



A Strong Desire To Be Of The Other Gender in Dean's Portrayal in The Novel "Between Perfect And Real"

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Abstract

This study analyzes a strong desire to become other Gender of Dean's Portrayal in the novel *Between Perfect and Real*. The data was taken from a novel entitled *Between Perfect and Real*, which is monologue and dialog. This study analyzes the strong desire to be of the other gender of the main character named "Dean Foster." The study uses the descriptive-qualitative method to analyze the data. The result of the study is presented in a formal and informal method. The library research method is used as the technique for collecting data. This study uses two main theories to analyze the data. The first leading theory is a diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders proposed by the American Psychiatric Association (2013) used to find out the strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean's. The second leading theory is the Method of Characterization proposed by Kenny (1966), used to analyze how the writer presented the strong desire to become other gender Dean in *Between Perfect and Real* novel. This study obtained 18 data relating to the strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean.

Keywords: *character's portrayal, novel*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis keinginan kuat untuk menjadi Gender lain dalam Penggambaran Dean dalam novel *Between Perfect and Real*. Data diambil dari sebuah novel berjudul *Between Perfect and Real*, yaitu monolog dan dialog. Studi ini menganalisis keinginan kuat untuk menjadi jenis kelamin lain dari karakter utama bernama "Dean Foster." Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian disajikan dalam metode formal dan informal. Metode penelitian kepustakaan digunakan sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua teori utama untuk menganalisis data. Teori pertama adalah manual diagnostik dan statistik gangguan mental yang diusulkan oleh American Psychiatric Association (2013) digunakan untuk mengetahui keinginan kuat untuk menjadi jenis kelamin lain dari Dean. Teori kedua adalah Metode Penokohan yang dikemukakan oleh Kenny (1966), digunakan untuk menganalisis bagaimana penulis mempresentasikan keinginan kuat Dean untuk menjadi gender lain dalam novel *Between Perfect and Real*. Penelitian ini memperoleh 21 data yang berkaitan dengan keinginan kuat untuk berjenis kelamin lain yang dialami oleh Dean.

Kata kunci: *gambaran karakter, novel*

Introduction

Literature is a text that expresses communication through feeling and human attitude in literary work. It is the overflow or realization of thought and feeling and the writer's experiences. Literature is the class of writing in which imaginative expression, aesthetic form, the universality of ideas, and permanence are characteristic features of Romance, Poetry, Drama, and Fiction (Webster, 1974). Many types of literary works, such as poetry, prose, novels, dramas, movies, etc. The novel is one of the literary works that belong to fiction. A novel's most crucial intrinsic element is plot, character, setting, and point of view (Klarer, 2004: 14). As one of the essential intrinsic elements, characters play a vital role in controlling the course of the story. A character who performs appears or is referred to as a role. According to Abrams (1999: 32-33) states that "characters are the person represented in a dramatic or narrative work, which the reader interprets as being endowed with particular moral, intellect, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it -the dialogue- and the from what they do -the action". The character expression and behavior is also related to the gender dysphoria phenomena that happening in the society right now.

Nova, Vina, and Andri cited in Thomas (2004) define the word 'gender' as originally a grammatical term; it has come to refer to social roles and individual behavior resulting from their biological gender. Gender dysphoria, According to American Psychiatric Association (2013: 453), "gender dysphoria refers to the distress that may accompany the incongruence between one's experienced or expressed gender and one's assigned gender." It emphasize the condition in which a person feels out of place or depressed as a result of the disparity between their birth gender and the identity that defines their gender. Gender dysphoria, previously known as gender identity disorder, is a psychological condition that can make people feel uncomfortable because of a discrepancy between their gender identity and biological sex. Furthermore, gender dysphoria affects transgender people. GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), a US NGO engaged in LGBT advocacy (2019), states that the term "transgender refers to a person whose gender identity does not match with their sex biological at birth, the sex assigned by a doctor at birth, usually based on the genitals." It emphasize a transgender person is someone whose gender identity differs from their biological sex at birth, which is usually determined by the genitals.

Related to the previous study in analyzed the character in literary works can be seen from the first article entitled Gender Identity Disorder in Louisa May Alcott's Little Women by Rochimah et al. (2013). The method that they used is a descriptive qualitative and library method. They analyzed the symptoms of Jo's transgender. Their study found that Jo clearly stated that she wanted to be the opposite sex. They also analyzed the factors that contribute to Jo "s transgender. Two factors occur transgender, there was the absence of man's figure in Jo's family, and Jo hated

women's role in society. They also analyzed the impacts of Jo's transgender on her and her family. They were transgender and gained a positive impact on her and her family, such as she could protect and provide financially for her family. The similarity between Rochimah's study and this study is both the studies discussed gender dysphoria issues in literary work, which is novel. The differences can be seen in the data source and one theory used. Rochimah's study used a novel by Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*, as a data source and used the gender role to analyze the factors contributing to Jo's transgender. Whereas this study used the novel Ray Stoeve's *Between Perfect and Real* in analyzing the data to analyze how the writer presented a strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean Foster in *Between Perfect and Real*, novel this study used the method of characterization purpose by Kenney (1966). In this study there are 18 data of a strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean Foster as the main character in the "Between Perfect and Real." All the events that showed a strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean Poster as the main character are presented by three methods of characterization that consist of 8 data is given with the discursive method (45%). However, 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 is given with the mixing method (5%).

Sarah L. Schulz (2017) wrote an article entitled *The Informed Consent Model of Transgender Care: An Alternative to the Diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria*. They analyze an alternative to the diagnostic model for transgender health is the Informed Consent Model, which allows for clients who are transgender to access hormone treatments and surgical interventions without undergoing mental health evaluation or referral from a mental health specialist. They found that the Informed Consent Model of transgender care shows promise in alleviating barriers to accessing treatment and allowing a narrative of transgender experience to emerge outside of the distressing narrative that is at the core of the diagnostic model. Whereas this article analyze how the writer presented the characteristics of gender dysphoria of the main character in "Between Perfect and Real", novel this study used the method of characterization purpose by Kenney (1966). In this study there are 18 data of a strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean Foster as the main character in the "Between Perfect and Real." All the events that showed a strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean Poster as the main character are presented by three methods of characterization that consist of 8 data is given with the discursive method (45%). However, 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 is given with the mixing method (5%).

Maitane Picaza Gorrotxategi, Naiara Ozamiz-Etxebarria, Eneritz Jimenez-Etxebarria and Jeffrey H.D. Cornelius-White (2020) made an article entitled *Improvement in Gender and Transgender Knowledge in University Students Through the Creative Factory Methodology*. They analyze the level of knowledge students with a social education degree perceive toward what it means to be a transgender person

and the attitude of Social Education students toward transgender people. They found that after four months of training with a weekly session on gender and transgender learning, students showed improvements in knowledge and attitudes toward gender and transgender people. Whereas this study analyze how the writer presented the characteristics of gender dysphoria of the main character in “Between Perfect and Real”, novel this study used the method of characterization purpose by Kenney (1966). In this study there are 18 data of a strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean Foster as the main character in the “Between Perfect and Real.” All the events that showed a strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean Poster as the main character are presented by three methods of characterization that consist of 8 data is given with the discursive method (45%). However, 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 is given with the mixing method (5%).

Riitaakerttu, Kaltiala-Heino, Hannah Bergman, Marja Tyolajarvi, and Louise Frisen (2018) wrote an article entitled Gender dysphoria in adolescence: current perspectives. In their study, they analyze how the treatment-seeking adolescents with GD present with considerable psychiatric comorbidity and transgender identity are associated with the completion of developmental tasks of adolescence. They found that An increasingly accepted treatment model that includes puberty suppression with gonadotropin-releasing hormone analogues starting during the early stages of puberty, cross-sex hormonal treatment starting at 16 years of age and possibly surgical treatments in legal adulthood is often indicated for adolescents with childhood gender dysphoria (GD) that intensifies during puberty. Whereas this study analyze how the writer presented the characteristics of gender dysphoria of the main character in “Between Perfect and Real”, novel this study used the method of characterization purpose by Kenney (1966). In this study there are 18 data of a strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean Foster as the main character in the “Between Perfect and Real.” All the events that showed a strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean Poster as the main character are presented by three methods of characterization that consist of 8 data is given with the discursive method (45%). However, 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 is given with the mixing method (5%).

Hasibuan (2020) wrote an article entitled An Analysis of Main Character's Gender Dysphoria in Kim Fu's Novel for Today I Am a Boy. The method that used is a descriptive qualitative method. He analyzed the reflection of gender dysphoria in Kim Fu's novel for Today I am a Boy. In his study, he found six gender identity disorder criteria in the novel that can indicate that Peter is affected by gender dysphoria. He also analyzed the cause of becoming transgender in Kim Fu's novel for Today I am a Boy. Two factors occur, transgender, there was the influence of hormones and social influences. The similarity between Hasibuan's study and this study is both the studies discussed gender dysphoria issues in literary work, which is

novel. The differences can be seen in the data source and the theory used. Hasibuan's study used a novel by Kim Fu, for Today I am a Boy, as a data source and used the transgender theory purpose by Stryker (2014) to analyze the cause of becoming transgender. Whereas this study used the novel Ray Stoeve's "Between Perfect and Real" In analyzing the data to analyze how the writer presented the characteristics of gender dysphoria of the main character in "Between Perfect and Real", novel this study used the method of characterization purpose by Kenney (1966). In this study there are 18 data of a strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean Foster as the main character in the "Between Perfect and Real." All the events that showed a strong desire to be of the other gender of Dean Poster as the main character are presented by three methods of characterization that consist of 8 data is given with the discursive method (45%). However, 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 is given with the mixing method (5%).

Method

The data source in this study were taken from the "Between Perfect and Real" novel. "Between Perfect and Real" novel, which was just released on April 2021 which is a fictional novel. Dean Foster who is the main character in this story is someone who already effected by gender dysphoria since childhood. Furthermore, the data were analyzed by using qualitative method and present descriptively. There are two steps used in analyzing the data. First, the data analyzed according to the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorder proposed by American Psychiatric Association (2013). Second, the data analyzed according to method of characterization proposed by Kenny (1966). Each data is presented and is analyzed based on the theoretical basis for the theory. There were four steps to collect the data namely, (1) reading the novel entitled "Between Perfect and Real", (2) finding the data that suitable with the conflicts in the main character of the novel "Between Perfect and Real" and observing the utterance produced by the writer in the novel, (3) Note-taking technique on the sentence or utterance that related to the conflicts in the main character of the novel "Between Perfect and Real", (4) selecting and categorizing the data.

Result and Discussion

There are 18 data of characteristics of gender dysphoria experienced by Dean as the main character in the "Between Perfect and Real." 18 data show strong feelings being her opposite gender (100%). The characteristics of gender dysphoria presented in Dean Foster as the main character are analyzed with the theory of method characterization proposed by Kenney (1966). In that theory, five methods consist of a discursive method, dramatic method, character to another character, contextual approach, and mixing process. The method presented by the writer to present the characteristics of gender dysphoria of Dean Poster as the main character are the namely discursive method, dramatic method, and mixing process.

After collecting and classifying the data, the amount percentage acquired by using the formula $\% = \frac{\text{Occurances}}{\text{Total data}} \times 100$. The data of the characteristics of gender dysphoria of the main character are presented in the table below:

Table 1. The Method of Characterization

No	Method of Characterization	Occurrences	Percentage
1	Discursive Method	8	45%
2	Dramatic Method	9	50%
3	Mixing Method	1	5%
	Total	18	100%

The table above shows the occurrences and percentage of the method of characterization that the writer uses. They are presented by the writer to explain or describe the event that gives the characteristics of gender dysphoria of Dean Poster as the main character in the novel "Between Perfect and Real." Based on the table above, all the events that showed the characteristics of gender dysphoria of Dean Poster as the main character are presented by three methods of characterization that consist of 8 data is given with the discursive method (45%). However, 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 is given with the mixing method (5%). The dramatic method is the most presented method since the writer in "Between Perfect and Real" novel allow the character expressing their self through statement or word. The character of another character does not occur since there is no event to indicate that the writer tries to describe one character in the story by talking about another character. Still, the character is expressing their self. The contextual method also does not occur since there is no event to indicate that the writer tries to describe the device of suggesting character by the verbal context.

1. A Strong Desire to be of the other Gender or an Insistence that one is the other Gender

In the novel "Between Perfect and Real", Dean Foster, the main character, strongly feels about being her opposite gender, a boy. Dean feels her soul is trapped in the wrong body; she often said her desire to be a boy with her word. This feeling will be followed by her desire to change their gender. According to the American Psychiatric Association, in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (2013: 452), "a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender." It emphasizes the patient's condition who has a solid feeling about being the other gender; for example, a man wants to be a woman, and a woman wants to be a man.

Data 1

*“I stay up late that night writing my response for Mr. Harrison. We only have to write one page, and I say it as plainly as I can: **I’ve been thinking about gender transition for a while, and this costume made me realize that I want to. I’m a trans guy**”.*

(Ray Stoeve, 2021: 68)

This situation happens in Dean's house, specifically when she stays up late writing her response for Mr. Harrison about the character that she got, which is Romeo. Furthermore, Dean only has to report one page; in the reaction, Dean said that she had been thinking about gender transition for a while, and this costume made her realize that she wanted to be a boy. When Dean wrote the response, she felt satisfied because she could write anything, and the next day, she brought the reaction to Mr. Harrison

From the bold sentence above, *“I’ve been thinking about gender transition for a while, and this costume made me realize that I want to. I’m a trans guy.”* Dean says that she has been thinking about transitioning to being a man. The costume made her realize that she wanted to be a trans man. Dean is sure that she wants to be a man through the Romeo costume. She feels very comfortable wearing the suit. Dean says that she has been thinking about transitioning to being a man. The costume made her realize that she wanted to be a trans man. Dean is sure that she wants to be a man through the Romeo costume. She feels very comfortable wearing the suit. Dean uses the repeating word **“I,”** which shows Dean’s affirmation that she is already sure she wants to be a boy. Repetition is an important literary device because it allows the writer or speaker to emphasize important details. According to the American Psychiatric Association in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (2013: 452), this characteristic belongs to **“a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender”**.

In the bold sentence above, Dean states, *“I’ve been thinking about gender transition for a while, and this costume made me realize that I want to. I’m a trans guy.”* in her monologue. According to Kenney in the characterization method (1966: 74), “the author who chooses the discursive method simply tells us about his character.” The **discursive method** is used here since the writer tries to tell about the characteristic of gender dysphoria of Dean directly through the monologue.

Data 2

“I want Zoe to see me as a guy, and like me as a guy. What if I tell her, and she says she’s okay with me, but it’s only because somewhere in her mind she still sees me as kind of a girl, just because of my body? The thought makes me feel like I’m choking”.

(Ray Stoeve, 2021: 97)

This situation happened in Lambert House. Specifically, when Dean attended a meeting of minority groups, namely LGBT, they shared stories about their respective circumstances during the session. When Dean talks a lot about her girlfriend, Jade warns her that Dean has to be careful with her relationship with Zoe because of the experience of one of the group members who her girlfriend abandoned because she turned into a trans man. When she heard Jade's advice, Dean became tense, and her mind wandered as she had never thought that far.

According to the American Psychiatric Association in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (2013: 452), the data above is classified as **“a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender”** since it shows Dean's desire to be her opposite gender. From bold sentence above, *“I want Zoe to see me as a guy and like me as a guy.”* Dean wants her girlfriend, Zoe, to see her as a man and like her as a man. Dean's statement *“see me and like me as a guy”* show Dean's affirmation 100% sure that she wants to be her opposite gender which is a boy. Dean mentions it twice because her desire to be a man is assertive. Dean uses the repeating word **“me,”** which shows Dean's affirmation that she is already sure she wants to be a boy. This repetition highlights the phrase while also adding rhythm to the passage, making it more memorable and enjoyable to read.

The writer uses the **discursive method** to describe the characteristic of gender dysphoria since Dean states, *“I want Zoe to see me as a guy, and like me as a guy.”* in her monologue. The writer uses a direct message to describe the characteristic of gender dysphoria of Dean as the main character in “Between Perfect and Real” novel. In this method, according to Kenney in the characterization method (1966: 74), “the author who chooses the discursive method simply tells us about his character.”

Data 3

“She reaches out, grabbing my hand.

Zoe: “I love you, Dean.”

Tears prick my eyes at the words.

Dean: “I love you too.”

I clear my throat.

Dean: “You remember how I wanted to play Romeo as a guy?”

She nods.

Dean: “That's because. Because I am one.” She tilts her head. “I'm transgender. I want to transition. I feel like a guy, and I want people to see me that way.”

Her mouth opens slightly, her eyebrows raising, and she says a silent oh into the cold air”.

(Ray Stoeve, 2021: 107-108)

This situation happened in Beth's Restaurant when Dean and Zoe had a date, and the date was going so well they ate together and talked a lot about each other and theater. Specifically, after lunch, they walked around the lake, and Dean said that she wanted to be a boy character more than that; she wanted to have a transition because Dean felt that she was a boy and wanted the world to see her as a boy. When Dean tells everything to Zoe, she hopes that Zoe can accept her as her true gender identity.

The data above shows one criteria diagnosis of gender dysphoria of Dean Poster, which is a desire to be her opposite gender since she states that "**I'm transgender. I want to transition. I feel like a guy, and I want people to see me that way.**" Dean says that she is a transgender person, and she wants to transition, whereas she feels like she is a man, and she wants to people see her that way. Dean never feels like she is a woman but the opposite. Dean state, "**I feel like a guy, and I want people to see me that way.**" Dean's word emphasizes Dean wants everyone to see her not as a woman but as a man, and it shows Dean is already sure that she wants to be a man. Whereas Dean uses the repeating word "**I,**" which shows Dean's affirmation that she is already sure she wants to be a boy. This repetition highlights the phrase while also adding rhythm to the passage, making it more memorable and enjoyable to read. According to the American Psychiatric Association in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (2013: 452), the data above is classified as "**a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender**" since it shows Dean's desire to be a boy.

This data is classified as the **dramatic method** since the writer allows the main character, Dean Foster, to reveal her desire to be a man through her word. According to Kenney (1966: 77), the dramatic process states that "**the author allows his character to reveal themselves to us through their own words and actions.**" Dean says, "**I'm transgender. I want to transition. I feel like a guy, and I want people to see me that way.**" Dean says that she is a transgender person, and she wants to transition, whereas she feels like she is a man and wants people to see her that way.

Data 4

"I tell them about seeing West Side Story when I was a kid and watching Boys Don't Cry with Zoe.

*Dean: "When Mom told me I couldn't play boy roles because I was a girl, I was kind of like, 'Oh, okay.' I was disappointed, but I thought the reason I felt different was because I was gay. **I hated being seen as a girl, though.**"*

Nina: "So, you're a trans guy," Nina says. I frown.

Dean: "Yeah."

(Ray Stoeve, 2021: 119-120)

This situation occurred on Monday at Lambert House. Specifically, when Dean gathered with the LBGT group. When Dean talked about herself telling her girlfriend and even all her friends at school about her being a trans man, next, after meeting the group, they went to Caffe Vita, while there about each other's lives as each of them turned into a trance and their love journey. Dean told them that she was disappointed with her mother because her mother told her she could not play the male role because she was a girl.

According to the American Psychiatric Association in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (2013: 452), the data above is classified as “**a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender**” since it shows Dean's desire to be her opposite gender. Dean states, “*I hated being seen as a girl, though.*” Dean says that she hates when people see her as a girl. Dean's statement shows that she wants to be a boy rather than a girl, whereas she cannot stand people's views when people think and see her as a girl.

Dean states, “*I hated being seen as a girl, though.*” Dean says that she hates when people see her as a girl. Dean's statement shows that she wants to be a boy rather than a girl. This data is classified as the **dramatic method** since the writer allows the main character, Dean Foster, to reveal her desire to be a boy through her word. According to Kenney in characterization method (1966: 77), “the author allows his character to reveal themselves to us through their own words and actions.”

Data 5

“I guess this is happening. I reach down inside me and pull the words up one by one.

Dean: *“Do you know what transgender is?” Dad nods once.*

Dean's Dad: *“I've heard the term,” he says. I swallow.*

Dean: *“I'm transgender. I'm not a girl.” Mom's laugh makes my head jerk back.*

Dean's Mom: *“What? You have ...” She gestures at me. “What do you mean, you're not a girl?”*

Dean: *“I have certain parts.” I blush. “But I don't feel like a girl inside. I never have. I just didn't have the words until now. I'm a trans guy.”*

(Ray Stoeve, 2021: 190-191)

This situation happened on Friday nights. Specifically, after Dean's performance as a Romeo in her school, Dean's mother was upset because Dean used a binder on her chest that made her chest looks flat. Furthermore, Dean and her parent went home by car. When Dean and her parents were in the living room, Dean's mother was confused about Dean's behavior lately; when Dean revealed that she is not a girl but a

transgender, her mother laughed and judged her because she does not have the part that characterizes that she is a man.

This characteristic, according to the American Psychiatric Association in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (2013: 452), belongs to “**a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender**” since it shows Dean’s have a solid feeling to be a boy. It can be seen from Dean’s statement above “*I’m transgender. I’m not a girl.*” Dean says that she is a transgender person and not a woman. Dean believes that she is not a woman and wants to be another gender, a man. Furthermore, this characteristic is proved through Dean’s words since it shows Dean’s strong feelings about being a man.

The writer uses **dramatic method** to describe the characteristic of the main character, who wants to be a man, directly through the main character’s statements. According to Kenney (1966: 77), in the dramatic method, “the author allows his character to reveal themselves to us through their own words and actions.” Dean says *I’m transgender. I’m not a girl.*” Dean says that she is a transgender person and not a woman. Dean believes that she is not a woman and wants to be another gender, a man.

Conclusion

There are 18 data of a strong desire to be of the other gender experienced by Dean Foster as the main character in the “Between Perfect and Real.” The study used a characterization method in presenting the events that show the characteristics of the main character “Dean Foster” gender dysphoria. There are only three methods used from the five methods proposed by Kenny (1966). They are a discursive method, dramatic method, and mixing process. From the previous discussion, the most method applied is the dramatic method since the writer in “Between Perfect and Real” novel allow the character expressing their self through statement or word. Here is how the writer presented the gender dysphoria of the main character. Those 8 data are presented with the discursive method (45%), whereas 9 data are presented with the dramatic process (50%), and 1 data are presented with the mixing method (5%). The character of another character does not occur since there is no event to indicate that the writer tries to describe one character in the story by talking about another character. Still, the character is expressing their self. The contextual method also does not occur since there is no event to indicate that the writer tries to explain the device of suggesting character by the verbal context.

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