

**BISEXUALITY REFLECTED ON ANDRÉ ACIMANS' *CALL
ME BY YOUR NAME* (2007) : A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree
of Department of English Education School of Teacher Training and Education**

**By:
LESI YUNITA TINNINGRUM
(A320150227)**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA
2020**

APPROVAL

BISEXUALITY REFLECTED ON ANDRÉ ACIMANS'

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME (2007) :

A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

PUBLICATION ARTICLE

Written by:

LESI YUNITATINNINGRUM

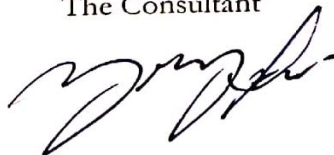
(A320150227)

Approved by the Consultant

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

The Consultant



Yeny Prastiwi, S.Pd., M.Hum., Ph.D.

NIK. 1047

ACCEPTANCE

BISEXUALITY REFLECTED ON ANDRÉ ACIMANS' *CALL ME BY YOUR NAME* (2007) : A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

PUBLICATION ARTICLE

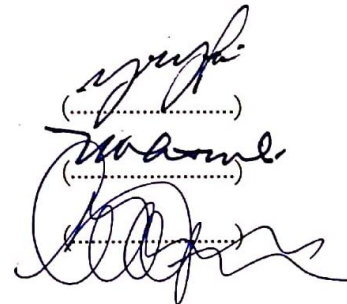
by:

LESI YUNITA TINNINGRUM
A320150227

Accepted and approved by the Board of Examiners
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta
On December, 2019

The Board of Examiners:

1. **Yeny Prastiwi, Ph.D.**
(Chair Person)
2. **Dr. M. Thoyibi, MS.**
(Member I)
3. **Dr. Abdillah Nugroho, M.Hum.**
(Member II)



(.....)
(.....)
(.....)

Dean,




Prof. Dr. Farun Joko Prayitno, M.Hum
NIP. 1965 04 28 1993 03 1001

TESTIMONY

Herewith, I declare that there is no plagiarism in this publication articles. As far as I know, there is no literary work which has been raised to obtain bachelor degrees of university. Nor there are option masterpiece which have been written or published by others, except those in which the writing are referred manuscript and mentioned in the literary review and bibliography.

Hence, later, if it is proven that there are some untrue statements in this testimony, I will bold fully responsible.

Surakarta, 19 July,2019

The researcher



Lesi Yunita Tinningrum

A320150227

BISEXUALITY REFLECTED ON ANDRÉ ACIMANS' *CALL ME BY YOUR NAME* (2007) : A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki tentang biseksualitas dalam karakter yang dipengaruhi oleh masyarakat. Selain itu, penelitian ini meneliti tiga tujuan utama, yaitu penggambaran biseksualitas yang dijelaskan dalam *Call Me By Your Name* (2007) oleh André Aciman, indikator biseksualitas yang dipengaruhi oleh pandangan sosial di sekitar karakter dan alasan penulis dalam mengangkat masalah biseksualitas dalam novel. Dalam menganalisis *Call Me By Your Name* (2007), peneliti menggunakan pendekatan sosiologis yang disajikan oleh Wellek dan Warren (1949) yang memiliki tiga perspektif utama. Tiga perspektif dapat disederhanakan sebagai berikut --- biografi penulis sebagai sumber daya, konten sosial dari karya tersebut, dan pengaruh sastra dalam masyarakat. Selain itu, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang biasanya jenis penelitian ini digunakan dalam bentuk deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa indikator biseksualitas karakter dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal dan faktor eksternal. Biseksualitas yang digambarkan dalam novel berdasarkan penerimaan orang biseksual dalam masyarakat di antaranya pada keluarga, lingkungan pertemanan, lingkungan sekitar dan agama. Selain itu, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *Call Me By Your Name* ditulis untuk menyampaikan apa yang penulis lihat dalam pengalamannya ketika ia berada di Italia.

Kata kunci: *call me by your name*, biseksualitas, pendekatan sosiologis, penerimaan masyarakat

Abstract

This research aims to investigate about bisexuality in the characters which affected by the society. Furthermore, it examines these three major objectives of this research, these are the depiction of bisexuality described in *Call Me By Your Name* (2007) by André Aciman, the bisexuality indicators influenced by the social views surroundings the characters society and the author's reason in addressing bisexuality issue in the novel. In analyzing *Call Me By Your Name* (2007), the researcher uses sociological approach presented by Wellek and Warren (1949) which served three main perspectives. The three perspectives can be simplified as follows--- the biography of the writer as the resources, the social content of the work, and the influence of literature in society. Moreover, this research uses qualitative method which is usually this type of research used in descriptive form. The result shows that the indicators of the bisexuality of the characters are affected by the internal factor and the external factor. The bisexuality depicts in the novel based on their society acceptance among family, friendship, environment and religion. In addition, this study indicates that *Call Me By Your Name* was written to deliver the what the writer ever see in his experience when he was in Italy.

Keywords: *call me by your name*, bisexuality, sociological approach, society acceptance

1. INTRODUCTION

In the world of literature, there are a lot of aspects that support the literary works to be an excellent product to enjoy. Just like the genres, the story line, the characters, the theme, and etcetera. Nowadays, there are lots of stories that bring a rare theme. One of them is *Call Me By Your Name* (2007) by André Aciman. He raises a different theme to his novel which is maybe not a common theme used by the other author, bisexuality. This novel tells about a young boy called Elio and a man called Oliver. The story starts when Oliver came to Elio's house in B town. Oliver is in his assignment to get done his manuscript. Thus, he came to Elio's house to look for Elio's father helps to revise his manuscript. He stays for six weeks long. During Oliver stays in Elio's house, they start to fall in love to each other. Started with Elio who tried to give Oliver the signs that he is interested to him, and finally when Elio confess his feeling to Oliver, Oliver also said that he feels the same. For the period of their romance, Elio also have a lover-alike relationship with Marzia, which currently his friend, and Oliver with Chiara which is also one of Elio's friend. Unfortunately, their love story (Elio and Oliver) did not end up well. When Oliver get back to United State, finally he got married to a girl, Elio feels so sad about that. Nevertheless, twenty-year later they meet in an occasion. Oliver already has children, but Elio still love him just like the first time he realized it.

The researcher found several previous studies related to this novel. The first one is written by Jelita Anggreini (2014). Anggreini mainly focuses her research on Elio's characterization as a homosexual teenager. She focuses on three aspects: Elio's self-identifying as a young homosexual, the second is about his inexperienced as a homosexual, and the last is about the society awareness that is related to his sexual orientation in society such as in family, friendship, job and religion. The second is a research written by Frederick S. Roden (2019) that focuses on Jewish memory and the Jewish identity which has the correlation toward same-sex love.

Call Me By Your Name (2007) André Aciman is great novel that has a good story in it. This novel might change some people point of view toward bisexuals. That is why the researcher interested to wrote a research on bisexuality issue in the novel. From time to time, bisexuality becomes uncommon issue to be

discussed. Rathus, Nevid & Fichner-Rathus (2009) stated that bisexuality itself is the attraction to both sexes, males and females sexually. Their background that make them being a bisexual, how their social acceptance, and the reason why the author write this novel is really interesting to study. Thus, it makes a difference to the previous study, and finally this present researcher mainly focused on the bisexuality reflected on *Call Me By Your Name* (2007).

Related to the issue of the study, the researcher chooses sociological approach to analyze the bisexuality in the novel *Call Me By Your Name* (2007). This theory focuses on the relation among the story, the author, and the society. Wellek and Warren (1949) briefly served three major perspectives toward sociology in literature: (1) the biography of the author, (2) the social content of the work, and (3) the influence of literature in society.

2. METHOD

The type of this research is qualitative research which the result formed as words. Qualitative research is research that works with non-numerical data (Punch, 2013 and Mohadan, 2018). The primary data of the research is the novel "*Call me by Your Name*" which is written by André Aciman and the secondary data was taken from the other resources which is related with the study and the primary data such as the biography of André Aciman, literary books, articles, journals and also other references from the Internet. In collecting the data, the researcher reads and takes an understanding about the novel. After that, browse and read some related article from the Internet. Next, taking notes of the important related to the novel, and the last is identifying the problem and finding the result of the study on *Call Me By Your Name* (2007). Moreover, sociological approach was used to analyze this research and answer the following research questions: (1) the indicators of bisexuality in the novel, (2) the description of the bisexuality in the novel, and (3) the reason why the author write a novel under bisexuality theme. The technique to analyze this data is separated into two, first, defining the problem, and the second, analyzed on the classification and characteristics that refer to the main problem.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Indicators of Bisexuality

Being normal is everyone wants, but some people are born different. One of the differences is being a bisexual. Bisexuality mostly called as a deviation for some people because they never know and strange about what bisexuality is. Bisexuality is often described as someone equal desire toward men and women (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1976). Mostly people with this deviation also feels worry about several things. They could be afraid of being thrown away and it will create several outcomes that will increase their negative emotion (DeWall & Bushman, 2011). In this novel, there are two main bisexual character, they are Elio and Oliver. There are also two indicators that considered as the factor of their bisexuality, there are the internal factor and the external factor. Thus, the factors will be distinguished into two, Elio's bisexuality indicators and Oliver's bisexuality indicators.

The first is Elio's bisexuality indicators that separated into internal and external indicator. Bisexuality could come to everyone in every age, adolescence or adult. Elio is only a 17 years old boy, he is still a labile teenager that is why he has huge worries about anything confirmed by this passage, "*And why I wouldn't show him how like butter I was? Because I was afraid of what might happen then? Or I was afraid he would have laughed at me, told everyone, or ignored the whole thing on the pretext I was too young to know what I was doing?*" (Aciman, p.19). Elio was afraid if Oliver knows about what Elio feels he will ignore him. Caldwell, Kivel, Smith, and Hayes (1998) explained that adolescent with bisexual might face some difficulties such as establishing autonomy, identity formation, sexuality, and peer relations, that might cause them more insecure about their self.

There are two factors that cause Elio's bisexuality; the first indicator is the internal indicator. This indicator mostly come from someone itself, maybe they are naturally born bisexual or descendent of bisexual parents. In the novel, Elio proved genetically bisexual descent from one of his parents that is his father. In one conversation, Mr. Parlmen, Elio's father, decide to confess that once he was almost jump into bisexuality world, Mr. Parlmen explained "*Then let me say one more thing. It will clear the air. I may have come close, but I never had what you*

had. Something always held me back or stood in the way....” (Aciman, p.204), from this line it could be concluded that he is trying to get to close to be a bisexual but never get it too deep as Elio did, because sometimes, this sexual orientation often influenced by someone genetic background in their early development (Garcia-Fulgares & Swaab, 2009). The second is the external indicator that influenced by the factor outside bisexual person. The place where Elio lives is fulfilled with different kind of people, also a homosexual couple that he met when they visited his house to meet his father. Elio make clear, *“I wondered what their life together was like.”* (Aciman, p. 115), from this passage, Elio seems interested to learn something from their relationship and it makes him feels like that everything is got to be just fine being like them. Moreover, it is clear that Elio is genetically bisexual from his father and he is also influenced by people around him.

The second is Oliver’s bisexuality indicators that also have two factors that made him bisexual. The first one is the internal indicator. Since Oliver’s background does not described in the novel, but there are some proves that considers Oliver as a bisexual. Oliver is the kind of handsome, smart, and curious man. He always tried to learn something new include the way someone react to him. Elio tried to interest Oliver’s attention some times and Oliver could easily read it. Oliver is also curious about Elio, so his curiosity brought him to include to a romance with Elio. It could be happened because men with bisexuality have a bigger curiosity rather than the other men with heterosexuality or homosexuality (Rieger, Rosenthal, Cash, Linsenmeier, Bailey, and Savin-Williams, 2013). The second is the external factor that influenced by other people around Oliver. Different with Elio that get the impact from someone else, here, Oliver is directly has the romance with the actual bisexual, that is Elio. Thus, it can be concluded that even Oliver is considered as a person with normal-sexual before Elio, but because he get into a romance with Elio he become a bisexual. The factor can simply said comes from his curiosity as the internal indicator and his interaction with Elio as the external indicator.

3.2. The Description of Bisexuality in the Novel

Call Me By Your Name (2007) is a novel that portrayed the vents of everyday life of someone, but the difference is some people here are bisexual. They are Elio and Oliver which become the main character in the novel. As a bisexual, they should assimilate with the society around them. The author of this novel, André Aciman, also put the depiction of bisexuality through their everyday life; their relation with family, with the opposite gender, and the relation between Elio and Oliver itself.

Both Elio and Oliver also have a relationship to a girl, Elio with Marzia and Oliver with Chiara. The first is Elio with Marzia, they are apparently friends. Nevertheless, Marzia has an interest to Elio more than friends in general. They often do anything together and Elio likes to do something romantic with Marzia. *“When we were no longer naked, I took her hand and kissed her on the palm, then kissed the space between her fingers, then her mouth. She was slow to kiss me back, but then she didn’t want to stop. We were to meet at the same spot on the beach the following evening. I’d be there before her, I said.”* (Aciman, p. 47). This passage shows that Elio seems really enjoy his activity with Marzia, and Marzia never reject the thing that Elio did to her. Marzia knows that Elio did not like her portrayed in Elio’s conversation with his neighbor, Vimini. Friend is the most common making partner, it can activity reinforces their sexual activity and it is normal (Bisson & Levine, 2009, and Fielder & Carey, 2010). Thus, the relationship between Elio and Marzia is seen as friend with benefit only, but both Elio and Marzia feel fine about that. The next is Oliver with Chiara which met in an occasion when Oliver is in B town. After they have met, finally they are getting close to each other. Just like Elio and Marzia, Oliver and Chiara also regularly wasting time together and doing romantic activity together. Elio seems like he does not comfortable with Oliver and Chiara’s relationship. *“Talking about skin, come here,” she said, and with her fingernails gently and slowly tried to pull a sliver of peeling skin from his tanned shoulders, which had acquired the light golden hue of a wheat field in late June. How I wished I could do that.”* (Aciman, p. 31), this line talks about how Elio feels jealous toward Chiara and want to be like her. Besides the romance, a reason why Oliver likes Chiara is because she is depicts as a good looking girl. Machiavelli (1532) said that” Men in general judge

more from appearance than from reality”, or easily said that men mostly considers the appearance rather than the other aspects because appearance is the most important thing that can be accepted by others (Olivola & Todorov, 2010).

Beside their relationship to opposite gender, Aciman also depicts their life in society through some aspects, such as family, friends, environment, and religion. Family, friends, and environment has the same bound to every bisexual. In Elio’s family, this bound can be seen when Elio’s father knows about his son condition, *“You had a beautiful friendship. Maybe more than a friendship. And I envy you. In my place, most parents would hope the whole thing goes away, or pray that their sons land on their feet soon enough. But I am not such a parent. In your place, if there is pain, nurse it, and if there is a flame, don’t snuff it out, don’t be brutal with it.”* (Aciman, p. 203-204), Mr. Parmlen really understands what kind of situation Elio faces is. He is not even angry or doing something bad to his son, he gave Elio an understanding about how to face this kind of situation because he knows that it is not got to be easy for his son. He also understand that sense of recognition, because everyone is the part of society, thus, they have to be recognized (Moss, 2012). The other people that already know about Elio and Oliver are Mafalda and Elio’s mother, Mrs. Parmlen. They consider not talking everything about this, in case to take care of Elio’s feeling, because the safeguarding of the family will help the bisexuality carriers to stabilize and to endure among the society (Austin, 2016). Not only family that should understand people with bisexuality, but also friends and environment. These two aspects also have a significant role in someone’s life. The place where Elio lives is a good place with a good environment and friends surrounds. They never get a bad treatment from everyone else related to their boy and boy relationship. Oliver is considered as careless man, so he decides not take everything too serious. Nevertheless, Elio has the opposite characteristic. He is a thinker and even thinks about the small thing. The first time Elio realize about his feeling to Oliver, he feels so confused. *“There was no one to speak to. Whom could I tell? Mafalda? She’d leave the house. My aunt? She’d probably tell everyone. Marzia, Chiara, my friends? They’d desert me in a second. My cousins when they came? Never. My father held the most liberal views—but on this? Who else? Write to one of my*

teachers? See a doctor? Say I needed a shrink? Tell Oliver? Tell Oliver. There is no one else to tell, Oliver, so I'm afraid it's going to have to be you..." (Aciman, p. 57-58), this line depicts Elio's worries about what he feels that time because there is no one to talk to. He feels afraid if someone knows, everything will be different in his life. Sometimes people with deviation also hiding their true identity from their peers because they are afraid of the response they will get related to physical violence (Barker, 2007). That is why the society acceptance including friends and environment is really important because it will affect their mentality and their social life.

There is one aspect left, bisexuality seen from religion side. Elio and Oliver are Jews, but they are not a very faithful Jewish, because in Judaism, there is a law called Torah law that already clarify about the prohibition toward this kind of sexual-orientation (Shaffer, 2013, and Anggreini, 2014). Thus, it is clearly seen that actually is Judaism believe bisexuality is prohibited and not even allowed to declare their identity as a bisexual.

3.3. The Motive Behind the Depiction of Bisexuality in the Novel

Every author has their own experience in writing. Every ideas they have is coming from every single part of this life, it may come from their personal experience, other people experience, from their imagination, or even from the combination of life reality and the imagination. Thus, every story has its own characteristic which makes it different from the other.

Aciman wrote his novel as the portrayal of his experience pour with imagination as writer. The *Call Me By Your Name* novel is the depiction of his experience when he is in Italy. He travels somewhere using train and unintentionally a woman also ride the train. He started chitchat with the woman until she finally left the train. This event makes Aciman started imagining a story and finally *Call Me By Your Name* was created with some modification, because in reality Aciman has no bisexuality background (Kornhaber, 2019). Thus, why this novel addressed bisexuality is clearly because Aciman's wide imagination. Aciman itself is a Jewish, which is why he puts a little Judaism aspect in this novel.

In writing this novel, Aciman also puts the detail about the continuity between the novel and the actual event in Italy. In a real condition in Italy, bisexual and the other deviation called polyamorous people choose to be able to keep their existence among their family and how it will help them direct their sexual deviation in the right way regardless the stigmatize in the society (Gusmono, 2018). In line with the three perspectives by Wellek and Warren (1949), Aciman apply the social content of the work to write his novel because the main idea of this novel is coming from a real condition then transform into story with some addition.

4. CONCLUSION

This part presents the conclusion of the investigation. Based on the past examination, the analyst has concluded three conclusions. To begin with is the indicators of bisexuality in the novel are separated into two, internal and external indicators. Elio's internal indicator is coming from his father who is apparently a bisexuality survivor, and it makes Elio is genetically bisexual. Then, the external factor is from his surround which makes him meeting a homosexual couple which triggers his curiosity. The next is Oliver. Oliver's internal factor is because his own curiosity in studying Elio's random pattern to Oliver which pulls him into bisexual circle. Oliver's external indicator is because he has direct interaction with the other bisexual that is Elio, which makes him more curious.

Then there is also described about the bisexuality in the novel which separated into some aspects. The first is Elio and Oliver relationship to opposite gender. Elio and Marzia's relationship is considered as a friend with benefit relationship, while Oliver is only interested with Chiara's good appearance. The other aspects are from family, friends, and environment which has a big effect to a bisexual person. The support of these three society aspects toward bisexual people could help them to avoid some mental and society problem, not only family, friends, and environment, but also religion. Here, the role of religion is disobeyed by Elio and Oliver. In Judaism there is Torah law that arranging the prohibition about bisexuality. That is why Elio and Oliver described as a mediocre Jewish.

The last is the reason why the author writes this novel is because he wants to deliver his experience and his imagination. He also think about the continuity inside the novel with the real situation so this novel is readable and does make sense.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anggreini, Jelita, (2014) *Examining a Representation of a Coming of Age Homosexual in Andre Aciman's Call Me by Your Name*. Scientific work. Depok: Universitas Indonesia
- Austin, C. R., (2016) Bisexuality and the problem of its social acceptance. *Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge*. 4:3, 132-137
- Barker, Meg, (2007) *Out in Psychology Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Perspectives: Heteronormativity and The Exclusion of Bisexuality in Psychology*. UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd
- Bisson, M. A., & Levine, T. R., (2009). Negotiating a friends with benefits relationship. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 38, 66–73.
- Blumstein, Philih W., Schwartz, Pepper, (1976) *Bisexuality in Men*. Fudan University Library: Sage Publication
- Caldwell, Linda L., Kivel, Beth D., Smith, Edward A., & Hayes, David, (1998) *The Leisure Context of Adolescents who are Lesbian, Gay Male, Bisexual and Questioning their Sexual Identities: An Exploratory Study*. National Recreation and Park Association
- DeWall, C. Nathan, Bushman, Brad J., (2011) *Current Direction in Psychological Science: Social Acceptance and Rejection: The Sweet and the Bitter*. Amsterdam: Sage Publication and Assotiation for Psychological Science
- Garcia-Fulgares, Alicia, & Swaab, Dick F., (2009) *Sexual Hormones and the Brain: An Essential Alliance for Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation*. Amsterdam: S. Karger AG, Basel
- Gusmono, Beatrice, (2018) *Coming out Through an Intersectional Perspective: Narratives of Bisexuality and Polyamory in Italy*. UK: Routledge
- Kornhaber, Spencer (2019) *The Call Me by Your Name Dream Continues*. USA: The Atlantic. Retrieved November 15, 2019 (<http://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theatlantic.com/amp/article/601060/>)
- Machiavelli, N. (1532/1898). *The Prince*. London: George Bell & Sons.
- Mohajan, Haradhan, (2018) *Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects*. UTC: MPRA (Munich Personal RePec Archive)
- Olivola, Christopher Y., & Todorov, Alexander, (2010) *Fooled by first impressions? Reexamining the diagnostic value of appearance-based inferences*. UK: Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved

- Punch, K. F., (2013). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Rathus, Spencer A., Nevid, Jeffrey S., Fichner-Rathus, Lois, (2009) *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity*. Seventh Edition.
- Rieger, Gerulf, Rosenthal, Allen M., Cash, Brian M., Linsenmeier, Joan A.W., Bailey, J. Michael, & Savin-Williams, Ritch C., (2013) *Male bisexual arousal: A matter of curiosity?*. UK: Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved
- Roden, Frederick S., (2019) Queer Jewish memory: André Aciman's *Call Me By Your Name*. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 18:2, 194-211. USA: Routledge
- Wellek, R. & Warren, A., (1949). *Theory of Literature*. USA: Harcourt, Brace and Company.