CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study which includes background of the research, reasons for choosing the topic, scope of study, research questions, the aims of the study, research methodology (data collection and data analysis), clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

1. 1.   Background

The ideas of wrong and right, beauty and ugly, normal and abnormal are socially constructed. It is not the taken-for-granted norm but it is a collective agreement or a convention in a particular society. Consequently, breaking the norms may result in social punishment.

However, the practices of these particular social norms are opened for challenge. It is in line with Foucault (1978) who believes that there are always possibilities of resistance, in which the dominant discourse may get the benefits from this by reaffirming its position and defining the boundaries between the legitimate and illegitimate.

Further, Foucault (1978) affirms that process of normalization depends upon the construction of a normal/abnormal binary opposition in which the abnormal is set up as a point of reference for the normal. For instance, heterosexuality is put under 'normal' category as contrasted to the 'abnormal'

homosexuality. Consequently, homosexuals are regarded as abnormal since they violate the code of conduct of the fixed 'normal' heterosexual norms.

Frequently, the study about queer is focusing on their marginalization. For example, the previous related study of Frias (n.d) has investigated a novel about lesbian couple in Walker's *The Color Purple* who have been marginalized. The main character in Walker's novel often got abused and beaten up by her surroundings. However, what makes the present study different from other queer researches, is that it focuses not on society's rejection, but acceptance towards the homosexuals. Specifically, the objectives of the study are twofold. First, it attempts to find out the portrayal of the homosexual characters in Aciman's novel *Call Me by Your Name;* and second, it endeavors to identify ways of society's acceptance towards the homosexuals.

The novel *Call Me by Your Name* written by André Aciman has significantly drawn the life of same-sex in a normal, daily life setting. Elio, as a main character, fell in love at the first sight with a man named Oliver. Suddenly, Elio's female friend, Chiara, was seducing Oliver while Elio was dating with Oliver. This made Elio confused whether Oliver had the same feeling or not to him. Therefore, Elio tried to test his feeling by dating to a female named Marzia, Elio's another friend. But it did not work, Oliver was always inside Elio's heart. Fifteen years later, Oliver married to a woman but years after, they divorced. Elio and Oliver finally met again and live happily ever after.

Consistent with the objectives of this present study queer theory becomes the theoretical framework in analyzing the data. Culler (1997) mentions that queer is a theory that questions not just the cultural convention of sexuality but on the culture itself. Based on this statement, it is clear that the cultural convention is not merely natural but it is constructed. It can be concluded that homosexuals may challenge the established convention with some compensation. The issue is also appropriate to be analyzed by using gender stereotypes. Brannon (2000) explains that a gender stereotype is a belief in the society about psychological traits, characteristic, and activities appropriate to certain gender. It means that there are possibilities of difference with what people think and the reality. The study is also using gender performativity. One of the experts which is concerned on Butler's performativity is Sara Salih. Salih (2006) states, "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is perfomatively constituted by the very 'expression' that are said to be its results" (p.56). It can be said that one's gender is performatively depended on one's choice and it is influenced by society, context, economy, etc. In addition, Foucault's technology of self is utilized. Martin (1988) states that Foucault was concerned on how the 'reality' was constructed and how the 'reality' was connected to governmental, institutional, and social structures of power and knowledge. Related to this, Foucault's theorization of technology of self is relevant with this analysis as a means to analyze the equal treatment of homosexuals from the society in the text.

1. 2.   Reason For Choosing Topic

In the text, the love stories of the same-sex lovers are more like heterosexuals. The characters are just like heterosexual men except they choose to have relationships with other men rather than women. They appear to possess great and true love that are just as real as heterosexuals. The issue is interesting to discuss because the main characters are confident to express themselves even though they are homosexual. In addition, it is relatively unusual for the community to accept such behavior, which makes it different from some other queer stories.

To go further into the analysis, queer theory, gender stereotypes, gender performativity, sexual identity, and Foucault's technology of self are used as the tools of analysis to reveal several ways in which a homosexual couples is treated equally by the society.

1. 3.   Scope of the Study

Choosing André Aciman's novel entitled *Call Me by Your Name* as a research context, this study emphasizes of how the homosexuals are portrayed in a text and how this same-sex phenomenon is treated in a heteronormative social structure.

1. 4.   Research Question

The study is geared towards answering the following questions:

1.   How are the homosexual characters portrayed in the novel?

2.   In what ways are homosexual relationship accepted in a heteronormative society as evidenced in the novel?

1. 5.   Aims of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the study attempts to find out how homosexual people are portrayed in the text. Further, the study aims to find how a heteronormative society tolerates homosexual relationship. As a result, this analysis may possibly reveal as the evidenced of how homosexual are portrayed in the text and how the heteronormative society accepts the act of homosexual relationship.

1.6.   Research Methodology

The study uses descriptive text analysis approach. The study analyzes the phenomenon in the form of homosexual portrayal in the text and the ways of heteronormative society accepts homosexual relationship. The study describes and analyzes the textual evidence in the form of words, phrases, and sentences as evidence in the novel which answer the research questions.

Chintiana Rahmatika, 2012
Compensation For Acceptance : The Portrayal of Homosexuals in Andre Aciman's
Call Me by Your Name
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia **|** repository.upi.edu

1.6.1. Data collection

The data are in the form of words, phrases, and sentences critically selected from a novel entitled *Call Me By Your Name* by André Aciman, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux with the length of 248 pages as the source of the study. The novel is chosen because homosexuality in the main characters is significantly illustrated. To gain all the data, the study collected the textual evidence from the novel.

1.6.2. Data Analysis

The collected data are then categorized into how homosexuality is portrayed in the text and in what ways are homosexual relationship accepted in a heteronormative society as evidenced in the novel. Queer theory as proposed by Dobie (2009), gender stereotypes by Brewer (n.d), gender performativity by Butler (1990), homosexuality by Lehrman (2005), and technology of self by Foucault (1988) then are used as tools of analysis to analyze the textual evidence. In conducting the study the following steps have been taken:

- Selecting the subject of the topic.
- Reading the novel closely.
- Classifying the text into research questions.
- Analyzing the texts.
- Interpreting the data.
- Making conclusion.

1.7. Clarification of Terms

Straightening the terms used in the study is very fundamental. It is required to avoid any misinterpretation. Therefore, several important terms are defined below:

- **Queer:** A set of many possibilities of sexualities which covers various degrees of heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality. Here, sexuality believed as something which is not simply granted but is influenced by the experience of race, class, and subject to shifting desire. In other words, sexuality is fluid or flexible to change (Dobie, 2009).

- **Gender Stereotypes:** Generalization about a role on each gender. It can be about the gender attributes and differences of individual or groups (Brewer, n.d).

- **Gender Performativity:** It describes how gendered bodies are performed in the society. It is something one 'does', a series of act rather than a 'being' (Butler, 1990).

- **Sexual Identity:** Something that explains someone's thought about his/her sexual orientation whether to the same or the opposing gender (Culler, 1997).

- **Homosexuality:** The phenomenon which shared experience or feeling about their sexual act and attractions between people of same biological sex. They have emotional bonding with people of the same-sex and are caught into same-sex romanticism (Herek, 2000).

- **Heteronormativity:** The insistence that "humanity and heterosexuality are synonymous". Therefore, heterosexuality is considered as the natural act or normal expression of humanity (Warner, 1993 as cited in Dalley and Campbell, 2006).

1.8. Organization of the Paper

Chapter I

This chapter presents background of the research, reasons for choosing the topic, scope of study, research question, the aims of the study, research methodology, includes data collection and data analysis, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II

In this chapter focuses on theoretical framework used to be the equipment of the research in revealing the problem in a novel by André Aciman, *Call Me by Your Name*.

Chapter III

Chapter III includes the ways how to analyze the study, such as research design, source of data, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

Chapter IV

This chapter consists of the data collected along with its deeper analysis taken from relevant studies stated in chapter II.

Chapter V

This chapter concerns with the conclusions and suggestions of the investigation.