

Female Characters' Bisexuality in Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*

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Abstract

This study focuses on bisexuality characters performed by three main female characters in *The Hours* written by Michael Cunningham. This study aims to depict the bisexuality and its factors toward the three main female character, and how they cope with their bisexuality. The result shows that the three female characters are bisexual. The female characters are Virginia Woolf and Laura Brown who are married women, they love their husband but at the same time they love another people, their female partner, Vanessa and Kitty, while Clarissa Vaughan had loved a man named Richard but then she decides to marry a woman, being lesbian. The factors of bisexuality of Virginia Woolf and Laura Brown are there is no satisfaction and happiness in their marriage while for Clarissa Vaughan is due to her disappointment with the opposite sex. The three female characters face their life of being bisexual differently; Virginia Woolf must hide her feeling and later decides to commit suicide, Laura Brown leaves her husband and her children, and Clarissa Vaughan remains to live with her female partner and her daughter.

Keywords: Bisexuality, Sexual Orientation

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada biseksualitas yang dialami oleh tiga karakter wanita utama dalam novel *The Hours* karya Michael Cunningham. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan biseksualitas yang dialami oleh ketiga karakter wanita utama, faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan ketiga tokoh ini menjadi biseksual, dan cara mereka mengatasi biseksualitas dalam diri mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga tokoh wanita utama dalam novel *The Hours* adalah biseksual. Tiga tokoh wanita utama tersebut adalah Virginia Woolf dan Laura Brown, mereka adalah tokoh yang digambarkan telah menikah dengan laki-laki namun pada waktu bersamaan juga tertarik pada wanita lain, Vanessa dan Kitty, sedangkan tokoh Clarissa Vaughan pernah menjalin hubungan dengan laki-laki bernama Richard, namun kemudian menikah dengan sesama jenis, yang lebih dikenal sebagai lesbian. Faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan tokoh Virginia Woolf dan Laura Brown menjadi biseksual adalah adanya rasa tidak puas dan kebahagiaan dalam pernikahan mereka, sedangkan pada tokoh Clarissa karena dia pernah dikecewakan oleh lelaki di masa mudanya, sehingga ketiga tokoh ini tertarik pada laki-laki dan perempuan. Ketiga tokoh wanita utama ini tidaklah mudah mengatasi biseksualitas yang ada didalam diri mereka; tokoh Virginia harus menyembunyikan perasaannya tersebut dan pada akhirnya memilih untuk bunuh diri, tokoh Laura Brown pada akhirnya meninggalkan suami dan kedua anaknya, dan tokoh Clarissa Vaughan pernah berniat untuk melakukan bunuh diri namun pada akhirnya menyadari keputusan yang telah diambil yakni tetap tinggal dengan kekasih wanita dan anak perempuannya.

Kata Kunci: Biseksualitas Orientasi Seksual

INTRODUCTION

Michael Cunningham was born on 6 November 1952 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Then he grew up in Pasadena, California. He earned his B.A in English Literature at Stanford University in 1975 and his M.F.A (Michener Fellowship) from University of Iowa in 1982 and was awarded a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He wrote and published some short stories in the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Paris Review* while studying at Iowa. His first novel *Golden Gates* (1984) published followed with *A Home at the End of the World* (1990). His short story "White Angel" was later used as a chapter in his novel *A Home at the End of the World*. It was also included in "The Best American Short Stories, 1989", published by Houghton Mifflin.

The Hours is a great novel which wins the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and PEN/Faulkner Award in 1999. Besides *The Hours*, Cunningham also writes other works such as *A Home at the End of the World* (1990) and *Flesh and Blood* (1995). *The Hours* was published in 1998 and nominated for The National Book Critics Award and The American Literary Associate's book award gay and lesbian literature. In 1999 this novel was chosen as the Best Book of 1999 by New York Times, Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune and Publishers Weekly. Cunningham's works, *A Home at the End of the World* was listed in the Irish Times' International Fiction Prize and *Flesh and Blood* wins a Whiting Writer Award in 1995.

The Hours is also adapted to a film-maker directed by Stephen Daldry, with the screenplay by David Hare, starring Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore, Nicole Kidman and Ed Harris. There are some awards that *The Hours* film achieved, such as Best Actress in a Leading Role, Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, and Best Picture (Academy Awards 2003, USA), Best Motion Picture-Drama, Best Performance by an Actress and an Actor in a Motion Picture-Drama (Golden Globes 2003, USA), Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role (BAFTA Awards 2003, USA), Movie of the Year (AFI Awards 2003, USA), Best Foreign Feature Film (Amanda Awards 2003, Norway), Best Foreign Film (Association of Polish Filmmakers Critics Awards 2004), and Best Actress (Berlin International Film Festival 2003) (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0274558/awards>).

The story starts with the suicide of Virginia Woolf in the river. She is bored and confused in facing her life then she chooses to end her life by drowning herself in the river. Besides Virginia Woolf, other main characters are Laura Brown and Clarissa Vaughan. The three female characters live in different time but face almost same thing about love and life to both their lovers –both male

and female. There are chapters of three main characters that tell the life story of each character in which it is told specifically and with detail story.

In the chapter of Virginia Woolf who lives in 1923, it tells about how she survives with her illness in the suburban area with her husband, Leonard Woolf. She spends her time to write a novel –Mrs. Dalloway that she believes will change the life of many women in the future. She loves not only her husband but another woman, Vanessa, which reflects her sexual attraction for both male and female. In the chapter of Laura Brown who lives in 1941, Laura Brown is a wife of Dan Brown who has a son named Richie and now she is pregnant her second child. She loves to read the work of Virginia Woolf –Mrs. Dalloway that influences her personal thoughts and experiences. She is in a confusion of what she has chosen of being a wife and mother. Unfortunately, she loves not only her husband and her family but also another woman who is her neighbor, Kitty, that clearly shows her sexual attraction just same as Virginia Woolf. In the chapter of Clarissa Vaughan who lives in 2000s, Clarissa briefly lives together with her female lover Sally and her daughter, but she also takes care of her male lover, Richard in different apartment. Here, she is accepted to the society of her role being a modern wife of Sally, well-known as lesbian, however she still loves Richard and wants to be with him also even though Richard is sick, he has AIDS.

Through the story, the idea of having sexual attraction to both male and female is depicted clearly. It is all good in loving a male and female in the same time as long as she or he feels comfortable with it. Being bisexual is hard for Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Brown that they decide to make their own world –which Mrs. Woolf ends her life and believes this is the best choice of her own, while Mrs. Brown leaves her habit of being a normal wife and mother to make her own in another place and survived after the death of her husband, her daughter and her son, but for Clarissa, she keeps being Sally's wife after Richard is dead that society knows her as lesbian.

This study aims to depict the female characters' bisexuality in Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, to reveal the factors that contribute the female characters' bisexuality and to expose how the three female characters cope with their bisexuality within the novel. Sociological and psychoanalysis are used to analyze the data concerning about bisexuality. It uses concept of sexuality by Michel Foucault, concept of bisexuality and queer theory.

It includes the description of bisexuality depicted in the novel *The Hours*, the factors that contribute the

characters to be bisexual, and how the main female characters cope with their bisexuality. They are all hoped to be a valuable and excellent reading source for the readers. So, the readers will understand the topic about bisexuality widely and comprehensively. Furthermore, this study is expected to help the researchers who intend to develop the topic discussion afterwards.

METHOD

The data source of this study is a novel Michael Cunningham entitled *The Hours*, published by Picador, Farrar, Straus and Giroux/ New York, 1998. The data taken are in the form of phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs that represent the bisexuality of three main female characters, from author's description or other characters dialogue in the novel. This study applies library method which uses intensive or close reading technique to find quotations which represent the idea of bisexuality of three main female characters. The references contribute in this study are taken from the library and internet sources which support the data analysis. The steps to analyze the study are reading, comprehending the story of the novel and outlining the thesis, then collecting and dividing each data related to the analysis in the following chapter.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Sexuality

Talking about sexuality is rather hard and some cultures view it as a taboo thing. It is not easy to understand the term of sexuality in the past, however, the studies of sexuality develop rapidly and criticize the world of sex, sexuality and its connection toward influencing politics, economics, class, race, ethnicity, geography and space, gender, age, and morals and values (Weeks, 2009: 10). Sexuality is any feelings and activities related to someone's sexual acts, orientation, pleasure and desire (Weeks, 1978: 4). It comes from the word "sex" that refers to the biological and psychological characteristic to define a male or female. While gender refers to social constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers such constructions as an appropriate for men and women, it is related to someone's of being masculine and feminine, in which this term becomes one of some feminists' perspectives. In some definition, sex is such kind of a communication media to signify the intimation of a relationship; usually the relationship is between male and female in a sacred bond, a marriage, that means a thing administrated as Foucault stated in his *The History of Sexuality* "Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administrated."(Foucault, 1978: 24).

For some reasons, sexuality which refers to someone's sexual orientation, privately, is not visible which is different from the term of gender. No one can understand people's sexual orientation, whether he or she is attracted to different sex, same sex or even both sexes. Different from sex, gender is visible, for instance a man physically who dresses like woman (Bertens, 2002: 220). In some feminist thoughts, gender is understood against the biological sex that more socially acceptable and acquired. "The concept of gender argues that a person may have male sex, but may have feminine attributes in relation to the cultural norms..." (Wolfreys *et al.*, 2006: 45). The truth of sex appears as an activity as long as both people are like each other, love, feel comfortable to be together and remain revealing their relationship. It shows the sex as a desire is a special thing, personal in other words reveal who we want, what we want, and how we want. This idea leads to the presence of new social movements concerned with sex such as modern feminism, the 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer', and other radical sexual movements (Weeks, 2009: 9).

Sexual Orientation

According to American Psychological Association (2008), sexual orientation is an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to men, women, or both sexes. It is usually mooted in terms of three categories: heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual. Heterosexual is someone who has an emotional, a romantic or sexual attraction to other sex, for example a male who is attracted to a female. Homosexual is someone who has an emotional, a romantic or sexual attraction to same sex, for example a female who is attracted to another female. Bisexual is someone who has an emotional, a romantic or sexual attraction to both sexes, for example a female who is attracted to both male and female.

According to Noam Shpancer (2013), kissing, on the level of psychology, is an action that people express to others in showing their feeling, affection, closeness and intimacy. The kiss can express the love, passion, romance, sexual activity, affection, respect and friendship. There is also a different view of kissing between man and woman, according to Susan Hughes, a psychologist at Albright College, the kissing for women tend to build a bond with their partner and to asses them as potential mates, meanwhile for men, the kissing means to an end for their sex, to increase arousal for their partner.

Concept of Bisexuality

The definition of bisexuality is, closely related to French Feminism theory, an individual condition which

has sexual or romantic attraction toward both male and female. A bisexual experiences emotionally, physically, and sexually his or her attraction toward male and female. The bisexuality can be experienced by both male and female that two genders of masculinity and feminine exist in an individual personality. The word "bisexuality" is also used to refer the existence of two biological sexes within a species, a male or female characteristic within a single body (Storr, 1999: 15).

In the past, the bisexuals were considered as a person who are perilous and deceitful individuals, this condition is almost similar with the homosexuals but the homosexuals were clearly signified that they are attracted to same sex. This is due to their romantic attraction toward both male and female, that they can not be identified as normal or common people, but as a deviant (Bowie, 2002: 12).

It is briefly hard to define people who are bisexual that he or she may be more known as a homosexuality both gay and lesbian. According to Michael du Plessis, bisexuality is a common behavior but does not have identity, this happens because they choose to be what society say as a normal one, getting married to different sex, or they on the contrary choose to be a homosexual, being a gay or lesbian. So, the identity of married unmarried and/or lesbian gay are more clear than being a bisexual. Bisexuals are everyone, they can be a working men and women of all professions: writers and philosophers, soldiers and emperors, singers, actors and actress, etc. According to the Williams Institute (2014), bisexual are parents, teachers, athletes, writers, politicians, musicians, and artists. In *The Pocket Essential Bisexuality* by Angie Bowie, she quotes Dr. Fritz Klein's statement that bisexuality is not disguised homosexuality nor is it disguised heterosexuality, it is another way of sexual expressions which a way of being (Bowie, 2002: 7).

According to Exodus Global Alliance, there are two factors of being bisexuality, internal and external factors. Internal factors relate to the biological, genetic or heredity which can influence someone's sexual orientation. External factors relate to social factors, it can be from the raising contribution by homosexual orientation, such as peer rejection, sexual abuse, etc., the surroundings that introduced that kind of behavior also influence someone to be bisexual. The bisexuals face disparities in the society, almost similar with the lesbian and gay people. They find a different treatment in a workplace, according to Understanding Issues Facing LGBT Americans, 20% of bisexuals are reported experiencing discrimination, also sexual violence such as rape. In the health field, the bisexuals suffer hypertension, poor physical health, smoking, and risky

drinking much different from heterosexuals, lesbians, or gays. Some are reported to feel suicidal, based on the Canadian Community Health Survey that almost half of bisexual women and men had positively attempted taking their own lives.

Queer Theory

Queer theory emerges in the early 1990s which is out of the fields of queer studies and women studies, pioneered by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, and Derrida (Bertens, 2001: 336). It becomes a proud banner for homosexuality that was traditionally disparaged by the society. The work of Michel Foucault, which he develops the idea on sexuality and society, *the History of Sexuality* inspires the form of this theory, that "deviant" – non-heterosexual, forms of sexuality play a prominent role in the organization of Western culture. For Foucault, the homosexual had come into existence, that in the later nineteenth century sexual acts between men were no longer seen as a criminal act like fraud or burglary: 'Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality' (Foucault, 1978:43). It issues the new identity to the societies in which this production lead to a fixation of identities (homosexual, heterosexual) legally, medically, psychologically and be accepted in religious discourses (Foucault, 1978: 21).

According to Tamsin Spargo (1999: 9), queer theory is a collection of intellectual endeavour with the relations between sex, gender and sexual desire. The development of studying lesbian and gay becomes the major topic but then it explores the topic of the opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality. This theory is spreaded by the ideas from poststructuralis theory, such as Lacan's psychoanalytic models of decentred, unstable identity, Derrida's deconstruction of binary concept and linguistics structure, and certainly Foucault's model of discourse, knowledge and power.

People who are identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual often experience a different treatment from the society. They face pervasive stereotype for instance when someone comes out as bisexual, people assume that he or she is confused about or hiding his or her true feeling, the real sexual orientation of his or hers. This stereotype leads the discrimination toward the people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (Understanding Issues Facing Bisexual Americans, 2014). Society may fear of those people that give rise to what it is known as homophobia, and then people only accept the normal sexual orientation which is called as heterosexism. The people who are LGBT are also related to suffer the mental health or depression, obesity, smoking and unsafe alcohol, drug use and even they are contagious by AIDS. So, the people who care with the case of what LGBT

people face in the society manage such kind of association to care with and protect these people by being well-known as queer theory (Bertens, 2002: 225). These people are also experiencing violence, according to a 2010 study of 3134 young Australians; it is found that 61 percent LGBT people had suffered sexual abuse because of their sexuality. By this umbrella, the LGBT people feel getting the protection and respect; having the same treatment by the society, social and public relations.

ANALYSIS

1. Depiction of Female Characters' Bisexuality Virginia Woolf's Bisexuality

Virginia Woolf is one of the main female characters that appear in the first story. This character will trigger the two others characters in the novel. The author of the novel is inspired to write this story by so much reading the works of a great female writer and feminist, Virginia Woolf, in which he then creates such a story and a character that depict his idol to an imagination character, in issuing the bisexuality personality. In the story, Virginia is described as a writer who lives in a suburban area with her husband, Leonard Woolf and a servant, Nelly. She has a simple life and activity, but she is a smart girl. She lives in 1923, the era of World War II, which emphasizes the traditional life for every people. Society looks that the good relationship between man and woman are by getting married that a wife must take care of her husband and fulfill what he needs.

And she is his wife. She is Virginia Stephen, pale and tall, startling as a Rembrandt or a Velazquez, appearing twenty years ago at her brother's rooms in Cambridge in a white dress, and she is Virginia Woolf, standing before him right now. (Cunningham, 1998: 33)

From the quotation above, it demonstrates the consciousness of Virginia as a wife that she exists to spend her whole time with her husband. Her real name mentioned briefly "*She is Virginia Stephen.*" before being a wife of Mr. Woolf which emphasizes her previous existence as a common woman that she was a girl but it was so much easy to change to be Mrs. Woolf, as stated in "*..she is Virginia Woolf*" which underlines she belongs to her husband, it is regarded to the custom of the society. The word "*..pale and tall, startling as a Rembrandt or a Velazquez.*" describes her first appearance, as a young girl, she has a pale face that sustains her confusion in accepting someone to be her partner for her whole life that she is finally accepting Leonard's proposal and being a bride *in a white dress*.

The character of Virginia is described as a character that has a liberal perspective as clearly mentioned that "*If she were religious, she would call it the soul.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 34), unfortunately she lives in a time that it is somewhat odd if she does not believe such kind of a belief -religion. It happens when she tries to have an inspiration to write. She believes that she is smart, her husband also admits that his wife is able to produce a masterpiece as stated in "*Her books may be read for centuries.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 33) and indeed able to deliver an ideology, from her own experience, through her work of writing will influence many people especially women in the future. As Foucault's idea that the liberation will make a better understanding for people to be free, speaking freely about sex (Foucault, 1978: 9).

Clarissa will have had a love: a woman. Or a girl, rather, yes, a girl she knew during her own girlhood: one of those passions that flare up when one is young -when love and ideas seem truly to be one's personal discovery, never before apprehended in quite this way; during that brief period of youth when one feels free to do or say anything; to shock; to strike out; to refuse the future that's been offered and demand another, far grander and stranger... (Cunningham, 1998: 81)

The quotation above remarks the character of Virginia writing a fiction story about a woman in which it actually represents her own experience. She creates her character as a different woman in her time that this creation will be accepted in the future. She creates a character who is interested in a same sex that actually it represents her own feeling. Here, the bisexuality is reflected in the fiction character -Clarissa Dalloway created by Virginia Woolf herself, a married lady to a gentleman and love another girl. "*Clarissa will have had a love: a woman*" emphasizes Virginia's real attraction toward same sex -a woman in which by her writing she can do or manipulate the storyline through her fiction character in representing her feeling due to her time that this kind of behavior is not acceptable. As Foucault's idea that being a homosexual was not acceptable in the past and in some believes and also it was prohibited to talk about sex freely written in his work *The History of Sexuality*, that depicted clearly by the character of Virginia and her fiction character (Foucault, 1978: 38). She cannot express her true feeling toward same sex in her society so she is deliberately writing a fiction story, creates such female character that actually represents herself (Cunningham, 1998: 35). Virginia is not depicted neither religious nor acceptable to tell her attraction toward a female. She is liberal but tries to repress her real

point of view, she has her own perspective about love and affection and she only can share it through her writing as proved by the statement she writes in her story "...when love and ideas seem truly to be one's personal discovery, never before apprehended in quite this way; during that brief period of youth when one feels free to do or say anything; to shock; to strike out; to refuse the future that's been offered and demand another, far grander and stranger...". She loves her husband, she loves her job and she is attracted to another woman.

One of the bisexual ways in expressing their feeling is by kissing their partner. In the story, not only Virginia is described to have a quality time with her husband but also with Vanessa. Vanessa is depicted as Virginia's sister, but it is clearly enough to recognize that they have a relation more than family relationship. The kissing scene between Virginia and Vanessa has shown the readers that they share their hidden feeling, their deep affection.

Nelly turns away and, although it is not at all their custom, Virginia leans forward and kisses Vanessa on the mouth. It is an innocent kiss, innocent enough, but just now, in this kitchen, behind Nelly's back, it feels like the most delicious and forbidden of pleasures. Vanessa returns the kiss. (Cunningham, 1998: 154)

With the visiting of Vanessa, Virginia feels a different spirit as well after she kisses Vanessa again behind her servant, Nelly in the kitchen. She realizes that what she is doing with Vanessa is something strange which is approved by the statement "*although it is not at all their custom*". So, it is brief that there is no custom of kissing on the mouth between woman and woman in her time, it is something queer and she must kiss her partner covertly as stated in "*behind Nelly's back*". Usually the kissing action is acted by two people, between male and female in expressing their love, affection, feeling and desire. It is related to Storr's statement that people may find their sexual pleasure and satisfaction to both male and female, however in some cases homosexual is more sensitive (Storr, 2002: 17). But, here, the kissing between these two female characters shows their true feeling, their desire toward each other. Virginia feels something innocent but soulful in which she realizes what she is doing right now is really what she wants beside with her husband in her boring life. With their kissing, Virginia is inspired to elaborate her fictional character's story and add more complicated storyline. She will write Clarissa's love story toward a man and woman which she will kiss passionately her female partner as well as what Virginia

has done with Vanessa; the kiss that describes a love, a desire and passion.

Laura Brown's Bisexuality

The second character that appears in the novel as bisexual is Laura Brown, a housewife; her husband is Dan Brown, who lives in Los Angeles with their first child, a son named Richie. She is now pregnant a second child and she is proud of it, as woman's obligation in producing descents that can make her husband and family happy. The purpose of marriage is to obtain offspring, to have children as heirs that are related to what Foucault found in his research that sex is powered which "the sex of husband and wife was beset by rules and recommendations (Foucault, 1978: 37).

The sexual orientation of Laura Brown is evinced clearly when she kisses Kitty, on the lips. It happens accidentally but they both enjoy the kissing, and realize what they are doing, as stated in "*Kitty lifts her face, and their lips touch. They both know what they are doing. They rest their mouths, each on the other. They touch their lips together, but do not quite kiss.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 110). Kitty's lips and Laura's is touching but they do not kiss passionately in a long time, but that short kiss influences their both feeling, deep in their heart. The touching lips of theirs trigger a strange feeling that they realize that it is not a dream; it is true, their acts, their kissing, and their strange feeling (Cunningham, 1998: 110).

She touches her lips, where Kitty's kiss briefly resided. She doesn't mind so much about the kiss, what it does and does not imply, except that it gives Kitty an edge. Love is deep, a mystery—who wants to understand its every particular? Laura desires Kitty. She desires her force, her brisk and cheerful disappointment, the shifting pink-gold lights of her secret self and the crisp, shampooed depths of her hair. Laura desires Dan, too, in a darker and less exquisite way; a way that is more subtly haunted by cruelty and shame. Still it is desire, sharp as a bone chip. She can kiss Kitty in the kitchen and love her husband, too. She can anticipate the queasy pleasure of her husband's lips and fingers (is it that she desires his desire?) and still dream of kissing Kitty again someday, in a kitchen or at the beach as childrenshriek in the surf, in a hallway with their arms full of folded towels, laughing softly, aroused, hopeless, in love with their own recklessness if not each other, saying Shhhh, parting quickly, going on. (Cunningham, 1998: 143)

This quotation above proves that the character of Laura Brown is clearly bisexual. The definition of bisexuality that is closely related to French Feminism

theory is a condition of someone's sexual interest, attraction and orientation toward both male and female. This condition can be happened by both male and female in which in a single body there may be the existence of two characteristics, feminine and masculine (Storr, 1999: 15). This condition is happened to Laura that she is attracted to both male and female; she is interested in her husband, Dan Brown, and her neighbor, Kitty. She loves both of them at the same time and she feels that she needs their love too. She always remembers the kiss between her and Kitty in the kitchen, her lips, her breath, her perfume and her force. She cannot forget what she had been done with her, full of passion. On the other hand, she loves her husband. She desires Dan a lot, as evidenced in "*She loves her husband, and is glad to be married.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 79); she remembers his kiss, his pleasure, and his force that the only girl he loves is herself, a good housewife, Laura Brown. Dan is also a good husband for her, he always desires her and lets her free to do anything as long as she feels good and care with him and their son.

Clarissa Vaughan's Bisexuality

Clarissa Vaughan is fifty-two and she lives in an apartment with her female partner, Sally, and her daughter, Julia. She has been living there with Sally almost fifteen years (Cunningham, 1998: 91). The character of Clarissa is clearly well-known as a lesbian in the modern society due to her decision to marry a same sex, a female named Sally. But before she decided to spend her whole time with a same sex, she was in love with a male and she had a special relationship with him that shows Clarissa's sexual orientation, it is known as bisexual (Bowie, 2002: 13). Clarissa can have sex with both male and female that in accordance with diagram of sex and gender, her sexual orientation is actually bisexual but then she chooses to be a lesbian to make her herself and her family not confuse with her marriage status. As Storr (2002) found that some people are attracted to a certain person in their early life and remain attracted for the rest of their life, yet the sexual identity is needed in the fact of classification for anxiety (Storr, 2002: 103). Besides, her male partner named Richard was also interested in a same sex; he loves his friend and he has a special relationship with him, named Louis, as stated in "*Why should he want her, a wry and diffident girl, no breasts to speak of (how could she be expected to trust his desire?), when he knew as well as she the bent of his deepest longings and when he had Louis, worshipful Louis, heavy-limbed, far from stupid...*" (Cunningham, 1998: 52). This condition emphasizes her to choose loving and living with her female lover.

The liberal idea of being a bisexual is about the perspective about love and sex in which for Clarissa the sex and love is an uncomplicated thing. People can have sex with anyone as long as that people want it each other, either between male and female or between a male and male and/or female and female, even toward both sexes, as evidenced in "*It seemed possible, at least. Why not have sex with everybody, as long as you wanted them and they wanted you? So Richard continued with Louis and started up with her as well, and it felt right; simply right. Not that sex and love were uncomplicated.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 96). It proves that Clarissa and her mate, Richard, are bisexual; they both love each other but they are also interested in same sex. According to Pines in her *Falling in Love*, she states that when the first time a couple meets directly has an attraction, the relationship will start, either to both male and female (Pines, 2005: 76). Moreover, Clarissa can imagine having sex with Richard's mate, Louis, that in her mind as long as both of them agree to fulfill their passion together, it is all fine to share their desire as proved by the statement, "*As she rubs Louis's back, Clarissa thinks, Take me with you. I want a doomed love.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 135).

2. The Factors of Bisexuality of Three Main Female Characters

Factors that contribute the characters in *The Hours* becomes a bisexual is no satisfaction and happiness in the marriage bond. Generally, people expect the marriage walks happily ever after, both husband and wife feel satisfy with their partner and feel happy with their bond, as Pine (2005) states in her *Falling in Love* that the purpose of marriage is love; two people promise to share their feeling, the romantic love, and the happiness that this is the basic reasons which can provide the best basis for marriage (Pines, 2005: 25). However, in a case of Virginia Woolf's marriage she feels trapped with her choice, of marrying a kind person like her husband Leonard Woolf. Both Virginia and Leonard are busy with their own rush, and they are rarely spending their timer together or even have a leisure time in some time. Virginia feels alone although in fact she is no alone, she does not feel satisfied with her marriage or even happy, as stated in "*She is herself, standing here, with a husband at home, with servants and rugs and pillows and lamps. She is herself.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 164). To spend her time she always writes and produces inspiring story about intelligent woman and their life while Mr. Woolf spends his time in his room to work and publish that Virginia feels her marriage does not work as well as a common marriage. In accordance with Mehrabian (1989) in *Falling in Love* that people decide to be a couple while

they feel comfortable with each other and influence their satisfaction in their relationship, Virginia was married to Leonard Woolf out of love, she does not know the true personality of him as stated in "*She knows Leonard can be gruff, stingy, and all but impossibly demanding.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 72), this condition makes her pursuit her affection toward same sex, with her sister named Vanessa (Cunningham, 1998: 114).

The character of Laura Brown is also depicted as a young woman who marries her husband out of love; even though it is written that she loves her kind husband and their son. She feel trapped with her choice of marrying Mr. Brown, she enjoys reading as long as her duty has been finished, as stated in "... *she might have spent her whole life reading.*" (Cunningham, 1998: 39). The idea of fulfilling to love her life, loving someone beside her husband and her son that is love another woman is influenced by her hobby of reading Virginia Woolf's fiction story, Mrs. Dalloway.

Another factor that contribute the main female character becomes a bisexual is the disappointment with the opposite sex as experienced by Clarissa Vaughan. In the story, it is told that Clarissa was in love with Richard, her male lover that she loves until she chooses to be a lesbian; marrying same sex named Sally. Before Clarissa decided to marry Sally, she was disappointed with her male partner, Richard that he prefers to have an intimate relationship with Louis than with her, as evidenced in "*Richard had eventually gone off to Europe with Louis. What, Clarissa wonders now....*" (Cunningham, 1998: 52). It remarks clearly that Clarissa is truly disappointed with her opposite sex, she loves Richard very much yet she was left for a male partner. This condition makes her get the love and affection from both male and female, she loves both Richard and Sally. According to Murstein in Pines' *Falling in Love*, love is the mutual feeling to obtain a satisfaction that the two partners trying to do the best, this reason reinforces Clarissa to choose Sally rather than has another relationship with man (Pines, 2005:63).

3. The Main Female Characters Cope with Their Bisexuality

Virginia Woolf's Life

Virginia feels not satisfied with her life; she cannot freely express what she needs and what she wants, everything she can do are always by imagining what she desires in which by writing the fictional story and creating such kind of complicated story representing her life experience, one of them is the greatest story about a woman entitled *Mrs. Dalloway* (Cunningham, 1998: 34-35). Even, in her story writing she makes the main character will do everything that she cannot do directly

either toward her husband or toward her servant, Nelly, and ends her life that truly represent Virginia's mind (Cunningham, 1998: 69).

She has something deep in her heart, a feeling of affection, love and desire, that people will view it as something queer and ridiculous, she is a married woman that actually is interested in another woman. Virginia is not able to hold her burden of loving two people at the same time in which she still lives at the time that society feels disgusting with such kind of behavior, bisexual and/or lesbian. She is confused with herself; she loves her kind husband, Leonard Woolf and she also loves her partner, Vanessa.

She reaches the embankment, climbs over and down again to the river. There's a fisherman upriver, far away, he won't notice her, will he? She begins searching for a stone. She works quickly but methodically, as if she were following a recipe that must be obeyed scrupulously if it's to succeed at all. She selects one roughly the size and shape of a pig's skull. (Cunningham, 1998: 4)

The quotation above demonstrates that Virginia chooses to take her own life; she ends her precious life by committing suicide. There is a dilemma inside her thought whether she commits suicide or turns back to her home, lives normally and beats the pain and her indecision, before she is sure she will commit suicide, Virginia has written the idea of taking own life in her fiction character *Mrs. Dalloway*, as asserted in "*She will, Virginia believes, take her own life. Yes, she will do that.*" (Cunningham, 1998:69). Unfortunately, the decision has been taken, she is not able to endure her feeling, her pain, her tightness in the chest; she begins to pocket some stone to support her to be drowned. She intends to end everything, end her life leaving her home, her husband, her servant, her female partner, and she feels satisfied with it. Before she committed suicide she has left a note, a piece of letter to her beloved husband and she also did not forget to leave a note to Vanessa, as evidenced in "*She has left a note for Leonard, and another for Vanessa*" (Cunningham, 1998:3). Taking her own life by drowning herself into the river, on the other word is suicide, shows that her sexual orientation of bisexuality gives the impact toward herself; this condition happens to Virginia who cannot stand with the fact of her life, she is not able to overcome the fear and guilty inside her own self, its impact just influences her personal life.

Laura Brown's Life

Laura feels that she is not being herself, she is being another person that she must act as proper as her environment wants. She must act as a good wife and ideal mother. She feels better if she is reading the book she likes, a book of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (Cunningham, 1998:48). She is being confused with her own self and her life that she has been chosen, she loves her husband. Dan Brown is a kind husband who accepts everything inside herself, remains to be faithful with all her shortcomings, Laura realizes that she must make him happy and so does herself, she must be happy with her life. Due to her condition, of her confusion being herself that she desire her husband, Dan, and at the same time she also desires Kitty, another woman, she feels that she must make her own self happy, that first she decides to end her life. Her hobby of reading a lot about the work of Virginia Woolf especially *Mrs. Dalloway* contributes her mind very much and also herself of being bisexual and everything she will do, being someone who loves both male and female, as evidenced in "At least, she thinks, she does not read mysteries or romances. At least she continues to improve her mind." (Cunningham, 1998: 41-42). Her discontent of life makes her confuse to choose, be the one who obtains her own life, ends her own life, or remains to be a good wife and a mother of two children, as stated in "It seems she will be fine. She will not lose hope." (Cunningham, 1998: 79). Laura's condition of being confused is one of the impacts of her sexual orientation, as a bisexual. This happens because she cannot be able to decide the best decision for her life.

She could decide to die. It is an abstract, shimmering notion, not particularly morbid. Hotel rooms are where people do things like that, aren't they? It's possible –perhaps even likely- that someone has ended his or her life right there, in this room, on this bed. (Cunningham, 1998: 151)

From the quotation above, it indicates that Laura plans to do suicide. She intends to end her life in a hotel, alone by leaving her child, Richie, with Mrs. Latch, due to her condition of getting confused whether she is able to face her future life of making her husband happy and raising her two children, and also withstands her feeling toward Kitty, a strange feeling that she perceives (Cunningham, 1998: 141). For Laura, not only her that doing suicide in a hotel room as she thinks but also people had done the same thing with what she would do, taking her own life in a room, on the bed. But then she rethinks whether her choice is appropriate or not especially to end her life, leaving everything by dead. Her sensitiveness forbids her to commit suicide, she must live, the life must go on, and she must take her own life a

happy life different from her idol, Virginia Woolf, as stated in "...and yet she imagines that Virginia Woolf herself, the drowned woman, the genius, might in death inhabit a place not unlike this one." (Cunningham, 1998: 150). This condition obviously shows that Laura experiences as bisexual, after she gets confused with her life, with her all decision of being a normal one, a housewife and mother of two child, she tries to do suicide; to end her life will make her happy she thinks. Being away from her own home makes her more comfortable, she feels free, she feels safe, as evidenced in "She is safe here. She could do anything she wanted to, anything at all." (Cunningham, 1998: 150)..

So Laura Brown, the woman who tried to die and failed at it, the woman who fled her family, is alive when all others, all those who struggled to survive in her wake, have passed away. She is alive now, after her ex-husband has been carried off by liver cancer, after her daughter has been killed by a drunk driver. She is alive after Richard has jumped from a window onto a bed of broken glass. (Cunningham, 1998:222)

From the quotation above, it is surprised to recognize that Laura Brown is not dead, in the end of the story it is told that Laura comes to Clarissa's house, she visits to join the party held for Richard's winning award, but actually it is the farewell of Richard's death. In fact, she failed to commit suicide, and she did not kill herself or even her child. She has given birth to her second child, a daughter. She has decided to leave her sphere in what she thinks it prevents her to be herself, she left her husband; she left her children, Richard and his sister. She is alive when the people she was loved and had been ever together die. She realizes that what had been happened is the best for her life; she has done the best for her life but not for her own family; her husband, her daughter and the last her son, as evidenced in "I wish I could have done better." (Cunningham, 1998: 222). Laura eventually makes her strongly decide to be happy by being herself and leaving her obstacles; leaving her imperfect life of being a housewife and a mother of two children. She feels free in a different atmosphere; she can do anything she wants, and she is happy.

Clarissa Vaughan's Life

Clarissa is a figure of a modern woman who is brave to decide marrying a female lover, different from two others characters, Virginia Woolf and Laura Brown. Before she chooses to be a lesbian, as people knows that the relationship between a same sexes, for female known as lesbian, she was in love with a male, Laura's son, Richard. In facing her complicated life, she frequently gets confused about her decision, of being a lesbian rather than has a marriage bond with a man, with the one

she loves, Richard. She is confused whether her decision is right or not, as stated in "...Clarissa stands not only for herself but for the gifts and her entire sex." (Cunningham, 1998: 19). For some time, she thinks that she is not Clarissa, she is another person, and she is being another person that her partner wants. She performs everything for the person she loves, she obeys what her lover wants from her, and she follows Sally's wishes. She has been disappointed by her male lover when she was very young, and she feels not satisfied with her decision of being a wife of a female lover (Cunningham, 1998: 91).

She could simply leave it and return to her other home, where neither Sally nor Richard exists; where there is only the essence of Clarissa, a girl grown into a woman, still full of hope, still capable of anything. It is revealed to her that all her sorrow and loneliness, the whole creaking scaffold of it, stems simply from pretending to live in this apartment among these objects, with kind, nervous Sally, and that if she leaves she'll be happy, or better than happy. She'll be herself. She feels briefly, wonderfully alone, with everything ahead of her. (Cunningham, 1998: 92)

From this quotation, it represents Clarissa's true feeling that she wants to be free. She wants her own life, a life that she is alone and free to do anything she wants without thinking about others. She does not want both Sally and Richard; she will live with her own taste, she is able to find her way. Even so, Clarissa still cannot understand her confusion. She is upset, she loves them, but she is trapped with her feeling. She chooses to be loved by her female partner, but on the other side she must accept that she is being the one who is not independent. She believes that she will be excited if she leaves her life now, goes to elsewhere and another home in which only she, Clarissa, exists and feel quiet. However, the confusion comes to her mind, she realizes that she must face and take a risk about the decision she has taken in the past, and she must live. She does not want to think to leave or even to commit suicide, she loves her life, she is a fortunate woman, as evidenced in "*This is, in fact, her apartment, her collection of clay pots, her mate, her life. She wants no other. Feeling regular, neither elated nor depressed, simply present as Clarissa Vaughan, a fortunate woman....*" (Cunningham, 1998: 92). It all clearly denotes that Clarissa efforts to enjoy her life, coping with her bisexuality by choosing to be a wife of a woman and raising a young girl. She appreciates the gift that God has given to her; she does not either leave her life now to go elsewhere or commit suicide, she does not take her own life that it does not guarantee she will be free or glad.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis from the previous chapters, there are three main conclusions presented here. They are related to the depiction of bisexuality of the three main female characters, the factors that contribute bisexuality through the three female characters and the life of three female characters cope with their bisexuality. The three main female characters are Virginia Woolf, Laura Brown, and Clarissa Vaughan.

The main female characters in *The Hours* written by Michael Cunningham depicts the women who are bisexuals, the characters are Virginia Woolf, Laura Brown, and Clarissa Vaughan. These characters are interested in both man and woman, even though they have been bounded by a common marriage as Virginia Woolf and Laura Brown experience it. For Virginia Woolf, she is married to Leonard Woolf which at the same time she also loves her female partner named Vanessa. For Laura Brown, she is married to Dan Brown and at the same time she desires her female mate, Kitty. For Clarissa, she is married to a woman named Sally yet she remembers her past experience in spending her time with her male lover, Richard. Three of the characters admit that the love is complicated; they love both of the lovers, the husbands and the sweethearts.

Some factors that contribute the characters to be bisexual are there is no satisfaction and happiness in their marriage bond, as experienced by both Virginia Woolf and Laura Brown. They seek their satisfaction from loving another people, precisely to a woman, and they feel comfortable with their feeling. For Clarissa, she is a bisexual but then chooses to be a lesbian due to her disappointment toward opposite sex, she was in love with a male (but he later chooses his partner rather than her), so she keep loving him but marry to same sex. Another factor that is influenced to the male character of being bisexual (adult Richard) is due to the home environment of raising him in such kind behavior.

The three female characters are not easy to live with their bisexuality. For Virginia, she cannot cope with her life and she prefers to commit suicide, to leave everything, however for Laura, she first wants to commit suicide but then she thinks to appreciate her life time by leaving her common life and start to have a new life far away from her family and her children. For Clarissa, she also wants to leave everything she has and commit suicide, but then she feels she must face what she has been chosen; she will enjoy her life with her female lover and her daughter.

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