
LESBIANISM AS PORTRAYED IN CLARE LYDON'S *THIS LONDON LOVE*

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled “**Lesbianism as Portrayed in Clare Lydon’s *This London Love*.**” This study explains about the causes and effects of lesbianism which found in the novel *This London Love* by Clare Lydon. The purpose of this study is to find out the causes of lesbianism experienced by the two main characters and effects of lesbianism experienced by the two main characters. This study uses Uzoeshi’s theory to analyze the causes and effects of lesbianism in a novel in line with Queer Theory. In analyzing this study, the writers use qualitative descriptive method that presents all data in the form of words sentences and use library research as a way to collect data by reading selecting quotations from the novel *This London Love*. From this research it is found that the two main characters in the novel experienced four causes of lesbianism which are inadequate parenting, associating with lesbians, hetero-phobic, and looking masculine; and two effects of lesbianism which are alcoholism and jealous reactions. So, hopefully this research is expected to be able to become a reference which can provide useful information child abuse and for people to prevent the act of child sexual abuse and help the victims.

Keywords: Lesbianism, Queer Theory, Hetero-phobic, Butch, Alcoholism.

PENDAHULUAN

In this 21st century, many things have changed or upgraded to a whole new level. Now, the thing that is called a couple is not only built between man and a woman but also man and man or woman and woman who are famous with the name of homosexual. A man who has no attraction to women or even sexual disgust toward them is considered as a gay while a woman who is attracted to her fellow woman is known as a lesbian. Even though human nature was created in pairs between men and women to build a harmonious family (Budiarty, 2011) but it does not really matter nowadays.

The phenomenon of lesbianism itself has become a major subject in today’s society ever since it rose up in the nineteenth century. Lesbian and gay are the result of deviant sexual behavior among human in the society. When diversity in sexual orientation first began to appear near the end of the nineteenth century, some scientists explain homosexuality in religious terms. It is said that homosexuality was the work of the devil. Others attribute homosexuality to a host of causes, including genetic defects, hormone imbalances, dysfunctional families, and childhood sexual abuse.

Ideally a man will pair up and fall in love with a woman as well as woman in pairs and fall in love with a man. Like a family consisting of a father who is a male sex, a mother who is a female sex and plays their role according to their gender. But not for this couple, the celebrity lesbian couples who confront the notion of what a “normal” couple is the so-called First Ladies of Lesbianism, Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi. Probably the most visible and accepted couple in the public eye, [Ellen](#)

[and Portia show that it is possible](#) to be successful, popular, and gay at the same time. It has been the eleventh year for their marriage, and everything seems fine like any other “normal” married couples.

In this case, the idea that the writers would like to analyze is lesbianism. Carla Golden in Savin-William and Cohen’s (1996) *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexual* say that lesbians are women who are sexually attracted to and involved with other women. Cook (1977: 48) in Savin-William and Cohen’s (1996) *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexual* defines a lesbian as “A woman who loves women, who chooses women to nurture and support and to create a living environment in which to work creatively and independently, whether or not her relations with these women are sexual.” While Ferguson (1981:162) in Savin-William and Cohen’s (1996) *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexual* offers the definition “A lesbian is a woman who has sexual and erotic-emotional ties primarily with women or who sees herself as centrally involved with a community of self-identified lesbians whose sexual and erotic-emotional ties are primarily with women and who is herself a self-identified lesbian.” So, it can be said a woman is considered as a lesbian if she is attracted to a fellow woman and have a romantic or sexual relationship.

This study aims to find out how lesbianism is portrayed by the two main characters Kate Carter and Meg Harding in the novel *This London Love* by Clare Lydon. The writer wants to see how lesbianism which is still a major subject in today’s society reflects in a literary work, novel.

Literature has been widely known and used by many people all around the world. The term literature refers more closely to imaginative works. It also has a direct relation of actual life. It reflects an actual experience such as social, philosophical and moral concern. Literature is supposed to be an imaginative creation which is not far from two factual events. Literature itself has been traditionally classified into three genres; prose, poetry, and drama. Each genre still has subgenres and one of the subgenres of prose is novel. In *Mastering English Literature*, Richard Gill (1985:77) states that a novel is a world specially made in words by the author. Peck and Coyle (1984) State novels present a documentary picture of life.

Alongside the fact that novels reflect the people in society, the other major characteristic of the genre is that novels tell a story. Most novelist focus on the tension between individuals and the society they live in. They also tell and describe the social life and society. Novel is process story telling with a great amount of detail on every page, and usually reveals human values (Peek and Coyle, 1984:102).

The writers are interested in analyzing about lesbianism because the phenomenon of LGBT and lesbianism as well has certainly increased over time and leaves behind some pros and cons about it. Lesbians may face a distinct physical or mental health arising from discrimination, prejudice, and minority stress. Political conditions and social attitudes also affect the formation of lesbian relationships and the families. It is a new topic in literature and reality. Through this topic we can find out the reason why lesbianism happens and how it is seen by the society. This topic is analyzed under Queer theory which also being used in a thesis by Dayna Prest from University of Ottawa entitled *Lesbians and Space: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis* (2016). Her thesis is grounded in ongoing debates around identity politics and representation, drawing on literature from lesbian theories, lesbian-feminist histories, queer theories, heterosexism, hetero-normativity and homo-normativity, lesbian-feminist histories, white privilege studies, queer and feminist geography, and LGBTTTQAI+ rural studies. A journal by Sharon Marcus from The University of Chicago entitled *Queer Theory for Everyone: A Review Essay* (2005). This journal contributes in giving explanation

about Queer Theory which is the umbrella theory used by the writer in conducting this research.

This *London Love* is the second book of the London Romance Series by Clare Lydon. This novel has the genre of lesbian romance as what Clare Lydon always writes. This *London Love* talks about the love story between a successful editors named Kate Carter and a workaholic florist, Meg Harding. It is such a complicated story which full of sparkling romantic comedy and twist and turn of romance. Kate carter has a boring life even if she has everything but lover. Then she meets Meg Harding and feeling attracted at the first sight. Some questions held her back form making a move such if Meg Harding is a lesbian too, while Meg Harding is single but stuck living with her ex. When she meets Kate, she feels the same as Kate does. Then they both had a relationship which not running smoothly, they also face some problems and fights just like the others couples. But in the end, they can live together happily.

Based on the background description above, the problem that the writers want to analyze is as follows: What are the causes of lesbianism experienced by Kate Carter and Meg Harding in Clare Lydon's *This London Love*? Based on the problem of the study, this study aims: To find out the causes of lesbianism experienced by Kate Carter and Meg Harding in the Clare Lydon's *This London Love*.

METODE

Research Design

In conducting this research, the writer used descriptive qualitative method. Bodgan and Blinken (2007:4) state qualitative research is descriptive and data collected in the form of word or picture rather than number. This method attempts to understand and interpret the meaning of an event interaction of human behavior in certain situation according to the writers' perspectives. It means that the method is applied by describing the data and analyzing them, the presentation of the result is in a form of explanation of words and the results obtained data is not a number, but rather leads to the words, phrases, clauses and sentences expressed by the characters in the novel *This London Love* by Clare Lydon

Data and Data Source

The data source of this study is a novel by Clare Lydon entitled *This London Love* which consists of 284 pages, first published in 2015 by Custard Books. While the data of this study is the two main characters' behavior, utterances, and actions which is in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences derived from the novel that the writer uses to carry out the analysis.

Data Collection Methods

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014: 46), data collection is divided into four types; those are observation, questionnaire, interview, and study of document. In this study, the writer chooses the study of document in collecting the data with steps as follows:

1. Reading the novel by Clare Lydon entitled *This London Love* which consists of 284 pages to make the writer has a clear understanding about the novel.
2. Gathering data source from books, thesis, journals and articles related to lesbianism, the causes of lesbianism, and queer theory.

3. Selecting the data which is the words, phrases, sentences in the novel that is related to each of the research problems.

Data Analysis Techniques

After collecting all the data and information which relate to the problems of study, the data will be combined and analyzed to get what the writer wants as it has been planned in the object of this thesis. Since this study uses library research, and applied the qualitative descriptive method. The writer has some steps to analyze the data as follows:

- 1) **Classifying the data:** After selecting the data by finding out quotations, in this step the writer classifies the selected data each of causes and effects of lesbianism experienced by the two main characters.
- 2) **Interpreting and analyzing the data:** The writer interprets and analyzes the data to achieve the objectives of this thesis and then the analysis begins with explaining the relation and the arrangement of the analysis in mind onto writing.
- 3) **Making conclusion:** After doing the steps above, finally a conclusion can be drawn.

DISCUSSION

Lesbianism is the sexual or romantic desires between females. A woman is considered as a lesbian when she is attracted to a fellow woman and having a sexual or romantic relationship. A woman can turn into a lesbian can be caused by many factors such as environmental factors or biological ones. Environmental factors are the most affected of them all. To whom you are associating and making relationship will determine in which direction you will move forward. As what a saying that be careful the environment you choose for it will shape you; be careful the friends you choose for you will become like them.

A change of sexual orientation can be experienced by all people, from infancy through adolescence or even adult. From infancy through adolescence, the role of parents is very needed in determining the child's sexual orientation. Because most of homosexuality might result from several forms of inadequate parenting, including unhappy and broken homes. Another factor is about a person's appearance or mannerisms resembled those of the opposite sex, the individual may gradually settle into a same-sex identity and lifestyle.

In this analysis, the writer wants to analyze the quotations which related to the causes of lesbianism in the novel. The writer will put the quotations which related and describe the causes of the two main characters to become lesbians, those are: inadequate parenting, looking masculine, heterophobic, and associating with lesbians from the novel *This London Love* and explain every quotation.

Meg Harding's Inadequate Parenting

Inadequate parenting as one of the causes of lesbianism can occur from unhappy and broken home family. Meg Harding as one of the main characters in this novel turns into a lesbian because of the broken home family. Broken home is a home in which one or both parents is absent due to divorce or [separation](#). As the result, children in such an environment may be prone to antisocial behavior or having vary traumatic condition. Children can have a personal grudge against their parents. This is

obtained because they get abusive treatment or are abandoned by their parents. If a child is unable to forgive their past experience or behavior that they have got from their parents, so it will be appeared a tendency for her to hold grudges and fear someone of a certain sex, especially straight relationship.

In the novel *This London Love*, that kind of situation is happened to Meg Harding as one of the main characters. . Meg Harding has been single-parented by her mother Olivia and she has sibling that is her brother Jamie. Her father left them since they were young.

Meg smacked Kate on the back of her hand. “You bugger.” Meg sat back. “I envy you, though.”

“For being such a good liar?”

“For having a dad— one you can think of fondly. And even though he’s gone, you still had loads of years with him, which you should treasure. I never had that. My dad was never there.”

“Is it too late to try to get to know him now?” Kate put her elbow on the table as she spoke.

Meg shrugged. “He’s tried to get in contact. But with Mum so fragile, I don’t want to do anything to upset her. Not now.”

Kate nodded. “I get that. But I’m sure she’d understand too. He is your dad after all.”

Meg pursed her lips. “That’s the thing though, I’m not sure that means much to me. He was never there, so my ‘dad’ feelings are fairly non-existent. I don’t feel any connection to him.”

(Lydon, 2015: 164)

It is clear that from the quotation above, Meg is experienced inadequate parenting. It can be seen when Meg tells to her girlfriend Kate if she does not have father since her childhood. Meg’s father has already left her and her family. She even has no memories with her father like other daughters may have such as drive her to school, spending holidays together, playing games, or teach her to ride a bicycle. Generally, father has always been as daughter’s first love because they are daughter’s first man to know about the world. However, it does not work on Meg. Meg has been living in such a family without a father—that must be so hard. Usually, a daughter always gets so close to their father—but again she cannot do it, because the condition of her family is so inadequate. This inadequate can be proven in the time when her father leaving and abandoning her family—which it absolutely leaves bad memories on her. Of course, this situation leads Meg hating her father and also leaving deep traumatic condition, especially unusual sex-oriented. This unusual sex-oriented is lesbian. It is proven that she would not want to start a household or have romantic relationships with men. Indeed, she does not believe men because her first love that is her father has hurt her feelings deeply that can create traumatic condition and making such thinking that she truly believes that all men are the same. Which of course, it leads her to change her sex-oriented to love women, even though she is a woman. This love is not a usual love between mother-daughter, or sisterhood, but

romantic love that is called as lesbian.

This inadequate parenting can be more adequately if every man who fathers a child, they have a moral and sacred responsibility to his son or daughter to educate their children, having best life as they can get. *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* says that "by divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families". Meg's father is clearly not a responsible father, person, even as a man. Meg's father leaves his wife and children without anything they can rely on and of course forget them like they were nothing for him, they do not mean something for him. This bad past life experience becomes major cause why Meg has no willing to build a romantic relationship with men and choosing herself as a lesbian. Another quotation that is shown inadequate parenting is quoted below:

"Hey." Kate grabbed Meg's arm, but she shook her off. "What's wrong, what's going on?"

"I'm leaving." Meg shot Kate an apologetic look. "Sorry — I can't stay with him here." She yanked the door fully open just as Jess appeared in the hallway.

"You're here — finally! Super-fashionably late too." But Jess stopped talking as she approached and saw the worry etched on Kate's face. "Everything okay?"

"He's a fucker, that's what's going on," Meg told Kate, before stepping out into the October evening.

Kate held up her hand to Jess. "Give us a minute." She followed Meg out the front door and up the garden path.

(Lydon, 2015: 208)

It is clear that from the quotation above illustrates inadequate parenting. All bad memories are played and creating Meg hating her father period. It can be seen how much Meg hates her father, Lawrence. It happens when they were on Kate's sister, Vicky's birthday party. There were Kate's mother, Maureen and her boyfriend, Lawrence. Lawrence is Meg's long-lost father. Lawrence himself is the father who left her, her mother and her brother. While the actual situation is Maureen and Lawrence has just met for almost two months. So they did not know what was going on that day. It just happened without their knowing, and Meg vented her hatred on her father even though it is her first time meeting him for a long time.

The usage of the word "fucker" expresses her feelings towards her father. She feels inadequate parenting where she does not have a father and leaving her act fine without it while a family has supposed to have a father and mother. Meg believes that "Fucker" looks like it is the best word to mention Lawrence for leaving her. Commonly, children who are experiencing inadequate parenting would not care about politeness and easy to speak rudely, even directly to the person. They would not care whether the person they mock to will feel shame or anger, because they feel the same when they do bad things toward them.

Another condition of inadequate parenting that shows Meg to speak rudely again is also quoted below:

“...Will you tell me what’s going on.”

Meg laughed a hollow laugh. “Lawrence is my long-lost fucking-father, that’s what’s going on.”

(Lydon, 2015: 209)

It is clear that from the quotation above showing about inadequate parenting. This inadequate parenting creates bad impact to her that easily to speak rude to anyone no matter what. It can be shown from the words ‘fucking’ and ‘fucker’ is made from the word ‘fuck’. According to Oxford Dictionary, fuck is a swear word that many people find offensive that is used to express anger, disgust or surprise. In this case, the writer chose the word fucking and fucker is definitely to show how Meg expresses her anger even detestable feeling towards her father.

Inadequate parenting leaving her in disappointed, hatred and longing feeling which is experienced by Meg through the years she has been abandoned and left by her own father now has been fulfilled after she has spoken rude to him. A child who was left by a father will surely miss for a father figure. However, another fact that if a child were abandoned and ignored by her father, it can leave them in more painful feelings than anything else which leads to great anger.

Meg’s bad experience towards her father creates such assumption that man is irresponsible, a husband or father cannot make his wife and children happy, men are evil—that only can happen when a children gets traumatic condition from her broken home family and deeply developed in Meg’s mind. This condition leads her to become a lesbian. From her experience, she thinks she can trust women more than men.

Kate Carter’s Looking Masculine (Butch)

Masculine is usually the term used on describing boys or man. Masculine has the synonyms of manful, manlike, and manly while the antonym is feminine. If someone has a masculine appearance, the person is probably tall and strong. In the lesbian subculture, the terms that usually used are butch and femme to ascribe or acknowledge a masculine (butch) or feminine (femme) identity with its associated traits, behaviors, styles, self-perception, and so on. On the other hand, feminine is the opposite term of masculine. If it has anything to do with girls and women, it’s considered feminine. A girl is considered a feminine when wearing pink, playing with dolls, sporting high heels, and getting weepy during sad movies. It can be concluded that when a woman is looking masculine then that woman looks like a man. As written in the book *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals*, when a women’s appearance and mannerisms resembled man, she may gradually settle into a same-sex identity and lifestyle.

According to Uzoeshi (1996), looking masculine can be a cause of a woman becoming lesbian. A masculine woman is usually more attracted to a fellow woman because she thinks she can change the man’s position in building a relationship with fellow women. As portrayed on Kate Carter, the other main character in novel *This London Love*. From the novel it can be seen if the one who plays the role as a man is Kate. Just like the most acceptance lesbian, Ellen De Generes who always

wear such a masculine clothes that makes her looks more like a man. As proven on the quotation below:

Kate didn't do dresses, so she'd opted for a black tuxedo, the first time she'd ever done so. It sat well on her tall, slim frame — she should have done it years ago. She leaned back in her chair and rolled her ankle, the light catching on her black patent brogues. More dazzle.

(Lydon, 2015: 1)

It can be seen from the quotation above that Kate has masculine look. Generally, most of the women would wear beautiful dress such as long dress, mini dress, royal dress or any other which shows women's beautiful body shape to go to a formal event while men would go with tuxedo or a suit. When a woman is wearing a tuxedo, it can be said if that woman is looking masculine. Same as Kate that is shown as masculine where she would opted to wear tuxedo more than dress.

Masculinity on a woman can be seen from the style how she dresses or how she cut her hair. On the quotation above, Kate was at her company's awards ceremony due to she doesn't like to wear dresses; she chose to wear a black tuxedo instead. It was her first time, but it is described that she is really comfortable and confident with it. The tuxedo she wore radiates the masculinity so much. Moreover, rather than wearing a pair of high heels or any feminine shoes, she wears a pair of black patent brogues instead. This explains how looking masculine can be a cause of a woman turn into lesbian. Another condition that showing looking masculine is quoted below:

Kate smiled and ran her hand through her short, platinum-blonde hair. "You know what I mean. One minute you're here, the next minute you're not."

(Lydon 2015: 12)

It is clear that from the quotation above that Kate is looked masculine than feminine as a woman. It is shown from the quotation above that her hair style just makes her looks more masculine. Kate's hair style has short platinum-blonde, in addition she also wears tuxedo style she wears that absolutely radiates lesbian woman so much.

Almost all of people believe that hair to women means the crown for them. Commonly, a feminine woman would make her hair longer falls beautifully. However, a masculine woman would do contrary from the feminine, of course they would have short hair. Kate who behaves as a man would make her looks similar as regular men so much. Just like any boys and men who have short hair, Kate also has it. Kate who manner as a boy would make her looks resembled men so much. Just like any boys and men who have short hair, Kate also has it. She looks so confident and comfortable with it because she feels like that is herself and her style. Which is proven that she is lesbian. Kate's description looks alike Ellen DeGeneres the celebrity. Ellen and her wife Portia de Rossi are the right example of Kate and Meg in this case. Kate and Ellen play the role of the masculine ones while Meg and Portia keep being the feminine or female role ones.

Kate Carter's Hetero-phobic

Hetero-phobic as one of the causes of lesbianism is portrayed in this novel. Hetero-phobic is something that makes someone doesn't like to see heterosexual couple. It can be shown from the quotation below:

"I'm good — very good in fact. I was ovulating last night, so it was a long night for Nick and I, if you catch my drift." Dawn winked at Kate.

Kate stuck her tongue out and made a gagging sound. "Not before I've had my first coffee, please."

*Dawn shook her head. "You're so **hetero-phobic**."*

(Lydon, 2015: 15)

It is clear that from the quotation above that is categorized as hetero-phobic. It is shown when Kate and her partner Dawn is talking about something that Dawn and her husband Nick did last night. As a husband and a wife, it should be such a normal thing between them. But Kate is feeling sick to hear that. It is explicitly said by Dawn that Kate is hetero-phobic.

One of causes is hetero-phobic, can be happened to any lesbians. They can be hetero-phobic with various reasons. It is abnormal for them to imagine something out of their minds, especially not same-sex love.

Kate Carter's Association with Lesbians

Associating with lesbians is one of the factors of a woman can change her sexual oriented. Our environment is a part of how is determined our behavior and mindset. If we are too often to spend times together with lesbian and tends to have a weak principle of life then it is likely to be affected, and will change sexual oriented into lesbian as well.

Environmental factors can trigger the occurrence of lesbianism, for example because of a social association. In making friends, we naturally "choose" friends who have good behavior. When someone befriends people who are lesbians, there is a tendency for them to become lesbian as well because of the influence of friends. It can be shown in the quotation below:

Her flatmate and sister-in-law Jess poked her head into the lounge and gave Kate a quizzical look. Jess had been for a haircut today and it looked particularly lesbionic—short, jaunty, brown. Kate wouldn't tell Jess, but her cut was straying worryingly close to looking identikit to her girlfriend, Lucy. She'd have a word with Jess about her and Lucy merging into dyke-alikes later.

(Lydon 2015: 10)

It is clear that from the quotation above that associating with lesbians can create someone's

to be a lesbian as well. The citation above shows that Kate is living with a lesbian. Jess is her flat mate and her sister-in-law, Jess has a girlfriend named Lucy. Jess and Kate live at the same house and do the same thing that is being a lesbian. They are not having sexual or romantic relationship but they are best friends to each other.

Just like the saying the birds of the same feather flocks together. You and your best friend would do anything together and have the same thoughts. They help each other in every things out of lesbian world. And Jess also helps Kate in finding a girlfriend. Before Kate is having relationship with Meg, Jess and her girlfriend Lucy always find a way to pinch Kate with any lesbian, as the quotation below:

“Look, I know this is another set-up, but if this doesn’t work, I promise I’ll leave you alone. It’s just that Lucy thinks this has potential and I trust her judgment. My girlfriend is a trustworthy woman. Are we agreed?”

Kate grudgingly nodded. “We’re agreed, she is.”

(Lydon, 2015: 44)

The quotation above explains the situation where Jess wants to make Kate and Tanya knowing each other. While Kate is single and so is Tanya. Associating with lesbians in this situation is where Kate has the lesbian flat mate who always find a way to make Kate has a girlfriend as soon as possible. Another quotation that is shown as associating with lesbian can be a caused of someone to be a lesbian is quoted below:

*She was due to go to her running club after work, but she was finding it hard to gee herself up to attend. She’d joined the group at the insistence of her friend Adele and her mum. Adele had told her she should channel her running because she was good at it; her mum had told her she should go because she might meet someone. **On arrival at the running club, however, all Meg had found were a bunch of sprightly, coupled-up lesbians** who were far keener on running than on finding her a girlfriend.*

(Lydon, 2015: 84)

It is shown that from the quotation above about associating with lesbian. The quotation above shows how lesbians are actually has their own place to gather and associating with another lesbian. It can be seen if lesbian has a special club to do their stuff. As one of the causes of lesbianism, Kate is really surrounded by her lesbian friends that seem hard to get out from such an environment.

When this kind of places are available, lesbianism practice is easily to be noticed and practiced for someone who wants to learn about lesbianism, because it will always be there and provided as well. Because according to Uzoeshi (1996) lesbianism as practice can be learned likes any other behavior through imitation or associating with lesbians.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing and creating the criticism, the writers come to this part which is conclusion. The conclusion is drawn based on the research problem or the result of analysis. The causes of lesbianism experienced by the two main characters in the novel *This London Love* are different to each other. Meg Harding turned into a lesbian is caused by broken family. She was left and abandoned by her father makes her hate her father so much and has a traumatic to build a relationship with a man. While Kate Carter is becoming a lesbian because of three causes those are her biological inadequacy which is butch, hetero-phobic and associating with other lesbian.

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