

LESBIAN CONTINUUM
AS AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY IN NEGOTIATING
HETERONORMATIVITY IN SARAH WATER'S *FINGERSMITH*
Lesbian Continuum sebagai Strategi Alternatif untuk Menyiasati Heteronormativitas
dalam Novel *Fingersmith* Karya Sarah Water

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Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji representasi lesbian continuum dalam novel Sarah Waters yang berjudul *Fingersmith*. Dua pertanyaan utama penelitian ini adalah (1) bagaimana konstruksi lesbian continuum direpresentasikan dalam hubungan antara tokoh Susan Trinder dan Maud Lily dalam novel *Fingersmith* dan (2) bagaimana lesbian continuum menjadi strategi untuk menghadapi compulsory heterosexuality dalam novel *Fingersmith*. Teori lesbian continuum oleh Adrienne Rich akan menjadi teori utama untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Menggunakan teknik pembacaan novel dan analisis pustaka yang bersumber dari jurnal dan sumber lain yang mendukung. Untuk mendapatkan data yang komprehensif, metode yang dipakai adalah close reading, menjabarkan pertanyaan, klasifikasi data, dan analisis menggunakan teori lesbian continuum, analisis didukung menggunakan penelitian pustaka, buku dan jurnal. Dalam penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan hal-hal berikut: Pertama, tokoh Susan Trinder dan Maud Lily diidentifikasi memiliki kehidupan ganda (double-life), yang merupakan ciri dari representasi Lesbian Continuum. Kedua, lesbian continuum adalah strategi untuk bertahan dalam masyarakat dengan cara menyangkal (denial) adanya relasi seksual di antara mereka dan untuk melawan tekanan terhadap perempuan pada masa itu.

Kata-Kata Kunci: compulsory heterosexuality, lesbian continuum, *Fingersmith*

Abstract: This study is conducted to examine the portrayal of lesbian continuum in Sarah Waters' *Fingersmith*. To conduct the analysis, there are two research questions: first, how is the construction of lesbian continuum portrayed in the relationship between Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly and how does lesbian continuum become a strategy to negotiate compulsory heterosexuality. In doing the analysis, theory of lesbian continuum which is proposed by Adrienne Rich will be used to elaborate the novel. This study is a qualitative research where the data are taken from the novel *Fingersmith*, library research, journals, and other relevant sources. To gain the comprehensive analysis, this study uses some methods which are: close reading, postulation the statements of the problems, data classification, and analysis using the lesbian continuum theory, supporting analysis through library research, books, and academic journals. This study finds that the characters of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly can be identified as having double-life which constructs the lesbian continuum. Moreover, the lesbian continuum becomes a strategy to negotiate compulsory heterosexuality with denial and negotiation of women's oppression.

Key Words: compulsory heterosexuality, lesbian continuum, *Fingersmith*

INTRODUCTION

The innately heterosexual condition as the result of compulsory heterosexuality and male oppression towards women later on becomes theoretical and political tools to bandage the position of women and identity of women in the society, especially for the women who have same-sex desire (Rich, 1980:636). The oppressions caused hatred towards male supremacy especially for those women who are not fully engaged into heterosexual relationships and have same-sex desire. Many women were considered trapped in compulsory heterosexuality while they felt the imbalance inside the heterosexual relationships. Later on, sex is seen as form of attention from male, who is charismatic though brutal, infantile, and unreliable. Women who suffered from male oppression feel that it is women who make life endurable and give physical attention without causing pain (Rich, 1980:656). Living with men in heterosexual society can be seen as either women own desire or only the way to save women live within the society. For the heterosexual women, living with men is a natural life but for lesbian at that time, it can be the way to be accepted. This condition is seen as woman's double-life which women can have double-life both as heterosexual and lesbian.

Concerning the way many women conduct their live within their double-life condition, there is an interesting issue that lesbian identity is not limited only in sexual areas, but also consisting the emotional support and energy to other women as the psychological support (Tyson, 2006:324). Thus, the range of lesbian identity itself is quite wide since the term lesbian is not only referred to sexual activities between woman and another woman, but includes the shared psychological supports and emotional relation. The term of this lesbian will

cover many forms of primary intensity between women (Rich, 1980:648). This term is called *lesbian continuum* that was introduced by Adrienne Rich in her essay. Rich tries to use the new term of lesbian continuum since the term lesbian has a limited definition (1980:648).

From here, we can see that lesbian continuum condition existed before the notion of homosexuality was built. Later on, since women could assume that living with men is a matter of compulsory due to the imbalance of right and power, lesbian continuum becomes a way for those women who have same-sex desire to still embrace the heterosexual life in order to be seen as heterosexual women. Lesbian continuum has wider area of identification of homosexual relationship, thus the notion of lesbian continuum can embrace the wider aspect of women's life not only about sexual matter. Lesbian continuum phenomenon is also portrayed in some of famous literary works. One of the novels which portrays the lesbian continuum phenomenon is Sarah Water's *Fingersmith*.

Fingersmith is one of the magnificent literary works which has setting in Victorian era around the nineteenth century. This novel is interesting since it portrays the lesbian issue in the nineteenth century. This novel is written by Sarah Waters in 2002 and won the CWA Ellis Peters Dagger for Historical Crime Fiction and the South Bank Show Award for Literature. This novel also became the shortlisted for Orange Prize and Man Booker Prize. The author was included in Granta's prestigious list of 'Best of Young British Novelists 2003', and in the same year was voted Author of the Year by both publishers and booksellers at the British Book Awards and the BA Conference, and she also won the Waterstone's

Author of the Year Award ("Sarah Waters").

The story tells about two young orphan women, Susan Trinder, an orphaned thief, and Maud Lilly who is a young rich lady. Susan Trinder is a girl who lives in a slum area of London with Mrs. Sucksby who is a baby farmer, a person who sells the unwanted babies. The slum area which Susan Trinder lives is a place where there are a lot of fingersmiths, slang language of British for thief, live. Although Mrs. Sucksby has many children from her job, still Susan Trinder is the most loveable girl for her. Though Susan Trinder is known as 'slow' for a fingersmith by her friends and relatives but she is considered clever and the most beloved girl of Mrs. Sucksby.

Then, at one night, comes Richard Rivers who is usually called 'gentleman' to The Burough. The gentleman offers Susan Trinder a great business. The gentleman is now trying to swindle rich Maud Lilly. If he could marry Maud Lilly then he will inherit Maud Lilly's money. To convince Maud Lilly, he needs Susan Trinder to pretend as the maid for Maud Lilly since Maud Lilly's maid is sick. After agrees with the amount of money she will get from the Gentleman, Sue deals with the gentleman's crime strategy. Maud itself is an orphan who lives with her rich uncle at the house called Briar far away from London. Maud Lilly is a lonely girl who bored with her life. For the first time Sue works at Briar as Maud Lilly's maid, she does not feel anything strange and everything goes smoothly as the gentleman's plot. Then, after the coming of gentleman into Briar to gain the attention of Maud Lilly, Sue feels jealous with him. Then, she falls in love with Maud Lilly.

In analyzing this novel, Adrienne Rich's theory of lesbian continuum is applied. It is because there is an issue

about the emergence of lesbian that clearly depicted not only in sexual domain but also the psychological support and need which influence the sexual identity of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly characters. Moreover, the issue can not be separated from the oppression of compulsory heterosexuality. Thus, through this thesis which uses Rich's theory of lesbian continuum, the writers would like to analyze the construction of lesbian continuum which is portrayed in the relationship of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly and lesbian continuum as a strategy to negotiate compulsory heterosexuality in *Fingersmith*.

In order to gain a comprehensive analysis, the writers would like to state two questions:

1. How is the construction of lesbian continuum portrayed in the relationship between Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly?
2. How does lesbian continuum become a strategy to negotiate compulsory heterosexuality?

METHOD

To make the analysis, the writers of the thesis does the close reading of the text first. Close reading is needed to gain the comprehensive understanding about the novel as the text and also to find the issue out of the novel. After doing the close reading, the writers finds that the issue of the novel is about lesbian relationship which arises between the main female characters, Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly. Second, after doing the close reading process, the writers postulates two statements of the problems concerning to the lesbian issue in the novel about how the construction of lesbian continuum portrays within the relationship of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly and how lesbian continuum becomes a strategy to negotiate

compulsory heterosexuality. To gain a detail analysis, the writers will focus on the characters of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly and their relationship in the novel. Third, the writers makes the data classification and selects the data that can be related to the double-life of women, lesbian continuum, and compulsory heterosexuality of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly characters in Waters' *Fingersmith*. Then, the data will be analyzed using Adrienne Rich's lesbian continuum and other relevant sources.

To get the comprehensive analysis, the writers of the thesis collects more information through library research including the literary works discussed, some books, and other references that relevant to the study. The writers of the thesis also support the analysis by the internet research to gain the international academic journals and articles which are related.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Lesbian continuum begins with questioning the lesbian invisibility throughout the history. The compulsory heterosexuality that is rooted in most of all societies creates the assumption that most women are innately heterosexual and this assumption becomes a theoretical and political stumbling block for many women (Rich, 1980:648). It can be said that in making the assumption there is a limitation and force toward women sexuality and identity. Chatarine A. Mackinnon explains that under capitalism, women are horizontally segregated by gender and occupy inferior position in the workplace. There are facts that women are not only segregated in low-paying, service jobs (as secretaries, domestics, nurses, typists, telephone operators, child-care workers, waitresses) and also the 'sexualization of woman' is part of

women's job (Rich, 1980:641). Here, within the 'conflicted' relationship with men, women are seeking psychological support with other women. Woman-to-woman relationships and female support networks later on make the world bearable for women. According to Hesford in her journal, that lesbian continuum occurs in women's community or relationship based on the sameness of women experience,

Rich's conception of lesbian existence and lesbian continuum, then, has more to do with a 'community' of women that is 'at once discovered, invented, and constructed', to use de Lauretis's words, than it has to do with the claiming of the innate being-ness, and sameness, of women (1980:244).

Women to women relationship become a way for women who have already suffered from social and sexual oppression of compulsory heterosexuality to share support and affection among women. It can be seen as affectionate relationship in nineteenth-century women which have been discussed earlier. This relationship may include sexual desire or just to comfort women's life during the oppression. Again, the compulsory heterosexuality makes the possibility of lesbian relationship within women covered. Within this relationship women are considered having double-life, the life which women can embrace both as heterosexual woman and also as lesbian. This female double-life later on becomes the sign of lesbian continuum. The double-life experience also differentiate lesbian continuum with lesbian existence. Based on Rich, "lesbian continuum needs delineation in light of the "double-life" of women, not only women self-described as heterosexual but also of self-described lesbians (Rich, 1980:659).

Women's Double-life

The effect of compulsory heterosexuality in women's life was great and still exists until today. Due to the imbalance of many aspects in life, women are suffered from the oppression within the heterocentric society. From the imposing of heterosexual toward women, until the imbalance of economic and labor, from the physical torture and the economics dependency, women tried to resist the conflicted condition of their life. In 1976, the Brussels Tribunal on Crimes named compulsory heterosexuality as one of the crimes against women (Rich, 1980:653).

The hard condition which is remained in the heterosexist culture creates 'men hatred' feeling especially for women who have same-sex desire and forced to be heterosexual. For those women, sex becomes a form of attention from male though they are brutal and infantile. She is a woman who can give support and understanding toward woman's condition and feeling without causing pain (Rich, 1980:656). Woman who considers the feeling that man is a person to get the 'normal' life but not suffice for life partner considered as having double-life.

The invisible lesbians are psychologically trapped in compulsory heterosexuality. Those women are trying to be 'normal' with fitting their mind, spirit, and sexuality into a heterosexual script to be accepted in the society (Rich, 1980:657). This condition makes them create affectionate relationship with other women since they cannot get the total affection from men. The concept of heterosexuality is strongly imposed from the tradition, as Rich stated,

...that women *need* men as social and economic protectors, for adult sexuality, and for psychological completion; that the heterosexuality constituted family as the basic social unit; that women who do not attach their

primary intensity to men must be, in functional terms, condemned to an even more devastating outsiderhood than their outsiderhood as women (Rich, 1980:657).

Later on, for many women, marriage becomes a compulsory need since women need economic warrantor and in order to have children in 'normal' family who would not suffer economic problems (Rich, 1980:654). Thus, marriage is seemed to be a secured place to be normally accepted within the society. In her essay, Rich stated that women's double-life has been existed in many kinds of heterosexual behavior, the ritual of courtship; the pretense of asexuality by the nineteenth-century wife; the prostitute, and twentieth-century 'sexually liberated' woman (Rich, 1980:654).

Lesbian continuum to Rich has wider area of lesbianism since lesbianism itself has limited definition. As Rich stated that, "I mean the term *lesbian continuum* to include a range--through each woman's life and throughout history--of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman" (Rich, 1980:648). Thus, lesbian continuum is a kind of women-to-women relationship that may or may not contain sexual relationship. Woman-to-woman relationship in lesbian continuum is not as the same as male homosexuality. Moreover, through her essay, Rich raised doubt about the connection between lesbian and gay, she said that lesbians are closely similar with women's relationship than relationship between man and women (Beasley, 2005:49). The same opinion also came from Jagose that lesbian much more has similarity with heterosexual women rather than male homosexual (Jagose, 1996:48). Thus, in lesbian continuum,

there is focus on woman experience upon what is common and shared among women and this is different with the relationship between woman and man (Beasley, 2005:50). Furthermore, the first difference between lesbian and lesbian continuum is that in lesbian continuum there is a presence of woman-identified experiences throughout history that may or may not include sexual relations (Hesford, 2005:243). Second, lesbian continuum is always including women's double-life. Lesbian continuum will be constructed if women who are having relation conduct double life both as heterosexual women and lesbian (Rich, 1980:659).

DISCUSSION

Maud Lilly has been raised in a madhouse until she is eleven years old. There she only has relationship with the nurses and rarely meets men in the Madhouse. Maud Lilly's own mother died in the madhouse. Since her mother died, she considers the nurses as her mother. As Maud says, "I pass my first ten years a daughter to the nurses of the house. I believe they love me" (Waters, 2012:114). In the madhouse, Maud Lilly sleeps with each of the nurses in turn, in their own bed. Maud also follows their activity in caring the lunatics. The madhouse itself is divided into two: one side is for female lunatics, and the other side is for male lunatics. There, Maud Lilly is raised in the female lunatic's space and never see the male's part. Here, Maud Lilly could be said as living in the homosocial sphere since she is living only with female. According to Sedgwick, homosocial is a word that is occasionally used in history and in social sciences that describes social bonds between persons from the same sex (Sedgwick, 1985: 1). Sedgwick also mention that homosocial is usually referred to woman bonds rather than to men bonds. Women

homosocial takes place in many forms relationship such as women who love women, women who teach, study, nurture, suckle, write about, march for, vote for, and many more (Sedgwick, 1985:2—3). In Maud's case, homosocial occurs in the relationship between Maud Lilly and the nurses. Their relationship can be said like mother-daughter relationship that the nurses nurture Maud Lilly. It is also supported that during her time in the Madhouse she rarely sees men. Thus, she has limited clue about heterosexual relationship and the model of man itself. The erotic friendship can be motivated by many causes. In Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly's case, it could be traced back from mother-daughter relationship, from homosocial experience, and also from self sexual definition which both of characters have previously (Hollinger, 1998:12).

The first erotic scene happened before they leave Briar. Susan Trinder does not expect it. It is Maud Lilly who seduces her first. In the other hand, Maud Lilly who is already known about sexual intercourse among women cannot control her desire to Susan Trinder. Here, Susan Trinder's lack of sexual identity and Maud Lilly's forceful sexual identity also contribute to the presence of erotic friendship between them. Susan Trinder can be easily seduced by Maud Lilly who has stronger sexual identity. The second erotic scene happens when Sue comes back to Briar after the trial of Mrs. Sucksby case. At this time, both of them have already known about their desire. So the erotic scene happens without hesitation. Besides, Maud Lilly's strong sexuality identity comes from her experience and knowledge about sexuality from her uncle's books. She is taught to read and copy the erotica books since she was child.

Before Susan Trinder meets Maud Lilly, she has intimate relationship with Dainty. Though has been considered as sentimental friendship, on the other side, Sue's relationships with Dainty also can be reputed as erotic female friendship because there are suggestions of lesbian sexual relationship between the two women which include erotic acts (Hollinger, 1998:7). Besides sharing support and affection, Sue has ever kissed Dainty. It can be shown when Susan Trinder kisses Maud Lilly for the first time, she has already known about how to kiss, since Dainty had shown her. "I knew how to do it all right, for Dainty had shown me, once. Kissing Maud, however, was not like kissing her" (Waters, 2012:90). Also, in Sue's last moment with Dainty, she kisses Dainty for the farewell. Then there is a changing within Sue and Dainty's friendship. At the first, it can be considered as sentimental friendship, but later it also can be viewed as having erotic sides which are consciously presented by both characters. Thus, it can be read as women friendship and also as lesbian relationship which include sexual desire (kiss act). After Susan Trinder meets Maud Lilly, there is an alteration within Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly relationship. It is no longer as only female sentimental friendship but it also embraces the erotic friendship that creates lesbian suggestion as in Susan Trinder and Dainty's relationship.

According to Flax, erotic friendship can be distinguished from sentimental friendship since erotic friendship gives suggestion of lesbian sexual relationship (Hollinger, 1998:7). But, as it can be seen in the relationship of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly and Susan Trinder with Dainty, their friendships are sometimes in between the sentimental and erotic though it was started by sentimental friendship. Thus, their relationships

cannot be exactly defined into one category. It can be accepted as Flax said that sometimes the sentimental friendship and erotic friendship is indistinguishable since sometimes sentimental friendship can cause erotic relationship too (Hollinger, 1998:7).

The changing friendships identification within Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly relationship can be considered as the construction of lesbian continuum. It is because in lesbian continuum itself, women can move in and out whether they identify themselves as lesbian or not (Rich, 1980:651). Their sexual scenes moreover can be the lesbian side of their relationship so it can be suggested as women's double-life experience. The denial which is stated by both of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly is a sign that they still want to embrace the heterosexual life. As Maimunah wrote in her thesis, that lesbian continuum can be said as uneasy movement between female relationships and lesbian that allows for identification and desire (Maimunah, 2008:92). It is because lesbian continuum embraces both the spaces of women life which is heterosexual and lesbian.

Lesbian Continuum as a Strategy to Negotiate Compulsory Heterosexuality in Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly Relationship

Compulsory heterosexuality is a term which is popularized by Rich within her essay *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*. That compulsory heterosexuality is a term which assumes that both males and females are born to be naturally heterosexual. This assumption later on gives limitation to human sexuality only for heterosexuality. Furthermore, the compulsory heterosexuality marginalizes women who are not engaged in compulsory

heterosexuality (Rich, 1980:657). The compulsory heterosexuality matter cannot be separated from the construction of lesbian continuum. As in Rich essay these two issues are connected each other as active and reactive matters. In one side, compulsory heterosexuality caused and covered the existence of lesbian that makes women counted in double-life. In the other side, the female attachment draws women's resistance towards patriarchal control that has embedded throughout the history (Hollinger, 1998:168).

As have been explained in the previous section, there is a process in Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly relationship which includes continuity and change of sexual desire and love perception. This continuity and changes flow within the formation of sentimental friendship and erotic friendship which creates uneasy definition of the relationship itself. This phenomenon later can be identified as the construction of lesbian continuum in their relationship since it lies in both women identification as lesbian and also as heterosexual women. As quoted from Jagose, the term lesbian continuum created in the aims of creating a bridge over the gap between lesbian and feminist. This continuum makes women can move in and out from the space whether they are identified themselves as lesbian or not (Jagose, 1996:49). It is clearly seen that within the relationship of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly, there are same-sex desire which creates lesbian suggestion and also denial to cover the desire at the same time. Thus, within the construction of lesbian continuum in Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly relationship, which contains the existence of women's double-life and denial, the compulsory heterosexuality becomes the causal factor. Compulsory

heterosexuality makes Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly oppressed sexually and also culturally. From sexual oppression, both of the character cannot express their same-sex desire. From cultural oppression, both of them especially Maud Lilly are living under the male domination which limits their freedom and also torture them physically and also psychologically. Here, the construction of lesbian continuum not only emerges as the effect of compulsory heterosexuality but also as the strategy to negotiate that condition.

In this subsection, the writers would like to analyze how lesbian continuum works as a strategy to negotiate compulsory heterosexuality within the relationship of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly. There will be two aspects that will be discussed since within those aspects there are the negotiation processes towards compulsory heterosexuality from both of the characters.

Lesbian Continuum as a Negotiation towards the Women's Oppression

According to Rich as has been cited from Hollinger, "lesbianism is not marginalized as a matter of sexual preference or lifestyle choice but is portrayed instead as behavior that strongly resists male dominance and abuse" (Hollinger, 1998:168). Here, lesbian continuum cannot be separated from male dominance and women oppression since many women include them who are having same-sex desire should receive male domination and oppression. Thus women who suffered from male's oppression seek the nurture and support from other women whether they are lesbian or not. This creates women relationship becomes important for women since it can make their life durable and bearable without causing pain (Rich, 1980:656).

This phenomenon can be found in Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly's experience. Maud Lilly can be said as getting oppression from her uncle. Christopher Lilly asks her maid to teach little Maud Lilly good manner to be a lady. Yet, because Maud is not used to them and she does not like them, Maud Lilly put their command aside. This makes little Maud Lilly gets punishment every time she makes mistake (Waters, 2012:122). Her uncle also forced Maud Lilly to become his secretary for his collection of erotica books. He trains Maud hardly just like she is a servant (Waters, 2012:134). As Maud Lilly tells to the gentlemen when they are having dinner, "indeed,' says Mr. Hawtrey, turning again to me, 'I am afraid, Miss Lilly, your uncle continues to work you very mercilessly.' I shrug. 'I was bred to the task,' I say, 'as servants are'" (Waters, 2012:134). It shows that Maud Lilly is under the power of her uncle. Just like servants but without wage she should works hard for the pornography business that owned by her uncle. It is similar with Susan Trinder's case. In the mission of deceiving Maud Lilly, her position is under Richard Rivers' power thus she does not have authority to decide. In the common patriarchal society it is common for women to be put in lower job position than men. As Rich quoted from Catharine A. MacKinnon who depicts the relation of compulsory heterosexuality and economics, "Under capitalism, women are horizontally segregated by gender and occupy a structurally inferior position in the workplace.." (Rich, 1980: 641). The jobs have owned by male and under the male domination. Maud Lilly does not have any power to resist her uncle power. Like in her conversation with Richard Rivers,

"You mean to keep beside him, then,

for all the time?'—I will not answer.—'You are as dedicated as he?' 'I have no choice,' I say at last. 'My skills are few and, as you have already noted, quite uncommon.' 'You are a lady,' he says softly, 'and young, and handsome.—I don't speak from gallantry now, you know that. I say only what is true. You might do anything.' 'You are a man,' I answer. 'Men's truths are different from ladies. I may do nothing. I assure you'". (Waters, 2012:138)

It is clearly seen that in nineteenth century, the gender position between man and women was based on traditional gender roles. According to Tyson, traditional gender roles assume that men are rational, strong, and protective while women are emotional, weak, and submissive. Later on, the traditional gender roles create imbalance of power between men and women like excluding women from leadership and decision-making position in society (Tyson, 2006:85). Women also segregated in lower job position and had limited access to do anything under the men's power.

Maud Lilly also receives the physical torture from her uncle through Mrs. Stiles, her uncle's maid. It is portrayed when Maud Lilly gazing her maid's body while the maid is bathing. Then, she gets cruel punishment from Mrs. Stiles. She takes a block of soap and presses it into Maud's mouth then passes it back and forth across inside her mouth (Waters, 2012:127). Maud Lilly often gets punishment whenever she doing something which is not considered as good for Mrs. Stiles and her uncle. Based on Kathleen Barry as cited in Rich:

female sexual slavery is present in ALL situations where women or girls cannot change the condition of their existence; regardless of how they got into those conditions, e.g. social pressure, economic hardship, misplaced trust or

the longing for affection, they cannot get out; and where they are subject to sexual violence and exploitation. (Rich, 1980:644).

Maud Lilly can be considered as having social pressure in the case of her oppression from male domination. She cannot do anything without the permission from her uncle. She is also longing for affection since no one gives her affection and nurture in Briar. Maud Lilly also can be the subject of sexual violence and exploitation because she is not only trained to be a secretary and copied the erotica books, but Maud Lilly also forced to read the books for the gentlemen who come to Briar to visit her uncle (Waters, 2012:126). Reading erotica's books for the gentlemen also can be said as insulting act as a form of women oppression from male dominance. Pornography itself is an industry which makes women as objects of sexual appetite and makes women to become sexual commodity to be consumed by males (Rich, 1980: 641). As Richard Rivers said to Maud how she is look like for the gentlemen outside the Briar's wall:

They speak about you—perhaps you know—in the shady bookshops and publishers' houses of London and Paris. They speak about you, as one of some fabulous creature: the handsome girl at Briar, whom Lilly has trained, like chattering monkey, to recite voluptuous texts for gentlemen—perhaps to do worse. (Waters, 2012:142)

The using of words like 'creature' and 'chattering monkey' express the marginalization of woman in the male gaze. This marginalization can be said as Christopher Lilly's oppression towards Maud Lilly. Here, it can be seen that Maud Lilly does not have power to

refuse her uncle since she is living in heterosexist culture during the nineteenth century era. In this case she is considered getting double oppression, as a non-wage labor and also as the subject of sexual violence.

Moreover, the male domination works to limit women from their economics independence. As has been explained before that women position in workplace is considered below the men's position at that time. Even more, for the rich women they cannot get their inheritance unless they are married by man. This situation makes women cannot gain the economics dependency. Thus, women need men as economics preserver for their life from the marriage (Rich, 1980: 654). In Maud Lilly's case, she cannot get inheritance without marrying a man. As Richard Rivers says, "I know you gain nothing unless you marry...well do you know what you are worth, Miss Lilly?...It is a great sum,' says Mr. Rivers, watching my face. I nod. 'It shall be ours,' he says, 'If we marry'" (Waters, 2012:142). She realizes that she will not going to have her inheritance without this marriage. Like Mrs. Sucksby tells her later, "No penny to go to daughter—meaning you, dear girl, so far as they knew—till the daughter marries" (Waters, 2012:217). Thus, Maud Lilly agrees to marry Richard Rivers just in order to get her money and to get out from Briar. It can be seen that marriage is a kind of negotiation from the oppression that she gets in Briar. As Murray stated in her research that marriage for some women may be a practical solution which allow them for freedom behind the marriage status (Murray, 2001:168). Though Maud Lilly is married by Richard Rivers, but she does not love him. Her love is only for Susan Trinder but because the condition does not support their lesbian relationship thus their sexual desire and

love are covered by the superficial marriage. As Chodorow stated that actually women have preference to make relationship with women, but because of the taboo of homosexuality and also economics dependence to men, then the women sexual bonds are unlikely occur (Rich, 1980:636). This condition makes the women's double-life possible to occur. It happens because women who have same-sex desire need to embrace both lesbian and heterosexual life to survive.

Until the coming of Susan Trinder, Maud still gets those kinds of oppression from her uncle. Just after the coming of Susan Trinder she feels affection and nurture that she never gets in Briar. Then Maud Lilly becomes close to Susan Trinder because their relationship makes her forget about her sorrow in that house. The sentimental friendship between Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly later on support them each other to bear the oppression that works towards them. This sentimental friendship is very important for women because they cannot get the affection from men who are oppressive and emotionally unavailable (Rich, 1980:637).

From the explanation above it can be found that the existence of lesbian continuum in the form of double-life, sentimental friendship and also the erotic friendship can be the strategy to negotiate the women's oppression that comes from compulsory heterosexuality. In Susan Trinder character, the lesbian continuum that exist in her relationship with Maud Lilly makes her can share affection with Maud Lilly. In Maud Lilly's side, besides making her life bearable, lesbian continuum can be the solution to gain both of her freedom through the marriage with Richard Rivers by still maintaining intimate relationship with Susan Trinder. As has been mentioned before, the compulsory heterosexuality

is the causal factor for the existence of women's double-life that is constructing the lesbian continuum. In the other hand, the lesbian continuum also becomes the strategy to negotiate the marginalization and oppression of compulsory heterosexuality for women. Thus, lesbian continuum creates the space which women can hide behind their heterosexual appearance since this strategy can negotiate the oppression from compulsory heterosexuality.

CONCLUSION

After doing the comprehensive analysis of Sarah Waters' *Fingersmith*, the writers has found that within the relationship of Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly characters, there is a construction of lesbian continuum. In Susan Trinder character, there are several points that are motivating the double-life experience. The first point is the mother-daughter relationship between Susan Trinder and Mrs. Sucksby. This relationship later on motivates Susan Trinder to seek nurturance and independence in her later relationship with women. Second, Susan Trinder is having lack of same-sex sexual definition. She is considered as having malleable sexuality which makes her had by others who have stronger sexual identity. Both of the points make Susan Trinder build sentimental and erotic friendship with Dainty at first and later with Susan Trinder. In the sentimental relationship she shares psychological support, nurturance and care with Dainty and Maud Lilly, but with Maud Lilly she learns about love and affection. There is also erotic friendship within the relationship between them. However, the erotic friendship is not the major thing within both relationships of Sue with Dainty and also Sue with Maud Lilly.

Similar with Susan Trinder experience, Maud Lilly has homosocial

relationship with the nurses of the madhouse which is like mother-daughter relationship to her. Maud Lilly lacks of good relationship with men in her life. She is also taught to copy and read her uncle's collection of erotica books. Thus, these things make her has no attraction and desire towards men. She also has strong sexual identity that she has same-sex desire. Maud Lilly also maintaining sentimental and erotic friendship with Susan Trinder as has been mentioned above. The existence of both sentimental and erotic friendship within Susan Trinder and Maud Lilly can be said as creating women's double-life experience. Moreover, the double-life condition constructs the lesbian continuum within those characters.

As has been stated before, that compulsory heterosexuality is the cause of the construction of lesbian continuum. On the other side, lesbian continuum itself can be used as a strategy to negotiate compulsory heterosexuality. The negotiation process can be seen within the denial of both characters with their intimacy as a matter of same-sex desire. The denial is aimed to enable them to embrace both lives; they can still have the desire and also can maintain heterosexual life. The other negotiation comes from the condition in which women get the oppression from male's power. Here, lesbian continuum makes women's life become bearable though under male's domination and oppression.

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