

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Gender is a set of characteristics that are tied to and distinguish masculinity and femininity as people know in this era. This characteristic can include male, female, or intersex gender. Gender is determined by social structures such as gender roles or gender identity. Many People who do not identify as male or female are generally grouped into non-binary or genderqueer societies. Based on the statement of Dörnyei and Skeha (2003:11), gender itself is treated as social interaction and a product of achievement, focusing on the way individuals "do" or "perform" their gender identity in interactions with others, and the emphasis is on the dynamic aspects of interaction.

Butler (1990:35), explains that gender is not something that floats freely, such as a set of attributes or nouns, whose substantive effects are imposed by the practice of regulating gender coherence and are produced performatively. Therefore, Gender is a series of actions that are repeated over time to produce the appearance of natural substances and types of living things. There is no inherent/permanent and genuine gender identity. The formation of gender identity from repeated expressions and performances. Butler also states that identity is neither permanent nor coherent. Identity is created by performativity, which is constantly changing (Butler 1999:175). Therefore, a person's gender identity is never stable and can be determined with physical performance and performance, performance in sexual activity, and sexual conversation.

Moreover, according to Butler (1990:10–11), "sex is as culturally constructed as gender" and she concludes that sex and gender are one and the same. She calls sex a cultural norm because sex is no longer treated as something determined by the body. (2011:2–3). Butler refers to sex as a cultural norm since it is no longer viewed as something that is decided by the individual's physical characteristics. Therefore, babies born with double genitals are operated on to normalize their genitals, so that

their bodies become male or female. Transsexuals, on the other hand, are willing to have their genitals surgically altered in order to be recognized as the gender they believe they should be. Since the sex of people is being changed to fit the current norms, Butler sees sex as socially constructed.

One of the novels which contain the issues of gender performativity is from one of the famous American Writers, Andrea Lawlor entitled “*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*” which was published in 2019. She teaches writing at Mount Holyoke College, is the recipient of a 2020 Whiting Award for Fiction, and has been awarded fellowships by Lambda Literary and Radar Labs. Their publications include a chapbook, *Position Papers* (Factory Hollow Press, 2016), and a novel, *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*, a 2018 finalist for the Lambda Literary and CLMP Firecracker Awards. *Paul*, which was originally published by Rescue Press in 2017, is now available from Vintage/Knopf in the United States and Picador in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl tells the story of a young guy with gender-shifting abilities who are looking for love and plenty of sex in this hilarious debut set in the 1990s. Paul is the name of the main character. The setting is 1993. Paul Polydoris is a bartender at the lone homosexual club in a university town that is buzzing with politics and partying at the same time. He studies queer theory, has a best friend who is a queer, creates zines, and is a flâneur with thriving dating life. Paul is a shapeshifter. Paul changes his identity at will on various adventures that take him from Iowa City to Boystown to Provincetown and finally to San Francisco. *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* is a young boy who is fierce and sharp as having a world shattered by loss, he lives on the pulse of music and opens up into a series of intimacy and connection.

Many literary works, particularly novels, have both intrinsic and extrinsic elements in this regard. Andrea Lawlor is the author of this piece. She incorporates elements of transformation or performativity into his free life with parties, politics, gay clubs, a rich dating life, and a series of adventures from Iowa City to Boystown to Provincetown and finally to San Francisco through the deep Queer archive of struggles and pleasures, make this fiction more intriguing to read, and it can be found in Andrea Lawlor's “*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*”. Gender performativity is reflected in this novel. As a result, the writer examines this novel since it is entertaining to read by describing the element of gender performativity.

In this study, the writer is using the novel *“Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl”* as the main source of data. Based on the background above, the writer is interested in examining the gender performativity in the novel "Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl" for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, gender appears to be out of the ordinary in this context Gender can be determined by the performativity of their physical appearance, as well as their sexual behavior, and the writer analyze how the character's life is influenced by their gender performance. It may be determined by examining the components of gender performance depicted in the work. Second, this book was released in 2019, which is not too long ago, and it is written by Andrea Lawlor, who is a well-known American writer. Although someone has ever studied this novel before, this study would be the second one using the novel as the source of data but a different analysis.

One of the previous studies used *“Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl”* as the source of data. Many researchers, on the other hand, are using Gender Performativity theory as their reference to analyze their sources of data such as novels and movies. Chris Liane Swanson, Lund University (2020), conducted the first previous study using the same data source, titled *“Re-Imagining Trans* A Baradian close reading of Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl”*. Swanson analyzed the main character, namely Paul, and examine how the novel can be read as a re-imagining of trans* becoming an examination of two memory sequences using Baradian theory.

Then, the same theory was researched by Rizka Wigati, Universitas Airlangga Surabaya (2014) entitled *“Representation of Gender Performativity in Patrick, a Character in Neil Jordan's Breakfast on Pluto (2005)”*. This study is about an American film that analyses Ulysses' gender performativity and how society treats it.

Alfisyahrin Fitriani, Dyah Sunggingwati, and Nasrullah from English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawarman University (2021) conducted another study. Their research entitled *“Gender Performativity In Chainani's The School For Good And Evil Novel”*. This reveals the presence of gender performativity in this narrative and investigates how gender is presented in the text.

Next, a thesis by Putri Dwi Annisa, Indonesia University Of Education (2015) entitled *“An Analysis Of Spongebob Squarepants' Selected Episodes: A Study Of Queer Theory And Gender Performativity”*. In this thesis, the writer is more focused

on two characters (Spongebob and Patrick) who are portrayed from the perspective of queer and gender performativity in the selected Spongebob Squarepants episodes.

Then, Previous studies about a thesis by Nolen, English Department Faculty Of Social Sciences And Humanities Putera Batam University (2020) entitled "*Performativity Of Main Character Identity In "The Color Purple" By Alice Walker: Feminist Approach*". This thesis is more focused on the main character's to change herself in her sexual orientation with fellow women (lesbian).

The difference between the same source of data and the theory of the previous studies with this research is that this research focuses more on gender performativity and the role of gender performativity portrayed in the novel. From this, it can be said that the writer did not include the result of the same source of data and the theory of the previous studies. Such as re-imagining of trans* becoming of Paul with the examination of two memory sequences, Gender performativity Ulysses' in American film and how society treats it, Gender performativity in the narrative, and The present gender performativity and queer in Spongebob Squarepants episodes.

Furthermore, the gender performativity in the novel directs the writer to conduct further analysis. The problem falls under the literary techniques and the role of gender performativity, which is in every part of the work. Gender performativity and its elements have emerged as a new trend in the research and analysis field and Gender is never old to talk about. The source of data is what distinguishes this study from previous analyses. The writer conducted research using Andrea Lawlor's novel "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" in this study.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the information provided in research questions, the purpose of this study is to find an answer to the following questions:

1. How is Gender Performativity presented by the main character in the novel "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" novel?
2. What are the causes of Paul's Gender Performing different Gender Identity as represented in "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" novel?
3. What is the impact of the Gender Shifting portrayed by the main character on his social life in "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" novel?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

According to the statements of the problem above, the author tries to achieve objectives as it is written as follows:

1. To present the Gender Performativity presented the main character in "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" novel.
2. To present the causes of Paul's Gender Gender Performing different Gender Identity as represented in "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" novel.
3. To present the impact of Gender Shifting portrayed by the main character on his social life in "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" novel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be able to provide both theoretical and practical profits. Theoretically, the result of this study can enrich the knowledge and understanding of applying gender performativity theory to analyze gender performativity issues. The result of this study is hopefully able to inspire the next researchers to write or do further research about gender performativity issues in literary study. This study also aimed to give the contribution to students' understanding and to raise awareness of a growing discussion regarding gender performativity in America. The result of this study, hopefully, can also be used for the reference to the next researcher, who is dealing with any related topic of discussion, especially the English Study Program students at the University Trunojoyo, Madura.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study raises gender performativity as the focus subject for analysis. In order to avoid any unrelated outward discussion, the writer considers the scope and limitations to establish this study to set a preferable focus on the issue. This study focuses on the main character's speech and the author's narrative related to the issue the gender performativity, aspects of gender performativity, and the impact of the main character in his social life in Andrea Lawlor's debut novel "*Paul Takes The Form Of A Mortal Girl*" (2019) by applying gender performativity theory.