

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In social life, several groups are part of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual groups. It cannot be damaging that even though homosexual groups are in the community structure, some areas consider homosexuals to be an iniquitous group. Some people think that people who claim to be homosexual must hide their identity as gay, lesbian, and bisexual because they are seen as immoral by society. Some people also view that being gay is a failure for those who cannot fulfill society's norms of heterosexuality (Rudy, 2016).

According to the book *Queer Theory* by Jagose, p. (1996), the word 'homosexuality' was proposed by the Swiss doctor Maria Benkert which was not used in England until the 1890s. Homosexuality is a relatively new word because it was only discovered at the end of the 19th century. Homosexuality is usually used for someone who practices homosexuality. Homosexuality occurs in anyone, both men and women, who tend to be attracted to other people of the same gender. Homosexual is often replaced by the term "gays," which refers to male homosexuals. In contrast, the term "lesbian" is used to describe women who tend to be attracted to other women.

The topic of homosexuality raises many different perceptions and points of view in society because the subject of homosexuality is not something that many people can discuss. Discussions about homosexuality in

society create debates and differences in perspective from various points of view. In American society culture, it is undeniable that there has been a multicultural country, one of which is a social phenomenon regarding the issue of homosexuality. (Rudy, 2016)

Differences in perception regarding homosexuality give rise to various ideas in creating works of art containing gay elements. Following developments in technology and media, many people have included the topic of homosexuality in their works in the form of novels, films, music, and literary works. (Costa, 2017)

LGBT social, cultural, and political issues are one of the issues that are widely discussed by many media, especially films. In its development, American society is actually interested in films and television shows that show gay characters and themes clearly. Many of the films that contain gay themes and characters in them have won awards and achieved commercial success. (Costa, 2017) This shows the interest and level of interest of American society in LGBT issues. In a study conducted by Rudy, pp. (2016), many gay movies became popular in the 2000s in the USA. This reason agrees that American gay films are exciting to be discussed in a study. One of them is *Love, Simon* (2018) directed by Greg Berlanti.

Love, Simon (2018) is an example of a film that raises the topic of homosexuality. This film is a romantic comedy-drama directed by Greg Berlanti and released in 2018. This film premiered at the Mardi Gras Film Festival in February 2018 and was released in the United States on March 16,

2018, by 20th Century Fox. The main character in the film *Love, Simon* (2018) is Simon Spier, a gay teenager who has difficulty expressing his sexual identity in American society which has a culture of freedom of expression. The difficulties that Simon faces are spiced up by his love story with Blue, who uploads an online post saying that Blue is gay. The disclosure of this identity will be the author's focus in dissecting the film *Love, Simon* (2018).

The film *Love, Simon* (2018) was chosen as the film object in this research because the main character is aware that he is gay, but he has difficulty telling other people his true identity. By using the film *Love, Simon* (2018) as the object of research, I try to understand the formation of Simon Spier's homosexual identity, which goes through the six stages of identity formation according to the theory put forward by Vivienne Cass.

1.2. Research Question

The problem that arises in this thesis is how Simon's sexuality as a homosexual teenager develops in school life, society, family, and himself.

- 1) How are the narrative elements of *Love, Simon* (2018) movie depicted?
- 2) How did Simon's homosexual identity formation develop in *Love, Simon* (2018) movie?

1.3. Scope of the Study

I analyzed a film called *Love, Simon* (2018) produced in 2018 by Greg Berlanti, where he made it based on a novel, *Simon Vs. the Homo Sapiens* by Becky Albertalli. In analyzing this research, I used Homosexual Identity

Formation by Vivienne Cass (1979) to describe the description of the object and the study that will be from the research. The topic of discussion in this research focuses on the character Simon Spier, a teenage boy who experiences sexual development in his life.

1.4. Aims of the Study

The study aims to:

- 1) To discover what are the narrative elements of *Love, Simon* (2018) movie.
- 2) To explain how Simon's homosexual identity formation occurs in *Love, Simon* (2018) movie.

1.5. Previous Study

In previous study, the film *Love, Simon* (2018) was analyzed as a film object for its research. To make this research broader and more complete, the author included several previous studies with the same film objects and topics in previous research. The author includes previous studies with the research object, *Love, Simon* (2018), and the topic, Homosexual Identity Formation by Vivienne Cass, to support knowledge and show the novelty of the research.

According to Zie (2021), in the film *Love, Simon*, directed by Greg Berlanti, there are four signs against the defense of homosexuality, namely the struggle to come out as homosexuals, increasing the acceptance of homosexuals, changing negative perspective about homosexuality, and supporting the homosexuals starting from family and friends. In her research,

Tessa also stated that the film *Love, Simon* (2018) directed by Greg Berlanti is a film that represents the views of a student who is gay.

Putri Pradnyaningsih et al. (n.d.) states that external factors influence Simon to resolve conflicts in the story. According to the author, Simon faced his external conflict between man vs. man and man vs. society. On the man vs. Man. Simon gets external conflicts with other characters, namely Martin, Abby, Nick, Nora, Leah, and Blue. They also get the external conflict between Simon and the community at school.

Riana et al. (2022) uses the Queer Theory by Giffney (2007) to analyze the influence of sexual orientation secrecy from the utterances of the main characters and the author's narration and the realization of the influence of sexual orientation found in *Love, Simon* (2018) movie. Anna found six kinds of romantic secrecy of sexual orientation flouted by the main characters and the author's narration in *Love Simon: Romantic Secrecy, Burden, Instruction Thought Suppression, Perceived Physical Attractiveness, Break-up Distress, and Love*.

An analysis of the film *Love, Simon* conducted by Florida & Rauchberg (2019) stated that there was an influence of homonationalism that was brought out in *Love, Simon* (2018). Florida & Rauchberg analyzed their thesis using Jasbir K. Puar's (2007) theory of nationalism-LGBT rights discourse which states that white gay people are more privileged, while black and brown gay people are decentralised.

Vidyastria (2017), in her journal article entitled *Homosexual Identity in Alex Sanchez's Rainbow Trilogy* (2017), uses Vivienne Cass's Homosexual Identity formation to describe the development of the sexual identities of the three main characters in the *Rainbow Trilogy*. Vidyasatria found that the three novels described all stages of Cass's homosexual identity formation in the characters Jason and Kyle. Meanwhile, Nelson is already at the synthesis stage because Nelson has a sexual identity that has been formed. However, this research also reveals that personal subjectivity and actions, interactive intimacies, and socio-historical connections also influence the development of the sexual identities of the three main characters.

Papilaya et al. (2021), in *The Analysis of Zach's Homosexual Identity in Shelter* (2007) (2021), uses homosexual identity formation by Vivienne Cass. In his research, six stages of Cass's homosexual identity formation occur in the character Zach in the film *Shelter*. Papilaya uses Vivienne Cass's theory in order to understand more deeply the process of becoming a homosexual experienced by Zach.

Putri S (2021), in her thesis entitled *The Development of Homosexual Identity of Adèle in Blue Is the Warmest Color* (2021), uses Vivienne Cass theory of homosexual identity formation to describe the sexual development of Adèle's character. Putri describes the six stages of sexual development proposed by Vivienne Cass. Meanwhile, this research shows five stages that occur in Adèle's character. Adèle's character does not experience the final stage of identity synthesis because of society's rejection and stigma regarding sexuality.

Based on the previous studies above, this research has a different study from those researched previously. By using a Queer Theory perspective and the development of homosexual identity, the author focuses on depicting the development of Simon Spier's character in the film. I will explain the development of Simon Spier's homosexual identity in the six stages proposed by Vivienne Cass: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, Identity Pride, and Identity Synthesis.

1.6. Method of the Study

In the method of the study, it will be explained about the methods used by the author for writing research, analyzing data, collecting data and the approaches used in research. The purpose of explaining the method used by the author is so that the reader understands how the author examines the data in detail and factually.

1.6.1. Method of Data Collection and the Source of Data

In this study, I employ qualitative method to explore and understand the meaning of *Love, Simon*, in his part, represents his homosexual identity. According to George, p. (2008, p. 7), qualitative method refers to research results in words, images, or non-numerical symbols. This research uses primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source is the subject of written data in the film *Love, Simon* (2018). While secondary data sources are taken from journals, theses and books/e-books that are appropriate to the research topic and can support the arguments in this study.

In compiling this research, I used library research. According to George, p. (2008) in the book *The Elements of Library Research*, she stated that library research identifies and searches for factual sources or expert opinions regarding questions and problems in research. I retrieve research supporting data through articles, journals and theses that have been carried out previously.

In collecting data, I carried out several stages in data collection, especially in researching the object of the film *Love, Simon* (2018). First, I watched and observed the film *Love, Simon* (2018) to get a deep understanding of the entire movie. Then, I wrote various important notes that support the research argument. In writing notes, I took data that is in line with the object of study and social phenomena raised in the research. After taking the notes, I did a transcription in which the dialogs in the film *Love, Simon* (2018) in the form of audio data were converted into written data.

1.6.2. Method of Approach

This research uses an exponential approach. According to (Guerin et al., 1966) exponential approach or also called as “symbolic” approach is a dissection of works through symbols of patterns that form meaning to explain a thematic implication. Therefore, this approach focuses on observing several intrinsic aspects in movies that specifically support research, such as character, setting, and conflict.

This research uses the theory contained in the book written by Carol A. B. Warren entitled *Identity and Community in the Gay World* (1974) to

dissect how homosexuals and homosexuality occur in the main character Simon Spier in the film *Love, Simon* (2018). The theory about homosexuals and homosexuality put forward by Warren will also help in dissecting how the society in the film *Love, Simon* (2018) sees Simon Spiers as a homosexual.

This research also uses the theory of homosexual identity formation, which was developed by Cass (1984). This homosexual identity formation claims that the formation of homosexual identity goes through six stages, namely identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. The use of homosexual identity formation theory is based on queer theory as a bridge that helps to complete and explain the direction and focus of research.

By using homosexual identity formation theory, this research also bases its approach using a queer approach. The aim of using this approach is to deepen the explanation regarding the formation of homosexual identity and dissect the identity of homosexual characters in the research object. This queer approach is also used to interpret the homosexual identity of Simon in the *Love, Simon* (2018) film.

1.7. Writing Organization

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consist of the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous study, scope of the study and writing organization

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the writer mentions the intrinsic and extrinsic theory which are utilized for describing the main topic of this research.

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS

It is the main chapter of the study. This chapter consist of the discussion and analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of *Love, Simon* movie by using related theories that are attached.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter is the result and outline of the previous chapters.