

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

This study deals with the field of film narrative. It concerns the idea of treating film narrative from a literary perspective. The object of the analysis in this study is *Blue Is the Warmest Color*.

Blue Is the Warmest Color was released in 2013 and was directed by Abdellatif Kechiche. The movie featured Adèle Exarchopoulos (as Adèle) and Léa Seydoux (as Emma) with the French title *La Vie d'Adèle*. This movie was adapted from a graphic novel, *Le Bleu Est Une Couleur Chaude*, by Julie Maroh, a writer from France. The film narrative in *Blue Is the Warmest Color* begins with Adèle's life as a high school student. Like other students, Adèle does the things a student does, like leaving for school, chasing the bus, skipping some subjects, and gossiping with her female friends. She also dates a good looking guy named Thomas but finds no satisfaction with him sexually. Her confusion begins when she accidentally meets a blue haired-woman, Emma, who happens to be a lesbian. Their accidental meeting drags Adèle to her private sexual fantasies which makes her curious about this blue haired-woman. She has also struggled with her sexual identity since then. There is emotion she never felt before, especially towards a woman. She likes it better when she gets the chance to spend her time with Emma afterwards. The rejection she gets first is from her school friends when they know she hangs out with Emma a lot.

They happen to know that Emma is a lesbian which makes them draw a conclusion that Adèle is a lesbian too, they mock Adèle for this reason.

The big difference between what is shown in the movie and what is written in the novel is that the protagonist in the movie, Adèle, remains alive throughout the story. Meanwhile, the one in the novel, Clementine, is told that she passed away from the outset rendering a flashback technique employed in the novel. Kechiche makes the film narrative in the movie a little bit different from the novel. He wants to show the audience that every identity is worth fighting for despite what people say and the struggle. Clementine's death in the novel is caused by, more or less, heartbreak over the loss of her relationship with Emma that brings her to pill addiction and leads to heart failure. Emma is similarly represented as the one in the novel, whereas Adèle is not. Adèle does not find happiness in the lesbian community. She experiences rejection and emotional hardship as she yearns for returning home to her parents. Clementine is completely isolated when her school friends deny her once she starts hanging out with Emma. This becomes worse as Clementine's parents disown her when they find out about her love affairs with Emma (Thomas, 2013). As in the movie, the audience can still watch the rejection of Adèle from her surroundings. Yet, Kechiche makes it so vivid on how Adèle finds her true identity.

The writer chose *Blue Is the Warmest Color* because this movie is not only tells us about a homosexual love story, but there is also identity development portrayed in the movie. By watching the movie, the writer would try to find out the experience and struggle of Adèle and focused on Adèle's process in finding her new identity as a lesbian.

The movie vividly depicts Adèle's journey in discovering her sexual identity. In the outset, Adele is represented as an ordinary student. Such a depiction changes as she

encounters confusion and rejection from her surroundings. The writer notices the different representations of Adele in the film from that of the novel. In the movie, Adèle keeps on moving despite her struggles. She leaves anti-gay hatred behind and finds the social circle that completely welcomes her. This is the moment where her relationship with Emma starts flourishing as she graduates from high school (Thomas, 2013). Henceforth, Adèle encounters confusion about her sexual orientation. At first, she rebuffs the idea of being a lesbian. Later, she finds herself end up with Emma, and accepts herself for being a lesbian. This transformation is captivatingly described in the movie. Thus, the writer is interested in analyzing Adèle's identity development through such transformation represented in the movie, instead of the novel.

This movie tells about an unusual romance, that is a same-sex relationship. Same-sex relationship or LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) has become the world's attention for a long time. This issue is still considered as a taboo for it is considered violating the norms prevailing in the society. Most people think that being homosexual is a disease that must be cured. In Indonesia itself, most people assume homosexuality as sexual deviation that has not been generally accepted and hardly accepted by society (Tarigan, 2011).

The same-sex relationship is presented in this movie, illustrated through the main character as a lesbian. According to Ricch (2000), as cited in Setya (2013), lesbian is a label given to the same-sex relationship of women or women who have sexual desires and emotions towards other women. Nowadays, lesbian still bears a negative perception from the society. Subject to stigmatization, those of lesbian or LGBT often feel afraid, differentiated, and marginalized. Therefore, from the ideological aspect of the film, the

writer intends to and focuses on analyzing the transformative development of Adele's identity. To do this, the writer employs the concept of homosexual identity formation as proposed by Vivienne Cass. The motive to bring forward this issue stems from the writer's intention wherein any stigmatization should not be easily labelled upon those of the LGBT as this may inflict further social damage as if LGBT is something bad.

The writer decides to choose Cass' theory because there are six stages that explain homosexual identity development. The theory of Cass may help the writer to describe Adèle's identity development as a lesbian. There have been some previous studies on the development of homosexual identity. Risanti Intan Al Baluni (2012), for instance, studied "The Sexual Orientation of Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*". Al Baluni examined the sexual orientation of the main character, Celie, with the focus on the factors that make her a lesbian and her homosexual identity development process. The writer studies something different from that of Baluni's. Baluni's study only uses four stages of homosexual identity development process, namely sensitization or emergence, identity confusion, identity assumption, and first relationship. As in this study, the writer applies all stages of Cass' homosexual identity formation. The stages are identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. This more complex approach to the subject matter follows what the movie represents.

1.2.Field of the Study

The field of this study is related to literature, with the object of analysis being the film narrative.

1.3.Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Vivienne Cass' homosexual identity formation experienced by the main character of *Blue Is the Warmest Color*, Adèle, that contains of six stages; identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis.

1.4.Problem Formulation

This study has purposes to answer these following questions:

1. What is the identity development of Adèle as a lesbian?
2. To what extent does the movie title express the film narrative?

1.5.Objectives of the Study

With regards to the problems mentioned, this study is conducted to achieve these following objectives:

1. To describe the identity development of Adèle as a lesbian.
2. To see how the movie title expresses the film narrative.

1.6.Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide the readers with a more rounded understanding of homosexuality, particularly the stages of homosexual identity development. Considering so, homosexual people should not be hindered and marginalized from any social interactions in the public domain. Hopefully, this study will enhance people's awareness to respect human values, especially to those having different sexual orientation. This seems to be the case for they have their own struggle finding their identity.

1.7. Definition of Term

Sexual Orientation:

Sexual orientation is related to sexual attraction to men, to women, or to both (Bailey et al., 2016). According to Supratiknya (1995), as cited in Mastuti et al (2012), there are three kinds of sexual orientation:

- Heterosexual

Heterosexual is a term used for a person who is romantically attracted to the opposite sex; a male would be attracted to a female or a female attracted to a male (Alston, 2017).

- Bisexual

Bisexual is a pattern of emotional, romantic, and possible sexual attraction to both sexes, woman and man (Kowalczyk, 2013a).

- Homosexual

Homosexual is a same-sex attraction; the physical, emotional, and psychological attraction to the same sex (Kowalczyk, 2013b). A man who is attracted towards another man is called gay, while a woman who is attracted towards another woman is called lesbian.