

CROSS-DRESSING ISSUES IN SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT*



A Thesis

*Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University in Partial
Fulfilment for The Requirement to Obtain Sarjana Degree in English*

Written by:

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**ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM
THE FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES
HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY
MAKASSAR**

2024



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THESIS

CROSS-DRESSING ISSUES IN SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT*

BY

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It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on Friday, 12th July 2024 and is declared to have fulfilled the requirements.

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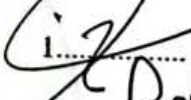


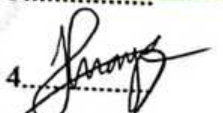


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AGREEMENT

On July 12, 2024, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by Fitri Handayani (F041201010) entitled *Cross-dressing Issues in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night* submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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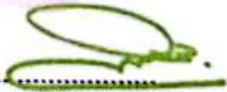
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Hereby, the writer declares that this thesis is written by herself. This thesis does not contain any materials which have been published by other people, and it does not cite other people's ideas except quotations and references.

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APPROVAL FORM

With reference to the letter of the Dean of Cultural Sciences Number 1359/UN4.9.1/KEP/2023 regarding supervision, we hereby confirm to approve the thesis draft by **Fitri Handayani (F041201010)** to be examined at the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences.

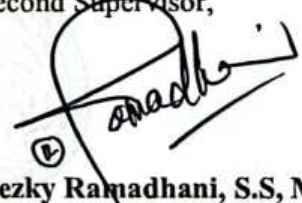
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Makassar, 12th July 2024

Lots of Love (LOL)

Fitri Handayani



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ABSTRACT

Fitri Handayani. 2024. *Cross-Dressing Issues in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.*
(Supervised by **Fathu Rahman** and **Rezky Ramadhani**)

In this research the writer will analyze the issues which appears in the script *Twelfth Night* due to character Viola cross-dressing as a man. The writer will also analyze why Viola chooses to hide her female identity as soon as she arrives in Illyria.

This research will use structuralism approach to analyze the intrinsic elements in the script. The writer will also use qualitative research method because this research will use narrative description for the analysis and not by collecting outside data from surveys or interview. This research use the script *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare as its data source.

In conclusion of the analysis, the writer found that cross-dressing caused issues amongst the characters; confusing gender identity, ambiguous sexual orientation, and emotional struggle that Viola herself must face. It is also found that the reasons for Viola's cross-dressing was to protect herself, as a lone woman in a strange country, from dangers, and also to gain more freedom for herself.

Keywords : *Cross-dressing, Twelfth Night, Issues, Intrinsic Elements*



ABSTRAK

Fitri Handayani. 2024. *Cross-Dressing Issues in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.*
(Dibimbing oleh **Fathu Rahman** and **Rezky Ramadhani**)

Dalam penelitian ini penulis akan menganalisis permasalahan yang muncul dalam naskah *Twelfth Night* akibat karakter Viola yang melakukan lintas-busana sebagai seorang laki-laki. Penulis juga akan menganalisis mengapa Viola memilih menyembunyikan identitasnya sebagai wanita begitu ia tiba di Illyria.

Penelitian ini akan menggunakan pendekatan strukturalisme untuk menganalisis unsur intrinsik dalam naskah. Penulis juga akan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif karena penelitian ini akan menggunakan deskripsi naratif untuk analisisnya dan bukan dengan mengumpulkan data luar melalui survei atau wawancara. Penelitian ini menggunakan naskah *Twelfth Night* karya William Shakespeare sebagai sumber datanya.

Sebagai kesimpulan dari analisis, penulis menemukan bahwa lintas-busana menimbulkan berbagai masalah diantara para karakter; kebingungan identitas gender, orientasi seksual yang ambigu, dan pergulatan emosional yang harus dihadapi Viola sendiri. Ditemukan juga bahwa alasan Viola melakukan lintas-busana adalah untuk melindungi dirinya sendiri, sebagai wanita yang sendirian di negara asing, dari bahaya, dan juga untuk mendapatkan lebih banyak kebebasan untuk dirinya sendiri.

Kata Kunci : *Berlintas-busana, Twelfth Night, Masalah, Elemen Intrinsik*



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Background of Study

Clothes has become an essential part of human's history, as the time keep moving, clothes and fashion also changed following the time and trend in a certain era. Clothes also became a type of signification system that can reveal people's culture, sex/gender, class, and sexuality. Many cultures has different way of clothing, but one thing that stays the same is, clothing conventionally gender-coded (Yuxin, 2002: 23). Men and women have their distinct differences in clothing; men wore suit and pants, while women wear dresses and jewelery, in some cultures men can show more of their skins, while women need to appear modest and wear long clothes. The act goes against this gender-code clothing style is called cross-dressing.

Cross-dressing is an act of wearing clothes, ornaments, and accessories meant for the opposite gender. This act, althought very unacceptable in the past, was still well-known in history. Cross-dressing in practice is used as tools to change and destroy the dominant culture. Cross-dressing gives women the ability to have opportunities opens to them to the men's privilage, wearing men's ing allowed them to enjoy certain privilages of men (Yuxin, 2002: 29-31).



Shakespeare, in some of his works shows how the heroine got more privileges that only usually available to men by cross-dressing.

Literature refers to any piece of writing or any publicly available writing. Literature is a work of art that uses language as their media and possesses a certain artistic values (Stecker, 1996: 681). Therefore, other than prose fiction, poetry, and drama, they also consider essays, biographies, addresses, and orations a vital part of literature. There are several other opinions on literature, therefore literature cannot be defined into one single definition. Literature contains the experience of the author and their social, political, and cultural perspective during their own times.

Play script or drama is one of the oldest form of literature. Scripts are utilized as reference points for reflection on performance or to chronicle live activities on stage (Baker, 2018: 175). So drama is a literary work that was presented through dialogue and actions between characters that were played by actors on stage by following the play script. Drama play uses costumes to emphasize each characters identity since they can be seen in reality by the audiences, there are also props that are needed during specific actions in the play.

Someone who writes a play is known as a play wright, and one of the most famous play wright in history is William Shakespeare. Despite being famous, there are little things known about him. According to the note on Shakespeare in the book "Twelfth Night William Shakespeare" from Wordsworth Classics



edited by Cedric Watts (1993: 21), Shakespeare was the son of a merchant in Stratford-upon-Avon and was born on 23 April 1564. It is unknown when he started to get involved in stage in London, but he was known as a play wright in 1592. He prospered greatly, but near the end of his life he decided to move away from London and move to New Place. He died on 23 April, 1616, and is buried in Holy Trinity Church, the place of his baptism.

One of the most famous Shakespeares's comedy is *Twelfth Night*. It is frequently staged in theatre, while in cinema and televisions it has millions of viewers. It tells the story of Viola who after being stranded on Illyria, disguises herself as a man which causes various misunderstanding which became the main conflict of the play. Because of the novelty and refreshing elements in the play such as cross-dressing, confusions, and ambiguity, it makes *Twelfth Night* as a famous comedy play. *Twelfth Night* also involves the sensitive topics of gender identity when the streotype between genders are still very diverse.

Identity is the form of reality in which we exist, a construct that we created from something we perceive. So identity is something that is created as our self recognition in what we know, belief, and experience thus constructing our nature, temperament, and character. While gender identity is someone's own sense of self and gender from the inside which is not outwardly visible to other, they can be female, male, or neither. Different from sex that is defined from their physical traits and biologically assigned since birth.



Twelfth Night shows that cross-dressing has many interesting aspects that can be explored, like the reason why Viola have to pretend as her brother in Illyra and why her disguise, Cesario, caused so many problematic situations among the characters. There are many reasons why people choose to cross-dress, some might be out of interest, mental issues, or protection. Women during Shakespeare's era still suffers from discrimination againts men, so in Shakespeare's script drama play it is common to find the female protagonist disguising herself as a man. The writer finds this to be interesting to explore. To know Viola's reason to cross-dress and work as an attendant, instead of just staying as a female and became a maid in the Duke's house. The writer wanted to explore this reason in Viola's act of cross-dressing, because protection does not seem to be the only necessary reason for Viola to become Cesario.

The issues caused by cross-dressing in this script is also very interesting, like how Cesario was able to make the Countess fell in love with her just by changing her clothes and demeanor into a man, and the dilemma Viola need to face due to her identity as Cesario when she fell in love with the Duke. The writer thinks all of this are very interesting to explore. So in this research the writer will use the script of the drama play *Twelfth Night* to explore the intrinsic elements and also the reason and problems of cross-dressing in the drama play

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare.



1. 2 Identification of Problem

The following are some of the problems that the writer found after reading the script of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* :

1. The reason for character Viola cross-dressing after being stranded in Illyria and the issues that appears due to it.
2. Different treatment based on status.
3. Different privileges received as a man and as a woman.

1. 3 Scope of Problem

In this study, the writer will focus on analyzing the reason for character Viola in cross-dressing and the issues it brought in the play script *Twelfth Night*.

1. 4 Research Question

According to the scope of problem, these are some questions that will be explained in this research :

1. What are the cause that Viola do cross-dressing in script *Twelfth Night*?
2. What are the issues caused by cross-dressing in *Twelfth Night*?



Objective of Study

According to the research question, the writer will :

1. To explain the reason for character Viola to do cross-dressing.
2. To describe the issues that appear because of the cross-dressing in *Twelfth Night*.

1. 6 Sequence of Writing

This writing consist of five chapters. First is introduction that consist of background of the study, identification of problems, scope of problem, research question, objective of study, and lastly sequence of writing.

Second is literature review which consist of previous related studies that will include studies that has relation with the current research, and theoritical background that will explain about the theory that will be used in this research. Third is methodology that will explain the writer's method in collecting data and analyzing data.

Chapter four will consist of analysis for all the research question in this research and the last chapter will consist of the research conclusion and suggestions.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 Previous Related Studies

Previous related studies are studies that has relation with the research that will be conducted in this paper. Previous related studies are needed to make some comparison between the previous research and the current research.

First research is an article from Akbay (2015) with tittle “A Study of William Shakepeare’s *Twelfth Night* from a New Historicist Perspective”. This article aims to examine Shakespeare’s comedy *Twelfth Night* from the viewpoint of New Historicism based on the literary criticism of Stephen Greenblatt. This research used the concept swerving, which is a new concept from Greenblatt with New Historicism as the basic. This research put the issues of confused identities, crossdressing, social mobility, Elizabethan gender and sexual norms to analyze. And using role language to interpet the implied meaning of the words and expression in the play. Akbay conclude that swerving is an essential component in *Twelfth Night* because it can start subversive ideas and informs about the possibility of a threat to authority, but it can also functions as a tool for the character to get what they want by taking a step back and make a room for the

l order to remain.



Second research is from Daulay (2018) with research title “Ambiguity of Gender Identity in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*”. This research aims to show the gender identity and its ambiguity in Shakespeare’s drama *Twelfth Night*. This research used Gender Theory to analyze the characters identity and subjectivity. The conclusions that were drawn from this research is that sex, gender and sexual orientation is something that is fluid, not natural, and changing and constructed by social conditions.

Third research is from Fauzi (2019) with research title “A Study of Misunderstanding as a Means of Finding Love Theme in William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*”. In this research, Fauzi explain how the main conflict between characters which is misunderstanding, became the number one reason to the theme of finding love in *Twelfth Night*. Viola’s disguise as Cesario is the main reason of this misunderstanding. By using the study of misunderstanding in general, this research analyze the conflicts between characters. By analyzing all the misunderstanding that happens in the play and based on the definition of theme, this research conclude that the love experienced by the four main characters is the theme of *Twelfth Night*.

Fourth research is a thesis from Anastasia S. Bierman (2013) with a title



“Counterfeit Passion: Cross-dressing, Transgression, and Fraud in Shakespeare and Middleton”. In this thesis, Anastasia explored the crime of cross-dressing as man in *The Roaring Girl* by Thomas Dekker, and *As You Like*

It by William Shakespeare. Anastasia explains that cross-dressing is often shown in Renaissance writing as a type of crime, alongside thieves, adulterers, vagabonds amongst others, which is something that many modern scholars has overlook because they only look at the end of the play as the base of their analysis rather than seeing the entire play. The character who did cross-dressing deceives other characters in their respective stories.

From the three previous researchers, it can be seen that there are many elements that can be found in *Twelfth Night* such as; misunderstanding, confusions, and gender ambiguity. While on the fourth research shows how cross-dressing can be seen as an issue because it can be classified as an act of transgression and fraud. But in this research the writer will analyze the main issues of cross-dressing that Viola did out of necessity due to her gender using structuralism approach.

2. 2 Theoretical Background

This part will explain the theoritical background used in this research. The writer used structuralism approach to analyze the drama script play *Twelfth Night*.

Structuralism in general is an approach that considers the object of study as just as a collection of separate elements but as a combination of elements that related to each other, so they are dependent with one another (Sukarto, 2017:



50-51). So structuralism consists of many elements that work as one structure with their own roles.

To start a research on literary works the first thing that needs to be known are the intrinsic elements of the object of study. Structuralism approach is an approach that talks about the intrinsic elements that create work from the inside (Sukarto, 2017: 50-51). So structuralism approach analyzes literary works without any influence from external elements, like history, social, or the author.

Structure became the connector that connects one intrinsic element with another. In drama script the intrinsic elements consist of plot, character and characterization, theme, dialogue, and setting (background). Each element has its own role that creates the drama script.

2.2.1 Character and Characterization

Characters in the story have their own unique impact in the story. A character in the play has their own personality, beliefs, and principles. While characterization according to Wellek and Warren (1956: 32) in literature the concept of characterization has always been described as the combination of the type with the individual. Characters are divided into protagonist and antagonist.

The protagonist is the center of the story where the conflicts revolve. They are usually known as the “good” character of the story and the perspective mostly following them. In opposition of the protagonist is the antagonist or



the “bad” character. Antagonist will try to fight or hinder the protagonist in reaching their goal which causes main conflicts in the story. Other than that there is the deuteragonist who is also considered to be an important character but is jumping between helping or hindering the protagonist.

2.2.2 Plot

Plot is the most important element in a story because plot explain the correlation of the story’s events linearly and chronologically so it is easier to understand (Sukarto, 2017: 51-52). Plot has five components in making up a plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

- Exposition : works as the opening that introduce settings, characters, and the story’s beginning or primary conflicts.
- Rising action : starting from the conflict introduction, it carries details of the story that will lead to climax.
- Climax : the peak or most intense part of the plot where the conflict reach its most intense moment.
- Falling action : after the most intense moment of the conflict the story will start to wrap up and other minor conflict will be resolved.
- Resolution : Every conflict in the story has been resolved and the story is concluded.



The development and resolution of the conflicts in the story where the main character, protagonist, is the center of the story and created the patterns where the main character meet with problems and resolve the problem is what makes up the plot. According to Abrams (1990: 226) the order of the unified plot pointed by Aristotle is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle, and end. A good story is a story where all actions, incidents, dialogue, thoughts, and details can be linked together to make up the entire story.

2.2.3 Theme

Theme in a story is important to set the type of story that will be created. It is the the main idea, message, or moral of the story that wants to be conveyed to its readers or audience. Examples of theme can be love, good vs bad, coming of age, etc. According to Stanton (1965: 88) theme is the meaning contained in the story. Theme set by the author is like the foundation of the entire story which can be seen from the character's thingking, feeling, settings, and their events in life.

2.2.4 Setting

Setting shows the situations in which the story takes place (Sukarto, 2017: 54). Settings helps in creating the atmosphere appropriate for the particular events in the play. A story without settings would seem bland. This settings not shows the place and time but also other values in the said place.



- Setting of place : Refers to the location in which the story took place. This location can be somewhere in the world that we had heard about, but it can also be a place that is totally from the author's imagination. Setting of place without names usually only used their generally known features. Setting of place can have several locations.
- Setting of time : Refers to the time in which certain events occurs in the story. Setting of time shows the year, month, season, and hours, or other descriptive indications that can be used as a mark in a certain time.
- Setting of atmosphere : Refers to the emotions the characters undergo in certain situations. For example; when someone dears to a certain character dies, the atmosphere would become sad and mournful.

Settings helps in making the background of the story more vividly shown to the readers and viewers. It helps readers to be easier in integrating and imagining the story.

2.3 Cross-Dressing

Cross-dressing as previously written, is the act of wearing clothes or accessories that is not in line with one's gender or sex. The concept of cross-dressing has existed for a very long time for many reasons, and in many places. For example, in Hindu there are many legends of male gods takes the form of a



female and one of them is Vishnu. Vishnu in his female form is called Mohini, an enchantingly beautiful woman. Vishnu turns into Mohini to stop the battles between the gods and demons which he governed. It is said that Mohini was so beautiful that Siva even begged him to revert into his female form (Bullough, 1993: 6).

On Madagascar, among the Hovas, one of the island tribe, some boys are raised as girls by their parents because they are viewed as too gentle and weak to be a man despite being born as male, such people are called *sekrata*. Sekrata took on women's apparel, customs, and character, they wore female clothes and grew their hair long and wear accessories. They did everything a woman should do and not the tasks that male usually do. They had naturally regarded themselves as female and forgetting their true sex (Bullough, 1993: 14).

But the above example does not mean that cross-dress are something acceptable worldwide. Earnest Boulton and Frederick William Park were arrested in 1870 wearing drag on charges of public decency outside of the Strand Theatre in London. Although after long trials they were released, the charge at the time were changed to sodomy. Later this trial became the foundation for the emerging queer identity in late nineteenth-century London (Wells, 2021: 18-19).



majority of early publications on cross-dressing focus on female-to-male cross-dressing, as a way to transform power dynamics and destroy the patriarchy. Cross-dressing in theatre has become a significant work on the stage. Most of

theatre historians emphasized the stage as a 'safe' place where women and men have some flexibility in crossing the lines of gender (Wells, 2021: 20).

In recent years, according to Dr. Denise Renye; cross-dressing can just be taken as dressing. Since people are wearing what makes them feel comfortable. Privately, this is changing the terms of dressing, but slowly it will change the public as well. For example, Brad Pitt who wore linen skirt to a movie premier in July 2022. Current generation, also known as Gen Z, can not connect with cross-dressing as a concept because they only wore whatever makes them comfortable without feeling embarrassed or judgment.

