Rere’s Personality And And Lesbian Culture Of Urbans In Novel Re: By Maman Suherman

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Abstract: In Indonesia nowadays the theme of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual (LGBT) in Indonesian literary works grows rapidly. It can not be separated from the condition of the urban cultural context which is built in it. Novel Re: by Maman Suherman is the most important part of lesbian literary work, and Rere becomes the main character. Rere was described as a lesbian prostitute in Jakarta during 1987-1989. The cause of Rere becoming a lesbian will be analyzed further by using the personality theory of Sigmund Freud.

Keywords: LGBT, novel Re:, urban culture, and personality theory of Sigmund Freud

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a product born from society, in which the society itself has cultural tradition and diverse backgrounds. This diversity affects the style of homogenous literary texts based on the era. According to Goldman and Damono, literature draws a picture of life, and that life itself is a social reality. In this definition, life is about relationship among society and individuals, among humans, among someone’s feelings and thoughts. As a product of social world that always changes, literary work is a meaningful dynamic unit, that also shows the values and series of important events of the era [1] [2]. Novel Re: by Hermawan Sulistywo is one of the literary works that raises the phenomena of urban culture in Jakarta. Urban means something related to city or the migration from village to city. The phenomena of urbanization essentially involves the modern tradition of urban society. Lifestyle, way of thinking, and social elitist activity become the symbol of social identity. This condition makes individual and group have strong ambition in pursuing financial needs. In this kind of circumstance, women in urban culture are often considered as having lower status, which made them becoming subordinate and object of descrimination. This condition is implied in novel Re: Rere, who is the main character of this novel, is a lesbian prostitute. Lesbians are homosexuals who are female-orientated [3]. Rere’s life is mostly related to nightlife, fashion, sex party, illegal drugs, and alcohol. Rere is a victim of human trafficking done by a mama (procuress) whom she met at the first time she steps her feet in Jakarta. Rere was raised in a village that the villagers is known as a lesbian, she will be highlighted negatively by the society (shame), but it is different when this indication happens to urban people. This condition of the urban cultural context which is built in it. Novel Re: has brilliantly exposed the personality of lesbian prostitute and the life of prostitution in Indonesia. Then it is rewritten in a form of novel. In the introductory notes, Maman Suherman states that the novel Re: is not just a fictional story. But it is also based on the reality and condition at that time. Indonesia is a multicultural country that consists of approximately 670 ethnicities, variety of languages, and customs. Jakarta is the biggest city of urbanization in Indonesia. Groups of urban society that have different customs, mindsets, and lifestyles create varied dimension of homogenous society. The urbans’ habit tends to something modern and ignorant behavior toward others. This kind of personality is pictured in Rere, in her years of senior high school, she dated and had sex with the son of Regent. Finally she was pregnant, she chose to end her school life and ran away from home without telling anybody. Time went by, her womb became bigger and she run away from home without telling anybody. She stole some money from her grandmother’s cupboard for supplies, then she went to Bandung by herself. After a few days living in bandung, she decided to go to Jakarta [5]. Implicitly, there are two probabilities of why Rere runs away from home, (1) she is afraid of her grandmother’s

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anger, (2) the big family's reputation of her grandmother has been flawed for what she has done, because her family has a good reputation and everybody in her village respects her grandmother. It proves that everyone in a village can interfere our family matters and our attitude. That kind of concept doesn't exist in urban society, so that Rere decides to go to a big city, such as Jakarta. Based on the framework of idea above, the researcher wants to reveal the personality of the main character, Rere, based on psychological theory of Sigmund Freud and show the life of urban lesbian especially in Jakarta and generally in Indonesia. Those two goals become a primary step in life meaning and development of urban lesbian in Indonesia. Rere and Lesbian Prostitute When she firstly stepped her feet on Jakarta, Rere met an old woman in a hotel of Matraman area, in Jakarta. That old woman was Mami Lani, a pimp for a lesbian prostitute in Jakarta The smooth and sweet introduction in the beginning had impressed Rere for Mami Lani's kindness, and finally she allowed Rere to sleep in her house. Rere had been living in Mami Lani's house for three months while she waited for bearing the baby. Right after the baby had been born, Rere was shocked by Mami Lani. During the period of living in Mami Lani's house, then she knew that it was not free. Mami gave the bills, from the soap used, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, clothes, medical examination fees until the birth of the baby was recorded as debt. The debt that had to be paid by Rere was about tens of millions IDR. Rere who was used to lived in Mami's house finally was forced to move to the boarding house right after the house of Mami Lani. The boarding house was owned by Mami Lani, there lived dozens of other lesbian prostitutes. Rere was one of Mami's asset, given a job as lesbian prostitute in Jakarta. She served female guests, such as artists, bussiness women, and the wives of the officials. The story of Rere drew the real life of a lesbian prostitute in 1987-1989 in Jakarta at that time. Rere was a high class prostitute at that time, her price is for about 325,000-360,000 IDR / hour of sexual service, and it was out of the price for the hotel for three hours rent. The numbers show that it was not cheap to enjoy the sexual service, knowing that the rate of dollars at that time reached the number of 1,200 IDR / dollar. Meanwhile, the cheaper prostitutes could be found at the edge of city street. The physical appearance of these kinds of prostitutes are often not good enough, have dark skin, and some of them are just some old hag. Just like as cited in novel Re: Their method of rolling up the bussiness could be in the same location and under the authority of the same pimp, but they could have different pimp and competing each other. In Lawang garden for example, especially in the area of shemales. In the area of Lapangan Banteng is the location of local men, while in Hayam Wuruk and Gajah Mada is the area of women. But in the area of Sabang Jakarta Pusat or around of Gereja Besar which is located in the corner of Sarinah Building, you had to look closer. It was not so difficult to find some shemales with real woman-like appearance. They were as gorgeous as the real women. The pros knew better. Shemales were often pretending to cover their mouth with their hands, to be shy. Sometimes they covered their neck with a scarf in order to hide their scrap mustache and theirs adam's apples [6]. On some railways in central Jakarta, east and west Jakarta were occupied by female and shemale prostitutes like those on Subang street. In this area there was a kind of demarcation line which was agreed upon the rulers of the region. The female prostitutes may not violate to get the customer across the shemales’ region. And neither of the shemales. This border was not known by people in general, because the signs were like some specific power stakes, train bars or trees. The demarcation was often violated. So that it broke out some fights among groups which resulting some people injured, even there were some died. Two or three days after the fight, there would not any prostitution activity the situation could be better if both sides agreed the declaration of peace again. The ones who involved were the region ruler (thug), parking attendants and room tenants, condoms and liquor sellers. They were the ones who depended their daily life on prostitution. The sexual service in Indonesia are generally controlled and managed by a pimp, and the share is about ::30% for the prostitutes and 70% for the pimp. But the developing technology and information nowadays, makes some actors do their activities personally, which is making use of the social media to promote themselves and look for some new friends such as WeChat, facebook, Twitter, GROWlr, Badoo, Wapa, Chat in Indonesia, Just She, Skout, Gayvox, Lesbian Dating Chat, For Here, Tanged, HER, Fridea, Gay Park, Mamba, Lollipop, Romeo, Hornet, Grindr, Blued, Jack’d, VGL, Fuzz, Surge, SCRUFF, Meetme, Gaydar and etc. The homosexuals in Indonesia have different labellings. For a gay, it is categorised as three: top, bottom and double serving. Top refers to a sex position over the buttock, they have muscular look just as a normal man, and claim themselves as subject. Bottom can be seen from their gesture which shows their feminine and coquettish side, and they consider themselves as sexual object. While double serving are the ones who have double roles, they can be an object or a subject when they have sex. In lesbianism there is often an identity bias among each other, so the labeling of lesbians is generally classified into three classification. The first is butch. This type dress like men, and consider themselves as men or subject when they have sex. Second is femme, a woman who dresses as a woman in general. This type consider themselves as women or object in having sex. The third is andro . the lesbians who have double roles. As a butchy or as a femme. The lesbian prostitute like Rere is classified as andro, she can choose to be a butchy or femme as she pleases because she just expects the money. Rere must be able to fulfill the customers' desire. It is different from a no-money oriented lesbian. This group of lesbian are usually looking for sexual pleasure, comfort with the partner, protection, and agreement. The existence of numerous lesbian prostitutes can only be found in some big cities in Indonesia. Lesbian itself is still forbidden in Indonesia. So, those who feels themselves as lesbians do not dare to spit it out loudly in public but only in their community. Lesbian is still considered as taboo by people, buy there are thousands of lesbians in Indonesia who can be seen in social media which are spread into groups. During the period of 1980-2000, lesbians in cities are susceptibile to drug abuse. It is only just a sensation in the beginning, then it turns out to be a lifestyle and a helper to get sexual pleasure. Just as cited in the novel: It seems that this girl doesn’t only use cimeng and beijing , but also bedak etep putih.... cimeng is another name of marijuana, beijing is cannabis flower. Bedak etep putih is a kind of term used as a teenslang in 1980s for heroin [7]. The description of Rere's character is a small part of of story about the lesbian who consumes drugs. In some cases that the researcher has interviewed, Drugs become an individual lifestyle among lesbians, consuming the drugs becomes a tool to familiarize the groups, and it is used to support the sexual
satisfaction. But recently, lesbians tend to pursue partner’s comfort and sexual pleasure. They, lesbians, are no longer similar to what they used to be in twenty years ago. Lesbian stigma nowadays is more communal, they start to think about the human rights, and involve themselves to some important sectors. Rere’s Personality Lesbian and gay in Indonesia are growing in number in some big cities, such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bandung, Yogyakarta, and some small cities in some regencies. The ministry of health’s data in 2012 states that there are approximately 1.095.970 gays has spread over Indonesia and 22.396 who suffer HIV/AIDS. The worst cause comes from sex without using condoms because LGBT in Indonesia are used to changing partners. It is rare to find a couple who can last long, because there is no officical ties from government for same-sex marriage. There are a lot of factors that make somebody a gay or a lesbian, but the people always discriminate their existence, they are considered to be abnormal and immoral. According to Michel Foucault, that humans are actually born bisexual, the education from the environment plays an important role in forming the sexual orientation, social behavior, and social identity [8]. Sexual orientation is a preference of someone to please their sexual desire, erotism, thought, fantasy and behavior toward the same sexes [9]. Lesbian Rere is a product of social construction and childhood education in her family environment. According to Sigmund Freud’s personality theory, that an individual childhood experiences with the family is the most important factor that can form the personality [10]. While Kretch adds, personality becomes a complex hypothetical construction to develop the quality of id, ego, superego [11]. Based on Margaret Muckenhoput’s explanation, Id is a psychological energy which has been existed since birth as personality system for human to accomplish the basic needs [12]. Ego is a personality structure which involved realistic demand. While, superego is a personality aspect which gives some clues to make evaluation or personal conscience. According to Minderop, from someone’s personality we can know three aspects, which are knowing information about human behavior, motivating the individual in order to be able to live fully and well, and to be able to develop the potentials of an individual optimally through the changing of psychological environment [13]. The Id of Rere, was created from her childhood which had less-affection of a family, being born without father. Unable to gain the love of the people around like what happened between her and her schoolmates. She often saw the conflict between her mother and her grandmother with some dirty words. One day Rere asked her grandmother about her father, her grandmother answered rudely and angrily. That made Rere dropped her tears, and hugged her mother. It was from her mother, the love which she could only get, in every night, she always slept beside her mother and hugged her. Until the day when her mother was sick, Rere slept with her, when she woke up, she woke her mother but her mother was no longer alive. Her sorrow became worse, then she lived only with her grandmother. Rere became a silent girl, like what happened to her mother. The cruel side of her grandmother made her felt inferior and alone. Until one day, Rere was falling in love with her private teacher and her friend in highschool until she got pregnant before marriage. Rere’s ego decided to go to Jakarta in order to avoid her grandmother’s anger. After the baby had been born, it was entrusted to Mrs. Marlin. A 40-year-old woman who worked as a teacher and had no child. Rere spent her daily life in Mami Lani’s boarding house and worked as lesbian prostitute. Then one day her super ego remembered the task that she had been doing all this time, as what cited here: Tomorrow , I’ll be back home to wash and kiss grandmother’s feet. I will go to mom’s and grandfather’s grave to do pilgrimage. I want to ask for apologize of my sins and mistakes...is there any place for Re in heaven: who has been drenched in sins [14].

Rere feelt unable to enjoy what she was doing. She thought to end it, the profession as a prostitute, she wanted to repent of her sins. Rere realized that she has so many sins all this time, sins to the mother, grandfather, and her grandmother. She wants to apologize to all of them. Therefore, the causes of Rere becoming a lesbian are the series of personality factors built in her family. Her childhood experiences which got less psychological care and love. According to Kartono, there are a lot of factors that cause someone to become a lesbian, they are: (a) hereditary factor is the imbalance of sexual hormones, (b) the bad or unfavorable environmental influences for normal sexual maturity development, (c) one always looks for satisfaction of lesbian relation, because she has ever felt the excitement of sexual experiences during adolescence, and (d) a child who has traumatic experiences with a father resulting antipathic hatred toward the father and everyman. Then come the encouragement of lesbian which stay inside the personality [15]. The environment causes Rere to become a lesbian. She surrenders herself to others and takes social pathology caused by a series of problems which can not provide solution. There is no concern of her closest family and friends. Rere grows up as a manifestation of her surrounding. Simply put, Rere gets her subjective internal structure through her external objective structural experience of social world where she lives. The presence of lesbian women in Indonesia can not be accepted by parents, relatives, and society in general. Lesbians, and abnormally assessed groups considered as low creature, often berated, unloved or discriminated. So that, the existence of Indonesian literature development can facilitate the lesbians’ struggle of their existence in Indonesia and also educate the readers, who are new to this matter in order to be wiser to respond the minorities.

CONCLUSION

Literature is a reflection of the era in which the literary work has been created. It has surely experienced such kind of freedom since 2000’s. It is triggered by the collapse of Soeharto’s regime. In the previous era, literature was imprisoned by a value and unable to explore the idea freely. For the next era , the post-modern literature grows rapidly. Style, moral value, diction, narration are no longer glorified by some writers, they free themselves out of structural pattern, which one of it raises the issue of LGBT. There are a lot of literary works in Indonesia which raise the issue of lesbian, bisexual, transexual, transgender, such as novel entitled “Gerhana Kembar” by Clara NG. Published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in December 2007, a novel “Love You Till End” by Merry DT published by Fou Media publisher in March 2009, novels “Suara Perempuan Lesbian” and “Kawin Bule “ by Putri Kartin published by Galang Press in 2003. Anthology of short stories “Rahasia Bulan” by Is Mujiarso and friends published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama 2006, novel “Dicintai Jo “ by Albertine Endah published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama 2005, novel “Jangan Beri Aku Narkoba” by Albertine Endah published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in January
2004, Lines: Kumpulan Cerita Perempuan Di Garis Pinggir by Ratri M. Published by Millenium Publisher in January 2000, Rima-Rima Tiga Jiwa novel by Akasa Dwipa published by Literasi Press 2016 novel Relung-Relung Gelap Hati Sisi by Wira W. Published by PT. Gramedia 1983, novel The Sweet Sins by Rangga Winanto Putra published by Diva Press October 2012, and novel Kembang Kertas: Ijinkan Aku Menjadi Lesbi by Eni Martini published by Trust Publishing April 2007, novel Lelaki Terindah karya Andrei Aksana, novel Cowok Rasa Apel by Noel Solitude, novel Pria Terakhir by Gusnaldi, and etc. The existence of literary works in Indonesia which use LGBT as theme are freely spreading. There is no censorship department which forbids its distribution. The major label appreciates it as a theme of sexuality which have always been sold out in decades after 2000’s. Those kinds of literary works are presented by using simple language it is usually called pop literature (teenlit or chicklit, and the world of youth is always raised as the theme Novel Re by Maman Sukarman is one of the example of Indonesian pop literature. The flowing language of storytelling, and the young people always become the object of a main character. In the end of the story, the life of a main character is always positioned to be tragic, questionable, and dramatic. The theme that is used draws the cultures of urban subculture to romance and domestic problem. The description of Rere becoming a lesbian prostitute is a form of crystalized contextual condition happens in Indonesia. Lesbian is a part of subculture who dares to show up to public in group lately. They start to speak up their struggle about the rights of citizen. Through the literary works, at least it can become a media of propaganda and educate Indonesian people extensively that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) are part of the social and cultural construction in diversity.

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