CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The word literature is derived from the Latin word, *littera,* which means a letter of the alphabet. According to Dyke (1912), literature consists of those writings which interpret the meaning of nature and life, in words of charm and power, touched with author personality, in artistic forms of permanent interest. Another meaning is also stated by Fananie (2000). He defined literature as the result of creations based on spontaneous overflowing emotions that are able to express the ability of good beauty aspects based on linguistic aspects and aspects of meaning. Therefore, it can be conveyed that literature is any human creation form filled with the interpretation of life and nature, which is depicted as a letter of the alphabet and conveyed through artistic forms. In other words, all of the written works that need an artistic process are considered literature.

Literature can be portrayed in various types. It can be reflected throughout forms of drama, autobiography, poetry, prose, and many others. One of the mediums used by the author to express his feelings can be conveyed through movies. Although there are differences in how movies and written works are presented, both of them are still related. Written works, such as novels and short story are presented in narrative form. Movies, meanwhile, originated from the written script and were presented through the help of visuals. In addition, both either movie and written works can be analyzed and interpreted as literature. As stated by Bennet and Royle (2004), movie is nevertheless, inextricably tied in with the study of literature, since

movie provides innovative ways of thinking about literature, and vice versa. Through this illustration, a movie can be categorized as literature.

Literature nowadays can't be separated from any human's life. In our everyday life, for instance, people are mostly involved with literature. Having binge-watching on series, watching movies, listening to songs, reading online news, or even writing some journals have become our social habits. It has been uncommon for us when some information provided on the news portal included the latest progress of the movie project has been produced. It can be filled with information about the release date of the latest film, the confirmation about the actor or the actress who takes a part in a particular film, or even the movie review from any reviewers. This information can either be shared by the author, the actors, and the actresses, or even the home production. Even, the existence of some special channels filled with films or serials, i.e*., Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, WeTV, Viu*, and the other online streaming platforms have been popularized by most of the society nowadays. According to a poll of participants from four Southeast Asian nations, 73.7 percent said binge-watching had increased as a result of the pandemic (Dixit et al., 2020). Through this illustration, whether we realize it or not, our society has been exposed to the existence of literature.

As a result, literature has contributed to our society's development. Through literature, our people can have a better comprehension of culture and a more prominent appreciation of them (Austin, 2021). The presence of literature is particularly important to capture the significant things that change time by time. Therefore, various platforms have been used to depict and capture all the changes

that happened in our surroundings. This reflection is normally portrayed through literary works, such as movies, songs, novels, novellas, proses, and other literary works.

People's behaviour can change over time and caused by various factors. For example, some people try to manage their childhood trauma by becoming arrogant and harsh in their surroundings. In other cases, some people suddenly change their behaviour to gain a better reputation from the society they lived in. As a result, people who have changed their behaviour will face two different reactions from their society. First, they will obtain things they want and achieve some good reputations in their surroundings. For example, a student who formerly was not an expert in pursuing his study decided to allocate some extra time in accomplishing his assignment. He also decided to hire some experts to gain a higher rank in his class. As a result, his class performance is improving, and their friends will recognize him as a clever student. Second, their former friends who had known about his changes wanted him to get back into his old routines. They realized it would drag him into bad results and tried to be ignorant about it.

Therefore, it is currently normal when people decide to change their character to be more accepted by others. Thus, some individuals need to achieve those standards by implementing the closest styles being implemented in their society as closely as possible. On the other hand, when people can't fulfill the standard being implemented in certain communities, they will be rejected and forced to look for some new communities. In the worst case, if someone can't fulfill their desire, they tend to influence someone to "reverse" their position to look fitter in that

community. Tragically, this behaviour can change someone's personality unconsciously and lead to the worst case, such as loss of identity.

This phenomenon is portrayed in the movie entitled *The Danish Girl*. *The Danish Girl* is a biographical movie directed by Tom Hooper which talks about the first publicly known transexual woman to receive sexual reassignment surgery (SRS) for her transition. It talks about the lives of Danish artists, Einer Wegener and Gerda Wegener. At first, they lived happily as a painter couple in Denmark. Einer's painting is more focused on Naturalism, meanwhile, Gerda's painting is more focused on Realism. All artists need some recognition and appreciation. One of the highest appreciations received by the artists is looking at their art being displayed in the gallery and noticed by other people. This case has also happened to Gerda. Unfortunately, Gerda's masterpiece has been rejected by Rasmussen, a museum collector. These are all done because all of her previous arts were in similar forms, in which the form of portraiture. Rasmussen also compared her works with her husband who had found the right subject painting earlier than her, expecting her to look at Einer as a role model. Therefore, she decided to make her new art. At the same time, her painting model, Ulla Fonsmarck, can't attend the painting session and she has an idea to replace her presence with Einar. Unfortunately, Gerda has evoked the feminine side of her husband by asking her husband to act like a woman and showing him off in public as a woman. Einer and Gerda's marriage has led them to create a new entity that never existed earlier. They create a woman named Lili Elbe as the model for fulfilling Gerda's desire. The existence of Lili Elbe has led Gerda into her glorious moments. Many reviewers have been amazed by her

paintings and her "creation". It makes Gerda decide to use Lili as her painting object over a while. Unconsciously, Gerda didn't realize her husband could be intrigued by a situation that can easily change his personality. Einer has tendencies to be treated as a woman entirely. He even has kissed Henrik Sandahl, one of the attendees at the annual artists' ball. However, when she decided to treat Einer into the normal one, Rasmussen has successfully convinced Gerda to attend the exhibition in Paris. Her presence as Einer's wife didn't contribute maximally to bring her husband back into the normal one. On the other hand, her "supportive" act drives her husband into the worst one, which is the loss of identity. Einer decided to have genital surgery and changed himself into Lili permanently.

Apart from being one of the writer's ways of expressing his problems, there are various reasons why the writer chooses movie instead of the other literary works. First, the writer can gain another knowledge from the movie. For example, the way of understanding everyone's feelings more deeply and the ability to observe many elements in the movie. These things can be obtained by observing the emotions built by each character. In addition, the main and supportive elements in the movie can support the writer to understand the plot more clearly. It can be derived by observing the setting provided in each scene. For example, the background music, lighting, the costume, as well as the other supportive elements in the movie. Second, he can observe a culture contained in literary works, especially through movie. The culture, in this case, includes how particular societies conduct their behaviour. As stated by Cronk (2016), human behaviour is strongly influenced by a content-related bias in favor of cultural traits that help us coordinate our social

behaviour. Therefore, by using movies, the writer can understand the characteristics of certain individuals based on the cultural values being implemented in their society. In this case, the writer decided to use a movie as his thesis subject.

However, due to the restriction policy that enforced some regions to close the cinema to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the writer currently prefers watching the movie review provided on YouTube. One of the movies reviewed entitled *The Danish Girl.* This film is played by well-known actors and actresses as their main characters. They are Eddie Redmayne (well-known for playing in the Fantastic Beast) and Alicia Vikander (Lara Croft) as the main characters in this movie. In addition, this movie also has received various prestigious awards. According to IMDb, awards received by this movie including Best Foreign Language Film by Cinema Brazil Grand Prize in 2017, Academy Awards of Best Performance by Actress in A Supporting Role in 2016, Winner of Best Breakthrough Performance by EDA Female Focus Award in 2016, Winner of EDA Special Mention Award in 2016, Winner of Detroit Film Critics Society Awards in 2015. In addition, it also became the nominee of other prestigious awards, such as The Nominee of BAFTA Awards in 2016, the nominee of AACTA International Awards in 2016, The Nominee of Cinema Brazil Grand Prize in 2017.

There are other factors which made the writer to choose this movie apart from the prestigious awards that had been received. The writer decided to choose this movie because of some intriguing scenes portrayed in the movie. These two scenes show Gerda's attitudes which are both influenced by her social life. The first scene that made the writer mainly concerned is when Gerda's art has been rejected by

Rasmussen. When her art is rejected, instead of giving her encouragement to create another better art, she is belittled with Einer's art, which evokes her to prove her capacity. Another scene portrayed in the movie is when Einer has to be treated because of the diagnosis result and Gerda is confused about taking care of her husband or attending the exhibition in Paris. In this scene, Elbershoff genuinely depicts Gerda's confusion, between pursuing her dream or sacrificing her dream for the one she loved. However, she has chosen to attend the exhibition in Paris, which ended up letting her husband have genital surgery and pass away because of the infection he has during the post-second surgery. Looking at this case, *the Danish Girl* is chosen as the writer's thesis topic.

Meanwhile, instead of using the main character's life as the main object, the writer focused on his wife's surroundings. Hence, what makes the writer curious is how tremendous the impact caused by social pressure is on shaping someone's point of view. In addition, the writer proposes his thesis entitled *The Impact of Social Pressure on Gerda Wegener: Feminist Sociology Approaches of Danish Girl Movie.*

1.2 Problem Statements

Based on the problem that arises earlier, therefore, the writer has stated a question to tackle the problem stated. Those are:

1. What kind of social pressure was received by Gerda which is portrayed in *The Danish Girl* movie?

2. How does Gerda Wegener's social pressure impact her husband's perspective and behavior?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study will affect the benefits achieved by the multiple parties, either academically or practically. The findings generated from this research will give supportive information to the students, primarily to those who want to conduct the same research, either with the same subject or the same objective.

Furthermore, the writer focuses on seeking the impact of social pressure that could influence someone's way of thinking and affects the close people nearby. Thus, this research will be beneficial for a society that has a high standard to achieve. By the scene portrayed in the movie, society will understand that every people have their capacities and capabilities in managing their problems. Therefore, the writer expected that society will not compare someone's problem easily. If they can't give any solutions, the writer suggests that society quietened their mouth and fingers, rather than mocking even bullying them.

1.4. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid any misinterpretations that may emerged from any readers, the writer, therefore, provide the frequent key terms used in this thesis.

1.4.1 Feminist Sociology

Feminist sociology is an interdisciplinary study of gender and power throughout society. In this case, it uses conflict theory and theoretical perspective to observe gender in its relation to power, both at the level of face-to-face interaction and reflexivity within social structures at large power. This term is more focused on sexual orientation, race, economic status, and nationality (Crossman,

2021).

1.4.2 Social Pressure

Sam (2013) stated social pressure is the influence exerted on a person or a group by another person which includes rational argument, persuasion, conformity, and demands.

1.4.3 Gender

Gender is defined by the role of male or female in society, such as norms, roles, and relationships between groups of women and men (Kangas, Raider, Fraser & Browne, 2014). Diamond (2002) also asserts gender is a socially constructed role and behaviors that society typically associated with males and females.

1.4.4 Gender Relations

Gender relations are the ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women in relation to one another (Bravo-Baumann, 2000).