

**RESISTING HETERONORMATIVITY: BOURDIEUSIAN READING  
OF THE QUEER IN FIVE SELECTED INDONESIAN NOVELS**

**A THESIS**

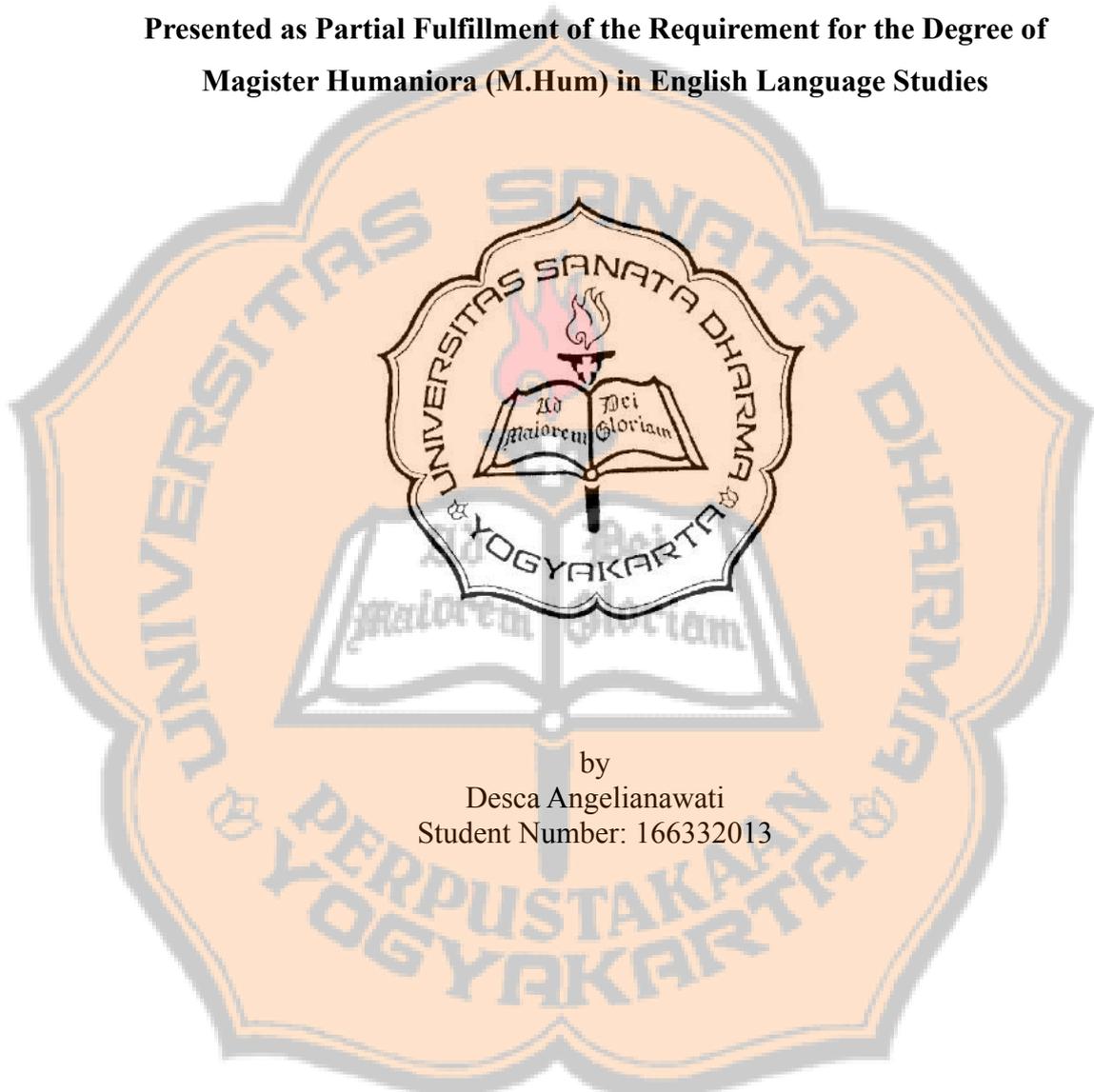
**Presented as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement to Obtain the Magister  
Humaniora (M. Hum.) in English Language Studies**



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by  
Desca Angelianawati  
Student Number: 166332013

**THE GRADUATE PROGRAMME OF  
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES  
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY  
YOGYAKARTA  
2018**

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Thesis Advisor

  
Yogyakarta, 3 August 2018

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MOTTO

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.

And in everything you do, do it with love.”

(1 Cor 16:13-14)

### STATEMENT OF WORK ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that all ideas, phrases, sentences, unless otherwise stated, are the ideas, and sentences of the thesis writer. The writer understands the full consequences including degree cancellation if he took somebody else's ideas, phrases, or sentences without proper references

Yogyakarta, 3 August 2018



Desca Angelianawati



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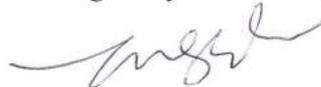
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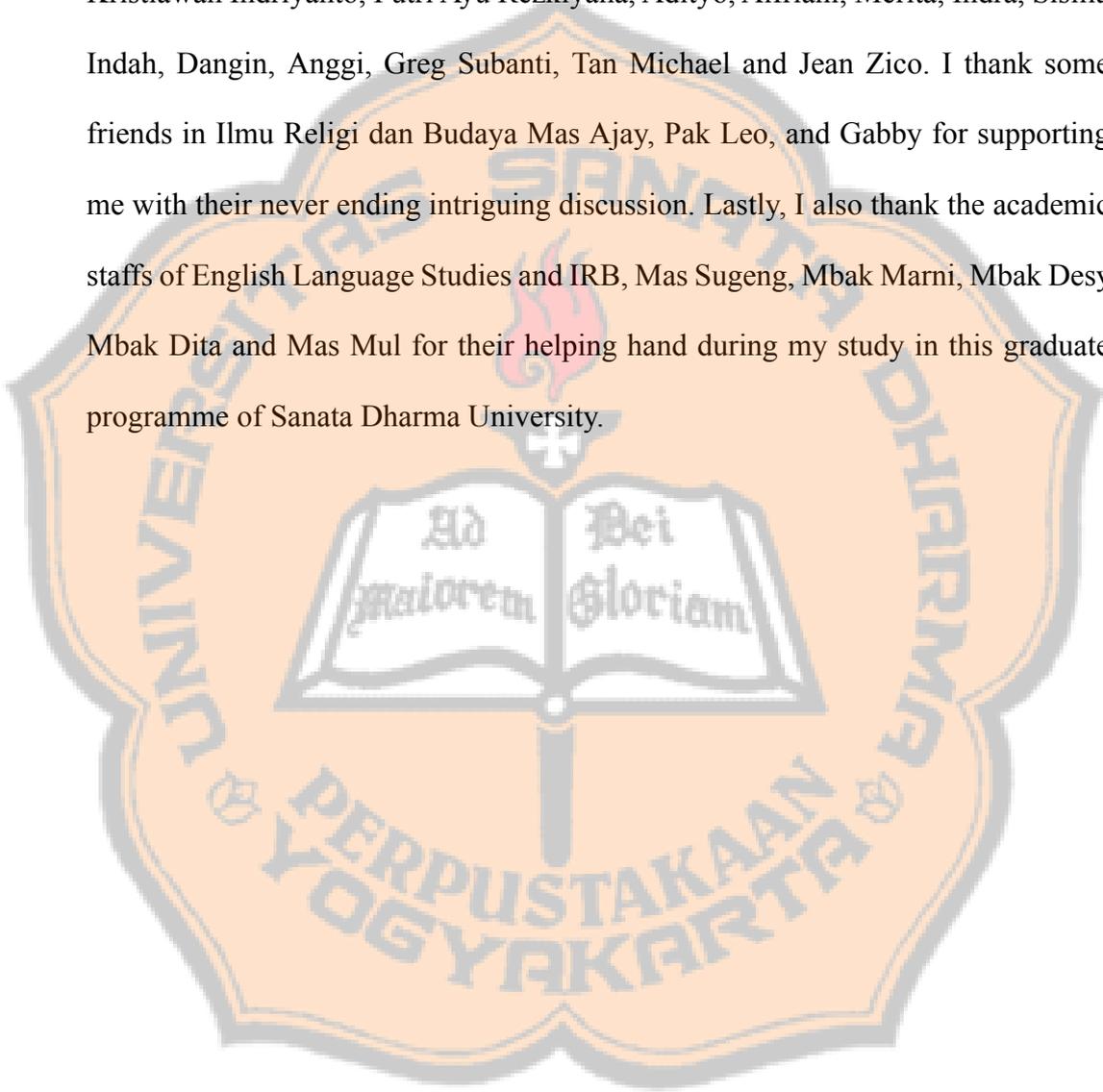
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“If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge? We shouldn’t marginalise people for this. They must be integrated into society.”

- Pope Francis

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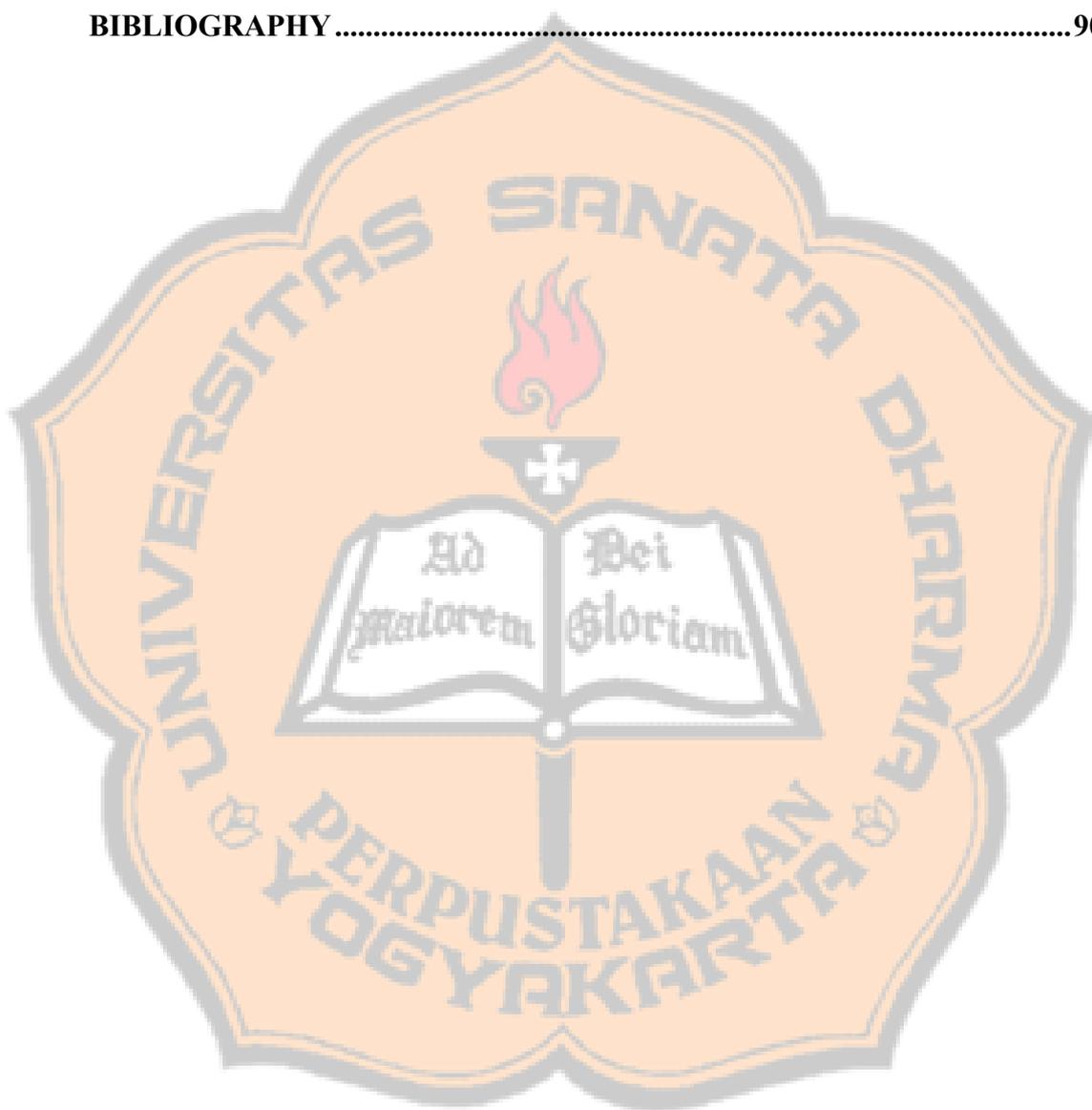
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## ABSTRACT

Desca Angelianawati. 2018, *Resisting Heteronormativity: Bourdieusian Reading of the Queer in Five Selected Indonesian Novels*. Yogyakarta: English Language Studies, Graduate Programme. Sanata Dharma University.

This study analyses symbolic violence through the gay and lesbian characters in the five selected Indonesian novels: *Nayla* written by Djenar Mahesa Ayu (2005), *Lelaki Terindah* written by Andrei Aksana (2004), *The Knight, the Princess and the Falling Stars* written by Dee Lestari (2011), *Saman* written by Ayu Utami (2015) and *Fly Tonight* written by Mario Bastian (2016). As Indonesia is a conservative country, especially concerning sexual preferences, this phenomenon is socially binding as restriction of identity construction.

There are also two main problems discussed in this study. First, it examines how the symbolic violence operates in the five novel studied. Secondly, it attempts to find out how these five-selected Indonesian novels resist the hetero-normativity in Indonesia.

The theories used are theory of gender and concepts of symbolic violence. Theory of gender as a social construction will form a point of departure to analyse how gender both masculinity and femininity and its fluidity is constructed in these novels. The concept about symbolic violence is used in this study to analyse how the fluidity of gender is at the same time constrained and brought back to hetero-normative masculinities and femininities. Therefore, this thesis aims to explore how the selected Indonesian novels challenges the heteronormativity in Indonesian society. It also enriches the discussion in Indonesian LGBTQ-themed literature in academic forum. As most of the theories used in this thesis are related to gender; gender discourse analysis is applied as the method. Discourse analysis is used to study how these narrative devices construct specific discourses about symbolic violence shown in these novels. It also shows how these novels resist the heteronormativity in Indonesia.

The study's findings are as follows. Firstly, several characters' childhood experiences are pivotal in shaping their homosexuality as a manifestation of symbolic violence. This thesis argues that the lack of emotional connectedness, the absence of father figure, and the dominancy of mother figure lead the characters to embrace homosexuality by their own volition. The second major point of this thesis underlines the circulation of LGBTQ-themed novels in Indonesia. Their existance highlights the resistance towards heteronormativity in Indonesia. This resistance manifests when the LGBTQ characters of the novels still embrace their sexual preference in the end of the story.

**Keywords:** symbolic violence, Indonesian novels, heteronormativity, gay, lesbian

### **ABSTRAK**

Desca Angelianawati. 2018, *Resisting Heteronormativity: Bourdieusian Reading of the Queer in Five Selected Indonesian Novels*. Yogyakarta: Pasca Sarjana Kajian Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Sanata Dharma

Tesis ini membahas kekerasan simbolik yang dialami oleh karakter gay dan lesbian dalam lima novel Indonesia pilihan. Novel-novel tersebut adalah *Nayla* karangan Djenar Mahesa Ayu (2005), *Lelaki Terindah* karya Andrei Aksana (2004), *The Knight, the Princess and the Falling Stars* hasil karya Dee Lestari (2011), *Saman* karangan Ayu Utami (2015) and *Fly Tonight* karangan Mario Bastian (2016). Kenyataan bahwa Indonesia merupakan negara yang masih konserfatif menyangkut pilihan seksualitas seseorang menyebabkan bahasan terkait seksualitas hanya terbatas pada hubungan heteroseksual antara lelaki dan perempuan. Fenomena tersebut secara tidak langsung telah menjadi ikatan seksual yang berfungsi sebagai konstruksi identitas di Indonesia. Bentuk konstruksi semacam ini dapat dikatakan sebagai kekerasan simbolik yang tersirat dalam beberapa karya sastra Indonesia.

Tesis ini menitikberatkan dua pokok bahasan. Pertama, menganalisa bagaimana kekerasan simbolik ini beroperasi pada lima novel Indonesia pilihan. Hal kedua yang menjadi pokok bahasan dalam tesis ini adalah keberadaan kelima novel pilihan ini sebagai bentuk perlawanan terhadap masyarakat Indonesia yang masih heteronormatif.

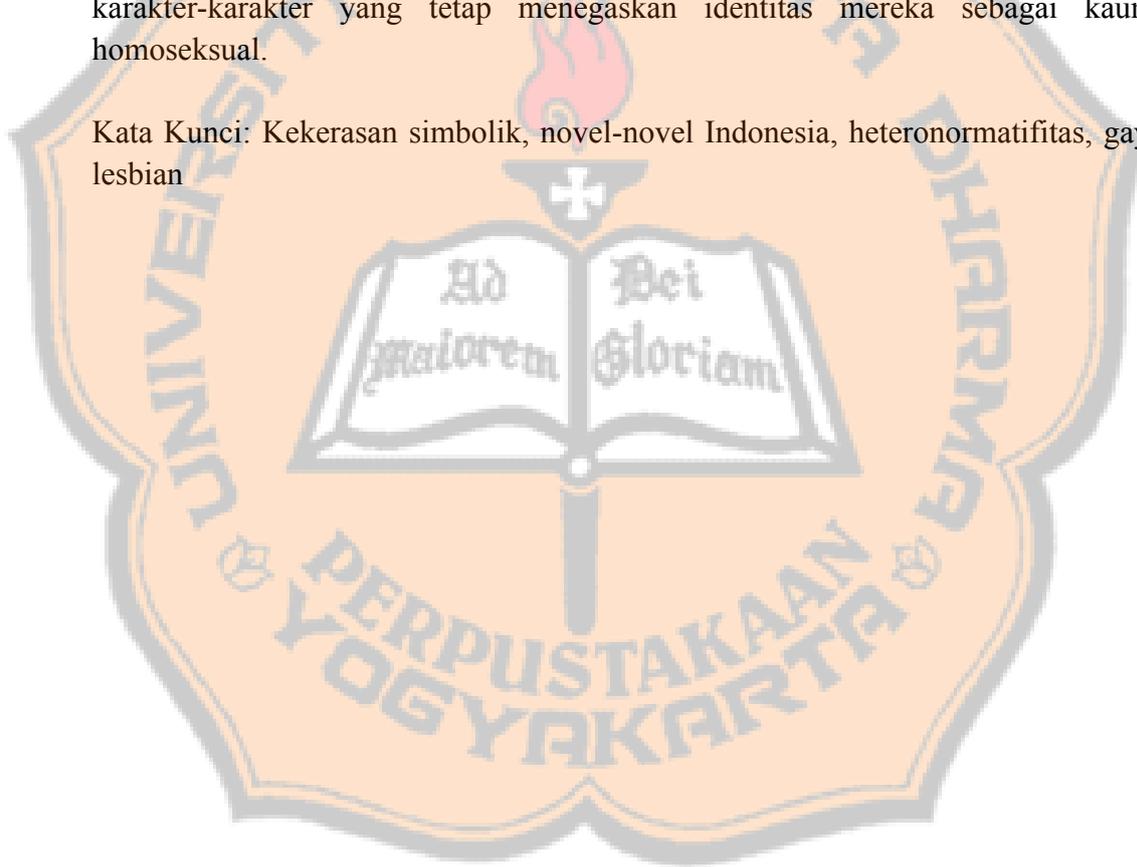
Penelitian kepustakaan, analisa naratif dan analisa wacana kritis merupakan tiga metode yang digunakan dalam tesis ini. Penelitian kepustakaan berguna untuk mengkontekstualisasi gambaran maskulinitas dan femininitas dalam novel. Analisa naratif bertujuan memaparkan bagaimana karakter homoseksual dan lesbian yang akan dianalisa tersebut digambarkan melalui teknik penceritaan. Sementara itu, analisa wacana kritis digunakan untuk menganalisa bagaimana suatu kalimat dalam novel dapat dikategorikan sebagai kekerasan simbolik. Pendekatan tersebut juga digunakan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana novel-novel pilihan dalam tesis ini mampu menunjukkan resistensinya.

Teori yang digunakan dalam tesis ini adalah teori gender dan konsep-konsep kekerasan simbolik yang diutarakan oleh Pierre Bourdieu. Teori gender sebagai konstruksi sosial menjadi kerangka teoritis untuk mencermati konstruksi femininitas dan maskulinitas dalam novel. Sebagai tambahan, teori Queer juga diterapkan untuk menganalisa diskusi mengenai karakter-karakter LGBTQ dalam novel-novel tersebut. Konsep kekerasan simbolik yang dipakai di tesis ini menjadi kerangka teoritis untuk menganalisa bagaimana pembahasan ketidakstabilan dalam gender itu membatasi dan membawa kembali dalam lingkup hubungan heteronormatifitas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini berujuan memaparkan bagaimana

novel-novel LGBTQ Indonesia sebagai objek studi tesis ini memaparkan perlawanan mereka terhadap heteronormativitas di masyarakat Indonesia. Penelitian ini juga dapat memperkaya pembahasan-pembahasan terkait sastra Indonesia bertemakan LGBTQ dalam forum akademis.

Penelitian ini menghasilkan beberapa kesimpulan. Pertama, pengalaman masa kecil beberapa karakter terutama kurangnya kedekatan emosional terhadap figur ayah dan terlalu dominannya keberadaan ibu menjadi penyebab karakter-karakter dalam cerita memilih untuk menjadi seorang homoseksual. Heteronormatifitas di Indonesia yang mengekang kebebasan seksualitas dapat pula diartikan sebagai sebuah manifestasi dari kekerasan simbolik. Kesimpulan kedua, keberadaan novel-novel bertemakan LGBTQ di Indonesia menjadi salah satu bentuk perlawanan terhadap heteronormatifitas di Indonesia melalui penggambaran karakter-karakter yang tetap menegaskan identitas mereka sebagai kaum homoseksual.

Kata Kunci: Kekerasan simbolik, novel-novel Indonesia, heteronormatifitas, gay, lesbian



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

Discourse about gender has been deployed for many years as gender is unstable and unfixed, hence socially constructed.<sup>1</sup> Gender basically is a social construction presented and challenged by the feminist, sociologist, and also philosophers.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, society and culture create the gender roles and these roles are stated to be an appropriate behaviour for one of a specific sex. Some experts like Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler argue that the differences in behaving on both sexes, either male or female are caused by the social conventions. Therefore, as stated by Butler, gender is 'not only a constructed identity but also a performative accomplishment with social audience.' In her opinion, the performance of sex, gender and sexuality is related to the power in society.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, she explains on how society determine one's obligation to perform as an individual in the society. Butler's assertion underlines that speaking of gender is inseparable with how this term itself is constructed with power relation as framing.

In the frame of power relation, Bourdieu explores the imbalance of power between male and female relationship. The gender inequality provides him with a rich example of the *paradox of doxa* which later will be explained in the other section of this study. In this matter, he states on the role of institution in reproducing gender inequality. He mentions that the masculine domination is anchored in the social practises and in

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<sup>1</sup> Lisa Diamond & Molly Butterworth, "Questioning gender and sexual identity over time to time." *Sex Roles: A Journal for Research* Vol. 59: (2008), p. 365-375.

<sup>2</sup> Linda Lindsey, "The sociology of gender," *Gender roles: a sociological perspective*. (MA: Pearson, 2010), p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge Classic, 1990), p.176.

unconscious way.<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu's notion on the male domination supports Butler's gender performativity in which the discussion of gender cannot be separated from the frame of power relation which mostly is masculine domination or patriarchal system.

To better illustrate the complexity of gender construction, this study specifically focuses on how this issue is contextualized in Indonesian society through analysis of several Indonesian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) novels. Over period of time, the Indonesian society will likely recognise only two genders that are male and female. However, the gender discussion in Indonesia have moved from linking normative gender with discussion about family and heterosexuality to marginalise another sexual minority that is homosexuality.<sup>5</sup> The rigid adherence of the dichotomy between male and female likely causes a negative portrayal and stigma towards the Indonesian LGBTQ actors including *banci* or *waria* in the society or in the media especially television.<sup>6</sup> Diamond and Butterworth argue that gender and sexual identity do not always go in line with the categories that are men and women or straight and gay.<sup>7</sup> In addition, they say that the perception of sexuality itself is just an extension of other perceptions of one's gender. An example is if one wants to be acknowledged as a lesbian, one would have to be acknowledged first as a woman; if one wants to come out as a gay man, he would have to become a man first.

The rigidity of gender construction in Indonesia, as aforementioned illustrates is inseparable with the heteronormativity in Indonesian society. Concerning discussion of heteronormativity, the terms of heteronormativity is a belief in which people separate

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<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*. (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), p.5.

<sup>5</sup> Evelyn Blackwood, *Regulation of Sexuality in Indonesian Discourse: Normative Gender, Criminal Law, and Shifting Strategies of Control*. (Indiana: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue Univ., 2007), p. 215

<sup>6</sup> Desca Angelianawati & Leonie Schmidt, "Discourses of Homosexuality on the Indonesian Television," *Hiski Seminar Nasional Prosiding*, (Yogyakarta: Komisariat HISKI Sanata Dharma University, 2017), p. 24-28.

<sup>7</sup> Lisa Diamond & Molly Butterworth, "Questioning gender and sexual identity over time to time." *Sex Roles: A Journal for Research* Vol. 59: (2008), p. 365-375.

gender into two: male and female including their natural roles in life. It later will settle an unspoken rule stating that the acceptable sexual and marital relations are between people of opposite sex.<sup>8</sup> This concept is likely applied in the Indonesian society in which most people will see that the acceptable relationship is between male and female.

In addition to accommodate several distinctive sexual characteristics beside straight and gay, the terminology “queer” is established to cover a wide range of concept related to these characteristics. As stated by Giffney, “queer is an umbrella term for those not only deemed sexually deviant, but also used to describe those who feel marginalized as a result of standard social practices.”<sup>9</sup> This term is also often used to refer those individuals who question their sexual identity. In this study, the term queer is used interchangeably with lesbian and homosexuality in referring to a specific gender portrayed in the novels.

Returning toward the question of gender performativity and the perception of sexuality, these are related with Bourdieu’s argument on the symbolic violence. Bourdieu defines the symbolic violence as extension of the term ‘violence’ represented in other forms of violence.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the production of text and meaning in cultural product also represents the symbolic violence; for instance, in conversation, advertisement, film, and others. The Indonesian example of symbolic violence is when one talks about sexuality in the mass media or novel, one will likely associate homosexuality as a disease although the documents written by World Health Organisation (WHO) have taken out homosexuality as the disease.<sup>11</sup> The idea that man

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<sup>8</sup> Harris J White. *A Dictionary of Social Work and Social Care*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.355.

<sup>9</sup> Noreen Giffney, “Denormalising queer theory more than (simply) gay and lesbian studies. *Feminist Theory*,” *Journals Sagepub*, (Dublin: University of Dublin, 2004), p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Bourdieu. *Language and Symbolic Power* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press., 2003), p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Cochran, “Proposed declassification of disease categories related to sexual orientation in the International Classification of diseases and related health problem,” in *Bulletin of World Health Organisation*- Geneva, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017.)

will have to remain masculine to stay as a man has come out as a result in those long debates related to homosexuality.

Similar situation is reflected also in some Indonesian literary works discussed in this study: *Nayla* (N) written by Djenar Mahesa Ayu (2005), *Lelaki Terindah* (LT) simply translated as *The Beautiful Man* written by Andrei Aksana (2004), *Kesatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh* (KPB) translated in English as *The Knight, the Princess and the Falling Stars* written by Dee Lestari (2011), *Saman* (S) written by Ayu Utami (2015) and *Fly Tonight* (FT) written by Mario Bastian (2016). These novels are abbreviated in review of literature and the discussion of this study as mentioned previously.

These five selected Indonesian novels along with other novels or short stories with LGBTQ theme that are not mentioned in this study do not only enrich the Indonesian literature but also represent what people may see in nowadays everyday life related to gay and lesbian. Their stories are catered with LGBTQ issues in mind, they circulate their stories around the sexual preference, the identity crisis, self-denial, and also the forbidden love between the same sex people. Through their depiction of LGBTQ themes and characters, the selected writers illustrate the condition especially the hardship faced by LGBTQ community in Indonesia.

To ease the discussion, what follows is a brief précis of each novel. The first novel analysed in the study is Andre Aksana's *LT* published by Gramedia, one of the major publication houses in Indonesia. The novel starts with Rafky, the male character of the novel who wants "Aku," somebody he knows to write his love story. Unlike a normal love story between male and female, Rafky falls in love with Valent, a "feminine" man whom he encounters in the plane to Bangkok. Rafky finally realises a new perspective in his sexual identity during his Bangkok holiday. After a long battle with himself, he

finally embraces his sexual identity as a homosexual man. However, the love between Valent and Rafky will have to face many obstacles from the people around them and the society. It is because their love is considered as something deviant. The love story ends up with the death of Valent and the rejection from Rafky's family. In order to express the love to his deceased boyfriend, Rafky then tells the narrator named "Aku" to help him writing a story about his same-sex love story with Valent. After rejecting Rafky's request several times, Aku finally agrees to write the story. Aku finally falls in love with Rafky but he decides to leave him in the end.

Similar to Andre Aksana, Dewi Lestari alias Dee Lestari's *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh* also portrays Dimas and Reuben, two Indonesian homosexual men who met in America. In the story, Dimas and Reuben discover their sexual preference after ten years living in the US. They then embracing their sexuality by becoming a gay couple and move to South Jakarta. They later come out with an idea to write a book inspired by the fairy tales they often hear during the childhood.

The knight in Dewi Lestari's novel is represented with Ferre or Re, a young executive who fell in love with a magazine reporter he met by chance named Rana who represents Dee's princess. Rana is married to Arwin and it complicates her love triangle with Re. Then there is Supernova, a Cyber Avatar of the story who always advices people including Arwin and Rana. Their relationship started to get complicated until Rana decides to leave Re. She prefers to return and reconcile with her husband Arwin, leaving Re heartbroken and down. Re's condition makes Dee's shooting star, represented in the character of Diva, worried. Diva is dangerously pretty, smart and independent. She makes money by providing a "service" to men in the pleasure department. Diva herself who finally helps Ferre in transforming to be a real knight. After she is done with it, she decided to leave Ferre and travel around the world. In the

end of the story, Dimas and Reuben, the male narrators of the story lay together and expressing their love to each other while admiring the work written during their partnership.

Different to the previous authors, Djenar Mahesa Ayu and Ayu Utami take a lesbian as their female character in their novel. For Djenar Mahesa Ayu, she tells a story about Nayla, the heroine of the story. Her mother abuses her during childhood and her mother's boyfriend takes away her virginity by force when she was only nine years old. In the story, whenever Nayla's mother is enraged, she will always physically and mentally abuse Nayla. Nayla then tries to find her father only to know that he is married to another lady. His father's new wife finally puts her in the rehabilitation centre assuming that Nayla is addicted to drugs. She then escapes from the rehabilitation centre and works in a club where she meets Juli, a DJ in that club and a lesbian. They then become a lesbian partner after building a strong connectedness from meeting intensively at work. Juli becomes Nayla's role model and a replacement of a mother figure she never possesses. After leaving for a while with Juli, Nayla starts to meet many people and it leads her to meet the writer community. Nayla later starts to write and send her writings to the publisher. One of her writings finally is recognised by a publisher and she becomes a famous author. By the end of the story, her mother can only read her short stories in agony.

Ayu Utami's *Saman* also portrays a lesbian character as one of her heroines. *Saman* tells a story between its feisty female protagonists and the male leader Athanasius Wisanggeni alias Saman. Those female protagonists, i.e. Laila, Shakuntala, Cok and Yasmin have been friends since their childhood and possess their own love story. Yasmin is a lawyer and married to somebody she does not really love. Cok is a type of *femme fatale* who will keep changing her male partners. Laila is a photographer

who demonstrates a worrying naivety from falling in love with a married man, Sihar. Shakuntala is one who comes from a traditional family with a dominant father. It leads her to a point in which she perceives men with cheap and low appreciation. She then lives and studies in the US that offers her a chance and more freedom for embracing her sexuality. There, Shakuntala decides to become a lesbian and rejects male's existence in her life. It was later Shakuntala who teaches Laila to pleasure herself before giving her virginity to Sihar.

The story of Ayu Utami's *Saman* starts when Wisanggeni dedicates himself as a Catholic pastor. He wants to be stationed in his hometown, a small region of Prabumulih, South Sumatera. He does not have the permit to do the service in his hometown but he is allowed to pay a visit during the holiday. He then visits his old family house where he recalls the traumatic childhood experience. During his stay, Wis hears the voice of a young lady asking for a help from the wood close by. Wis then helps the lady and finds out that she was Upi. The people in that village think that Upi is psychologically unstable. She is tied in a prisoner's stocks by her family which is no better than a sheep stall. Wis is sad and he decides to make her a new better place for Upi to stay.

Wis also helps the local people to fight against the big palm tree plantation company who wants to buy the area of the rubber plantation there. This big company then kidnaps the female and children then places them in a mosque. They later burn the village and put the blame on Wis. They also kidnap Wis in a small hut where Wis is forced to confess that he is responsible for the incident and is a sympathiser of a pro-Indonesian communist party, PKI. Those people later burn the hut where Wis is kidnapped, leaving Wis with a serious injury. Wis was taken to the hospital and later is

taken care of by the Catholic sisters. Since then, he changes his identity from Wisanggeni to Saman.

His meeting with the four heroines aforementioned (in the previous paragraph) is also an interesting part of the novel. Laila who at first falls in love with Wis alias Saman finally has a change of heart to a married man named Sihar. She later follows Sihar to the United States even-though she knows that Sihar only sees her as a mistress. Through Laila, Saman can finally meet Yasmin, Cok, and Shakuntala. However, following the incident and his kidnapping, it is unsafe for Saman to live in Indonesia. Therefore, Cok and Yasmin helped him to leave for the United States. This later build a connection with Yasmin and Saman. Before leaving Indonesia, Saman and Yasmin commit themselves into a virtual affair by exchanging adulterous emails.

Meanwhile, the only self-published novel studied is Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight*. It tells a story about a flight attendant named Boy who commits himself into a relationship with his Captain John. Captain John does not acknowledge his same-sex relationship with Boy in public. It drives Boy to be in another relationship with the airline mechanic, Zion. Captain John cannot take Boy and Zion's relationship easily. Three of them later were involved into a complicated same-sex relationship. The story ends up by Captain John loses his sanity and Boy's love affair with Zion.

The five novels are chosen because they are considered as ones that raise and voice the issues about LGBTQ shown through their gay and lesbian characters and encompass those which are published by major publishing house or self-published one. This point will enable a comparison between both types which can help people to understand what kind of masculinities, femininities, and sexual relationship "allowed" to be published by the larger publishing houses. As four of them are published in big publishing companies and one of them is self-published, by comparing them, it is hoped

that this thesis can illustrate the difference in censorship. Different with major publishing company, the self published one with LGBTQ-themed is scarce. Another reason is that the selection of the novels incorporates both female and male writers. It will allow the investigation on the homosexuality from male and female authors' perspectives on LGBTQ emerged that may differ from one and another. Furthermore, although all novels articulate their resistance towards the Indonesian homophobic society, not all of them expresses it openly by embracing the character's homosexuality. Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla*, for example, is more concerned with challenging the patriarchal system and affirming Adrienne Rich's lesbian continuum, this story ended with Nayla, the titular character's return into conformity by becoming a heterosexual person.

Commonly, the majority of Indonesian people consider heterosexual orientation as something normal as in male-and-female relation that will often be seen as a norm in Eastern societies. Similar with the situation in most Eastern countries, heterosexual relationship is the common practice in Indonesia. It is thus uncommon to accept easily people who has partners of the same sex. The Indonesian society will focus on the relation between men and women through imbalanced power caused by patriarchy. As Mansour says, it is apparent when women are likely seen as subordinate and those gay and lesbians are considered as a 'second-class citizen.'<sup>12</sup> Just as homosexual practices are not an accepted norm in mainstream Indonesian society, so is the same perspective represented in literature. Indonesian novels with LGBTQ themes often end with the gay and lesbian characters being 'normalised' to each role as a man and woman. The right of each human to claim his/her own rights including sexual preference has become the main issue in these five-selected Indonesian novels. One

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<sup>12</sup> Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial*. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar: 1998), p.28 .

should possess his/her own right in picking his/her sexual preferences and live with one s/he loves.

Normalisation of sexual preference only between male and female and marginalisation of LGBTQ community can be seen as a form of symbolic violence as addressed by Bourdieu. Symbolic violence is fundamentally the imposition of unrealised power, thought and perception between the dominant and the dominated. Moreover, symbolic violence manifests in such a concealed way so that the agent being exercised is unaware to his/her rights being violated. Bourdieu has this to say on symbolic violence:

Symbolic violence is the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity.<sup>13</sup>

Through propagation in the form of cultural media such as literature, sexual preference is constrained only among the aforementioned genders. Although it is subtle, this restriction of sexual preferences into the normalized one is one example of symbolic violence. In order to escape harassment and segregation from society, LGBTQ actors have to conceal their sexual preferences. This issue is challenged by the concept of hetero-normativity, which states that the dichotomy between masculinity–femininity and male–female is socially constructed and binding. Analysing the existence of symbolic violence and how hetero-normativity challenges this phenomenon is the emphasis of this thesis.

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<sup>13</sup> Pierre Bourdieu. *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 121

## **B. Problem Formulation**

Referring to the background of the study, there are two questions to answer in this study being:

1. How does symbolic violence against the queer operate in *Nayla*, *Lelaki Terindah*, *Kesatria*, *Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*, *Saman*, *Fly Tonight*?
2. How do these five novels resist the heteronormativity in Indonesia?

## **C. Benefit of the Study**

This study is expected to give benefits to those who want to conduct the study on the same areas. This study is hoped to enrich the academic discussion on how the discourse about homosexuality enriches the Indonesian literature. It is also expected that this study will contribute towards understanding on how homosexuality is constructed in the Indonesian literary works. Hence, there are both practical and theoretical benefits from this research. Theoretically, this thesis is expected to enrich the discussion on homosexuality in Indonesia academically, especially as the topic is still relatively unexplored. Practically, the study of several Indonesian homosexual novels is expected to increase the prominence of Indonesian queer literature, and assert that Indonesian queer literature are also worth studying in academic field.

## **D. Thesis Outline**

This thesis is arranged systematically into five chapters. The first chapter mainly illustrates the background of the study regarding LGBTQ in Indonesia and how it is narrated through several novels. After contextualizing the background of the study, problem formulation and the justification of the study is provided. Furthermore, the first chapter also consist of the thesis outline to illustrate the organisation of this thesis.

Chapter Two is divided into two main sections, review of related studies and review

of related theories. Review of related studies focuses on reviewing several previous studies regarding homosexuality in general, especially Indonesian LGBTQ-themed novels and symbolic violence. By reviewing the articles that focusing on these aforementioned studies, this thesis locates how this study is positioned among the plethora of scholars that focused on LGBTQ issues. Moving into review of related theories, this thesis summarises several concepts regarding homosexuality, heteronormativity, and symbolic violence as coined by Bourdieu.

Chapter Three analyses the manifestation of symbolic violence in the five-selected LGBTQ novels. It also covers the formation of habitus since the childhood and how heteronormativity in Indonesian society hinders the freedom of LGBTQ in Indonesia is the main discussion of this chapter. The fourth chapter examines the resistance toward Indonesian heteronormativity into two main arguments. Firstly, how the LGBTQ novels is able to be published in the still-intolerant-Indonesian society and circulated freely can be interpreted as a form of resistance. Secondly, the novels themselves assert the freedom of sexual preference in how the characters still embrace their sexual preference, either as gay or lesbian.

The last chapter, Chapter Five is the conclusion. This chapter summarises the discussions from previous chapters especially the analysis as conducted in Chapter Three and Four. Besides ending the discussion by presenting the conclusion, this chapter also provides some suggestions for future researchers to better explore the issue of homosexuality especially in Indonesian literature.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## A. Review of Related Studies

The issue of homosexuality has attracted major attention from various angles. In Indonesia particularly, the recent studies regarding the representation of homosexuality in Indonesia have contributed to the growing body of academic work that is concerned with gender relation and focus on realities of women. Several notable examples are Blackwood's research entitled *Regulation of Sexuality in Indonesian Discourse* and Udasmono's work on symbolic violence in everyday narration of the gender construction in Indonesia and sexualities in Indonesia (e.g. gay, lesbian, *waria*, *banci*, and *bissu*).<sup>14</sup>

Sexuality as a discourse in Indonesia focuses on the notion about masculinity – femininity and marriage. The first review on this section concerns about the realities of women and also the discussion about heterosexual masculinities. Several researchers discuss homosexuality from the angle that likely intersect and interact with the discourses of family, marriage, community, mass media and religion. One study by Paramaditha has contested Indonesian nationalism and masculinity in the cinema. She analyses one of the most powerful films in the New Order regime in Indonesia- Arifin C. Noer's 1985 movie *Pengkhianatan G30s/PKI* or the 30<sup>th</sup> September Movement Treason/PKI, 1984) as her subject.<sup>15</sup> The film portrays a general's daughter who admires a portrait of her father in his military uniform. She tells her mother that she

<sup>14</sup> See Evelyn Blackwood, *Regulation of Sexuality in Indonesian Discourse: Normative Gender, Criminal Law, and Shifting Strategies of Control*, pp. 293-207.; Wening Udasmono. Symbolic Violence in Everyday Narrations: Gender Construction in Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Social Science and Humanities (AJSSH)* Vol. 2 No. 3 August (2013); pp. 155-165

<sup>15</sup> Intan Paramaditha, "Tracing the White Ink: the Maternal Body in Indonesian Women's Writing." *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 2,( 2007), pp. 67-94

wants to have the same star emblem on her chest. Her mother then replies her while putting her husband's uniform into the closet that she has to work hard for it. However, the scene of the movie establishes the ideal manhood in Indonesian society especially in the Indonesian military in which the general becomes the heroic one both for his daughter and the public. Paramaditha's study here shows that the notion about gender in the movie is relatively still restricted in the discussion between male and female.

Meanwhile, Clark and Hoesterey analyse gender from different perspective as they analyse it through pop culture. They argue that pop culture has become an important area in which Muslim in contemporary Indonesian pop culture has constituted and contested the ideas about Islam, piety and also gender. They examine and try to find the representations of masculinities in recent Indonesian popular culture focusing on the 'pop Islam' film.<sup>16</sup> This finding argues that popularity and controversy in the pop Islamic film is closely related to the rising phenomenon of Islamisation and also provides an understanding of what Muslim masculinity should and can be in the Indonesian contemporary pop culture.

Clark and Hoesterey's analysis of gender from the pop culture in Islam perspectives is insightful to this study because Indonesia is well known as the largest country with predominated Muslim population in the world.<sup>17</sup> However, the fact that every Indonesian citizen is suggested to embrace one's belief to be written in their ID card, makes the discourses about sexuality especially homosexuality will normally also intersect and interact with religious discourse. Therefore, Clark and Hoesterey's finding in how the pop Islamic film is related to the ascend of Islamisation and also Muslim

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<sup>16</sup> James Hoesterey and Marshal Clark, "Film Islami: Gender, Piety and Pop Culture in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review*, No. 31, (2013), pp. 207-226

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

masculinity can be used to support this study in a way that the discourses of sexuality will circle around the patriarchal culture that the Islam carries.

In addition, enriching the discussion about sexuality in Indonesia from different perspectives, Tom Boellstorf and Dede Oetomo are two figures who provide beneficial contribution to the discussion about homosexuality in Indonesia. Tom Boellstorff through his book *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia* (2005), examines the history of homosexuality in Indonesia. He also gives an example on how gay and lesbian identities are lived in everyday Indonesian life. He then explores the roles of mass media, the state, and marriage in gay and lesbian identities.<sup>18</sup> *The Gay Archipelago* in short, tells how the Indonesian gay and lesbian identities are shaped by nationalism and globalisation. The book explains further that the process of identifying the Indonesian gay and lesbian depend on the perspectives of the people in certain area. Therefore, the people in Indonesia who are reportedly very well-known for their spirit of nationalism as well as their patriarchal culture, will likely consider homosexuality as some kinds of sickness and deviation. It confirms Boellstorff's remarks being "gay and lesbi love does not get one a national belonging because the heteronormativity lies in the heart of national love."<sup>19</sup>

Boellstorff also analyses how this low-portrayal of Indonesian gay and lesbian are represented in other media such as television which worsen the image of Indonesian LGBTQ community. He explored the roles of mass media, the state and marriage in gay and lesbian identities. His further explanation about these things are restated clearly in his other book *A Coincidence of Desire: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia* (2007) which explores the intersection between anthropology and queer studies.

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<sup>18</sup> Tom Boellstorf, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Tom Boellstorf, *The gay archipelago: sexuality and nation in Indonesia*, p. 107

Through case studies, Boellstorf expands the themes he explores in *The Gay Archipelago* (2005) focuses on the discussion about the ethnographic research on Indonesian gay, *waria* and lesbian identities and cultures.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, Dede Oetomo, an Indonesian figure that has come 'out of the closet,' has contributed a significant idea also to the recent discussion about homosexuality in Indonesia. His book, *Memberi Suara Kepada yang Bisu* (2001) or simply translated as *Giving the Voice to Those who cannot Speak* [My translation here and elsewhere] tells his story during his time in the U.S. During that period of time, the LGBTQ movement for equality rights in his campus has inspired him. Therefore, he decided to come out to the public and declared that he was gay. He also observes that the portrayal of any sexual behaviour outside a male and female relationship is marked as sick and deviant. This finding is still relevant in contemporary period when homosexuality in Indonesia is associated with disease, mental illness and also criminality.<sup>21</sup>

As comparison of homosexuality, Ben Murtagh analyses the reception of homosexuality in Asian literature, especially that of Indonesia and Thailand. Murtagh analysis of the portrayal of homosexuality in Andre Aksana's novel *Lelaki Terindah* articulates the discussion and formulates the portrayal of homosexuality in Jakarta and Bangkok from a gay male perspective. His study also explores the ideas of non-heteronormative sexuality as they presented to the novel. The findings of this study point out the fact that in Indonesia, homosexuality is still considered as something uncommon because it is rejected by the society. Therefore, to Indonesian gay male,

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<sup>20</sup> Tom Boellstorf, *A coincidence of Desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press., 2007)

<sup>21</sup> Dede Oetomo, *Giving the Voice to Those who cannot Speak* (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2001).

Thailand is considered as the paradise of gays.<sup>22</sup> Another reason uttered by Martin as stated in Murtaugh's is the fact that particularly in Indonesia, the majority of Indonesian is not economically able to travel abroad. Therefore, any connections with non-local culture will be through mass media that normally portrays homosexuality as something unacceptable according to the Indonesian heteronormativity.<sup>23</sup>

Focusing on homosexuality in Indonesian literature, Ben Murtagh elaborates this issue in yet another study on the novel/film entitled *Coklat Stroberi: an Indonesian Romance in Three Flavours*. His study pays attention to the ambivalences and it explores how deep is one's understanding to homosexuality is by analysing the transformation of the film into the genre of novel and pop video. The study also focuses on an apparent mismatch in the filmic imagination of gay characters and the reality of gay lives as they lived in Indonesia today. Murtagh's study finds out that the novel *Coklat Stroberi* mismatches the reality and the mass media representation of gay subjectivities in Indonesia.<sup>24</sup> Gay men are not only being shown as the representatives of the higher socioeconomic classes but also points out the fact on how Indonesian gay men live their daily life. Through Ben Murtaugh's portrayal of the Indonesian sexuality, one can see that the notion of homosexuality is still suppressed in the Indonesian heteronormative society.

Although studies of homosexuality especially in Asian Literature are quite common, still scant studies that related this issue with symbolic violence. Especially

<sup>22</sup> Ben Murtagh, "Beautiful Men in Jakarta and Bangkok: The Pressure to Conform in a Recent Indonesian Novel," (2007), pp. 281-299 *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23750841.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A6ea0bda7bf7d57df663cfd27fd70fbcc>

<sup>23</sup> Ben Murtagh, "Beautiful Men in Jakarta and Bangkok: The Pressure to Conform in a Recent Indonesian Novel," p.284.

<sup>24</sup> Ben Murtagh, "Coklat Stroberi: an Indonesian Novel in Three Flavours," (2010), pp 219-243. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23750937.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Afa6e6a7f9dec9b1c23e5f17ba9fadb4e>

regarding symbolic violence in the Indonesian media with LGBTQ themes, it is still fully unexplored, with the exception of some existing studies. Some researchers deal with the analysis of symbolic violence in film shown by the findings of Marshall Clark, Udasmoro, Karim, Farlina are the examples.<sup>25</sup>

To begin with Marshall Clark, he criticises Khrisna Sen's argument saying that the majority of genres in Indonesian films are dominated with the discussion about the dominance of men that has been portrayed as a 'norm' in the media and Indonesian pop culture. Taking the film *Kuldesak* as an example, he breaks Sen's argument and finds out that there is symbolic violence operated through the so-called gay character in the movie. He asserts that the gay character will have to be portrayed as what the Indonesian norm is stated. Clarks provides an example on the recognition of Yanto, a gay character in the film that his homosexuality is deviant. In order to escape harassment from the homophobic youth he has to abandon his urban life in Jakarta and return to his family. Yanto's rejection of his sexuality is one subtle example of how symbolic violence operates in *Kuldesak*. Clark's articles however, attempts to suggest the changing image of men and masculinities in recent Indonesian popular culture is not a new phenomenon. Therefore, his ideas written in his research paper challenge and subvert the dominant hegemonic patterns of manliness.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See Marshall Clark, "Men, Masculinities and Symbolic Violence in Recent Indonesian Cinema. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Feb., 2004), pp. 113-131. *JSTOR*: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20072559> ; Wening Udasmoro, "Symbolic Violence in Everyday Narrations: Gender Construction in Indonesia," *Asian Journal of Social Science and Humanities (AJSSH)* Vol. 2 No. 3 August 2013. *AJSSH Journal*: [http://www.ajssh.leena-luna.co.jp/AJSSHPDFs/Vol.2\(3\)/AJSSH2013\(2.3-19\).pdf](http://www.ajssh.leena-luna.co.jp/AJSSHPDFs/Vol.2(3)/AJSSH2013(2.3-19).pdf); Jafar Karim, "Wacana Kekerasan Simbolik pada Cerita Wandiu," Bali: Buletin Ilmiah Program Magister Linguistik Universitas Udayana v.22, (2005). *OJS Universitas Udayana*: <https://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/linguistika/article/view/14004> ; Nina Farlina, "Representasi Kekerasan Simbolik Terhadap Perempuan Betawi dalam Novel Kronik Betawi Karya Ratih Kumala." Jakarta: *Dialektika Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia* vol. 3, (2016). *Journal Universitas Islam Negeri*: <http://www.journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/dialektika/article/view/4181/pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Marshall Clark, "Men, Masculinities and Symbolic Violence in Recent Indonesian Cinema," p.133

Different from Clark, Udasmoro analyses the symbolic violence from the gender perspective in the media. She argues that the symbolic violence against the women is delivered through everyday narrations transmitted by the media. Women are the targets of the symbolic violence because women are often positioned as inferior ones. The reason is male dominated culture plays a role in maintenance the power relation in symbolic violence in Indonesia. Therefore, her paper explores how symbolic violence operated through the Indonesian television through language and images.<sup>27</sup>

The discussion on symbolic violence is not only limited to the Indonesian media but also in Indonesian folktale. Karim analyses the discourse of the symbolic violence in a folktale coming from Lakudo, Buton, Sulawesi Tenggara entitled *Wandiudiu*. The folktale narrates a story about a couple mother with two children: La Nturungkeleo and La Mbata-mbata whom they live in poverty. La Mbata-mbata, the younger son, needs to eat a mermaid because he is sick. The mother as she cares for the children tries to find a mermaid to bring home but she never comes home. In the end, it turns out that the mother has changed into a mermaid which is well known by the name Wa Ndiu Ndiu. Karim's analysis mentions that the symbolic violence presents in the narration of the story and also the socio-context.

In the narration of *Wandiudiu* story, the symbolic violence is represented with the relationship between the husband and the wife in Buton patriarchal society. The fact that the mother has sacrificed herself to be a mermaid for the sick son shows the role of women in the society. Through the constitution of role, the man as a husband is portrayed as the dominant and the wife as his subordinate one whose job is to stay at home and taking care of the family.<sup>28</sup> That issue on the gender bias in the study

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<sup>27</sup> Wening Udasmoro, "Symbolic Violence in Everyday Narrations: Gender Construction in Indonesia," p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> Jafar Karim, "Wacana Kekerasan Simbolik pada Cerita *Wandiudiu*," p. 156.

confirms Haryatmoko's remarks on the principal of symbolic violence in which this "type of violence is accepted by both parties: the dominant and the dominated."<sup>29</sup>

Enriching the discussion about symbolic violence in Indonesia, Farlina also does the same analysis about it in a novel. She analyses the representation of Bourdieu's symbolic violence against the women in *Kronik Betawi*, an Indonesian novel written by Ratih Kumala. She argues that the symbolic violence in the novel represents in the character of the heroine, Juleha. Moreover, the symbolic violence in the novel occurs when the traditional *adat* and religion value aligns with the patriarchal system in Indonesia determine the role and the position of Betawi women.

In Farlina's analysis, her argument relies on the fact that most Betawi women cannot does not have any significant contribution in the society and are freely taking part of the public or national matters. She later argues that the women there should be given the same rights as men to develop the area better; therefore, the reconstruction on Betawi women identity is needed.<sup>30</sup> One can see that the oppression towards female and the argument that women should possess equal position to men are the main arguments in Farlina's study. Yet concerning symbolic violence represented in novel, Farlina's analysis on Ratih Kumala's *Kronik Betawi* does not particularly convey LGBTQ theme because the symbolic violence is between male and female. Differently, the five selected novels used in this study embodied LGBTQ theme with LGBTQ characters.

Having discussed the existing studies, this thesis argues that the discussion about symbolic violence in Indonesian homosexual literature is still need to be done. Most studies reviewed above limit themselves into covering the discussion about male and

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<sup>29</sup> Johannes Haryatmoko, "Dominasi Penuh Muslihat: Akar Kekerasan dan Diskriminasi," (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Umum, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Nina Farlina, "Representasi Kekerasan Simbolik Terhadap Perempuan Betawi dalam Novel *Kronik Betawi* Karya Ratih Kumala," p. 75.

female relationship only and none of them discussed symbolic violence. When they do discuss symbolic violence represented in the Indonesian writings, the analysis mainly concerns the issue of gender especially women violation in patriarchal system. They have not discussed Bourdieusian symbolic violence in the scope of Indonesian LGBTQ. As highlighted previously, the study of LGBTQ also mainly focuses on outside literary area such as in film and society. Studies that explore symbolic violence in Indonesian novels with LGBTQ themes remain scarce. Therefore, this study emphasises on examining how symbolic violence operates in the selected Indonesian LGBTQ novels and also how these five selected Indonesian novels resist the heteronormativity in Indonesian society.

## **B. Review of Related Theories**

This study analyses symbolic violence against the queer; therefore, this thesis applies the theory of gender construction and also the concept of symbolic violence. Theory of gender is used because one cannot separate the discussion about homosexuality from the discourses about gender. In addition, to answer the second formulated question on how the five selected LGBTQ-themed novels resist Indonesian heteronormativity, the discussion about resistance will be provided in the next sections. The aims of doing so is to contextualize the notion of gender and queer and to strengthen the argument on the symbolic violence and resistance.

### **1. Gender and Queer Critics**

The idea about gender as not a biological matter but rather socially constructed is a view presented in the philosophical and sociological theories. Some experts such as Butler, Jagose, Clark-Ibanez, West and Zimmermann also argue that the differences in behaviour between male and female are influenced by the social condition where they

live in.<sup>31</sup>

However, the term ‘gender’ is adopted in order to distinguish male and female in biological and social term. West and Zimmerman argues that it is a feature of the social situation.<sup>32</sup> The categories of this distinction will later lead ones to the discourse about femininity and masculinity.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Clark-Ibanez also states that each gender is not given a choice to decide their own identity in the society.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, Diamond and Butterworth have interviewed some people and found out that gender and sexual identity is fluid.<sup>35</sup> It means that those two categories do not always deal with two main categories as one being male or female nor also gay or straight. These kinds of discussion will later lead to gender performativity and gender performance that are uttered by Judith Butler. Butler argues that gender performance means that one will have to take on a role while gender performativity means that it has to produces a series of effect like the way one acts, walks or speaks.<sup>36</sup> Hence, she concludes that gender is basically performed.

The fluidity of sexual preferences results in discussion about LGBT which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and is used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual. People later adds the letter Q for those who are questioning their sexual identity or queer. The new term LGBTQ is recorded since 1996.<sup>37</sup> Since then, the term queer is added to accommodate those who are still uncertain about their sexual identity

<sup>31</sup> See Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Candace West and Don Zimmerman, *Doing gender. Gender and Society vol. 1* (California: Thousand Oaks, 1978); and Annamarie Jagose, *Queer theory: an introduction* (New York: New York University Press., 1997).

<sup>32</sup> Candace West and Don Zimmerman, *Doing Gender, Gender and Society vol. 1*, pp. 125-131

<sup>33</sup> Sarah Fenstermaker and Candace West, *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power and Institutional Change* ( New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 3-26.

<sup>34</sup> Marisol Clark-Ibanez, *Gender inequality: girls and boys together. Lesson in Inequality: a comparative study of two urban school, dissertation*. (California: University of California, 2003), p.63.

<sup>35</sup> Lisa Diamond & Molly Butterworth, “Questioning gender and sexual identity over time to time.” *Sex Roles: A Journal for Research* Vol. 59: (2008), pp. 365-375

<sup>36</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*), pp.176-186.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Shankle, *The handbook of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Public Health: a Practitioner Guide to Service* (PA: Haworth Press, 2006), pp. 8-10

and for the study who specialised on non-heterosexuality.

This term 'queer' used to be slang word for homosexual and was used for the homophobic abuse.<sup>38</sup> The term itself was introduced back in 1990 by Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler and Adrienne Rich following the work of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*. Yet, these feminists believe that recently queer can be an umbrella term not only for those who are considered sexuality deviant but also those who feel marginalised because of the social oppression. In addition, queer is not only associated to gay and lesbian but also to cross-dressing, pansexual and gender ambiguity.<sup>39</sup> One can see that there is also a recognition that queer is also related to the discussion about other factors such as race, class and religion. It confirms Jagose's statement that "queer is a product of specific cultural and theoretical pressures which increasingly structured debate both within and outside the academic discussion about the question of lesbian and gay identity."<sup>40</sup>

Similar situation is also faced by the LGBTQ community in Indonesia. Men and women's sexuality for the majority of Indonesians are relatively seen as God-given attributes that are used to control and maintain the family honour and community order.<sup>41</sup> Yet the discourse on homosexuality in Indonesia is deployed in number of forms that are separated and are part of the state law which includes the discourses of family, marriage, community and religion.<sup>42</sup> In accordance to that, the discussion about homosexuality in Indonesia is likely restricted and is limited.

<sup>38</sup> Annamarie Jagose, *Queer theory: an Introduction* (NY: New York University Press., 1997), pp. 23-52

<sup>39</sup> Noreen Gifney, Noreen. *Denormalising queer theory more than (simply) gay and lesbian studies. Feminist Theory* (Dublin: University of Dublin, 2004), p.73.

<sup>40</sup> Annamarie Jagose, *Queer theory: an Introduction*, p.32

<sup>41</sup> Linda Bennet, *Women, Islam and Modernity: Single Women, Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Contemporary Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Evelyn Blackwood, *Regulation of Sexuality in Indonesian Discourse: Normative Gender, Criminal Law, and Shifting Strategies of Control* (Indiana: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue Univ., 2007), p. 215

On the contrary, there are some practices of homosexuality in society which is accepted as something “normal” and is preserved as a tradition. The Indonesian example is the practice of *warok-gemblakan* rituals in East Java. *Waroks* are the Javanese local heroes who perform a traditional art that is Reog Ponorogo. According to the tradition, a *warok* should not have any physical contact including sexual involvement with a woman in order to maintain his “mystical” power. However, a *warok* does not remain completely celibate as he can have sex with boys between the ages of eight and seventeen which is permitted as a substitute. The boy lover is referred as a *gemblak* and is usually kept in *warok*’s household with an agreement of his family. It will include a compensation from the *warok* to the boy’s family such as financial compensation and the family will likely be protected by the *warok*.<sup>43</sup> Later on his life, a *warok* can take a woman as his wife yet he still can keep a *gemblak* as a lover on the side. This kind of phenomenon is still ritualised in Ponorogo, East Java where there are also older *warok* who may still have a *gemblak* lover. Yet this practice of homosexuality is accepted and is likely preserved by the local people there.

Another example of the “accepted” practice of homosexuality is in *pesantren*-Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. Most Indonesians will likely associate *pesantren* with the notions of “devoted religious Islamic community.” Unfortunately, the arrangement in which female will have to live with other female build a *continuum* among the female *santri*. As of male *santri*, the same arrangement allows the hidden practice of homosexuality to start with an activity in which one will satisfy his sexual desire when the victim is asleep.<sup>44</sup> There is no sexual intercourse involved in this practice but the doer will sleep next to the victim and swiping his intimate organ

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<sup>43</sup> Josko Petkovic, Josko. Dede Utomo Talks on Reyog Ponorogo. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific Issue 2, May 1999*. Republished in 2008. (*Intersection*, intersections.anu.edu.au/issue2/Oetomo.html)

<sup>44</sup> Syarifuddin, Mairil, *Sepenggal Kisah Biru di Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: P\_Idea, 2005), p.25.

towards that victim until he is ejaculated. The victim will normally realise that he is being molested by other *santri*. Therefore, this practice is called as *nyempet*, an activity of *menyerempet*, simply translated as stumble over. Meanwhile, *mairil* refers to ones who play a female role, which is likely the victims.<sup>45</sup>

The practice of *mairil* happens in two ways: through an enforcement or based on both parties' interest. It also happens either incidentally or intensively. Incidentally refers to a condition when this practice only happens for once. However, the temporary incidentally relationship sometimes becomes an intensive relationship as both parties—the doer and the victim engage in same-sex relationship in the end. The *santri* normally do it when they are in the age of 13-17.<sup>46</sup> The *santri*, both female or male know that it is forbidden to have a same-sex practices like *nyempet*, unfortunately the condition in which female *santri* have restricted relationship with male *santri* often force them to do so. A female *santri* will be punished if she goes out with a male *santri*. Therefore, the fear of being punished flourishes also the practice of *nyempet* and *mairil*.<sup>47</sup>

Some *santris* also think that what they are doing is not a practice of homosexuality as they refer themselves as a straight and “normal” person. This condition is illustrated in the cultural studies research done by Tom Boellstorf in Kediri, East Java.<sup>48</sup> One of Boellstorf's informant recalled an even as follow,

Shall I tell the story? I used to live in the pesantren, from the last year of junior high school through until the end of high school. About four years...it was at that time that I started to understand same-sex relations [*awal mengerti hubungan sejenis*] because I was seduced by my Koranic recitation teacher...I was 19 or 19 years old at that time and he was 25 years old. The first time we were together, I haven't got the feeling [*belum ada rasa*]...When we were sleeping together, he liked to hold me and he's ejaculate...at the beginning, I felt very uncomfortable

<sup>45</sup> Syarifuddin. *Mairil, Sepenggal Kisah Biru di Pesantren* p. 25-30

<sup>46</sup> Yuli Kamiasari, “Gambaran Perilaku Mairil dan Nyempet Santri Terhadap Pencegahan HIV/AIDS di Pondok Pesantren.” *Universitas Diponegoro Journal*, 2001, <http://eprints.undip.ac.id/28622/1/4045.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> Syarifuddin. *Mairil, Sepenggal Kisah Biru di Pesantren* p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> Tom Boellstorf, “The Emerge of Political Homophobia in Indonesia: Masculinity and National Belonging,” *Routledge Ethos Journal*, vol 69:4, (2005). (Doi.org, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0014184042000302308>).

[*risih*]. I did not like feeling the sperm in his sarung...but he started asking me to hold his penis...eventually I started to like it...He had his own room, so we could do it easily. At first, he was only sympathetic [*simpatik*] but eventually there arose desire [*timbul suka-suka*].<sup>49</sup>

Through the study conducted by Boellstorf, one can see that at the point when the sexual relations occurred, his informant still thought that he is not gay and it was normal when a man seduced other men. Through the example, one can assume that there may be an exception in which “normal” guy who commit a homosexual practice will still be considered as a straight one. Meanwhile, one who declares his sexual orientation as a homosexual man will likely be socially or physically punished by the society and the authority when he commits any same-sex practices.

Concerning homosexuality in Indonesia, some scholars, for example Faqih, focuses more in the relation between men and female through examples or evidences of the imbalance of power involved therein.<sup>50</sup> It can be seen from the fact that there are more scholars whose analysis circle around the social inequality between male and female. However, homosexuality itself stands in the unknown area within the society, as the society will have two ways of seeing homosexuality. The traditional way of seeing homosexuality is through the hetero-normativity in which a man should be straight and taking a female as his companion.

Meanwhile, the opposite opinion sees homosexuality as a part of gender that is constructed by the society.<sup>51</sup> However, the systematic pressures regarding the acceptances of queer lead into the difficulties faced by queer to assert their sexual identity. It is hard for LGBT Q to ‘come out’ in the society and openly states their sexual preference.

<sup>49</sup> Tom Boellstorf, “The Emerge of Political Homophobia in Indonesia: Masculinity and National Belonging,” pp. 475-476

<sup>50</sup> Mansour Faqih, *Analisis gender dan transformasi sosial*, pp. 28-35

<sup>51</sup> Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality Vol. 1* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

## 2. Bourdieusian Concept on Symbolic Violence

One can relate the perception of gender sexuality and sexual preference in Indonesia with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence. In understanding the concept of symbolic violence, one should start with the three key concepts of dispositions, habitus, and capital. The discussion about those concepts will also lead one to the notion of paradox of doxa. In order to give an understandable illustration, those concepts will be explained in the following sections.

### a. Disposition

The first key in symbolic violence is disposition. Bourdieu defines dispositions as things that 'generate practices, perceptions and attitudes that are regular without being co-ordinated or governed by any 'rule'. The dispositions are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable. These will later constitute the habitus as they are acquired through a gradual process of inculcation.<sup>52</sup> The childhood experiences are particularly important in this gradual process. Through these processes, one would acquire a set of dispositions which literally form their personality and become their second nature. The dispositions are also structured which means that they reflect the society and the social condition where they are acquired. The structured dispositions are durable because they also embed in a way that they endure through one's life and operate in an unconscious way. These dispositions are also generative and transposable in the sense that they are able to generate a multiplicity of practices and perceptions.

Applying those concepts in Indonesian contexts, disposition is reflected through the stigma about relationship that had been shaped since one is in their childhood. During the juvenile period of Indonesian children, the acceptable relationship is always

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<sup>52</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd, 1991), pp. 12-14

between male and female. Due to this fact, the sexual preference is restricted only to heteronormative relationship. On the contrary, those who are committed into same-sex relationship are considered strange and unnatural. This concept has been brought for years since one's childhood and it will go through a gradual process following the development of an individual. It will later inevitably reflect the condition of Indonesian society in which homosexuality is associated with diseases that need to be treated. The argument that homosexuality is a disease is not readily accountable to be reflected and to be modified. It also confirms Bourdieu's concept on the formation of habitus.

#### **b. Habitus and Capital**

Continuing the discussion into habitus, Bourdieu defines it as, "set of dispositions that generate practice and perceptions within the original meaning in a normal or typical condition, state, or appearance in the body."<sup>53</sup> It can be stated that habitus itself is a system that is formed through a gradual process. As aforementioned, this gradual process started from dispositions that are inculcated and later structured into a system which shapes an individual's perception, behaviour and attitude or known as structuring structures. Moreover, Bourdieu asserts that the nature of habitus is reflected through the social condition within which they were acquired. He illustrates that the differing social class between middle-class and working-class will lead into the different habitus being acquired.<sup>54</sup> Relating it with Indonesian contexts, it should be underlined how the habitus formed in conservative Indonesian society particularly enforces the notion of heteronormativity with strong disdain toward LGBTQ agents.

An Indonesian example is the report stating the increase of homophobic attacks with police raids, crackdowns on LGBTQ activists, and discriminating political rhetoric

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<sup>53</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, pp. 14-16

<sup>54</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, pp. 14-16

since the start of 2016. Several cases such as the two Indonesian homosexual cases in 2017: the public canings of two homosexual men in Aceh and the raiding of a gay sauna in Jakarta and the subsequent arrest of 141 men that drew public attention and worsened the image of Indonesian homosexuality.<sup>55</sup> This condition is different from other countries in Europe, Australia, the U.S or Canada in which homosexuality is celebrated as a part of human right to embrace his or her sexual preference.

Another Asian example of LGBTQ tolerance is the establishing of LGBTQ parade in Taipei held in October 2017. The parade has taken place in the downtown Taipei on Friday, 20 October 2017 and was attended by LGBTQ activists including the Taiwanese celebrity ambassador of the event, the singer A-Lin. The singer has used the news conference to voice her concern about LGBTQ. She also invited the public to show their understanding and tolerance to LGBTQ people. Her speech confirmed the theme of the parade which was: Make Love Not War, Sex Education is the Way to Go. Some other pro-LGBTQ rights supporters such as the singer Emily Guan and and the Japanese diva Misa also announced that they would participate in the parade held in Ketagalan Boulevard around 14:30 HRS Taiwan Local Time. They would also gather in a joint benefit concert at the Rainbow Plaza, Taipei's Ximending area after the parade.<sup>56</sup>

From these two examples, the conclusion is Indonesian perception towards homosexuality is still negative. The fact that the discussion about sexuality, sexual preference and LGBTQ is still regarded as taboo from year to years confirms the argument about Indonesian homosexuality as seen as a disease. It is what also makes

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<sup>55</sup> Liz Dearden, "Sharia court in Indonesia sentences two gay men to 85 lashes each after being caught having sex." An article published on May 17<sup>th</sup>, (2017), *Independent.co.uk*, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/islamic-court-indonesia-gay-men-85-lashes-sex-caught-homosexuality-laws-first-time-khairil-jamal-a7740626.html> )

<sup>56</sup> E. Chang, "Artist to participate in LGBTQ film festival parade." *Bilingual Times article* - Friday, 27 October 2017.

homosexuality as a controversial topic in Indonesia. In the end, through all the perceptions about deviant sexual preference, the punishment for LGBTQ activities is seen as generative practices to normalise those 'sick' and 'deviant.' Such praxis is evident from the homosexual prosecution below.

Regarding the Indonesian case of homosexuality, one can see that there is a different way of objectifying the social structure where an individual is a subject. The result of objectifying social structure at individual subjectivity level in this sense is people's perception about homosexuality, in which habitus is the product. Concerning habitus, Bourdieu puts forward the connection between habitus and the specific social contexts in which the habitus is located. Bourdieu refers this social context as a market or a capital. In his words, particular practices should be seen as the product "of the relation between habitus and the specific social contexts or 'field' within which individual act".<sup>57</sup> He further identifies that the field is not an empty space but instead is consisted by various kind of capitals through his definition of field as "a structured space of position in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distributions of different kinds of resources or capitals."<sup>58</sup> A key tenet in Bourdieusian analysis, subsequent paragraphs will differentiate the variety of capital as it is defined by Bourdieu.

As stated, the discussion about habitus cannot be separated also with its relations to the specific social context in which Bourdieu refers as market or capital. The fields or capital are divided into three aspects which are economic capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. The economic capital is related to the economic resources such as money, assets and property. The social capital covers the resources linked to award and

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<sup>57</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*. pp. 14-16

<sup>58</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*. p. 12

title one may possess. In addition, the cultural capital will involve one's prestige, status and authority.

Among these three, it is the cultural capital and symbolic capital that have a close connection to the discourse about homosexuality in Indonesia. Therefore, the discourse about homosexuality is intricately related to certain factors such as one's understanding, knowledge and level of education to be able to accept homosexuality as sexual preference. Moreover, Bourdieu regards symbolic capital such as prestige and honour as an essential source of power. A symbolic capital holder will likely employ his or her power against the agent who has less power, thereby exercising the symbolic violence.

c. **Doxa and Symbolic Violence**

Previous section has illustrated that the imbalance of power that circulates in capitals can lead into oppression by the exercising of power from the higher capital into the lower one. Even more, the oppression manifested in such subtle way that it might be unrecognized by the oppressed party. Bourdieu calls this oppression as one example of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is the categories of thought and perception on the prevailing agents. This is embedded with the unconscious structures that tend to perpetuate the action done by the dominators. In some ways, the symbolic violence is more powerful than the physical violence. It will also later lead not only into the psychological abuse but also to the physical violence. Therefore, the symbolic violence is an unconscious act and will, in the practical schemes of habitus. It operates because each individual acquires different dispositions towards social games that are considered as the most important ones. This is because the societies are differentiated with the class

Bourdieu defines the symbolic violence as a 'gentle violence that is invisible and imperceptible even to its victims. The symbolic violence also often occurs upon a social

agent with is and her complicity.<sup>59</sup> However, it is an unconscious mode of cultural or social domination that occurs within the social habits over conscious subjects. Symbolic violence includes those actions that have a tendentious meaning or implication like for instance racism. It operates and maintains its effect through the dominator and other subjects that function as the dominated to accept their position in the exchange of the social value happens between them.

The inequality of each individual's status is further highlighted in the structure of symbolic exchanges. At this stage, it is clear that power operates in this discussion about sexuality. In Indonesia, the notion about sexuality has been increasingly challenged with this-so-called marginalised gender like gay, lesbian, or transgender categories, for instance *banci* and *waria*.<sup>60</sup> The terms gay, lesbian or *banci* and *waria* form the gentle and invisible tolerance also. In fact, in Indonesia these terms are considered natural and are not unique anymore as it is considered as what conceived by Bourdieu as a symbolic violence. It is because the heteronormative society recognises only male and female relationship and mark any relationships outside it as something sick and immoral. The symbolic violence occurs when those considered as *banci* and *waria* accept the label as their identity after the heteronormative oppression from the society.

This kind of fixation on gender sexuality affirms Pierre Bourdieu's paradox of doxa because gender is unfix and unstable. Doxa refers to particular truths that are used to cover and 'hide' the universal truths. To illustrate this issue from gender perspective, the rigid adherence of two-sexes; male and female is usually considered as universal truths. Yet in fact, this conception is an example of particular truth, as although this view is held by the religious believers and conservatives, the feminists and LGBTQ

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<sup>59</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 159-181

<sup>60</sup> Tom Boelstorff, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*, p. 89

agents dispute this perception by pointing out the existence of intersex. Bourdieu has this to say:

By what might be called the *paradox of doxa*-the fact that the order of the world as we find it, with its one-way streets and no entry signs, whether literal or figurative, its obligations and its penalties, is broadly respected; that there are not more transgressions and subversions...or, still surprisingly, that the established order, with its relations of domination...ultimately perpetuates itself so easily...and that the most intolerable conditions of existence can so often be perceived as acceptable and even natural.<sup>61</sup>

This doxic acceptance in Indonesia also shows the social functions that are deeply embedded in the relation of power.<sup>62</sup> In the case of Indonesian homosexuality, the authorities such as law state, norms, religious belief and *adat* hold power towards the discourses of homosexuality. One can also see that homosexuality is a social construction of gender sexuality.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Bourdieu suggests that cultural roles are more dominating than the economic forces in determining how the power are situated. Concerning the symbolic violence, the discussion about homosexuality also will intersect with the norm, *adat* and religious belief. It is strengthened also by the depiction of this issue in media. While the Indonesian state and *adat* emphasise on gender normativity, the Indonesian media try to present the stories about homosexuality since the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>64</sup> The fact is that Indonesian media tend to treat homosexuality as a crime or mental illness or disease. In addition, the media portrays the homosexuality in the negative image simply because it is normally associated with free sex, prostitution, promiscuity and criminality.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, creative works such as novels, no matter how they may appear do not

<sup>61</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, pp.1-2

<sup>62</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 121-163

<sup>63</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I*, p. 105

<sup>64</sup> Evelyn Blackwood, *Regulation of Sexuality in Indonesian Discourse: Normative Gender, Criminal Law, and Shifting Strategies of Control.*, p. 215

<sup>65</sup> B.J.D Gayatri, Coming out but remaining hidden: Portrait of lesbian in Java. (Paper presented at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. Mexico: Mexico City, 1993),

only represent the image of a certain people but also provide a social and political relations that can be represented, negotiated and manipulated.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the novels with gay and lesbian characters may represent and be seen in two ways. The first one is to be seen as the rejection of homosexuality to common people. Secondly, it may also be seen also as a possibility to encourage those homosexual men to be 'normal' in the sense that they will have to be heterosexual. By going through the discussion of the images of gay and lesbian through the Indonesian novels discussed in this study, namely: *Nayla* written by Djenar Mahesa Ayu (2005), *Lelaki Terindah* written by Andrei Aksana (2004), *The Knight, the Princess and the Falling Stars* written by Dee Lestari (2011), *Saman* written by Ayu Utami (2015) and *Fly Tonight* written by Mario Bastian (2016), one will be able to see from time to time the depiction of paradox of doxa as a form of symbolic violence and masculine domination. One can also see that there is always an effort to resist this doxic acceptance of this symbolic domination. Subsequently, one can also see that the gender relations in Indonesia have been constructed in terms of symbolic violence by marginalising the gay and lesbians as what depicted in these five selected Indonesian novels.

In short, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence reveals the inequality, which result in oppression by a particular group to other group of people. Relating in with the concept of sexuality, symbolic violence in this case occurs in the form of imposition of sexual preference only between male –female. The restriction of sexual preference is binding as oppressive toward the marginalized group such as the LGBTQ community. To challenge this concept, hetero-normativity reformulates sexual preference, through the terminology of gender performativity. Derives from several feminist concepts, sexuality is related with performativity instead of biological construction. This

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<sup>66</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 24-36

perspective will be employed in this thesis to challenge the symbolic violence in several Indonesian LGBTQ novels.

#### **d. Power and Resistance**

The terminology of ‘power’ has been a debatable issue among the theorists. It is because there is no standardised terminology in sociology to define its meaning and its concepts. However, the most agreeable term that most theorists refer is uttered by Weber. He defines power as, “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will.”<sup>67</sup> Relating with the circulation of power, one is in the position of control and authority and able to subjugate the powerless others.

Some theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault discuss the notion of power in its relation to the society. Foucault has an idea arguing that, “the state is super structural in relation to a whole series of power networks embedded in the body, sexuality, family, kinship, and so on.”<sup>68</sup> Therefore, it also confirms why those theorists have different way of seeing power. It covers their investigation on the nature of power and the areas where power operates. Their differences and similarities in seeing power will be furtherly explained in this section.

It is reasonable to start with Bourdieu’s notion of power. In Bourdieusian concept of symbolic power, one can see how power represents in the social relation. This concept is congenial because practically all social relations or institutions must in some way be considered as connecting power. In Bourdieu’s understanding, one who possesses more power or what he refers as a capital will likely hold the control towards the one with less capital. The violence in his case occurs when both oppressed and being oppressed accept their role in it. This confirms also the fact that Bourdieu’s power can

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<sup>67</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 53.

<sup>68</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power and knowledge* (New York: Random House USA, Inc, 1998).

be used as an instrument of domination by individuals or certain group.

In fact, Bourdieu believes that social personality is created by interactions, thoughts and ideas of other people, both dominant and non-dominant people. As habitus both gives and receives, Bourdieusian practices of resistance is outlined within his explanation between social relations within a habitus:

The specific efficacy of subversive action consists in the power to bring to consciousness and to modify, the categories of thought which help to orient individual and collective practices and in particular the categories through which distributions are perceived and appreciated.<sup>69</sup>

In its accordance, domination is not imposed by a group of individuals upon another but it maintained indirectly through institutions and practices which function with the involvement of the dominated.<sup>70</sup> To simplify it, one can say that Bourdieu's resistance comes within the habitus. Habitus later interacts socially and form a capital. The one with higher capital will possess more power than the one with less capital.

Similarly, Michel Foucault also analyses how power is represented although he has never provided a clear definition of power and its origin. It is because for Foucault, power is a transformative capacity which means an ability of an individual to influence and modify the actions of other individual to reach some goals.<sup>71</sup> He adds,

The exercise of power...is a way in which certain actions modify others...a total structure of actions brought to bear on possible action. The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome<sup>72</sup>

Therefore, Foucauldian power means something that makes change possible. Foucault believes that whether that change will limit or promote human freedom, the power itself can be indeed be used. He gives an example in his book *The History of Sexuality: The Pleasure of Torture* that power can be used for purposes of repression for instance to

<sup>69</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The logic of practice* (California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 140.

<sup>70</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The logic of practice*, p.141

<sup>71</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990)

<sup>72</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power and knowledge* (New York: Random House USA, 1998).

torture.

One can see that in contrast to Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault does not focus on the questions of who possesses the power, how he gets and uses it but he focuses on how the power functions in the society. Power to Michel Foucault is not a commodity but rather be acquired or seized.<sup>73</sup> He adds that power cannot be considered as a possession of certain individual or group which also contradicts Bourdieu's notion in which a disposition is an agent of power. In Michel Foucault's perspectives, the individual itself effects the power and its articulation elements.

In Foucauldian concept of the power relation, Michel Foucault believes that there must be a certain degree of freedom on both who dominate and being dominated. One would have to see the possible ways of resistance such as violent resistance, flight, deception and capable strategies of reversing the situation to see if there is a power relation or not. The key concept in Michel Foucault's power and resistance is the notion that an individual will affect the power itself. In short, Foucault argues that where there is power, there is resistance as well.

Implementing the concepts of power from those two thinkers in the Indonesian context of homosexuality, a Bourdieusian will see the LGBTQ actors as an agent of power. These actors will have their social relation which can be refer as a market or capital. As Indonesian homosexuality are those stigmatised as someone deviant, they would have less power against those religious actors or apparatuses who are against the homosexuality and who want to normalise them. When those LGBTQ actors accept their stigma as sick and deviant, there is no symbolic violence and no resistance occurred. Meanwhile, a Foucauldian will see that the LGBTQ actors are an individual who will affect the power. Their resistance would arise through the oppression they

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<sup>73</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, p. 156

experience although each novel will articulate the character's resistance in a different way. This kind of resistance may be seen as other form of symbolic violence to non-LGBTQ sympathisers. Taking an example of Indonesian heteronormativity, the publication of the novels is a triumph for Indonesian LGBTQ community, yet the novels have to undergo censorship if they are published by the major publishers. This censorship may include the mentioning of one's genitals and also the illicit depiction of intercourse. This illustration will be further explained in the next chapters.

This study will elaborate the notions of resistance from these two thinkers to analyse the type of resistance shown in novels discussed in this study, namely: *Nayla* (N) written by Djenar Mahesa Ayu (2005), *Lelaki Terindah* (LT) written by Andrei Aksana (2004), *Ksatria Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*, simply translated as *The Knight, the Princess and the Falling Stars* (KPB) written by Dee Lestari (2011), *Saman* (S) written by Ayu Utami (2015) and *Fly Tonight* (FT) written by Mario Bastian (2016). As aforementioned, the title of these novels will be abbreviated in the following sections. Further explanation on how these LGBTQ actors resist in the novels will be provided in chapter five. All explanation is supported with the specific parts of the novel which were translated by me as the writer of this study.

### CHAPTER III

#### MANIFESTATION OF SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE IN THE FIVE SELECTED INDONESIAN NOVELS

##### A. The Formation of Habitus through the Characters' Childhood Experiences

There are many assumptions of the cause of homosexuality namely the lack of father or mother's figure and some other cases uttered by the experts. The absence of father figure and emotional lack of father connectedness during the childhood as confirms by Nicolosi are ones of the reasons for a man to become a homosexual.<sup>74</sup> Besides the missing father-figure, the dominancy of female figure is also a major reason. A dominant female figure will likely be hated by her own daughter due to her authoritarian upbringing. This condition will later construct the daughter as an individual who will reject her notion of female and hate her own body.<sup>75</sup> Other possible common reason is the mistrust towards the opposite sex. In this stage, a woman will normally also look for some comfort from other female companion which Rich later confirms as a form of *lesbian continuum*.<sup>76</sup>

Several beliefs on the causes of homosexuality are closely related to Bourdieusian concepts of disposition and habitus. An individual, referred as a disposition will have his or her social circle which is likely affected their way of thinking and behaving. This habit of thinking and behaving generated from the habit one carries since their childhood will later shape their identity. An example in LGBTQ case is when a child lacks of connectedness with one of his or her parents, he or she will likely find the

<sup>74</sup> Nicolosi Joseph, *Reparative counselling of male homosexuality: A new clinical approach*. (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1999). *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.9777&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>75</sup> John Harvey, *Truth about homosexuality: the cry of the faithful*, p. 5

<sup>76</sup> Adrienne Rich, *Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence* (London: Onlywomen Press, 1981).

figure outside the house. Borrowing Rich's term on *lesbian continuum*, a lady will normally seek another shelter from a female friend. This habit in finding more comfortable shelter may also lead this individual to "embrace" other sexual identity.

To illustrate those discourses of cause of homosexuality, this subsection highlights how the characters in five selected Indonesian novels, analysed through Bourdieu's disposition regarding childhood experience forms a habitus in which some of them are oppressed either by the society or their own family.

The first novel being analysed in this study in Andre Aksana's *LT. Valent* as one of the character in the novel has undergo discrimination since his early childhood. His father passed away in an accident when he is two years old. His mother remains unmarried and only takes good care on Valent. Unfortunately, his mother does not think that raising son is different than raising daughter. This cause a pivotal change in Valent's personality, especially when he reaches puberty.

*Melewati usia kanak-kanak, Valent terkejut melihat perkembangan fisiknya. Tubuhnya berubah. Wajahnya berubah. Bahkan suaranya. Ia seperti tidak mengenali tubuhnya sendiri yang selama bertahun-tahun sebelumnya hidup di dalam diri Valent cilik. Ia seperti terkurung dalam hidup seorang lelaki dewasa. [Going through his childhood, Valent was surprised to see his physical development. His body, his face and even his voice have changed. He did not recognise his own body anymore which was trapped in the body of a child. He was trapped in the life of an adult]<sup>77</sup>*

Although the mother has tried and provided the best for him, her presence does not accommodate Valent as a teenager. Valent has many unanswered questions especially regarding his own sexuality: "*mengapa di suatu malam ia terbangun dan mendapati celana dalamnya basah? Mengapa alat kelaminnya selalu mengeras di pagi hari?*" [why does he wake up and finds out that he wets his pant? Why does he have a hard on every morning?.] (*LT*, 55). Since his mother cannot provide the answer he has been

<sup>77</sup> Aksana, Andrei. *Lelaki Terindah* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), p.55.

looking for, he finds himself lacking a father figure.

Living without father makes Valent questioning how it feels to have a father. He is longing for a father's love, affection and embrace. Even more, he also has no male figure in his life, as he has no brother. His desire to have a male figure in his life leads him to wait for that figure, but he is afraid. He tries to hide his yearning over male figure, unfortunately as he is the only heir in the family, his mother keeps pushing him to continue the family line. It is the reason why he dates a girl named Kinan later. This example from *Lelaki Terindah* illustrates two factors, the formation of habitus since the childhood of Valent and also how the society rejects the notion of homosexuality in the assertion of Valent's mother so that Valent will eventually marry and have child of his own.

Other example on how childhood experience that shapes the habitus in symbolic violence can be seen in other character Rafky. During his childhood, Rafky is expected to be and do what men normally do: sports, karate, and dating a girl.

*Perilaku Rafky tidak aneh, Jauh dari penyimpangan. Seperti anak lelaki yang lain, Rafky enerjik dan aktif. Ia selalu suka berolahraga. Ia menyukai semua permainan yang menguras keringat dan tenaga...sejak kecil ia juga rutin latihan beladiri, karate dan taekwondo. [there is nothing wrong with Rafky. He is just normal like any other boys. He loves sport and he loves the games that drain all his energy and make him sweat...since he was a kid, he also does sport: karate and taekwondo.] (LT, 90).*

As the only son in the family, he is expected to continue the family name. Therefore, once he meets Valent in Bangkok and he starts to desire Valent, he keeps questioning his identity as a straight guy. In his opinion, "*Ia (Valent) bukan hanya tampan, Ia cantik*" [He (Valent) is not only good looking (as a man) but also beautiful] (LT, 37). Growing up among his mother and two sisters, Rafky gets used to be surrounded with women, therefore, it is possible that the type of man he desire is the type of the "feminine" man.

Regarding the childhood experience, the dominance of mother and the absence of

male figure, Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla* also depicts these issues. The heroine of the story, Nayla faces similar problem with Valent. She lives only with the mother who keeps changing partners. The bitterness surrounding the absence of the father that left the mother for the younger women leads Nayla's mother to transfer her anger towards Nayla. Every time Nayla wets herself when she was a kid, her mother will punish her:

*Ibu menyalakan pematik lantas membakar peniti yang sudah dipilihnya. Peniti dengan ukuran terkecil tentunya. Dan ketika peniti yang menurut Ibu sudah steril itu ditusukkan ke selangkangannya, ia akan mengapit rapat-rapat kedua pahanya. Terisak. Meronta. Membuat ibu semakin murka. [Mother turns the lighter on and then burns the pin she has chosen: the smallest one of all. And when the pin that she thinks is sterile, she jabbed into her thighs, she will flank her two thighs together: sobbing and wiggling. It makes her mother angrier].<sup>78</sup>*

Despite all the horrible things her mother has done to Nayla, she keeps trying to love her mother in her childhood. Nayla illustrates how, "Saya pernah belajar mencintai perempuan. Mencintai Ibu. Tapi sayangnya, Ibu tak pernah belajar mencintai saya. [I have ever tried to love a woman. To love mum. Unfortunately, mum has never loved me in return]," (N, 5). Her disappointment of experiencing unrequited love eventually lead to enmity and hatred. Yet, Nayla does not understand the real reason behind her mother's cruelty. Her mother considers Nayla's laziness, such as her wetting herself as a betrayal to her generosity in providing Nayla with the finest care. She thinks that by doing so Nayla hurts herself such as her husband. She says,

*...aku ini ibumu, satu-satunya yang bisa kamu andalkan. Kenapa kamu tega menyakitiku seperti ayahmu? Kenapa begitu banyak sifatnya yang menurut padamu? Kenapa tidak ada sedikit saja sifat dan sikapku yang setiap hari kucoba contohkan kepadamu ini kamu jadikan panutan" [I am your mother, the only one you can rely on. Why do you have to hurt me like your father? Why do you resemble him more? Nor even inherit some of my attitude that I try to demonstrate to you as your role model every day] (N, 7).*

Nayla's mother emphasises that if Nayla is lazy, she cannot be independent and always depends on male. She considers that to conquer male, a woman should possess her

<sup>78</sup> Ayu, Djenar Mahesa. *Nayla* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2005), p. 1.

richness in body, mind, and soul. She tries to implement her opinion into Nayla, yet she is unable in doing so.

Although Nayla tries to love her mother, her mother does not love her in return. Due to her Nayla's unrequited love toward her mother, she looks for other shelter outside her house. She finds solace in Juli's character that helps her during the time she faints in a discotheque. Through her interaction with Juli, Nayla's opinion toward male worsen. Juli keeps telling her that male only wants women's body. We can see how Juli has important influence in shaping Nayla's worldview towards man.

Persoalannya...lelaki menciptakan mitos perempuan ideal perempuan ideal adalah perawan. Alat kelamin perempuan yang ideal ada kelebihan cairan dan otot vaginanya kencang [The problem lies in the male's myth about women. To a man, an ideal woman is one who is still virgin. The perfect female genital is one over liquid and a tight genital muscle]. (N, 78).

Based on Juli's counselling, Nayla has low appreciation toward man, eventually she chooses to be Juli's lesbian partner in which Nayla grows her emotional and physical bound. This situation illustrates how women start to have close connection, both emotionally and sexuality toward each other due to their shared enmity toward man. She always confirms, "Lebih baik saya memilih mencintai Juli ketimbang laki-laki yang menginginkan selaput dara saja [I'd rather be with Juli than being with a man who want my hymen]," (N, 6).

The impact for not being able to have the emotional connectedness with the father leads those characters to find a "shelter" from their same-sex friends. As aforementioned, one can look at the example of Nayla-Juli. Nayla finds and feels not only emotionally secured but physically secured when she is surrounded by her female companion which is Juli. It also confirms the notion of *lesbian continuum* coined by Adrienne Rich, in which she states,

Women may have a lesbian potential and that it comes from a desire to allow for the greatest possible variation of female-identified experience, while paying a

different kind of respect to lesbian existence – the traces and knowledge of women who have made their primary and erotic and emotional choices for women.”<sup>79</sup>

Through Rich’s remarks, one can see the example of “woman identifies woman” in which a woman can connect and relate herself to other woman; they can also feel the bond when they share the same situation and share the same emotional connectedness towards one another.

The portrayal of *lesbian continuum* in which women grow togetherness can be seen also in Ayu Utami’s lesbian characters in *Saman* which is Shakuntala. She is portrayed as a Javanese Catholic yet is immoral and a bisexual. When she was young, she realises that she is a bisexual by claiming,

“Sometimes I’m the Ramayana monkey-king Sugriwa, complete with a low guttural growl. Other times I am Cangik, whose slow, sluggish voice somehow seems to suit the flabby skin around her armpits. When I was a teenager I always used to dance as Arjuna in the *wayang orang* and all the girls would idolize me without realizing it, they saw no sign of femininity in me. But I was also Drupadi who ignites the passion of all five Pandawa brother.”<sup>80</sup>

Mentioning some of the Javanese leather puppets characters that are Arjuna whom is an androgyny so people say, the implication is that Shakuntala does not recognise herself as a woman but as a fusion between male and female. She also does not have good emotional bound with her father who sends her away to the remote area. This will later lead her dislike towards men, as she says, “It was 1975, and my father sent me off to a strange new city...I learnt a lot from Hansel and Gretel. They had an evil father too. (S, 113).

Although Shakuntala does not identify herself as a woman, her father’s presence obliges Shakuntala to embrace her womanhood. In other word, her willingness to be a woman does not come within her own conviction as her parents especially her father is

<sup>79</sup> Adrienne Rich, *Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence*, p.73

<sup>80</sup> Ayu Utami, *Saman* (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2015), p. 122.

the one who forced her to do so. Her father is the first person she knows who made a clear description between the functions of boys and girls. He also uses the bible verse to “legitimise” the women’s duties which is “*beranak pinak*” [bearing children], while men *make* the children. She points out:

*Orang tuaku percaya bahwa pria cenderung rasional dan wanita emosional. Karena itu pria akan memimpin dan wanita mengasahi. Pria membangun dan wanita memelihara. Pria membikin anak dan wanita melahirkan...Aku tak pernah dipaksanya untuk hal yang sama, sebab ia percaya pada hakikatnya aku tak mampu (My parents believe that men tend to be rational while women are emotional. Because of that men will lead and women will be the compassionate ones. Men are the ones who develop while women are the caretakers. Men make children and women will nurture them...I have never been forced by him [her father] to do things like my brother because he believes that I am not able to do them. (S, 146)*

As aforementioned, this kind of low appreciation towards men which holds biased and sexist view towards woman leads Shakuntala to experience her lesbian escapades. Her first experience of being bisexual starts with a *pesinden* (Javanese traditional female singer) who has taught her to dance and to sing. She learns about *Serat Centhini*, a classic Javanese manuscript which is likely considered as an erotic manuscript, and experiences her first same-sexual interaction. In the end, she understands that she has the tendency of being a bisexual as she states,

*Ia seorang pesinden. Aku pun datang padanya untuk berguru ...Tapi ia juga membacakan aku Serat Centhini dan menyanyikan keluhan dengan suara duka ...Suatu malam, ketika aku duduk dalam sebuah ruang dan mengagumi dia menyanyi...lelaki dalam diriku muncul dari belakang tubuhku seperti energy yang lepas...Mereka melepas kain masing masing dan berdekatan (“She is a pesinden. Then, I came to her to learn...But she also read me Serat Centhini and sang with a sad voice...One night, when I was sitting in the room and admiring her voice... The male side in my body emerged from the back of my body like a liberated energy...They [the male side of her and the pesinden] took off each other’s kain [traditional clothes] and got close one to another”). (S, 149)*

Being someone who lived in the United States of America, it is a lamentable situation because no one in Indonesian society is likely capable to understand Shakuntala’s sexual desire. It is probably the reason why Ayu Utami takes the U.S as

her setting of place where people are relatively more considerate on one's sexual preference. Therefore, when she meets her Indonesian friends especially Laila, she can relate herself and expresses her love to Laila. Laila herself is a virgin who is ready to give up her virginity to her lover, Sihar.

Based on the analysis of three novels, one can see that childhood experiences play important part of forming those characters to have the same-sex desire. The examples in three novels mentioned in the previous paragraphs do not only indicate the emotionally absent father from Valent, Nayla and Shakuntala's side but also father-son failed relationship in Rafky. Those are the indications for their lesbianism and homosexuality. It confirms Joseph Nicolosi's statement saying that a man is looking for emotional connectedness with his father through homosexual behaviour.<sup>81</sup> The lack of emotional connectedness has a great impact in forming one's sexual orientation. However, those indications as aforementioned cannot be seen in Dewi Lestari's *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh* and Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight*. It is because Dewi Lestari places his homosexual characters as narrators that tell "other people's" story. Meanwhile, Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight* does not state Boy's roots of homosexuality.

Applying those matters in the selected novels in this study to Bourdieusian concept, the lack of emotional bond is the disposition that will form the habitus that are the main characters: Rafky and Valent in Andre Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah*, Laila and Shakuntala in Ayu Utami and Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla and Juli*. One can see that some of the characters such as Rafky and Valent in Andre Aksana's embrace their sexual preference as an LGBTQ actor because of the gradual process they experience through childhood. It is in line with the absence of father as a male figure and lack of emotional connectedness with the father. Moreover, it confirms Bourdieu's concepts on the

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<sup>81</sup> Joseph Nicolosi, *Reparative counselling of male homosexuality: A new clinical approach*, p. 92

gradual process of disposition that later form a habitus. However, the *continuum* between Nayla and Juli in Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla* and the relationship between Shakuntala and Laila in Ayu Utami's *Saman* shows that homosexuality can be "conditioned." This concept illustrates that a female is more likely bond to other female companions when they share same emotional connectedness.

Meanwhile, one can draw a similarity through the homosexual and lesbian characters mentioned in the previous subsection. The emotional cripple they experience as a habitus condition them into somebody who are different from what they are in the beginning. Being a gay and lesbian and share an emotional connectedness with their same-sex partners are their way to survive as an individual.

Continuing the discussion, one can see that a habitus which has more capital will dominate those with less capital. That is where symbolic violence operated. The discussion about symbolic violence will continue in the subsequent sections.

### **B. Heteronormativity as a manifestation of symbolic violence**

As mentioned by Bourdieu in the previous section, power operates in three markets which he refers as capitals. These capitals are economic, cultural and symbolic capitals. The economic capital will cover the economic resources such as money, assets and property. The social capital covers the resources linked to award and title one may have. In addition, the cultural capital involves one's prestige, status and authority. Among these three, it is the cultural capital and symbolic capital that have a close connection to the discourse about homosexuality in Indonesia. The discourse of homosexuality is intertwined with certain factors such as one's understanding, knowledge and level of education which illustrate the still low tolerance towards homosexuality in Indonesia. The symbolic violence happens when ones that possesses bigger capital oppresses ones

with lower capitals, and the ones with lower capitals accept the oppression.

Manifestation of symbolic violence in the five selected novels is the notion of Indonesian heteronormativity that is reflected in the novel. Living in the Indonesian context, the homosexual and lesbian characters in the five selected novels experience oppression from the Indonesian heteronormative society. They cannot embrace their sexual preference as freely as in other countries which acknowledge same-sex relationship. Analysing homosexuality in Indonesia, this phenomenon is intersected with the norms, religion values, state law, *kodrat*, and also patriarchal culture which is already entrenched. Therefore, for a homosexual men or a lesbian, the implementation of this belief about heteronormativity is manifested in some aspects such as self-denial, forbidden same-sex relationship that should be normalised and a discussion about *kodrat*.

Andre Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah* gives an example about the manifestation of forbidden same-sex relationship that should be normalised. The example in the novel is in the part where Rafky realises as a man, he should find a woman as his partner. Therefore, when Rafky finally has a sexual intercourse with Valent, he feels that, "*Rafky merasa jijik dengan dirinya karena bercinta dengan lelaki.*" [Rafky feels ashamed with himself because he makes love to a man] (LT, 87). The guilt that he has later lead them to find a call girl in Bangkok but he still cannot feel the excitement to be with a girl.

*"Rafky memejamkan matanya. Mencoba menikmati sentuhan dan cumbuan gadis itu. Gagal. Ia tidak merasakan apa-apa. Hatinya meronta mencari-cari apa yang salah. Rafky mengerahkan konsentrasinya kuat-kuat. Tapi justru bayangan itu yang berkelebat di sana. Wajah Valent yang tampan. [Rafky tries to close his eyes and enjoy the touch and the kisses given by the girl. Fail. He does not feel anything. His heart suffers trying to look for something that does not seem right. Rafky tries to concentrate but he comes into flash. The face of sweet Valent.] (LT, 123).*

Through the passage, one can see that as a man, Rafky thinks that his same-sex attraction to Valent is forbidden according to his Indonesian heteronormativity belief. In order to normalise himself to be a straight male, he entertains himself with a call girl from Bangkok. Unfortunately, instead of feeling relieved after being with a call girl, Rafky is left out with a question about his sexual preference whom as a metrosexual guy, he barely has any problems in chasing girls. Therefore, when he has his same-sex intercourse with Valent, he feels like somebody is robbing his dignity as a real man. In his opinion, "*Valent telah merebut harga dirinya sebagai lelaki sejati*. [Valent has taken his dignity as a real man away]. (LT, 87).

The stereotype of gender role highlights how Indonesian society still enforce performativity toward male and female. In previous passage, it is seen when both Rafky and Valent must behave as a man. They have to dress like a man and are not allowed to have a male partner. Furthermore, they also have to act and behave like a man also, as a male who is considered as "feminine" is often associated with homosexuality.

An example, Dewi Lestari's homosexual characters: Reuben and Dhimas have addresses this issue of stereotyping. Lestari's *KPB* subverts the depiction of homosexual as feminine and instead strive to illustrate a manly portrayal of homosexuality. It starts when both of the homosexual couple try to discuss what kind of story they want to write and Dhimas tries to mock Reuben with him being too masculine for a homosexual man; Reuben's answer is; "*Sangat 'laki? Siapa bilang jadi gay harus klemak-klemek atau ngomong pakai bahasa bencong*. [so manly? Who tells you that being a gay means being so feminine or talking into trans. language.]<sup>82</sup> Reuben has rejected the notion that a homosexual man should be feminine; therefore, the stereotype of feminine homosexual male is negated.

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<sup>82</sup> Lestari, Dewi. *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh* (Bandung: Cipta Cekas Grafika, 2006), p. 15.

This stereotype on gender is a sign of Bourdieu's paradox of doxa which perpetuates particular truths that are used to cover and 'hide' the universal truth. The stereotype, in his case, one can see that the oppression of the heteronormative society towards the queer as a symbolic violence in which in the Indonesian context, a man should have relationship with a woman. Meanwhile, that kind of notion about heteronormativity confirms Dede Oetomo's statement on those who experience the same-sex desire will be considered as someone "sick" and "deviant".<sup>83</sup> In Mario Bastian's novel *Fly Tonight*, these labels are mentioned several times.

*Lo sakit? Tanya Captain John.* [You are sick, aren't you? Ask Captain John]  
*Ng-nggak, Kep. Saya sehat, saya siap terbang ---?* [No, Capt. I am healthy and I am ready to fly.]  
*Bukan itu," katanya. Captain John memberi tanda kutip "Lo 'sakit'?"* [No (that is not what I mean), he said giving a (braket) sign, "you are "sick"]  
*Nggak..nggak! saya...straight."* [No..no..! I am straight]<sup>84</sup>

The acceptance on the Indonesian sexuality that relatively consider homosexuality as something sick and deviant is also a form of symbolic violence. It embarks with the mark that people with same-sex desire is not normal and sick. This kind of violence causes homosexual men are often afraid to "come out of the closet."

Another effect of this heteronormativity towards the queer is the self-denial. It is the reason why Captain John, another male lead in Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight*, "*tidak mau mengakui kalau dia gay* [does not want to admit that he is a gay], (*FT*, 36). Living in the heteronormative norm with a principle that men should go along with girl, homosexual men or lesbians often doubted their sexual identity by questioning whether it is normal or not. It is reflected in Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight*, in which Captain John, one of the male leaders says; "*Gue nggak tahu...Gue nggak tahu sebenarnya gue pingin siapa* [I do not know...I do not know whom I want]. (*FT*, 100).

<sup>83</sup> Dede Oetomo, *Giving the voice to those who cannot speak*. P.295

<sup>84</sup> Mario Bastian, *Fly Tonight*. (Bandung: MBS Publishing, 2016), p. 17.

To exemplify, the queer characters in the selected novel mostly prefer to hide their same-sex desire and do not let others know about it. One of the characters says; “*Hubungan dengan Captain John adalah rahasia kami...Dia mewanti-wantiku supaya hal ini tidak sampai ke telinga orang lain* [the affair with Captain John is a secret...He warns me not to tell anyone about it] (FT, 38). It is also the reason why homosexual men in Indonesia context rather hide their identity, dating or marry a woman as a “cover” to avoid public prejudice towards homosexuality.

Tackling the issue from another angle, the interaction between Rafky and Valent in Andre Aksana’s *Lelaki Terindah* offers different perspective. One event in the novel, during how both characters try to have a double date with their partner in order to look normal to others, the double date does not succeed and it even lead them into bigger guilt for not admitting their sexual identities. They will have to face their girlfriends and their family who live with the Indonesian norm and have a strong stance against the same-sex relationship. It can be seen by the rejection from both of the families when Rafky and Valent reveal their sexual preference. It later leads Valent into depression and he finally have to be hospitalised. He feels better as soon as Rafky visits him but because of the oppression from his mother and his girlfriend, his condition gets worse and worse until he passes away.

The fixation of the gender in the society as what one can see in the novel will lead into stereotyping an individual in which male and female are taught to behave according to their ‘*kodrat*’ in the society. In Dewi Lestari’s *Kesatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*, the notion of *kodrat* is seen in the heteronormative relationship between the *Kesatria* (prince) and *Putri* (princess) in which Rana, the princess is having an affair with Fere, the prince. Rana herself is a married woman who often feels guilty every time she comes back home to her husband yet she still has the obligation to serve her

husband as what a normal wife do. Every time her husband asks to make love to her, she has no choice but to say yes although she does not want it. There are some expectations from her parents that she does not want to fulfil also; such as bear them grandchildren because she is a married woman. Therefore, she always avoids the family meeting, she says,

*Aku capek membayangkan harus memajang senyum seharian. Bosan menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan 'kapan kita bisa gendong cucu?' ...bosan..bosan..bosan..* [I am tired imagining that I have to (pretend) smile all the time. I am tired answering questions, 'When are we going to have grandchildren?']. (KPB, 49)

Rana's assertion emphasises that is an unwritten rule in the society about how women should behave and what women should do or be. This unspoken rule is used by Indonesian heteronormative society in order to control male and female position.

In enriching the discussion, Ayu Utami through her lesbian character Shakuntala also raises the issue of women's *kondrat* and gender roles in the patriarchal society. As aforementioned, Shakuntala lives with the absence of his father. She borrows a parable, the story of the ogres in Hansel and Gretel when she tells how cruel her father is; and in which she comes out with a realisation: she is educated within a society that sets double standard for male and female. From the parable of Hansel and Gretel, she muses over the following thought:

First, it is prerogative solely of the male to approach the woman. A woman who chases men is a whore. Second, a woman shall give her body only to the right man, who shall support her for the rest of her life. That's what is known as marriage." (S, 155)

This concept of gender roles in Indonesian patriarchal society makes Shakuntala to see marriage as "nothing more than hypocritical prostitution," (S, 115). She also believes that society "considers women only from their physical appearance" and "people did not consider a girl who didn't yet have breast to be virgin," (S, 118). Shakuntala who was born and raised as Javanese Catholic woman, was also advised by

her parents about virginity as “woman’s gift to her husband. And virginity is like a nose, once you lose it, it can’t be replaced,” (S. 118). Therefore, she must never give it away before she gets married, because then she will be “damaged good.” (S, 118) It is assumable that the concept of virginity that is enforced by her parents is the trigger for her rebellious character. Instead of obeying her parent’s order, she gives up her virginity to her foreign lover before she leaves for the United States.

Regardless of the fact that she had exposed herself to sexuality and eroticism when she was a teenager, Shakuntala does not only represent the gender role oppression in Indonesian patriarchal society but also portrays Ayu Utami’s perspective on the East and West dichotomy. As a lesbian character in the novel, she describes her understanding of how people from the West think about people from the East.

In this country (America) people thought those in the East lived according to strange customs. Their men attached decorations to their penises, on the surface or within the skin. Their women, without shame, aroused the desire of their men and also of strangers, since they indulged in sex without any sense of taboo.” (S, 127)

Shakuntala sees that American’s women are more liberal in expressing their sexual desire. She then compares it with the women’s sexuality which is perceived differently by her society.

In this country, people speak of your land and our land, your people and our people. We are the noble of the East. You, the depraved of the West. Your women wear bikinis in the streets and have no regard for virginity. Your school children, boys, and girls, live together out of the wedlock. In this country, sex belongs to adult through marriage even if they were married at the age of eleven and regarded as already mature. In your country, people have sex on television. We do not have sex on television. We have a decent foundation in the in the great East. Your customs in the West are not noble.”(S, 127)

Comparing West and East sexuality in the context of Edward Said Orientalism, it occurs that Utami is not trying to use her lesbian character Shakuntala to criticise the Western perspective on sexuality and morality but suggest that culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that is used to control women in the East might not be applicable in women who are sexually

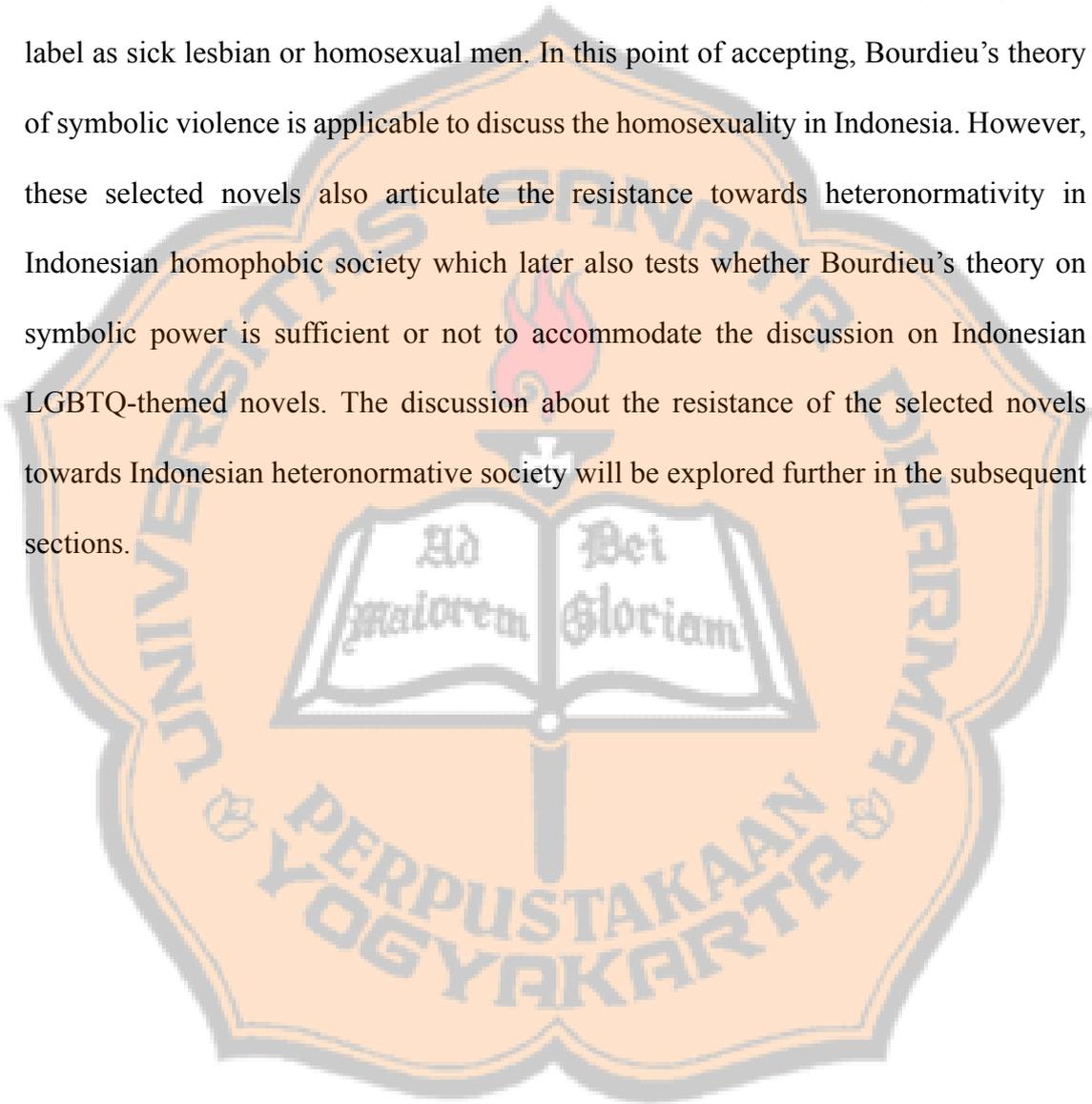
liberated like Shakuntala. Utami criticizes the rigid sexual orientation in the East in which speaking about sexuality is still considered taboo and one cannot fully express him/herself. It is even worse when concerning sexual preference such as homosexuality which viewed hostilely among the Eastern populace.

In its relation to Pierre Bourdieu's symbolic violence, one can see that it is not only the acceptance of homosexuality in the Indonesian homophobic society, but also the gender roles which is used to control the relationship between male and female in Indonesian heteronormative society are the form of symbolic violence. It is also a doxa as what conceived by Bourdieu as a particular "truth" that is accepted as the "universal" truth. To illustrate this issue from gender perspective, the rigid adherence of two-sexes; male and female is usually considered as universal truths. Yet in fact, this conception is an example of particular truth, as although this view is held by the religious believers and conservatives, the feminists and LGBTQ agents dispute this perception by pointing out the existence of intersex. This symbolic violence then occurs when both sexes accept the gender dichotomy of male-female and live within the unwritten gender roles context in the society.

This study therefore concludes that the characters' childhood experiences as a form of disposition shape that individual as a habitus. This habitus is strongly shown in Andre Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah*, Ayu Utami's *Shakuntala* in *Saman* and Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla*. Two other novels which are Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight* and Dewi Lestari's *Kesatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh* do not strongly show their habitus. It is because they do not explain the cause of the homosexuality in their LGBTQ characters.

Returning to the discussion on symbolic violence, those habitus later will deal with the power which Bourdieu refers as a capital in the society. As this study analyses the homosexual characters, these characters often experience the symbolic violence

because the discussion about homosexuality in Indonesia will always intersect with bigger cultural capitals that are norms, religious belief, and *adat*. The symbolic violence occurs when the dominated accept what the dominant does to them such as accepting their gender roles in the society or the stereotype that the society puts as their label. In this case, most of the homosexual characters in the selected novels likely accept their label as sick lesbian or homosexual men. In this point of accepting, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence is applicable to discuss the homosexuality in Indonesia. However, these selected novels also articulate the resistance towards heteronormativity in Indonesian homophobic society which later also tests whether Bourdieu's theory on symbolic power is sufficient or not to accommodate the discussion on Indonesian LGBTQ-themed novels. The discussion about the resistance of the selected novels towards Indonesian heteronormative society will be explored further in the subsequent sections.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESISTANCE TOWARDS HETERONORMATIVITY IN INDONESIAN SOCIETY

Previous chapter has elaborated the formation of habitus through the characters' childhood experience. The absence of father figure and lack of emotional connectedness have become the reasons why the characters find other shelter in their same-sex companion. However, the notion of homosexuality is still restricted through heteronormativity in Indonesian society. As aforementioned, Bourdieusian concept of capital is differentiated into economic capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital and among these three, it is the cultural capital and symbolic capital that plays important role in regulating the discourse about homosexuality in Indonesia. It can be asserted how Indonesian LGBTQ discussion remains intertwined with religious values and cultural wisdom. In this chapter, this thesis contextualizes how the emergence of Indonesian LGBTQ novels challenges the dominant discourse of Indonesian homophobic especially through embracing their sexual preference as homosexual to counter the Indonesian heteronormativity society.

As aforementioned, the previous sub chapters have illustrated the resistance towards Indonesian homophobic from the existence of the novels and now the emphasis is how the characters challenge the society. Taking cues from Bourdieu's elaboration of capitals, the unequal interplays of capital with different power will lead into oppression of lesser capital by the greater power. Furthermore, a Bourdieusian will focus more on the individual because both individual carries a power and resistance. If one with less power accept and does not resist the oppression done by one with higher power, there is no symbolic violence involved. Yet Foucauldian will focus more on the individual which is the LGBTQ actors in this study because that individual will affect the

established power to react. The varied reaction from the higher power ones will later stimulate their resistance.

It is important to firstly underline how far-fetched is the entrenchment of religious authority especially the clergies in how they are able to proclaim *fatwa* based on guidance on the scripture. To illustrate the domination of the clergy, Indonesian legal system –especially concerning sexuality- is strongly associated with the prohibition of homosexuality as it is written in the scripture. The Indonesian state laws only recognises two gender which are male and female, therefore, the Indonesian homophobic society considers those in the LGBTQ community not in accordance with the proper definition of gender as coined by the state laws. The draconian laws consider homosexuality and its practitioner as deviant and sick and need to be treated. One example of the law which regulate homosexuality is Indonesian Pornography Law No. 44/ 2008 which includes deviant sexual intercourse, as one of the contents of pornographic matters. In Chapter 2 Article 4, the law clearly states as follows:

*Setiap orang dilarang memproduksi...menyebarkan, menyiarkan, menawarkan, memperjualkan atau menyediakan pornography yang secara eksplisit memuat: pesenggamaan, termasuk persenggamaan yang menyimpang, kekerasan seksual, masturbasi dan onani,...*[ Everyone is forbidden to produce,...distribute, broadcast, offer, encash or provide pornographic services explicitly that included these contents: sexual intercourse included the deviant ones, masturbation.<sup>85</sup>

The law also further elaborates the definition of deviant sexual behaviour in the explanation of each chapter included bestiality, necrophilia, oral, anal, lesbian and homosexual.<sup>86</sup> The Indonesian state laws strictly enforce the notion that homosexuality is a carnal disease, hence LGBTQ practitioners have to be straightened. Several examples of how Indonesian polices crack down several LGBTQ gathering have been

<sup>85</sup> Badan Pengawas Keuangan dan Pembangunan (BPKP). “Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 44/2008 mengenai pornografi, p.2,” *BPKP*, <http://www.bpkp.go.id/uu/filedownload/2/33/151.bpkp>

<sup>86</sup> Badan Pengawas Keuangan dan Pembangunan (BPKP). “Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 44/2008 mengenai pornografi, p.10,” *BPKP*, <http://www.bpkp.go.id/uu/filedownload/2/33/151.bpkp>.

provided in the previous sections.

Deriving from the underlying perception of homosexuality as a disease, not many people can accept homosexuality in Indonesia. The homosexual men often prefer to hide their sexual preference because they do not want to be seen as someone 'sick.' Some of them would have to go through the self-denial also before coming out from their closet and declaring that they are gay. In the homophobic Indonesian society, it is dangerous to openly declare their homosexuality, in fear of rejection by their partner or the wider community. In Andre Aksana's novel *Lelaki Terindah*, the romance between Valent and Rafky in the novel *Lelaki Terindah* is the example of the attitude that is considered as something sickening as what the previous paragraph has stated. Rafky particularly embodies the turmoil and uncertainty a homosexual practitioner has to experience in Indonesia. In the beginning of the story, he identifies himself as straight, he acts like a normal man, career oriented, and has a girlfriend. Yet after his encounter with Valent, he realises that something is wrong with him because he is interested in other male. Rafky's reaction that he is wrong due to loving same-sex partners affirms how homosexuality is viewed in the binarism of right and wrong.

The moment Rafky realizes his homosexuality, he instantly becomes wrong, strange, and even bizarre as in Indonesia, what can be accepted is the relationship between male and female. Going through that phase, Rafky starts to have the self-denial as what can be seen in:

*Dan detik itu juga Rafky langsung memaki dirinya. Apa yang tengah terjadi? Ia lelaki normal! Tidak mungkin tertarik dengan sesama jenis! [in that very second, Rafky has cursed himself. What is happening? It is impossible for him to lay his interest on a man!] (LT, 35-36)*

After Rafky recognizes that he can lay his interest also on a male, he tries to convince himself that he is still normal. His self-denial raises when he keeps saying to himself that it is impossible for him to desire Valent as Valent is also a male. Furthermore, this

self-denial is represented when he keeps trying to convince himself that he is still straight by looking for a call girl in a Thai bar.

*Mengapa aku terjerumus dalam hubungan cinta sejenis ini? Aku lelaki normal! Yang masih terangsang perempuan. [Why do I get into this same-sex relationship? I am still a normal guy that desires a woman.] (LT,15)*

Apart from the sexual denial, the second important thing that should be underlined is the rejection of the family. It can be seen with the reaction of Jenita- Valent's mother that leads Valent later into depression:

*Kini setiap hari Valent diantar-jemput oleh supir pribadi Janita dan diawasi kegiatannya. Selesai jam kantor, harus langsung pulang ke rumah. Janita menghitung setiap menit. Valent tidak boleh terlambat sedetikpun. Janita seketat mungkin memonitor Valent agar anaknya tidak mempunyai celah untuk bertemu Rafky. [Every day, Valent is picked by the driver and being monitored. After work, he would have to go home. Janita will count every minute and Valent cannot be late even for a second. Janita tries hard to monitor Valent so he does not have any chance to meet Rafky.] (LT, 169)*

Through the passage, one can see that both Rafky and Valent have experienced the emotional depression and violence. After declaring that they are homosexual men, they are treated differently either by their family or the people around them. Despite of the emotional violence that threaten to hide their sexual preference, restriction and rejection, as homosexual men, they also have to suffer from the stigma of Indonesian society towards homosexual like what Rafky has experienced:

*Seks dan cinta adalah dua hal yang berbeda. Dan aku bercinta dengan Valent!...Dengan cinta, bukan mengumbar nafsu. [Sex and love are two different things. And I make love to Valent...with love, not lust.] (LT, 165).*

The emotional oppression and the rejection from society also resulted in Rafky and Valent's inability to openly confess their relationship. Both of Rafky and Valent's parents want them to marry a woman they do not want. After realizing their homosexuality, Rafky and Valent considers that they have the right to have their right to embrace their own sexual preference and live by it.

*Cinta...bukankah setiap orang berhak jatuh cinta? Seberapa pun nistanya,*

*seberapapun hinanya... ” [love...everyone has their right to fall in love...no matter how nasty it is...no matter how disgusting it is...] (LT, 17).*

Their position is further illustrated through the liberatory concept of sexual preferences. Trapped in Indonesian hetero-normativity concept Rafky and Valent consider the gender binarism of man and woman love which is held by Indonesian society to be restricting, he asserts that

*“Apa cinta hanya milik laki-laki dan perempuan? Seharusnya cinta membebaskan semua batas!” [does love only belong to male and female? Love should be liberating!] (LT, 193).*

This kind of situation depicted in Andrei Aksana’s novel is one portrayal of the marginalised LGBTQ community in Indonesia. They often experience the violence and abuse either physical or emotional, discrimination and stigmatisation within the society that still see LGBTQ community as someone deviant and sick. To assert, Rafky and Valent and other homosexual men have become the victim of hegemony. As aforementioned in the previous paragraph, the discussion of homosexuality in Indonesia intersects with the restriction from religion and *adat*. Therefore, the Indonesian society supported by the religious and *adat* leaders will relatively see the kind of relationship that Valent and Rafky have as something unacceptable. The heteronormative concept in the novel can be seen in the following:

*Dinding yang telah dibangun di atas bongkahan norma dan nilai yang membatu. Di sanalah semua yang dianggap kekeliruan telah dibekukan menjadi fosil. Menunggu zaman berganti hingga ditemukan lagi sejarah yang memaparkan kebenaran, [the wall that has been constructed of the sake of norm and the value has already hardened. Up to that point, the things considered as mistake has been frozen waiting to the time when people make a new history. Time when the truth finally can come out.] (LT, 135)*

One can see that the discussion about heteronormativity has been written and become the unspeakable law that subtly operates within the society. No matter how good a homosexual man is, he is will likely still considered as a criminal that needs to be punished and normalised.

*Namun mengaku atau tidak mengaku, toh akhirnya tetap saja dihukum. Salah atau tidak salah. Begitu kan yang selalu terjadi? Kita hanyalah tumbal bagi orang yang telah berkuasa. [no matter what, whether we confess (that we are gay) or not, we are going to be punished in the end. No matter whether it is right or wrong. That is what normally happens, isn't it? We are just the victims of those with the authority.] (LT, 144)*

Through the above passage, it can be seen that the norm and the concept of heteronormativity within the Indonesian society has become one restrictions in people picking their sexual preferences. Yet it is important also to know that the characters of the novel and probably other homosexual men do not ask to be born as a homosexual.

As what it sees in the passage:

*Tapi, bukan cuma Mama yang menghalangi kita bersatu. Masyarakat, norma, dan hukum juga. Padahal apa salah kita? Kita tidak minta dilahirkan begini, bukan? [But it is not only Mama who forbids us to be together. The society, the norm and also the law. What do we do wrong? We do not ask to be born like this, right?] (LT, 194)*

It is important to recognize that the Indonesian legal system is also intricately linked with the religious and *adat* actors to reflect, maintain and further construct the dominant discourse. These aspects assert that homosexual is a crime that should be punished and a disease that should be cured and it is further enforced by religious dogmas. One implementation of Islamic law is through *fatwa* issued by Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in the end of 2014 which contextualizes how Indonesian Ulemas perceive homosexuality, sodomy and sexual harassment. The *fatwa* asserts that a sexual intercourse should be done by husband and wife. MUI also explains that same-sex orientation is not a *fitrah*- natural tendency but a disease that should be cured. The council also argues that homosexuality is not only a disease but also a crime that should be punished. This *fatwa* MUI No. 57/2014 about lesbian, gay, sodomy, and sexual harassment in the beginning of first chapter states that:

*Bahwa sesuai fitrahnya, Allah SWT menciptakan manusia dan makhluk hidup berpasangan pasangan dan mengatur tentang kecenderungan seksual didasarkan pasangannya... [Following their natural destiny, Allah has created humans in*

pairs and set a rule on their sexual preference].<sup>87</sup>

From the aforementioned *fatwa*, it can be stated that MUI as the religious actor justifies their hostility toward homosexuality from the story of creation, how God only creates male and female. The *ulemas* considers that sexual preference should in accordance to God's guideline which is male and female relationship and legally married. As a result of the adherence towards God's command, MUI considers homosexuality as a crime and should be punished by the authorities even though the LGBTQ activists keep forcing the government to legalise the same-sex relationship.<sup>88</sup> This situation illustrates the two spectrum of LGBTQ debate, while the *ulemas* hold firms towards cultural and religious teaching in form of dogmas, the LGBTQ activists assert that sexuality is sexually constructed. Unfortunately, as the activists are the one with lower capitals, their status is still marginalized and they keep on facing harassment from the society.

The novel *Lelaki Terindah* offers another portrayal of the life experienced by homosexual in Indonesian society in which they have to face the obstacle and the rejection from the society. Living in the Indonesian standards, a homosexual man is oppressed and forced to normalise himself. This situation is similar with what is experienced by Rafky in *Lelaki Terindah* which explores the struggle of homosexual characters in order to embrace their sexual preference. Therefore, one sees not only the manifestation of symbolic violence but also comes out as one which resists the heteronormativity in the homophobic Indonesian society. The reason is because the homosexual characters; even though there is a process of normalisation are still

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<sup>87</sup> Majelis Ulama Indonesia, "Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia No. 57/2014 tentang lesbian, gay, sodomi dan pencabulan, p. 1" *KEMENAG LAMPUNG*, <https://lampung.kemenag.go.id/files/lampung/file/file/MUI/xdob1460683589.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> Majelis Ulama Indonesia, "Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia No. 57/2014 tentang lesbian, gay, sodomi dan pencabulan", p. 13.

portrayed as homosexual men in the end. This type of resistance is seen in the beginning of the novel. The plot of the novel starts with Rafky-one of the characters of the story and his request to the narrator which is called “Aku” in the novel. His request is for Aku to write and embellish his love story with his male lover, Valent. In his request, Rafky says:

*Hanya kau yang bias membuat kisah cinta ini mengharukan, bukan kisah cinta yang disisihkan, dicela, dan dicemooh.”* [Only you who can write this story into something profounding, not a love story who is being mocked by people] (LT, 15)

The portrayal of LGBTQ actors who embrace their sexual preference in the end of Andre Aksana’s novel can also be found in Mario Bastian’s *Fly Tonight* and Dewi Lestari’s *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*. Both novels vividly portray LGBTQ characters which openly stated their homosexual status and relationship with another man. In *Fly Tonight*, the gay characters, Boy and Zion finally engaged themselves into a homosexual relationship as their kind of resistance.

Besok lusa, ketika Zion pulang lagi ke Jakarta, aku akan mengenakan topi Winnie the Pooh...kenapa? Karena aku ingin semua orang di bandara itu tahu bahwa aku pasangannya laki-laki bertopi Mickey Mouse yang akan pulang kembali ke Jakarta.” [When Zion return to Jakarta the day after tomorrow, I am going to wear a Winnie the Pooh hat... Why? Because I want people to know that I am an (intimate) partner of that guy in Mickey Mouse hat]. (FT, 399)

Similarly, in Dewi Lestari’s *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*, Dhimas and Ruben, two narrators of the story decided to keep their sexual identity as a homosexual man. They also commit themselves into same-sex relationship, as follows:

Ruben

Aku mencintaimu... [I love you.]

Aku juga mencintaimu... [I love you too.]

Mereka lalu berpegangan tangan erat. Dua pria yang tak punya nama belakang di dalam sebuah kamar kerja. Saling mencintai. [They then hold each other’s hand. Two men who have no surname in a working room. Loving each other.] (KPB, 355)

Most of the LGBTQ actors in the five-selected Indonesian novels have gone through the oppressions and discrimination from living in the homophobic society.

However, their way of expressing the same-sex love and commit themselves into the same-sex relationship can be considered as their resistance in the novel. The power comes from the homophobic society oppresses them and becomes their source of resistant. This confirms Michel Foucault's idea of resistance in whenever there exist power, there is resistance also. It also shows that as an individual, those LGBTQ actors can influence the ones with the higher power to react. The reaction may be varied such as being casted from the society and the rejection of the family. They are considered also somebody who is deviant. Those can be seen in Andre Aksana's and Mario Bastian's but Dee Lestari's LGBTQ actors do not show any signs of social punishment. It is probably because the position of the LGBTQ actors in the novel is as a narrator only and not a character who directly participate in the narration.

In contrast with Mario Bastian's, Andre Aksana's or Dee Lestari, Djenar Mahesa Ayu and Ayu Utami depict different kinds of resistance. One example is Nayla which has experienced the violence from her mother and the people surround her. Her inhumane treatment from others cause her starts to lose faith in men especially after his father abandon her for other women. Viewed in this angle, her choice of being a lesbian is her kind of resistance in establishing her existence as an individual. She says:

*Saya juga punya pacar. Bukan laki-laki, tapi perempuan. Yang laki-laki cuma untuk hit and run. Mereka benar-benar menyebalkan...tapi untuk urusan perasaan, saya lebih merasa nyaman dengan perempuan.” [I have a partner. A female partner and not a male one. The male ones were for hit and run. They are obnoxious...however, I feel comfortable to be with a female partner.] (N, 55)*

Her statement confirms Pierre Bourdieu's notion that as a disposition, Nayla has become an active agent of power even though she does not become a lesbian in the end of the novel. In *Nayla*, the resistance comes from within herself as a habitus who lives in a capital dominated by higher power which are patriarchy and homophobic society.

Meanwhile, Shakuntala, a lesbian character in Ayu Utami's *Saman* symbolizes

different type of resistance. As aforementioned in previous chapter, Shakuntala's life is dominated with patriarchal culture illustrated by his dominant father and powerless mother. Once she decides to be a lesbian, she shows a kind of resistance on Indonesian heteronormativity which objects same-sex relationship. After Laila and Shakuntala get closer, Shakuntala believes that she loves Laila. She thinks that Laila has already free from her curiosity about sex and is ready to be pleased by her before meeting Sihar.

Women in Shakuntala's opinion have the power to satisfy themselves, as she claims:

*Aku tahu kamu belum pernah mengalami orgasme. Juga ketika bercumbu dengannya. Kini tak kubiarkan kamu menemui lelaki itu sebelum kamu mengetahuinya. Sebelum kamu mengenali tubuhmu sendiri. Setelah ini kamu boleh pergi.* ("I know you have never experienced orgasm, even if you have made love with him. Now, I am not going to let you meet that guy before you know about orgasm, before you know about yourself. After that, you may leave"). (S, 152-153)

It can be stated that Shakuntala's resistance is two-fold, by being a lesbian in homophobic society and neglecting male's role sexually although she lives in patriarchal system. She confirms Luce Irigaray's notion in women autoerotism that women have the ability to please themselves without any presence of the opposite sex, hence autoeroticism is the term. Moreover, Irigaray grants that one way of autoeroticism does fall into the traditional concept of masturbation. She argues:

Woman always remains several, but she is kept from dispersion because the other is already within her and is autoerotically familiar to her... Woman derives pleasure from what is so near.<sup>89</sup>

Irigaray adds and reclaims the lips in woman's autoeroticism instead of female genitals which often are associated with vagina and clitoris. Her reason is because of the consideration that clitoris is noticed as an inferior version of male penis while vagina is observed to be the location for male's penetration. She continues that by the virtue of the lips, 'women are able to touch herself all the time and moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for genitals are formed of two lips in continuous

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<sup>89</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Sex*, p.31

contact.’<sup>90</sup> Applying Irigaray’s concept on Shakuntala’s case, one can see that Shakuntala is able to pleasure herself and give pleasure to her female friend without any male involvement. The absence of Shakuntala’s opposite sex partner affirm how she resists the homophobic society which only consider sexual intercourse between male and female.

Other form of resistance in Ayu Utami’s *Saman* is also seen in heterosexual actors such as Saman and Yasmin. Yasmin is portrayed as somebody who is family oriented as she obeys her husband although she does not love him. Once she finally finds the love she has been looking for in Saman, she realises that she has been oppressed by her family and her husband. Therefore, she tries to resist it by having an ‘affair’ with Saman through flirtatious emails. The emails they exchange also show how Yasmin is unhappy with her husband:

Yasmin, I am masturbating. (Saman to Yasmin)  
 Saman, I have aloerotism. I have sex with my husband, but it’s you I am imagining. He has been asking why so often I want the lights out. It’s because I am imagining your face, your body. (Yasmin to Saman) (S, 192)

From the explanations, one can see that there are some types of resistance shown by non-LGBTQ characters or the LGBTQ characters in the five selected novel. It is mostly caused by their bad experience during the childhood and social punishment towards homosexuality. Andre Aksana’s Rafky; Dewi Lestari’s Reuben and Dimas; Mario Bastian’s Boy; and Ayu Utami’s Skahuntala’s decision to remain and keep their identity as a LGBTQ actor shows their resistance of living in the homophobic society as mentioned in the novels. Some LGBTQ characters in the novels especially in Djenar Mahesa Ayu’s Nayla and July also decided to neglect the male’s domination in their life by sexually self-pleasing themselves. In this point of discussion, Foucauldian’s concept

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<sup>90</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Sex*, p. 24

of power is more applicable than Bourdieu's notion of power. An LGBTQ individual does not possess a power yet they affect the higher power itself which is society to react. The reaction is shown in likely negative way seeing those individuals as someone sick and deviant. However, in Ayu Utami's *Saman*, Yasmin, a heterosexual character also shows resistance by being involved in an affair with Saman while she is legally married to Lukas. To summarize, it can be affirmed that the resistance toward Indonesian homophobic society as it is narrated through the five selected LGBTQ novels manifested in different ways.

Furthermore, this study also emphasizes how power in this case operates, either through explicit or implicit subtle way that often oppresses LGBTQ actors. Yet, not all is bleak in outlook, as even though in this homophobic society there still a plethora of LGBTQ novels which can be considered as a form of resistance. Deriving from Bourdieu and Foucault's notion of power and resistance, this thesis elaborates how several authors still managed to publish their works into a wider market and audiences.

The explanations from the preceding paragraphs has contextualize the the hardship faced by Indonesian LGBTQ individual. In contrast, this situation is different than the condition faced by the homosexuality in another country such as Thailand. Compared to the position held by Indonesian government, the Thai Ministry of Health no longer considers homosexuality as a mental illness.<sup>91</sup> The acceptance of Thai's government results in more pleasant climate for LGBTQ community in Thailand. Differently, some of social organisations in Indonesia linked to LGBTQ activists such as GAYa Nusantara, IGAMA, Gaya Dewata and Persatuan Waria Kota Surabaya (PERWAKOS) will have to deal with hard-line Islamist groups and organisations and

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<sup>91</sup> USAid. "Being LGBTQ in Asia: Thailand country report." UNDP, [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/Being LGBTQ in Asia Thailand Country Report.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/Being_LGBTQ_in_Asia_Thailand_Country_Report.pdf)

one of them is Front for the Defence of Islam (FPI).

Surprisingly, even though homosexuality in Indonesia is still viewed with hostility and enmity, the gay-themed Indonesian literature fictions shows a notable increase.<sup>92</sup> This phenomenon confirms with what Foucault states about power relation and resistance, how resistance is intertwined with the oppressive nature of power. The more the society oppressed the marginalised LGBTQ individual or group, the more the LGBTQ sympathisers or actors resist and one of their resistance is through literature. Beginning in the 1990s, some of the Indonesian pop writers such as Ayu Utami and Mira W already portrayed the life of homosexual characters in their book. However, it was Andre Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah* in 2004 that gave more encouragement to other writers in writing a gay romance and can be considered as a pioneer of Indonesian LGBTQ novels. Compared with previous canonical LGBTQ literature, Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah* explicitly covers the life of two homosexual men who fall in love and engaged themselves in same-sex relationship.

Taking cues from Aksana's foundational canon of Indonesian LGBTQ novels, several writers also publishes their own take of this genre. Dewi Lestari or what people often refer as Dee published her best-selling novel entitled *Kesatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh* which is simply translated as the Knight, the Princess and the Shooting Star. Ram Soraya adapted the film into movie directed by Rizal Mantovani and budgeted it for over IDR. 20,000,000,000. The movie was a big hit like the novel and is a faithful adaptation of the novel. This novel was also translated into English by Prof. Harry Aveling in 2001 and was published by Lontar Foundation. This shows that although LGBTQ is still a niche market in Indonesia, some studios are willing to take risk in

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<sup>92</sup> USAid. "Being LGBTQ in Asia: Indonesia country report." UNDP, [http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/hiv\\_aids/rbap-hhd-2014-blia-indonesia-country-report-english.pdf](http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/hiv_aids/rbap-hhd-2014-blia-indonesia-country-report-english.pdf)

order to adapt the script into wide screen.

Meanwhile, Ayu Utami's controversial novel *Saman* was published in 1998 and was sold over 100,000 copies. Despite its pro and cons, the novel won the 1997 Jakarta Art Institute novel writing contest and was published sooner after that. Moreover, the novel also won Prince Clause award in 2000. The popularity of the novel leads it to be translated into Dutch and English in 2005. It has also been translated into some other languages such as French, Czech, Japanese and Korean. As of 2018, the movie adaptation of the novel is still in progress.<sup>93</sup>

From the preceding explanation, one can see recently that this conception towards homosexuality has been challenged in many forms, either socially or through media such as literature. LGBTQ media can be stated to blossom, as not just in written form as novel, many LGBTQ novels are also adapted into big screen and able to attract a wider attention and popularity. Another Indonesian writer who writes an LGBTQ-themed story is Yuska Lutfi Tuanakotta. He is an Indonesian gay who migrates to the U.S to study dance and creative writing. His novel entitled "*Gentlemen Prefer Asian*" tells a story about the tales of gay Indonesian who immigrates to the US and get into a same-sex relationship with an American guy who will later become his "wife." Compared to others novels, his novel is more international and cosmopolitan in outlook. This book was published in the United States in 2016 and has won Lambda Literary Foundation Fellow Award.<sup>94</sup>

The circulation of the literary journal of transgressive art has also become one of the resistance against the homophobic society not only in Indonesia but also in South East Asia. Nuril Basri's short stories translated by John McGlynn illustrate that the

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<sup>93</sup> Michael Garcia, "More than just a sex." *Inside Indonesia*, <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-80-oct-dec-2004/more-than-just-sex-2607217>

<sup>94</sup> Yuska Lutfi Tuanakott, "Gentlemen prefer Asians." (Berkeley: ThreeL Media, 2016).

voice of Indonesian queer is started to get more prominence. John McGlynn in his interview with B.B.P. Hosmilo in that compilation of essay mentions that one of his reasons in translating the queer short stories is his own identity as gay which enable him to relate himself to the story. His other motive is his concerns towards Indonesian homosexual men which often have to life in a homophobic society which oppressed towards the homosexual.<sup>95</sup> John McGlynn also translated and published a collection of LGBTQ short stories and poems entitled *Menagerie 7*. It includes an excerpt from Oka Rusmini's novel *Tarian Bumi* and Djenar Mahesa Ayu's and also includes Ezra Setyadharma as a guest editor. In the introduction, John McGlynn argues that the compilation of the short stories is a form of resistance to the Indonesian heteronormative society.

Despite of the circulation of those LGBTQ-themed novels, one can see that there is a limitation in distribution of gay romance in Indonesia. As homosexuality is still regarded a controversial and sensitive topic in Indonesia, few dare to tackle this forbidden issue. Therefore, those LGBTQ-themed novels published by major publishing houses will normally undergo a strict censorship process. In order to circumvent the censorship issue, some of the writers especially independent writers concern on LGBTQ issue self-published their works or they publish to a small publishing house. Some of them such as Mario Bastian publishes his works on an online application named Wattpadd. It is an application for independent readers and writers although not all of them put forward homosexual issues.

Furthermore, there is also a difference between major published and self-published novel with LGBTQ theme. The major ones will normally go under more

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<sup>95</sup> Cyrill Wong, et al, "A literary journal of transgressive art, p. 97." *Queer Southeast Asia Journal* Published on September 2016. *Queer Asia Journal*, <http://queersoutheastasia.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Queer-Southeast-Asia-A-Literary-Journal-of-Transgressive-Art-The-Inaugural-Issue-Sept-Oct-2016.pdf>

editorship in order for those major publishers avoiding the polemic of pornography. To circumvent the strict censorship, several writers tend to avoid mentioning the male or female genitals like in Andre Aksana's novel. Allegory is often used by the writers to conceal the explicit imagery of sexual intercourse. The novel portrays a making-love scene as:

Jemari Valent menjadi kuas yang menggoreskan warna-warna cemerlang di atas kanvas. Lidah Valent adalah gelombang... Valent menelusuri seujur lekuk tubuh Rafky yang perkasa tanpa tersisa." [Valent's fingers have painted bright colours on a canvas. His tongue is a wave. Valent explores every inch of Rafky's body.] (*LT*, 83)

From the passage, it can be seen how the intercourse is not as openly portrayed by using the imagery of painting and sailing (waves) to describe the activity. This is in total contrast with Andre Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah* published by major publisher, Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight* portrays its making-love scene clearly by mentioning the male genitals, as follows:

Setelah puas, Captain John menindihku. Dia berada di depan selangkanganku sekarang... Captain John terus memaksanya sambil menjilati putingku... penisku yang tertindih perut Captain, penis Captain yang melesak di sekitaran pantatku... akhirnya aku orgasme lagi... [Captain John was there in front of my tights... he forced his (manhood) while licking on my tits... my penis was pressed by his stomach, and his penis was around my butt. I finally had my other orgasm...] (*FT*, 95)

It can be summarized that although there is a diverse selection of canonical LGBTQ literature in Indonesia, further scrutinizing these selections reveal surprising aspect regarding the publication. As illustrated, homosexuality is still considered as a taboo topic especially in the major publishing houses. The fear that novel with LGBTQ theme will not be able to attract wider popularity among the homophobic Indonesian society hinder the process of Indonesian LGBTQ literature. Yet, not all is lost, as many literature is still published under minor publisher or by self-publication. Hence, in spite of all the disadvantages, several Indonesian LGBTQ novels especially the five-selected

LGBTQ as the objects of the study are able to circumvent the strict censorship which expresses their resistance toward Indonesian homophobic society.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The selected Indonesian novels of this study are small examples of Indonesian novels that portray the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) life. Those novel share the same portrayal of these LGBTQ actors in each different way and contexts. Their similarity reaches to their function as an expression to voice their identity, right, hope, dream and existence. In most of the Indonesian novels selected, the struggles are mostly concern about dealing about their sexual preference and embracing their new sexual identity. The struggles also cover the gradual acceptance of the LGBTQ orientation among the Indonesian homophobic society. Yet each novel also has their own particular way of resistance against the still-dominant Indonesian heteronormative society.

This thesis has argued that homosexuality in Indonesia is still viewed in a negative light. The actors of LGBTQ will also likely be linked with illness and sexual aberrant. However, this condition is worsened with the varied discourses of homosexuality which are intersected with the norm, *adat*, religious belief and also the state law. The aforementioned factors are one manifestation of cultural capitals as it is theorized by Bourdieu. This lamentable fact is also portrayed in the Indonesian so-called-LGBTQ-themed novels in which the homosexual or lesbian characters should be normalised according to the Indonesian heteronormativity standard.

This thesis has tried to answer the main questions surrounding manifestation and resistance to heteronormativity in the novels studied through gender discourse analysis. The analysis is conducted through three different methods, mainly library research, narrative analysis and discourse analysis, by library research, this thesis

contextualises the portrayals of masculinity and femininity in the novels and also illustrates the situation in Indonesia faced by LGBTQ community. The data is later supported by reading several articles and academic discussions concerning LGBTQ either in Indonesia or in South East Asian countries. Narrative analysis helps to reveal how the characters are constructed and portrayed through narrative devices/ story telling techniques in these selected five selected Indonesian novels under discussion which is later viewed under the lens of Bourdieuan and Foucauldian perspective. Lastly, this study employs discourse analysis to analyse how these narrative devices construct specific discourses about symbolic violence shown in these novels. It also shows how these novels resist the heteronormativity in Indonesia.

The theories used are theory of gender, concepts of symbolic violence, and the concept of power of resistance. Theory of gender as a social construction will form a point of departure to analyse how gender both masculinity and femininity and its fluidity is constructed in these novels. The concept of Bourdieusian symbolic violence is used in this study to analyse how the fluidity of gender is at the same time constrained and brought back to hetero-normative masculinities and femininities. The concept of power and resistance later are used to see the kind of power and resistance operate and circulates around LGBTQ actors in the novels analysed in this study.

The first finding in this study shows that the manifestation of symbolic violence involves the formation of habitus through early childhood experience. The emphasis since early childhood that sexuality is only between man and woman and also the assignment of gender roles plays an important factor in strengthening the hostile conception of homosexuality in Indonesian society. The strong affirmation of heteronormativity caused homosexuality to be normalised and its practitioner re-educated into proper man and woman. The LGBTQ actors in the selected novels

experience the social judgement such as the rejection from the family and being judged as someone who is sick and deviant from the society.

The analysis conducted through Bourdieusian notion on habitus, symbolic violence, his notion on power and resistance has proven that through psychological and physical violation, the LGBTQ actors show different roots of their same-sex interest and different reaction on the oppressions. In the case of Rafky and Valent in Andre Aksana's *Lelaki Terindah*, their roots of homosexuality come from the absence of father figure and the dominancy of mother. The high expectation coming from Rafky father's high expectation gives him the urge to keep showing his masculinity by being a hard-hearted one. Meanwhile, Valent's mother who is overprotective causes him to be a "feminine" and soft-hearted guy. Once both of Rafky and Valent encounter each other in Bangkok, they can get along well. Valent feels that he finds a father figure in Rafky and Rafky finds the mother figure in Valent.

This lack of emotional connectedness towards parents was experienced by the lesbian characters in Ayu Utami's *Shakuntala* and Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla*. Being an unwilling members of the rigid patriarchal system, especially the physical abuse from their parents lead *Shakuntala* and *Nayla* to find a shelter and comfort by sharing an intimacy with their female companion. However, these kind of indications are not seen in Dewi Lestari's *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*. One possible reason is that the LGBTQ actors are placed as the narrator which is not actively participated in the story. Moreover, in Lestari's *KPB* the childhood experiences of the characters do not play an important role in causing the changes in sexual orientation which is found in Utami and Ayu's novels.

The second finding shows that by applying Bourdieusian and Foucauldian concepts of resistance, the selected Indonesian LGBTQ novels also articulate resistance towards

the homophobic Indonesian society. Although Bourdieusian and Foucauldian concept of resistance share similarity as the resistance comes within the individual, their source of power that trigger the resistance is different. Bourdieu argues that an individual is an active agent of the power. Once an individual or a disposition is in the circles of habitus, that individual can possess higher power if s/he possess more capitals. Meanwhile, Foucauldian argues that power cannot be possessed. Therefore, an individual himself will affect the power. In these novels analysed in the study, the kind of resistance shows in two ways. Firstly, is the circulation and publication of these novels which is able to circumvent the strict Indonesian censorship differentiated by the censorship. Those publishes by the big publishing house such as *Nayla*; *Lelaki Terindah*; *Ksatria, Putri dan Bintang Jatuh*; and *Saman* are more aware in their choice of words. Meanwhile, the self-published novel represented by Mario Bastian's *Fly Tonight* can mention one's genitals openly.

Secondly, the characters in these Indonesian novels under study embrace their sexual preference either as lesbian or homosexual man except for the female character in Djenar Mahesa Ayu's *Nayla*. Andre Aksana's Rafky finally remained as a homosexual gay, he even tried to approaches the narrator of the story "Aku." Boy in Mario Bastia's *Fly Tonight* and Dewi Lestari's characters Dimas and Reuben in the end still declare themselves as homosexual men. Shakuntala in *Saman* also remains to live in the U.S where one can express their sexual preference openly. She and Nayla also shows their resistance by neglecting the male's role deciding to be a lesbian. The difference is that Shakuntala's resistance also covers her way of deliberating herself sexually without any men's involvement.

As concluding remarks, this study limits itself to focusing on how Bourdieusian's symbolic violence manifested in the novels and how these novels challenge the

Indonesian homophobic society. As the focus is on the LGBTQ characters of the novels, this thesis does not analyse the “straight” characters. Therefore, this thesis overlooks several possibilities regarding symbolic violence that may occur in straight characters of the novels. This thesis advocates further researches to focus on the relation between male and female especially the depiction of dominant husband/father and powerless wife/mother within patriarchal culture.



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