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FEMININITY PORTRAYED IN DANTE CHARACTER IN ARISTOTLE AND DANTE DISCOVER THE SECRET OF UNIVERSE NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to find the femininity characteristics and identity developments as a homosexual in the character of Dante of Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe novel. This research was categorized as descriptive qualitative research and was using content analysis approach. The researcher used Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe novel as the source of data. The data were taken from the dialogues between characters and narrations that indicating Dante's femininity characteristics based on Bem theory and his identity development as a homosexual based on Cass theory. From the finding of this research, it reveals that the character of Dante possess 16 out of 20 femininity characteristics which are affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, feminine, gentle, gullible, sensitive of the needs of others, loyal, soft spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding. Dante also fulfills 4 out of 6 identity developments which are identity of confusion, comparison, tolerance and acceptance. The character of Dante has femininity characteristics and he experiences the identity development phases to be a

Key words: Bem Sex Roles theory, Cass Identity Development theory, Femininity, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan karakteristik feminin dan perkembangan identitas sebagai homoseksual pada karakter Dante dari novel Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe. Penelitian ini dikategorikan sebagai penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dan menggunakan pendekatan analisa konten. Peneliti menggunakan novel Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe sebagai sumber dari data. Data didapat dari dialog antar karakter-karakter dan narasi didalam novel yang mengindikasikan karakteristik feminin dari Dante berdasarkan teori Bem dan perkembangan identitasnya sebagai seorang homoseksual berdasarkan teori Cass. Dari hasil penelitian ditemukan bahwa karakter Dante memiliki 16 dari 20 karakteristik feminin diantaranya penuh kasih sayang, ceria, kekanak-kanakan, pengasih, ingin menenangkan perasaan luka, feminin, lembut, mudah tertipu, peka terhadap kebutuhan orang lain, setia, lembut



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saat berbicara, simpatik, lembut, pengertian, hangat dan penurut. Dante juga memenuhi 4 dari 6 perkembangan identitas sebagai seorang homoseksual yaitu kebingungan identitas, perbandingan, toleransi dan penerimaan. Dante memiliki karakteristik feminin dalam dirinya dan ia mengalami fase-fase perkembangan identitas sebagai seorang homoseksual.

Kata kunci: Bem Sex Roles Inventory, Teori Cass Identity Development, Feminin, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe

A. INTRODUCTION

The term of gender comes along with the feminism movement. It spreads into the whole world and there is a lot of pro-contra regarding this issue. The term femininity commonly sticks to women rather than men. (Moore 579). Men as well as women sometimes are struggling because they cannot express their feminine or masculine side causing by social prejudice. Some people who act differently from their gender roles will be seen as an odd. In the extreme ways, people who act not based on her/his gender will get discrimination and even harms.

In the society, the term femininity commonly sticks to women rather than men. The same thing happen with the term masculinity, it is associated with men. Men as well as women sometimes are struggling because they cannot express their feminine or masculine side causing by social prejudice. Some people who act differently from their gender roles will be seen as an odd. In the extreme ways, people who act not based on her/his gender will get discrimination and even harms.

In some cases, men who have dominant feminine characteristics turn out to be gay. However, their identity as a gay did not come instantly. They were not born with it, but there were process and factors. Recently, People start aware that this issue also happened in our country. Some people even join the community and become the activist for queer community. These happened because the technology and information is easily spread away these days. Topic about teenagers who are looking for their identity is quite popular. This topic has been discussed in many literary works, especially in young adult literature. We can find the topic in the novel as well as in the movie. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the* Secret of Universe is a novel written by Benjamin Alire Saenz that has main theme about gender and identity with the perspective of teenager.

The purposes of this research were to identify the characteristics of femininity and examine the identity development of homosexual portrayed by Dante character in Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe. It was expected that this research can give the contribution of knowledge and more perspective to the reader about femininity and identity development. Hopefully, this research can be used as guidance to the future researcher in doing the research with the same topic.



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B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Young Adult Literature

According to Robert Carlsen in Steven VanderStaay young-adult literature is literature wherein the protagonist is either a teenager or one who approaches problem from a teenage perspective. Such novels are generally of moderate length and told from the first person. Typically, they describe initiation into the adult world, or the surmounting of a contemporary problem forced upon the protagonist(s) by the adult world (48).

Character and Characterization

Character is an imagined person in the literary work (Hall 47). The way author describes the character in the story is called characterization (Rohrberger and Woods 20). Character and characterization connected to each other. A good character needs a good characterization to make it perfect so the audiences can see a character as three dimensional that has personalities just like a human being. It will help the audiences enjoy the story with their whole heart as they can give their empathy and affection to the character.

Literature and Gender Studies

Literature is a potential place to discuss about variation issues. Many people enjoy literary work not only because its story, but also the issue that is brought by the literary work. The issue of gender is one of the issues that are discussed in literary works. Literature makes people aware about other point of view about gender positively. Literature is a bridge of the author to the reader to deliver the information to know more about the issue like gender.

4. Gender Role and Gender Identity

Anselmi stated that gender roles are packs of prescriptions and belief socially and culturally about the way men and women should do: the behavior and emotions (195). Gender identity has been defined as an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, or an identity between or outside these two categories (Wilchins in Nagoshi 4). Both gender roles and gender identity are tightly connected. Gender identity brings the terms of masculinity and femininity, meanwhile gender roles are the cultural and social roles that need to be followed based on the their gender in order to keep their identity and status.

5. Femininity

Femininity was the cultural construction of woman behavior in society as Barlow stated that "femininity refers to behavior and ideas associated with womanliness or normative female sexuality, separable from women's anatomical sex" (1). In accordance with Barlow, Barker explained the term of femininity as an identity category that refers to social and cultural characteristics associated with being female. It is a discursive-performative that describe and disciplined how to being a woman (Barlow 86). Both man and woman can possess femininity because the label is determined by social rather than someone's sex (Burke 997). As Hofstede in Tidwell stated femininity stand for society in which social gender roles



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overlaps: both man and woman are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (104).

6. Bem Sex Role Inventory

BSRI (Bem Sex Role Inventory) was introduced in 1971 by Dr. Sandra Lipzits Bem. She published her theory in Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology volume 42 entitled *The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny*. BSRI contains 20 characteristics for each sex typed with one additional row for neutral items or neutral traits. This research used Sandra L. Bem's theory of Sex Role Inventory as the indicator to measure the feminine characteristics in Dante's character in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe* novel.

Table 2.1
The Measurement of Masculinity and Femininity Based on Sandra L. Bem's Sex Role Inventory(156)

No	Masculine Items	Feminine Items	Neutral Items
1.	Act as a leader	Affectionate	Adaptable
2.	Aggressive	Cheerful	Conceited
3.	Ambitious	Childlike	Conscientious
4.	Analytical	Compassionate	Conventional
5.	Assertive	Does not use harsh language	Friendly
6.	Athletic	Eager to soothe hurt feelings	Нарру
7.	Competitive	Feminine	Helpful
8.	Defends own beliefs	Flatterable	Inefficient
9.	Dominant	Gentle	Jealous
10.	Forceful	Gullible	Likeable
11.	Has leadership abilities	Loves children	Moody
12.	Independent	Loyal	Reliable
13.	Individualistic	Sensitive to the needs of others	Secretive
14.	Makes decisions easily	Shy	Sincere
15.	Masculine	Soft spoken	Solemn
16.	Self-reliant	Sympathetic	Tactful
17.	Self-sufficient	Tender	Theatrical
18.	Strong personality	Understanding	Truthful
19.	Willing to take a stand	Warm	Unpredictable
20.	Willing to take a risks	Yielding	Unsystematic

Source: Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 42 (1979):155-162. Web.December 2017.

7. Queer Issue

Tyson explained that queer was a term that used as a category for referring to a common political or cultural ground shares by gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and all



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people who consider themselves, for whatever reasons, non-straight (334). The word "queer" has a primary meaning of "odd," "peculiar," "out of the ordinary". In other words the term queer is for people who are not heterosexual and do not conform to gender norms.

8. Cass Identity Development

Cass Identity of Development was proposed by Vivienne C Cass, a psychological theorist. Cass Homosexuality Identity Formation: A Theoretical *Model* stated that identity development can be used to understand the identity development of homosexual. It described the process by which a person comes first to consider and later to acquire the identity of homosexual as a relevant aspect of self. Cass introduced the six phases to find the identity of homosexual:

a. Identity Confusion

Big question about their identity is the main point in this phase. This identity comes into question, through thoughts, emotions, physical reactions, and other experiences may bring the individual to question their identity as heterosexual. There will be a denial of inner feelings and some people try to date the oppositesex like normal people do.

Identity Comparison

The individual start to aware even with a doubt about there is something different in him/her. This phase involves the feelings of isolation and alienation, a feeling of being out of place, or difference.

Identity Tolerance

In this phase the individual break the denial before and start to accept their identity, they accept the possibility that they may be gay, but not fully embrace it.

d. Identity Acceptance

In this phase the individual already accepted who they are as a gay and he will start to make a friend with people with the similarity like him. Some of them might think that being gay or bisexual is acceptable, and they might begin coming out to a few trusted individuals for example family or close friends.

e. Identity Pride

In this phase the individual which has accepted his new identity will have the pride of his sexual orientation and they sometimes start coming out to others by making their sexual orientation publicly known.

Identity Synthesis

In this phase the individual's sexual orientation is integrated into their whole identity. The individual will feel equally comfortable in straight and LGBT environments.



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C. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research was a qualitative research as Patton explained that "qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life and its methods which (in general) generate words rather than numbers, as data for analysis"(3). Qualitative research had many methods to be conducted. In this research, the researcher used content analysis. Berelson stated content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications" (74). Furthermore, Fraenkel and Wellen defined content analysis as a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications.

2. Data and Data Source

The data were from the dialogues between characters and narration from the narrator of this novel that contained femininity and phases of identity development of Dante. The data source of this research was a novel written by Benjamin Alire Sáenz entitled Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe which published in 2012.

Research Instrument

Fraenkel and Wallen classified research instrument into "the one who provides the data, the method of data collection, and the one who collect the data and what kind of response they require from the subjects" (142). Hence, the key instrument of this qualitative research was the researcher herself, because the researcher was the one who collect the data to conduct this research.

4. Data Collection

There were several steps to obtain the data required for this research. First, the researchers read the novel repeatedly and then took notes focused on the Dante's femininity traits and identity development of homosexuality. After that the researcher sorted and organized the data that related to Dante's femininity and identity development of homosexuality.

5. Data Analysis

In conducting the research, the researchers used content analysis approach in gathering and analyzing the data. There were some methods that were usually used in content analysis; one of the methods was by using coding as aids in organizing content and arriving at a narrative description of findings. In this research, the researcher used coding to make it easier to categorize and analyze the data (Fraenkel, and Wallen 480). In gathering and analyzing the data, the researchers used the coding method to develop her theme of research in order to facilitate her research synthesis as follow.

Table 3.1

The Coding of Femininity Characteristics

NO FEMININITY CHARACTERISTICS	CODE
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1.	Affectionate	AFF
2.	Cheerful	СНЕ
3.	Childlike	СНІ
4.	Compassionate	СОМ
5.	Does not use harsh language	DHL
6.	Eager to soothe hurt feelings	ESH
7.	Feminine	FEM
8.	Flatterable	FLA
9.	Gentle	GEN
10.	Gullible	GUL
11.	Love children	LOV
12.	Loyal	LOY
13.	Sensitive to the needs of others	SEN
14.	Shy	SHY
15.	Soft spoken	SOF
16.	Sympathetic	SYM
17.	Tender	TEN
18.	Understanding	UND
19.	Warm	WAR
20.	Yielding	YIE

Table 3.2
The Coding of Phases of Identity Development

NO	PHASES OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT	CODE
1.	Identity Confusion	IDCON
2.	Identity Comparison	IDCOM
3.	Identity Tolerance	IDT
4.	Identity Acceptance	IDA
5.	Identity Pride	IDP
6.	Identity Synthesis	IDS

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Femininity Characteristics in Dante's Character

Dante's feminine characteristics based on Bem are found in the *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of Universe* novel. From twenty of femininity characteristics by Bem, Dante has sixteen characteristics of femininity, they are: affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, feminine, flatterable, gentle, gullible, sensitive of the need of others, loyal, soft spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding. Some example of Dante's feminine characteristics would be described below.

a. Affectionate



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Affectionate is defined as an individual's enactment or expression of feelings of closeness, care and fondness for another. Thus, affectionate is the enactment of behaviors (examples: hugging, kissing, and saying "I love you") that portrays or enacts feelings of affection (Mikkelson, 46).

P41L6AFF3

Quotation of Ari's narration about Dante and his family:

They touched a lot. A family of touchers and kissers. Every time Dante entered the house, he kissed his mom and dad on the cheek or they kissed him—as if all that kissing was perfectly normal (Alire, 41).

Ari often visited Dante's house and he observed Dante's family. In Ari's eyes, Dante's family was so interesting because they were different from his family or other family in general. Based on the narration above, Ari describes Dante's family as "A family of touchers and kissers" as if it explains how often they kissed and touched each other. From those actions Dante and his parents show their closeness as a family. It is suitable with Mikkelson's statement about the qualities owned by affectionate person who is showing affection through actions such as hugging and kissing.

b. Cheerful

Cheerful characteristics are marked by someone who is being optimistic about the future, coping with life's ups and downs in a healthy way, looking at the bright side when something bad happens, having a good sense of humor, noticing and appreciating beauty, friendliness and politeness (Ackerman).

P51L6CHE3

Quotation from Ari's narration:

I laughed. I got to thinking that one of my jobs in the world was to laugh at Dante's jokes. Only Dante didn't really say things to be funny. He was just being himself (Alire, 51).

Dante made a joke about a dog and Ari laughed after he was hearing it. From the data above, Ari describes Dante as someone who makes him laugh a lot. His utterance "I got thinking that one of my jobs in the world was to laugh at Dante's jokes" shows that Dante often makes jokes. Dante's jokes make Ari laugh from time to time. Ari would not laugh so often if Dante does not have good sense of humor as he said "Dante didn't really say things to be funny" which shows that Dante is effortlessly funny without pretend to be.

c. Childlike

The word childlike is explained as a positive and pertains to qualities associated with a child such as innocence, trust, charm and beauty. As an example the qualities of pure heart, cannot tell a lie and full of energy in a person can be called as a childlike (Room).

P50L8CHI2

Quotation of Ari's narration:

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He had this thing about telling the truth. He was as bad as my dad. Except my dad kept the truth to himself. And Dante believed you had to tell the truth in words. Out loud (Alire, 50)

Ari was describing the difference between Dante and his father. From Ari's narration above, Dante is described as someone who believes that telling the truth is a must. Ari's utterance "...Dante believed you had to tell the truth in words" shows that Dante is an honest person. An honest person will hardly tell a lie, because he used to tell the truth. Dante fulfills the quality of childlike according to Ackerman which is honest person who cannot tell a lie.

d. Compassionate

Compassionate person are described by Underwood as follows: (a) choosing freely to give of self for the benefit of the other; (b) some degree of cognitive understanding of the situation of the other and of oneself; (c) valuing the other at a fundamental level; (d) openness and receptivity, leaving space for receptivity to the divine if relevant; and (e) response of the heart, the integrative core of one's being (282).

P71L2COM1

Quotation of the conversation between Dante and Ari:

"You haven't been going to the pool." He sounded mad

"I've been in bed. I caught the flu. Mostly I've been sleeping, having really bad dreams, and eating chicken soup."

"Fever"

"Yeah"

"Night sweats?"

"Yeah."

"Bad stuff," he said. "What were your dreams about?"

"I can't talk about them."

That seemed okay with him.

(Alire, 71)

Ari made a promised to go to the pool with Dante, but he broke it and Dante got upset. However, the situation changes when Ari explains that he is sick. Dante starts to worry him and asked him questions. He forgets about his disappointment toward Ari and worrying Ari instead. Ari's narration "That seemed okay with him" show that Dante does not mad anymore. Dante understands Ari's situation that makes him cannot keep his promise. He tolerates it and also he asks Ari's condition. This is suitable with Underwood's explanation about compassionate people which they understand the situation of the other people and give the other the response of the heart.

e. Feminine

Feminine characteristics refer to qualities that include the appearance, behavior and practices conventionally attributed to women.

P32L16FEM1

Quotation from Ari's narration:



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...his long hair that he didn't like to comb **P144L8FEM2**

Quotation from Ari's narration:

Dante's hands were bigger than my mother's. And softer. (Alire, 32)

From Ari description above shows the appearance of Dante as someone who has long hair and soft hands. In addition, Ari compares Dante's hands with his mother rather than his father and he also says that Dante's hands are softer than his mother's. As we know that long hair as well as soft hands is usually the traits that commonly is found in girls. Boys rarely have long hair and soft hands are also something that rarely used to describe them.

Gullible

Gullible people often blind belief in people which sometimes can override common sense making them easy marks for those who take advantages. They are also making excuses for those who have proven untrustworthy, easily forgiving others, and being overly accepting of the faults of others (Ackerman and Puglisi 252).

P334L1GUL1

Quotation of the conversation between Ari and Dante:

"I think Daniel's a piece of shit."

"He's not. He's nice. He's good-looking."

"He's good looking? How shallow is that? He's piece of shit, Dante. He just left you there." "Daniel doesn't care about you."

"He's scared."

(Alire, 334)

Dante and his partner, Daniel, were kissing at the alley and a group of boys were trying to chase them both, Daniel left Dante behind. Dante did not run and he was attacked by them. He finally ended at hospital with serious injured. Daniel did not even show up when Dante was in the hospital. Despite what Daniel did to him, Dante still defends and make excuses for him when Ari blames Daniel. Dante protects Daniel by saying he is a nice person and he does not leave Dante because he want to but because he is scared. Everything that Dante did to defend Daniel shows that Dante is a gullible person, as Ackerman and Puglisi said gullible person makes excuses for someone who proven untrustworthy.

g. Yielding

A yielding person has behaviors such as following orders immediately, feeling relief not be the one making the tough decisions, respecting order, obeying rules and being easily cowed (Ackerman and Puglisi 346).

P127L12YIE4

Ouotation of the conversation between Ari and Dante:

"My mom says I have to go to a counselor."

"Yeah she said something like that."

"Are you gonna go?"

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"I'm not going anywhere."

"Your mom and my mom, they talked."

"Bet they did. So are you gonna go?"

"When Mom thinks something is a good idea, there's no escape. It's best to go along quietly."

(Alire, 127)

In the event above, Ari's mom and Dante's mom suggested both of them to go to the counselor after the accident that happened to them. Their mom worried of their psychology especially Dante's mom. From the data above, unlike Ari who strongly refuses their mom's idea, Dante says he would go because his mom said so. He obeys what his mother told him to do as he said "...there's no escape. It's best to go along quietly". From his utterance Dante shows that he is obedient to his mother. It is suitable with the Ackerman and Puglisi's statement that yielding person is following orders and obeying the rules.

2. Dante's Identity Development as a Homosexual

Dante followed the phases of identity development based on Cass theory. From the six phases, he followed four phases which are identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance and identity acceptance. Some examples of Dante's identity developments would be described below.

a. Identity Confusion

Identity confusion is the first step where in this phase there will be a big question in one individual about his/her identity. Some people may deny what they feel and try to date the opposite sex like normal people do.

P175L19IDCON1

Quotation of Dante's letter to Ari:

Somehow, I found myself talking to this girl. Her name is Emma and she's smart and nice and beautiful...she leans into me and kisses me. I guess you could say **I kissed her back**. She tasted like a mint and cigarettes and it was , well, Ari, it was nice...

I'm still thinking about that kiss.

She gave me her number. **I'm not sure about all this.** (Alire, 175)

Dante met a girl named Emma when he moved out to Chicago. At first, just like teenagers in their age where they start to date, Dante was curious about what it feels like to date a girl. He tried to get close with Emma. However, Dante's utterance "I'm not sure about all of this" shows that Dante faces the confusion. He describes Emma as a perfect girl who every boy would love to date and he has the chance to be close with Emma. The other boys probably would not let go the opportunity that Dante's got but rather he is still confuse about his feeling.

b. Identity Comparison

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In identity comparison, Cass pointed out some main events: start to aware although with a doubt about his/her identity, feelings of isolation and alienation, and a feeling of being left out of place or difference.

P88L3IDCOM1

Quotation of Dante's conversation with Ari about him being the outsider:

"...and I don't, I don't belong anywhere. That's the problem"

"...Do you think it will always be this way?"

"I mean, when do we start feeling like the world belongs to us?" (Alire, 88)

Based on the data above, Dante states that he "...don't belong anywhere" which shows that Dante feel he cannot fit in with the society where he lives in, somehow it makes him lonely. From his utterance "...when do we start feeling like the world belongs to us?" shows that Dante feel the alienation from the society he keep asking when he can fit in. He wonders when the world belongs to people like him. Dante is in the identity of comparison phase. He follows the indicator of identity comparison which is feeling of being left out of place and difference.

Identity Tolerance

In the identity tolerance, Cass explained that the individual breaks the denial before and starts to accept their identity. They accept the possibility that they may be a homosexual, but not fully embrace it. They might fall in love with a man, but considerate this as an isolated situation.

P151L1IDT1

Conversation between Dante and Ari

"I love swimming—and you."

I didn't say anything.

"Swimming and you, Ari. Those are the things I love the most."

"You shouldn't say that," I said

"It's true."

"Dante, I don't—"

"You don't have to say anything. I know that we're different. We're not the same."

(Alire, 151)

Dante confessed to Ari that he loved him. Ari was flustered after hearing that from Dante. From this utterance "I love swimming-and you" above, Dante shows that he falls in love with Ari. He loves Ari more that a friend. He tries to confess his feeling although he knows that Ari is straight and he is not going to love him back. It is suitable with the Cass explanation that when in the phase of tolerance the individual may fall in love with a man.



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d. Identity Acceptance

In identity acceptance, Cass explained that the individual already accepted his identity as a homosexual and he will start to make a friend with people with the similarity like him. Some may also start to open up about their identity to the few trusted individuals like a family or closed friend.

P227L19IDA1

Quotation of Dante's letter to Ari:

I guess I'm just going to tell my dad. I have this little speech. It starts something like this."Dad, I have something to say to you. I like boys. Don't hate me. Please don't hate me. I mean Dad, you're a boy too."... Look, I just want to know that I don't want you to feel like you have to be my friend when I get back. I'm not exactly best-friend material, am I?" (Alire, 227)

Dante told Ari about his plan to tell his father about his identity. Based on the data above, it shows that Dante is already sure about his identity and he implicitly tells Ari his identity through his letter by saying the scenario if he tells his father the truth. Dante's utterance "I just want to know that I don't want you feel like you have to be my friend when I get back" shows that Dante anticipates the situation whether Ari will hate him and will not be friend with him after know his identity as a homosexual.

CONCLUSIONS

First, from the findings it reveals that the character of Dante has sixteen of twenty femininity characteristics which are affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, feminine, gentle, gullible, sensitive of the needs of others, loyal, soft spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm, and yielding. Second, Dante fulfilled four out of six phases from identity development to a homosexual, those phases are: 1) identity confusion, 2) identity comparison, 3) identity tolerance and 4) identity acceptance.

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