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The influence of adolescent novels on adolescents in England and Indonesia: a comparative study

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**THE INFLUENCE OF ADOLESCENT NOVELS ON ADOLESCENTS IN
ENGLAND AND INDONESIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

by

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**A Master Dissertatiton, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the Master of Arts Degree of the
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation is to find out whether books have some influences on teenagers In England and Indonesia, in terms of their behaviours and attitudes towards life and the world. To this end, the experts' analyses of the young people's natures and responses whilst they are reading supported with the quotations of the teenagers' comments, are discussed. Given that each individual responds to the book differently, the influence also varies. Cultures, background and social values contribute to the variety of response and influence. Indonesia and England are the subjects of this study because they represent the three determinative aspects mentioned above. The books themselves with their presentation, characterization and themes play an important role. The analyses show that there is interaction between the book and the reader. Despite the culture and background differences, Indonesian and English teenagers generally have similar responses to the text they are reading. The differences lies in the content of the books. English teenage novels describe sex and other problems more openly, while Indonesian novels mention them implicitly. Since the influence of English and Indonesian novels on young adult readers are analyzed only with regard to their respective readers, it is not known whether English books produce bad or good effects on Indonesia teenagers, and the other way round. Anyhow, the analyses of Indonesian and English novels show that books may influence teenagers, especially in terms of attitude regarding love, relationship with family and other people. But actual changes in behaviour are difficult to document.

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INTRODUCTION

It is believed that the most pivotal stage of the development of human personality and characters is in the first five years (1). However, the basic pattern laid at this stage which will underpin an individual's further development, does not mean a growing child cannot change or develop. In the course of personality development, there are some stages during which an individual undergoes some changes before he or she becomes established.

Many psychologists and physiologists assume that the most fundamental changes happen during the teenage years when a young person undergoes both physical and psychological changes from childhood to adulthood. As John. C. Coleman writes:

Adolescence is a complex stage of human development for the years of 12 to 18 involve a wide range of major life changes. In fact it is unlikely that the individual greater changes at any other stage in the life cycle apart from in fancy.(2)

It is generally acknowledged that this stage is considered as a transitional period, during which a person is in the intermediate stage of being too old to be a child and too young to be an adult. Like undergoing a crisis stage of a fever (3), a young person will develop into well-established adult if he or she manages to pass this teenage period very well. The interplay of internal pressures such as the individual's alienation or physical changes and the external pressures inflicted by parents, society, teachers and peers may either create insecurity and uncertainty which result vulnerability, or compel the individuals to have strong determination to pass this crisis and then to establish maturity with a positive self-image and a sense of competence.

There are many factors that may help a young person to pass through this

transitional period successfully such as a happy family life, a social environment and good education system (4). Teachers, librarians and even psychologists now consider books as also being one of the factors that exerts great influence on adolescent development (5). The written languages depicting human characters, their dilemmas, struggles and joy, are good source for young people to observe and discover about themselves and the society in which they live without being patronised. As a prover says: "Books are the best teachers". Literature of all kinds, including novels, helps them to build some kind of emotional strength and to form an understanding of their individuality and to face social reality of their existence.

The adolescents's expanded consciousness of self,heightened by a sense of the world perceived as indifferent, requires the forming of certain emotional strength that literature can help. Books, therefore, as "sources" of forms for interpreting human experience, have an important part to play in the establishment of the young person's readiness to affirm his autonomy.(6)

Based on the above assumption, nowadays people, especially parents and teachers, are encouraging young people to read more books. In their quest for self-identity and competence, most adolescents prefer to engage themselves in more physical activities involving their peers like playing football, hiking, gathering. Watching Tv or movies is also more enticing for them while magazines and comics are more preferable than books. Despite Heather's finding which suggests that the reading habit is usually formed at an earlier age and pupils can be classified as either book readers or non book readers before they become teenagers (7),the endeavours to lure teenagers to read books are still made. Public libraries are always trying to improve their special services for young people. School libraries also strive to the utmost in enticing their users to read books. Meanwhile, authors and critics discuss and argue

about what the writers should write so that their adolescent novels are likeable if not tantalizing (8).

On the other hand, teachers, parents and librarians are also concerned with the kinds of books the young people read, with the vulgarity of sex, drug abuse, homosexuality, violence which allegedly has encompassed modern novels since the appearance liberation and sophistication and the extinction of taboos. In certain countries whose people still uphold certain values very highly and practise their religion strictly, this concern has turned into worries or even fears. With the argument of the need to protect children from detrimental influences of violence, war, crime and other negative forces, the Ministry of Education in collateral with other concerned bodies often exercises its authority through censorship.

What are the kinds of books which offer bad or good influences to young people? And what are the kinds of influences that can be inflicted on adolescents by the books that they mostly read?

This dissertation aims to discuss the influences of books, in this case, fiction books for young people or adolescent novels, on adolescents. Since the concept of adolescent and the criteria of adolescent novels are different for every country, it is interesting to compare adolescents and the influences of the novels in two countries. The writer has determined to choose England and Indonesia whose cultures and backgrounds are completely different.

The objective of the study are to find out how far adolescent novels influence adolescents in the two countries, and to identify the similarities and differences and analyse the reason.

The method used in the comparative study is a literature analyses followed by analysis of thirteen Indonesian novels and ten novels written in English. All the

references quoted from Indonesian books were translated by the author. Correspondent with some students of a private school in Cirebon was conducted to get their freely-expressed opinions on chosen Indonesian adolescent novels.

Aspects which may contribute to the success or failure of young adult readers in finding their self identity and leaping from childhood to adulthood are considered. Since the emergence of adolescent novels is believed to have begun in the 1960s in England and in the 1970s in Indonesia, the sample is chosen from novels published from those period up to the present. The variety of adolescent novels published is also taken into account in the sample selection so that the reason why some novels are popular or controversial while the others are not, can be discussed.

Unfortunately, however, there is only limited choice of a range of books which analyse Indonesian novels for young adults.

The adolescent novels are analysed in depth by reviewing a wide range of books concerning every aspect of adolescence, with particular regard to young people reading habits, reading materials and their expectations of adolescent novels. Given that discussion about adolescents is inseparable from a consideration of psychology and sociology, the literature review entails assessing materials which discusses both the psychological and sociological aspects of teenagers.

Chapter one will discuss the concept of adolescence, adolescent life experiences, problems, expectations and also their choice of reading materials. Though some psychologists assume that the concept of adolescence with their development is universal, it is intriguing to discover how cultures, backgrounds, standard of morality may differentiate adolescents.

In this discussion, some protagonists from the adolescent novels are used to illustrate the nature of adolescence.

Chapter two will analyse adolescent novels, whether they really exist, the

reasons why they appeared and some features of adolescent novels. This analysis will be derived not only from critics' point of views but also from the authors themselves, including their experiences as teenage novel writers.

Chapter three will discuss the relations between adolescent novels and teenage readers and some aspects in adolescent novels that can influence adolescence, and how far they affect their development.

The last part of this chapter is the conclusion that the writer draws from the whole literature review.

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENTS

INTRODUCTION

There is no universal definition of adolescence, a term derived from the Latin word "adolescere" which means "develops into physical and socio-psychological maturity"(1). Given that the socio-psychological development of an individual is influenced by his or her social life and environment, different countries with different cultures have their own definition of adolescence and therefore the span devoted to adolescent development also varies (2). One country may have various aspects of social life which relate to its specific environment. In Indonesia, for example, the adolescent age as defined in the 1980 population census is from 14 to 24 years of age, but since the tribes, traditions, educational levels and socio-economic conditions are wide ranging, there is no common definition of when adolescence starts or ends. Many 16 year old girls in some small villages in Indonesia are not considered as adolescents anymore because they are married with children and have the responsibilities of adults, while their peers in big cities are still children, running around school yards and doing other activities most adolescents usually do.

In Indonesian society, marital status still very important. A married person, regardless of his or her age, is considered and treated as an adult, both legally and socially.(3)

Despite the differences mentioned above, in 1970 WHO (World Health Organization) issued adolescent definitions which are based on biological, psychological and socio-economical criteria.

The above criteria in addition to the consideration of youth health has led WHO to decide that the period from 10-20 years of age constitutes adolescence (4).

CONCEPTS OF ADOLESCENCE

Some people have an assumption that adolescence is a stage full of rebellion, conflict, impulsive and irresponsible behaviours resulting from adolescent turmoil. They also think that war, crimes and other violence that engulf the world have corrupted young people, and that modern communication has accelerated this destruction. Literature like "*Diagnostic and statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*", describes adolescents as problematic, without realistic goals, and with poor relationship with their families (5). Interestingly, this assumption has been similar from ancient times right up to the present. Some 2300 years ago, Aristotle described adolescents as follows:

The young are in character prone to desire and ready to carry any desire they may have formed into action of bodily desires and ready to carry any sexual to which they are most disposed to give away and in regard to sexual desire they exercise no self restraint. They are changeful too, and fickle in their desires which are as transitory as they are vehement like a sick man's fit of hunger and thirst. (6)

Early studies have also characterised adolescents negatively, with an emphasis on the concept of Sturm and Drang or "Storm and Stress". In 1904, based on his personal experiences, observation and his knowledge of romantic 19th literature, Hall wrote about adolescents and stated that it was common for adolescents to have extremely reversible psychological functioning (7). This means that adolescents' emotions are unsteady; they might be benevolent, considerate and joyful one day and depressed the next. Anna Freud's extensive psychoanalytical experience with disturbed children and adolescents revealed that biological changes in adolescence were totally disruptive (8). And the latest study of Indonesian adolescents conducted by Muhammad Syamsul Hadi, a vice director of Klaten Islamic Hospital in Indonesia, as reported by Tiras magazine, revealed that 43.5 per cent of adolescents in Surakarta are

depressed and desperate (9).

Daniel Offer and friends, however, did not agree with the results of the above studies. Their twenty-year empirical studies on the psychology of normal adolescents in ten countries conducted from 1969 to 1984 did not support the adolescent turmoil view. They stated that only 15 per cent of their respondents described themselves as depressed, emotionally empty, confused and anxious. Most of those adolescents grew up in hostile family environments (10). The results of the research also depicted that on average, more than 80 per cent of boys remained calm even under pressure while 74 per cent of the girls did so (11). Ninety-one per cent of teenagers also denied carrying a grudge against their parents (12). Offer also said that the negative assumption of adolescents was a kind of prejudice and generalised opinion.

He argued :

To understand adolescents adults often consult their own experience, rely on media imagery, or look to mental health professionals for guidance. However, a particular adult's experience of adolescence is always idiosyncratic and the memory of one own's adolescence is probably not totally veridical. The media are suffused with dramatic, often negative, imagery wherein adolescents are portrayed in stereotypical ways. The concepts that mental health professionals have of adolescents have been shown to be biased in a systematically negative way. (13)

Despite these disputable views, it cannot be denied that turmoil and maladaptation do exist in many teenagers' lives. To understand this, there are many aspects that should be taken into account. Colemann analyses this emotional condition from two points of view: psychological and sociological. Since this thesis discusses adolescent novels and their influence on

adolescents, some characters from the sample novels are used to illustrate the natures of adolescence discussed above.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

Colemann described this unsteady emotion as the result of a disengagement process from dependency and the loosening of childhood ties (14). As many psychologists believe, parents are the figures the children closely attach to and love, they are the figures of the children's emotional ties. But when they reach their teenage years, children want to be independent individuals separated from childhood attachments. According to Lerner, this development is caused by the individual's sexual awakening which leads him or her to look outside the family setting for appropriate love and affection (15). That is why teenagers start to "go steady" with the opposite sex and try to attach themselves to this new kind of emotion. Some parents do not approve these relationship. They worry about their children's welfare but sometimes they do not like their children growing up and resent this. Coleman said this made some children feel rejected, unloved and thus it leads them to the ambivalence of hating and loving their parents which is often expressed in rebellious behaviour (16). Elizabeth in *My darling My hamburger*, feels very upsets with her parents' resentment on her going out with her boyfriend, but she still tries to reach out for their understanding. She rebels by not coming home at all when her parents reprimand her with rude words instead of giving her friendly advice or support. She feels rejected and unloved and ends up hating them.

Let them scream their head off. She wouldn't even hear them because she was in another galaxy. She didn't really have a world of her own. All she was certain was that she didn't belong in theirs.(17)

This implies that in seeking freedom, adolescents often experience unstable emotions which swing back and forth from acceptance and rejection, involvement and non involvement. Actually, in the process of detachment from their parents, they experience a feeling of emptiness and a loss of love. They realize they want to be free but they still need some support and guidance, some forgiveness when they make mistakes. This creates inner conflict which is difficult for them to cope with due to their lack of maturity.

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Most human beings are social creatures who cannot live on their own. They need other people. As has been mentioned previously, social life and environment influence the socio-psychological development of an individual.

Coleman wrote:

By socialization is meant the process whereby individual in society absorb the values, standards, and beliefs current in that society. Some of these standards and values will refer to positions, or roles, in society, so that, for example, there will be expectation and prescriptions of behaviour to roles[.....]. (18)

These unclear roles, coupled with transitional roles from dependent figures into independent ones, are really problematic. Actually, the roles adolescents have to carry on are still the same as those when they are small children, such as students, daughters, friends, brothers. The problems are the increasing demands made by each role and the conflicts between one role and another. In Indonesia, whose society is undergoing a transition from a "tradition oriented society" to a "modern society", this confusion is also caused by the extinction of old values and norms as living guidance and the use of new technology which requires more advanced education (19). *Maria in A pigeon never breaks a promise* [Merpati Tak Pernah Ingkar Janji], is an example of a teenager coping with these confusing demands and values of different roles when her father sends her to normal school. Being used to carrying on the only role she

knows, a daughter prepared to be a nun who lives in a small town with its tradition, she is shocked by the new roles, demands and values introduced by her teenage friends school system and a modernized big city . She starts wondering which roles she should carry on first or which is more important or better.

Is there any choice? Are there any other doors for her? Before she met her friends she never thought about it. She didn't dare to think about it. But now it is like a temptation which lingered on her mind, making her restless. (20)

Offer noted that the inability to cope with this conflict deters adolescents from achieving a consistent, coherent and integrated identity (21). David Allison, as quoted by Sarwono, described this failure by using socialized anxiety theory. In his approach he underlined that adolescents' anxiety at other people's rejection, threat and punishment compel them to comply with the demands imposed on them. If the anxiety is very overwhelming they become indecisive, uncertain of their self-worth or even neurotic (22).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF

The adolescent period of conflict and tumult as discussed above, actually happens in conjunction with the adolescent's quest for self identity. According to William James, the first self psychologist (a psychologist who focuses on self development), whose theory was quoted by Offer et.al, adolescents have many selves which, through development and growth throughout adolescent years, are eventually integrated to form the complete self from which the adolescent can draw an answer to questions like "Who am I?" and "What is my proper role?" (23).

In the course of this integrated selves acquisition, adolescents have to strive to develop harmony among selves because, as James noted, these different

selves are competing for recognition and calling for potential integration (24). Phoebe in *A Friend Like Phoebe*, for example, as a member of a class performing on TV, has to work together with other students to achieve a successful performance, but as an individual student she competes to get the best grades (25). This rivalry and conflict among selves will cause a number of different tensions in adolescents if they fail to select the most important self and commit themselves to it. To emphasize this theory, Offer et.al. analyses Kohut's theory about self identity quest in relation to nuclear self theory. His theory also includes many selves. Some of these selves remain unconscious, but the nuclear self remains the most basic and important one. He stated that an individual will succeed in achieving a realistic self if he or she develops his or her nuclear self. This will mean a reasonable degree of narcissism, that is, a self-valuing that is neither too disgracing nor this unrealistically pompous. In other words, by developing nuclear self in such a way as to preserve his or her self-appreciation, an individual will not try to get too much accomplishment because this effort may cause them not to gain anything at all. The nuclear self is the self that controls the individual's values, ideals, goals and ambition. It also enables the individual to introspect so that he or she plans the future of his or her life and anticipate a particular fulfilment (26).

Jung also analyses the conscious and unconscious of self. But according to his theory they are not different contradictory selves as James and Kohut stated but components which relate to the self. The self is the central archetype of the collective unconscious and the principle archetype of orientation and meaning, of unity and totality, of order and organization; it is the essence of psychic wholeness which unites the personality.

This centre is....thought ofas the self. Although the centre is represented by an innermost point, it is surrounded by a periphery containing everything that belongs to the self-the paired opposites that make up the total personality. This totality comprises

consciousness first of all then the personal unconscious, and finally an indefinitely large segment of the collective unconscious whose archetype are common to all mankind. (27)

Further, he stated that in the psychic revolution that teenagers undergo the adolescents are beginning to open up both to their personal self and to a collective realm. The more one knows oneself the more one will know the world. The more the self is able to enter into the realm of the collective unconscious, the more the self becomes open to all the world (28).

This development toward the self is lengthy and will not be fully accomplished until an individual reaches his or her maturity.

Coleman has a different approach to the conflict of the selves. In his theory of self concept, he described these different selves as different roles in various social life events. The dilemma lies between "playing appropriate roles" and "selfhood":

On one hand, it is important to be fully integrated and accepted in a variety of social settings and to follow the prescribed rules for these situations. On the other hand, it is equally important to be able to maintain elements of individuality or selfhood. (29)

The solution he gave to achieve harmonious roles is almost similar to that of James: namely through choice and selection of alternative social and environmental contexts in which to provide appropriate levels of variety and opportunity for adolescents to play the roles they prefer (30). Here, unlike James, Coleman emphasized the appropriateness of the self role instead of its priority. This is supported by Turner who argues that even within self-conscious cultures: "in many cases 'who I am' is a little bit more than to 'where I fit' (31). Hence a teenager who chooses activities or roles in which he or she feels comfortable may depict his or her sense of self. This may be applied in

England whose people have more liberty to think what roles appropriate for them. In Indonesia, this appropriateness should be in accordance with the moral values most people strickle uphold.

PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS

In the previous discussion, it has been discussed that adolescents experience a disengagement from parental control and domination. In the process, there is a conflict between the adolescents' wish to be free and their inability to shoulder the adult's responsibilities. This is exacerbated by the parents' unwillingness to let their adolescent children grow and stand on their own feet.

In Indonesia, parents tend to prolong their children's dependency on them and want them to behave in accordance with parents' expectations. The result of C. Kagitcibasi's research on the parents of the whole world revealed that most Javanese and Sundanese (two major tribes in Indonesia) parents want their children to be obedient. Javanese: mother 88 per cent and father 85 per cent, Sundanese: mother 81 per cent and father 76 per cent, while European parents' expectation on their children's obedience was less than 60 per cent (32).

On the contrary research findings on the adolescents themselves showed that most Indonesian adolescents neither obey their parents nor try to build good relationship with them. Only 11 per cent of the respondents claimed their obedience with their parents, while 63.8 per cent claimed that they tried to fulfil their parents' expectations only occasionally (33). This shows the conflict between the parents' wish and their children's.

Meanwhile, the parents' attitude toward their children are not consistent. Despite their reluctance to their children's emancipation, they sometimes wish their children to stop making childish demands, to make their own decisions, and so on. This complicates the emancipation process of adolescents.

In fact, the freedom that adolescents want, as Coleman noted, is freedom to make day-to-day decisions, emotional freedom to make new relationships and personal freedom to take responsibility for one's self in such things as education, political belief and a future career (34). He also argued that parents' conflicting attitudes toward their children is the result of generation gap (35). The adolescent years sometimes coincide with their parents' middle age life with their difficulties such as preparing retirement, coping with their deteriorating physical health and so on (36).

Another factor that deters parents from setting their children free is the parents' own security and self-esteem as individuals which is linked primarily to their function as mother or father, rather than to their function as wife or husband (37).

Thus, this major source of their personal gratification will disappear if they let their children go from. This implies that to develop into mature and independent adults, adolescents need their parents' "maturity" or their readiness to relinquish their role as parents.

This does not mean parents have to stop their support and control attempts. In 1974 Thomas et.al, as quoted by Geraldts et.al., have identified that these two factors are important in the socialization of children (38). Recent studies also have shown the relations between perceived parental behaviour and identity development. It has been found that parental emotional support is associated with enhanced identity development and that parental rejection is associated with lower levels of identity development (39). Parents' support and acceptance are supposedly to enable adolescents to explore and experiment with identity options, and therefore they are more likely to discover their unique personal qualities and values (40).

Widati in *The Seagulls in my heart* [Camar Camar di Hatiku], develops into a strong young woman who can cope with trials and ordeals though she is far from her family, because she knows her parents, especially her mother, are always behind her and ready to comfort her when she is sad, and to give her emotional support when she needs it.

Mother always gives me constant support and comfort. Again she shows how strong and wise she is. She keeps smiling and never blames me when something goes wrong. She has a lot of faith in me. (41)

Parents can continue their control of their adolescents but its degree should be different from that which is given to small children. Baumrind has stated the reason for decreasing parents' control on adolescents:

While at all ages a control attempt by one person towards another results in psychological forces both to comply and to resist, by adolescence the forces to resist become an important counterforce to compliance because they reflect a stage-appropriate drive toward independence. (42)

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS

Adolescence is a period of transition and adjustment in which they are in an intermediate state between independence and dependence. When adolescence withdraw themselves from their parents' control, they are in the process of freeing themselves and developing a sense of self identity. However, they still need some support to face the forces coming from society. Joining their peer groups is the easiest way for them, especially for early adolescents, since most adolescents spend their time at school with their friends.

Some psychologists believe that the similarity of interest, hobbies and so on is the driving force that strengthens the bonds between peers (43). Adolescents use these strong bonds as shelter to protect themselves from a broadside attack by forces which hold an unfair advantage (44). The need for this shelter is very strong so that sometimes adolescents try to do anything to be accepted in the groups. Ruth Thomas describes adolescents' dreadful feeling caused by rejection in her novel *The Runaways*.

Here she describes how their peers' rejection has driven Julia and Nathan to

be very resentful, vindictive and uncontrollable.

But loneliness, emptiness resulting from rejection and the detachment from parents, and the need to be members of the group have compelled them to do something drastic regardless of the consequences (45).

Some psychologists argue that the endeavours adolescents made to gain their peers' approval as portrayed in this novel become one of the main causes of juvenile delinquency. To be accepted they are willing to do what the rest of the group do, they will smoke, use drugs, shoplift, and other negative things. Meanwhile, the groups also pressurize the adolescents to do such activities (46). Some studies have depicted that this peer pressure is stronger than the one they get from their school and family. The strange thing is the adolescents' willingness to cope with this pressure (47). Other studies, however, have shown that not many peer groups put pressure on their members to do destructive things. Brown's study, for example, reported that friends actively discourage these activities (48). This can be seen in Hilman's *Lupus*. This novel shows that peer groups can not only be a refuge for adolescents from their sadness, worries and fears, but also act as confidantes and advisers. Given that adolescents' thoughts are mostly at the same level and their interests and concerns are almost equal, most adolescents find it easier to converse with their peers than with their parents. Hunter, as quoted by Coleman, stated that peer conversations are reciprocal and equal; "They involve more sharing, explaining, and mutual understanding, whereas adolescent-parent conversations involve parents explaining their ideas even at the expense of not understanding their children' alternative views"(49).

The advantages the adolescents gain from joining peer groups have been discussed by many psychologists. They even emphasize that this is important for adolescent development. It is important in the individual's attempts to establish a feasible identity (50) and as a confirming experience for adolescents in their transition to new identity (51). Close friends serve especially to confirm

crucial but tentative personal beliefs, and hence to validate each other' view (52). Marsland noted that peer groups are the crucial milieu for adolescence socialization. He argued further:

In at least most societies, this withdrawal to the peer group is, within limits, legitimated by the adult world. Time and space is handed over to young people to work out for themselves in auto-socialisation the developmental problems of self and identity which cannot be handled by the simple direct socialisation appropriate to childhood. There is moratorium on compliance and commitment and leeway allowed for a relatively unguided journey with peers towards autonomy and maturity. (53)

ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR READING HABIT AND MATERIALS

Apart from the turmoil resulting from both physical and psychological changes from childhood to adulthood, most adolescents actually have a highly stimulating world: playing, partying, pep rallies, folk-rock, watching TV, going to cinema. Some people, especially in Indonesia believe these activities are some of the aspects that deter adolescents from reading (54). As it has been described before, some adolescents tend to choose activities and roles that they feel comfortable with and also approved by their peers. Reading does not seem to fulfil these criteria because it is mostly done solely and quietly which is a bit contrary to the nature of adolescents who like excitement and cheerfulness. Woody Allen thinks that reading is hardly enjoyable if people treat it as a task.

The problem with reading now is that people approach it as a discipline, a chore; and consequently they don't want to do it and I feel the same way about it my self. If it's not joyful then I don't think it's worth doing. (55)

In Indonesia, the reluctance to read among teenagers is assumed to be so bad that it affects the quality of their education. Slamet Iman Santoso a prominent figures in Indonesian education affairs, identifies that most students, especially university students do not like reading. Their main source of information is only their notes which they write during lectures whose accuracy is still in question. Further, he says that this reluctance was caused by the family and school environment which does not encourage the students to read and to understand the benefits they can obtain from books (56).

Some surveys and facts, however, have shown that teenagers are not as reluctant to read as most people think. A lot of children and teenagers In Indonesia spend their time after school in bookshops, reading some books, since Indonesian teenagers are not as lucky as English teenagers who have enough public libraries. The findings of surveys conducted in Britain for the last twenty years depicted that teenagers read a wide range of reading materials like magazines, newspapers and comics (57). The problem is, a lot of people do not consider them as reading materials. Iman Santoso considers only books to be proper reading material. He does not mention whether Indonesian teenagers like reading newspapers, magazines or fiction books. Margaret Marshall's argument on whether newspapers and magazines are reading materials or not is not based on the materials themselves but on the way young people read them. Based on the inquiries she made, she observed that most teenagers did not read newspapers. They only look at them. Some boys like to look at sports news while some girls looked at horoscopes and others just glanced at whatever caught their eye (58).

This reading phenomenon is very interesting, given that teenagers' reading habits have been focused on simple and interesting materials. This has been noted as a continuing trend, from the nineteenth century on. Connie Alderson, who wrote about the magazines teenagers read in the 1960s, had quoted what Northcliffe said to Pemberton in 1883:

The board schools are turning out hundreds of thousands of boys and girls annually who are anxious to read. They do not care for the ordinary newspaper. They have no interest in society, but they will read anything which is simple and sufficiently interesting. (59)

Even Jean-Paul Satre, the great modern French writer, was very fond of trashy adventure stories which he stopped reading when he heard footsteps coming towards his room, and then he pretended to read classic stories (60).

The basic reasons why teenagers prefer reading the entertainment value to had news value, as Margaret Marshall stated, are that availability, topicality, readability and drama packed human interest stories with pictorial emphasis require little sustained concentration (61). These factors are the magnets which attract many teenagers and even adults to a reading medium with little demand on reading ability but which always gives a lot of interest.

The contents of Indonesian magazines like *Gadis* and *Puteri*, and English magazines like *Look* and *19*, are presented in teenage argot which create the feelings of identity and relevance that loom so large in adolescence. These magazines, which are widely read and bought by teenage girls, cater for their interest in pop stars, boy/girl relationship, fashion and make up, short and strip stories of romantic interests. Readers' letters and agony columns not only enable teenagers to express their feeling or their problems without being embarrassed but also give the solutions from experts. Meanwhile, the characters portrayed in the short stories and strip stories are usually evenly divided between the "goodies" and the "baddies" with the whole situation presented in a black and white treatment of good or bad. The happy ending of the story ensures security and comfort, which most adolescents need. Since boys also have problems of identity and uncertainty, they may read these magazines though they might not buy them but read those that are available

to them at school, in the home, or elsewhere.

Pop music is a part of the sub-culture of teenagers (62), therefore pop magazines such as *Hai* in Indonesia and *The Top Chart* in England are frequently read. There are some differences between the girls' interest and the boys' in this kind of magazines.

Marshall noted:

The girls tend more towards the romantic/emotional hero worship and less toward the music while the boys are attracted by the music itself, the technical paraphernalia of the pop world and the animal attraction of the beat and the volume. (63)

It is clear that boys' interests are more dynamic. Statistics show that these dynamic interest are very varied while girls' interests focus only on girls' magazines, pop music papers and their related interests (64). The most intense boys' interest is cars and motor bikes. Teenagers in Indonesia and England have no access to a car or motor bike until they are 17 for the Indonesian and 18 for the British teenagers, but it does not stop them from reading motor magazines. It seems that readership of motor magazines is not confined to those with ownership and access. The excitement and the danger the drivers or those who attend the race are exposed, as written in the magazines, are the aspects that attract teenage readers. They also sometime read these magazines for serious reason such as to learn about machines.

Young adults' reading material, however, is not limited to the media provided only for them. The physical changes adolescents experience make them self-conscious and raise their sexual interest (65). One of the ways to fulfil their curiosity is reading sex magazines. Actually, "look at" these magazines is more appropriate than "read", because most of the reading is done while standing at

bookstalls and news-stands, an apparently casual desultory look while flipping through. This can avoid them from the embarrassment of being asked by attendants and they can take advantage of being able to see more magazines. It is impossible for Indonesian teenagers to do this reading activity since these magazines and other similar "blue" reading materials are considered as in contravention of the Indonesian moral values and, therefore, to avoid moral disruption of Indonesian young people they are strictly banned.

In searching for self identity, teenagers need some figures as models (66). Sometimes they look for these models from the closest figures they are familiar with, like parents and teachers.

But they also sometime search some figures to be idolised from pop stars, popular figures and also protagonists of comics.

Casual readers can identify themselves with the superheroes portrayed in the comics by using their fantasy, while serious readers follow the fortunes of the characters with an eagle eye for consistency of detail in characterization and plot (67). Meanwhile, the comic strip format, the escapist content in terms of the hero, adventure, and triumph of right or wrong conform to the recognised liking for visual action and exciting, suspenseful plot. Superman, Batman and X-Man are very popular in England and in Indonesia. In Indonesia, the popularity is so pervasive that to counter these imported comics, some publishers publish Indonesian comics with heroes derived from Indonesian puppet shadow characters like *Gatotkaca* who can fly like Batman or from imaginary heroes like *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu* who can defeat their enemies with their inner power or their ability to fight in traditional self defence like *pencak silat*. The modernised characters presented humorously is the attraction of these comics.

G. Robert Carlsen's theory about the teenagers' reading habit and materials is somewhat different from that of Marshall. He agrees that the actual subject matter and content of the book or other reading materials which lie close to

their interests attract teenagers to read them. But he argues that language complexity is less of a deterrent than the boring subjects of simple books (68). Further, he divides teenagers' interests in reading into three transformations: early adolescence, middle adolescence and teenage adolescence. In the early adolescence, the period when the child is between the ages of eleven and fourteen, reading interests lie in imagined adventure, mystery, animals, sports, home and family. By the end of this stage they reach a peak of interest in science fiction. The imaginative power that illuminates the stories compels the reader to open up their minds to any possibilities (69). The reason for this interest is the young adults' need for choices. On the way to forming a definition of themselves and their place in the world, young people's opinions are not yet set. Science fiction provides the options. In these stories the young can find the same questions they are asking such as "What is our future?", "What is our role?" "Are we in charge of this?" The interest deepens when teenagers reach the age of fifteen or sixteen, or the middle of adolescence. At this stage they mature into a more realistic kind of reading interest. Boys want first hand experience of adventures while girls are interested in the romantic stories (70). In late adolescence, most adolescents start reading the type of reading materials generally read by adults. In this stage, they want to crystallize their own value systems, searching for meaning, probing, questioning and sometimes destroying. They want to find a personal direction for their lives (71). Hence they like reading books or other reading materials which centre on individuals struggling to find a code of social values for their society (72). Therefore, stories or articles about economic deprivation, racial inequalities, religious discrimination, though sometimes very shocking, and disgustingly presented, may attract adolescents.

The above stages develop in conjunction with the stage of satisfaction one seeks from reading. First, there is a stage when a reader absorbs themselves in reading and use it as an escape from daily life. As the reader matures, the involvement is more personal and deeper. Reading becomes a means of

understanding and testing one's own problems and world. The satisfaction is gained when readers recognised themselves in what they are reading (73).

Isabella Holland, however, has a different point of view. According to her, like the basic nature of adolescence, adolescents' interest in reading is inconsistent. Adults have evolved their own cosmologies. They choose to read the materials which reflect their own beliefs about themselves and the world around them, and therefore they will seek out what is consistent with it (74). Adolescents, on the contrary, can jump from one reading material to another, from one type of interest to another with no dizziness. Free from *Tarzan*, they can swing to *Mad Magazines* and so on. This, Holland says, because for teenagers "Life is still a huge, unrelated, fascinating, frightening hodgepodge. He does seek meaning, but he looks for it everywhere with equal passion (75).

CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

ADOLESCENT NOVELS

WHAT IS THE ADOLESCENT NOVEL?

There is a general idea, if not a truly adequate definition, about what the adolescent novel is. Isabella Holland, Sylvia Engdahl and Robert Carlsen have agreed that an adolescent (used interchangeably with "teenage" and "young adult") novel is a book written for, read and enjoyed by young adults (1,2,3). It is difficult, however, to categorize what kinds of books belong to this genre. Dorothy Briley thinks that this term has been invented for marketing purposes. Though teenagers are the intended readers of these books, they are not the targeted buyers. The books are marketed to those who bring books and adolescent-age children together, such as teachers, parents and librarians (4). The term "young adult" or "teenage" make the publishers market these books more conveniently. The prospective buyers also know what kinds of books they are buying.

The categorization of teenage novel on the ground of commercial purpose is also discussed by Sylvia Engdahl. According to her, the content and the characteristics of the book do not determine the designation. Whether a book bears on the designation "teenage" or "junior" or "young adult" as applied by book trade and review media is solely determined by the structure of the publishing trade.

A novel suitable for adolescent is "teenage" if it is issued by the children's book department of a publishing house, and "adult" if it is issued by the adult department (5).

Hence, the categorization is merely commercial. It is applied to meet the need for books appropriate for teenagers to read.

Every publishing house, however, has its own policy which may change from

year to year. One book's "10 to 14" designation may change into "12 up" next year or it may be the equivalent of another's "13 up". This of course creates the uncertain status of adolescent novel at present, especially when most publishers set age level designations unrealistically high.

Isabella Holland does not agree with these age level designations. This is understandable. Apart from the uncertainty of the adolescent novel it has caused, this categorization forms a pressure which deters young people from discovering their self-identity. Young people should have freedom of choice to be what they are and to be at what reading stage they like (6). Therefore, according to her, books which are supremely suitable for young adults and thus should be the staple of the young adult library are books which touch the sensitive areas of adolescent life, such as sex, schools, drugs, relationship to parent and relationship to society (7).

The freedom to read these kinds of books regardless of the age level, will open the young people's road of self discovery and therefore they can establish their own identity as individuals, separate from not only their families but also their peers. They have the chance to know what they are, where they are and what they really like and want for themselves.

The category of adolescent novels in Indonesia is more vague. There is neither a children's book department of a publishing house which determines the designation nor a library for young people. The only library they can go is the school library. There are some public libraries in certain towns but these are still poorly organised (8) so that it is impossible to think which books belong to which category. In this case, the reason for using the term "teenage" or "adolescent" is similar to Dorothy Briley's point of view, namely for commercial purpose. The difference is that the publishers used this term to attract the direct potential readers: the young adult themselves. The teenage category is confirmed by the youth of the author. Most of the widely read Indonesian adolescent novels were written by young authors whose age is more or less the

same as the targeted readers. *Lupus*, a currently popular novel about a teenage boy called Lupus and his "gang" who lead a simple but very cheerful life, was written by Hilman whose age, characteristics and feature are almost similar with that of the protagonist of his book. Teenagers saw him as the materialization of *Lupus* when he appeared in "fan-author" meetings, resulting in a surge in the book's popularity. Edi D. Iskandar was also in late adolescence when he wrote *Love songs from senior high school* [Gita cinta dari SMA] and *A Beautiful flower in my heart* [Puspa indah taman hati], two very popular novels in the 70s, while *My love in the blue campus* [Cintaku di kampus biru] and *I reach out for your love* [Kugapai cintamu] were written by the then young teacher, Ashadi Siregar, not to mention Yudistira Adi Nugraha with his *Arjuna seeks for love* [Arjuna mencari cinta], and some others.

Aidan Chambers considers that the popularity of adolescent books written by young authors is due to the authors' ability to really know and understand the young.

Anyone who really knows the young of today- knows them at first hand and by experience- cannot be older than 25 to 30, for this is the first generation which has come through: which has experienced at first hand the contemporary teenage phenomenon. They only have that instinctive feeling for the language, the themes, the treatments which communicate with present-day young people. (9)

Hence, it can be said that adolescent novels in Indonesia usually have a connotation with young authors.

The "teenage" or "adolescent" terms, however, are rarely used by Indonesian critics. Most of them categorize books for young adults into "pop novels". It is not known when the term "pop" which is shortened from an English word "popular" was firstly used. Umar Kayam, a prominent Indonesian writer and critic, assumes that this term is used just to differentiate this genre from "classic

novels", like people do with "pop music" and "classic music" (10). But Yacob Sumarjo presumed that this term was used in the 1970s when there was a "boom" of novels issued by publishing houses other than "Balai Pustaka" which only publishes "serious novels". The "pop novel" category is of course too broad, for originally, books which were grouped into "pop literature" could be adult or adolescent books as long as they were innovative and written in a new or experimental style. They now also have great commercial value (11). Kayam has noted these features, which will be discussed later, as the reason why Indonesian novels about young adults are labelled "pop" (12).

WHY DID ADOLESCENT NOVELS APPEAR?

In the first chapter it was noted that there is a growing concern about teenagers' reluctance to read, though survey findings of the last seven years reveal that this reluctance is not as it was assumed, given that 81 per cent of full time students from various ages in Great Britain spend their leisure time on reading (13). In England, this concern can be dated back in the 1930s with Eric Leyland's book *The public library and the adolescent*. Here he wrote about his concern on the adolescents' need for special books, and the public library's duty to start providing these kinds of books with special section (14). But the widely-spread concern started in the 1960s when teachers and librarians found that the use of school libraries and public libraries declined (15). In Indonesia there is no document stating when people started to pay attention to whether young adults like to read or not, or what kinds of books they like. Anyhow, nowadays, it is obvious that the concern of this reluctance is increasing and the awareness of the benefit of reading books is growing. On the 2nd May 1995, the Indonesian Minister for education proclaimed that this date is celebrated not only as The National Education day but also as the first day of book month (16).

In the early 1960s, librarians, teachers and youth leaders in England made some endeavours to find out the reason why many teenagers did not

apparently read much fiction and the children's use of both school libraries and public libraries decreased when they reached their teen (17). At a conference held and attended by librarians, teachers, youth leaders and other parties who were concerned with the adolescents' reading habit, it was agreed that there was a gap between books for children and books for adults. Children above 13 years old have lost their interest in children books but they have no access to adult books. Unless this gap was bridged with the right kinds of books, teenagers would drift away from reading activity (18). A decade later, under the same ground as that was in England, some publishing houses which issued newspapers and magazines in Indonesia had an interest in stories about young adults (19). These publishing houses saw that in the 1970s, the number of teenagers increased. They needed books. Public libraries had not existed, while school libraries did not have adequate collections. The books provided were only text books or classic fiction which had to be read by the students. It was assumed young people only read for school assignments (20). Marga's *Karmila*, initially issued as a serial in *Kompas* newspaper, in 1973, can be identified as the pioneer of the Indonesian pop novel. In 1977, *Gadis*, a very popular teen magazine issued serial stories: *Love songs from senior high school* [Gita cinta dari SMA], *Goodbye sadness* [Selamat tinggal duka], *A beautiful flower in my heart* [Puspa indah taman hati], and so on. Since these serials had attracted many readers, the publishing houses decided to publish them as adolescent books. Since then, pop novels written by young authors and intended for teenage readers have mushroomed.

The concern and the awareness mentioned above have sparked librarians, teachers and other parties concerned with teenagers to think what kinds of books are appropriate for young adults. The uncertainty resulted from the transition period that adolescents undergo leads them to have particular interests and problems (21).

These of course are not adequately represented in either children or adult

books. Actually there were some books about young adults which were published long before 1960s. They can even be tracked back to 1868 with Louise Alcott's *Little Women*. In the early 1950s, British writers and publishers followed the United States' pattern by making a conscious effort to provide books which give the adolescents the opportunity to experience the possibilities which lie ahead. In 1948 the Library Association awarded the Carnegie Medal to Richard Amstrong's *Sea Change*, a book about a boy going to sea with the merchant navy for the first time, and in 1950 to Elfrida Vipont's *The Lark on the Wing*, which told the hardships faced by the heroine at the start of her career as a singer (22). Nevertheless, these books did not meet the adolescents's needs for a long time since human culture and standards of value change from time to time.

By 1960 British young people were more sophisticated, more aware of the world around them, more subject to commercial pressures than the previous generation, and therefore they were more open to discuss those subjects which were initially considered as taboos. Restrictions on profanities and vulgarity declined (23).

Though they are not as open as British youths, adolescents in Indonesia also have changed. They have more freedom and more chance to choose their friends, their future wives or husbands, they also have bigger opportunities for further study. Therefore, arranged marriages in Marah Rusli's *Siti Nurbaya* and Hamka's *Under The protection of Ka'bah* [Dibawah Lindungan Ka'bah] no longer appeal to them. They do not think these subjects are relevant to their lives (24). These changes in literature, as Helen W. Painter has noted, occur because literature is a reflection of the times. Today's morality might be different from that of the past, and many words once spoken only in whispers are now mentioned openly and explicitly in casual speech, in print and on television (25).

There is an interesting difference between the development of English and

Indonesian teenage novels. In the 1960s, people in England started to open themselves to the things that used to be taboos, like premarital sex and abortion and writers discussed them in novels. Paul Zindel could describe Sean's need for sex in *My darling, My Hamburger* very openly:

But nature starts doing things. The hormones start rolling and those old testicles start producing and all the rest of it- like breathing. You don't go around asking for it. It happens. It happened to me when I was twelve (26).

Or Sean's conversation with his friend Dennis: "Did you ever have wet dreams?" Sean asked. "A couple". "They are funny, aren't they?" (27)

The above conversation might never be found in Indonesian teenage novels. The sexual openness of present Indonesian teenagers is limited to their freedom to have boyfriends or girlfriends, to have small kisses, and to talk about it freely both with their friends and their parents. Since young adults are not supposed to have sex freely, let alone abortion and homosexuality, the "courting" activities authors write about are merely walking hand in hand, hugs, or kisses on the lips. The "romance" depicted in Indonesian adolescent novels is lightly, softly, romantically, cheerfully or sometimes humorously presented. Mira W, illustrates how Ati, a smart but frustrated girl in *Adolescence Turbulence in senior high school* [Galau Remaja di SMA], dreams of kisses from two men she thinks she loves. She is aggressive but the author describes her aggressiveness within the limit of Indonesian moral values:

But.....ah, does she really miss Har's soft kisses? No....it's Anto's hot kisses which make her heart pound vigorously. The desire to be with him has kept her awake. (28)

THE FEATURES OF ADOLESCENT NOVELS

The concern at the need for appropriate books that can foster young people's interest in reading has compelled writers and critics to think about how to write

these novels so that not only these books can lure young people, especially the reluctant reader to read. They can also give the knowledge to bridge the transition period towards adult maturity. This is of course a very onerous business. Reading, as Robert Leeson says, exerts an impact of several aspects of human development, and ideas presented in fiction can be influential (29). Meanwhile, young adult today have been more exposed to information and opinions about all sorts of thing. Therefore, today's books have to offer more than excitement to teenagers. Besides holding up for the reader's inspection the whole spectrum of life; the good, the bad, people's success, their failures, the indifferent, the lost, good adolescent novels should cover several features.

Most writers and critics agree that adolescent novels should be real and relevant, meaning that they should adequately capture adolescent experience and life. The trouble is that most young adult novels, especially the English ones, (in the previous discussion it is already mentioned that most Indonesian teenage novels are written by young authors) are written by adults who present a picture of how young adults are thought to behave. This portrayal is sometimes not relevant to the present young adults at all. According to Robert Westall, this is because most authors write their stories for young people based on their nostalgia (30). He also describes how this nostalgia has hooked most authors and formed a body of opinion acceptable to the establishment so that they are tempted to set aside the children audience from their minds and then write what they think can please adults: editors, critics, parents and librarians. In fact his arguments are contradictory. On the one hand, he emphasizes that nostalgia is the enemy of realism because it drains the vitality of the book, on the other hand, he says that to write the best book for the young the author should separate the child-within-the author from the adult author writing (31). Hence, the child within the author turns to the real child (32).

This child-within-the author of course can only be evoked by nostalgia, as Dorothy Briley has said:

[.....] if you're going to write a novel, it is counterproductive to measure the audience before you begin. The measure is within yourself. The best writers put a great deal of themselves into their characters. They remember what life felt when they were the age of their characters, and they are able to transmit those feelings through their characters' response to the things that happen in the story. Thus what happens in a story is less important than how well characters are developed. (33)

Edi D. Iskandar, for instance, when he writes about the teenagers of senior high schools, seems to have a special memory of how he felt when he was seventeen years old. His masterpieces *Love Songs from Senior High School* [Gita Cinta dari SMA] and *Commercial Boys* [Cowok Komersil] are alive with his cheerfulness, his teenage self-consciousness, his feeling of rivalry and his mischief. Likewise, Ruth Thomas's memories when she was twelve years old seem to enliven her *The Runaways*, the winner of the Guardian Children's Fiction Award 1988. Readers can find twelve-year old insecurities, loneliness, the need to be loved and cared for, and pathos. In other words, character-memory can be a significant feature which distinguishes young adult books and adult books if the authors have the ability to transmit their memories into young adult stories without involving their way of thinking as adults. In this case Dorothy Briley's theory matches Westall's idea of "cutting off the child-within-the author from the adult author writing".

Obviously, adolescents cannot absorb ideas of as great complexity as more experienced readers, and thus the adults' viewpoint applied in teenage novels will lessen the vitality and the realities of the stories.

Besides putting themselves into adolescent characters, another way to enliven teenage stories is by using young adult's contemporary language. Paul Zindel calls this particular language "delicious". This can be obtained through

observation or informal survey, as Paul Zindel did with the titles of his books. He describes how he changed the title of his books *The Mortician's Gone Nuts* with *The Undertaker's Gone Bananas* because when he tested the title with the children, "undertaker" is more familiar to them and more of a favourite than "mortician", though these two words have the same meaning (34). Any words that were popular a decade ago may be no longer known among teenagers. Most widely-read Indonesian teenage novels are also written in this "delicious language". Since the authors are young, they really know what words are in fashion. Edi D. Iskandar admitted that to get the latest jargons and phrases into his books about students in senior high schools, he kept "eavesdropping" his little brother and his friends because at that time, though he was still young, he was no longer a student at the senior high school (35).

However, the like other kinds of fashion, the popularity of teenage vocabulary does not last long, and thus the exhilaration and the appeal of the books wanes quickly.

Some of the books which have tried to reflect too closely current teenage vocabulary have been dated almost on publication and have been allowed to go quickly out of print. (36)

According to Sheila Ray, the best style used to write stories is by presenting them in meaningful language which is not absurd or incomprehensible, with little or no dateable slang (37). Ashadi Siregar does not use contemporary teenage language. Readers cannot find the delight of "trendy" words like the ones in Edi D. Iskandar or Hilman's books, but his books are still popular. Though the books were written in the 1970s, the themes of the stories are still relevant to the current young people; young people's rebellion against parents' misconduct or bad treatment to their children, and teenagers' loneliness and emptiness are portrayed naturally by the characters.

Anyhow, the above aspects of adolescent lives, together with drug abuse,

runaways, high school dropouts and so on, which writers consider the truth(38), will not make the books realistic or relevant if authors set out to prove or present these particular aspects and invents characters and action to support their thoughts about them. "This is not themes, but thesis", argues Briley. Further, she notes that the "truth" will be realistic if authors allow the characters to tell their story within the framework of a theme (39).

Isabella Holland, for instance, mentioned homosexuality in her *The Man Without A Face*, but she does not want to force this truth into her story, so she does not go far in describing the homosexual act. She treats it as a part of the plot that develops young Charles's insight into who he is. Likewise, Paul Zindel uses the abortion issue in *My Darling, My Hamburger* as a device to develop the characteristics of Elizabeth and Sean. Sean's short story about a baby slaughtered in a circus illustrates his reaction to his girl friend's abortion. Here, Zindel shows the "realism" of the story. Sean is actually remorseful, but being young, he tries to find the justification for his wrongdoing; he thinks life is like a circus.

The illustration above shows one of the features of contemporary teenage novels. In earlier works, the writers had the tendency to be omniscient narrators by preaching about moral values and commenting about the consequences of the characters' actions (40). As an author of modern teenage novels, Zindel presents the actions and their consequences from the view point of young protagonists. There is no moral value assigned to actions, the situation is subjectively evaluated by the characters themselves. Zindel does not give his opinion about how young people ought to behave or to look at the life. He only describes how real life is. This may appeal to teenagers to read the books, since they will not feel they are being lectured by the authors. As some psychologists say that most adolescents scorn any kinds of preaching (41).

However, some Indonesian authors are either not aware of this adolescent characteristic or they choose to ignore it. Mira W, for instance, fills *The*

Adolescence Turbulence In Senior High School [Galau Remaja Di SMA] with her opinions about how teenage girls should behave, how they have to keep their virginity till they get married. She presents these moral values very crudely so that it mars the whole plot. The "delicious" language she uses does not help. Among her novels, this book is the most unpopular one. Her crudity can be seen in the conversation between Atik and Nina, Tia's mother:

Don't give your priceless treasure till your wedding night. This is your honour as a woman. Never let your husband, whoever he is, humiliate you at your wedding night. Your wedding night is the window of your marriage. (42)

Hilman, on the other way round, has captured his readers by putting his characters alive through actions. He does not tell the readers that to be orphans they have to help their mothers, or that teenagers should not be too-self conscious about their appearance. Instead, humorously he portrays these through Lupus's and his friends' actions.

As Patricia Lee Gauch says: "reality grows from a great inner action" (43). This is emphasized by Sylvia Engdahl:

[...] it is my belief that today's teenagers want fiction that emphasizes the inner events of its characters' lives more than the outward ones. (44)

Gauch also divides books into two categories: "good read" and "good stuff". In "good read" books, according to her, authors manipulate characters or situation or mood for didactic purposes or propaganda. Since the authors' goal is to give information or to enlighten their ideas about morality or responsibility, they usually avoid the rugged contour of reality (45). This of course hampers writers from being honest. Whereas, honesty is very important in writing novels for young adults because in many ways, teenagers' perceptions are keener than

adults', their minds are not cluttered with everyday living (46). They also know that life is sometimes very brutal. Therefore, young adults cannot be deceived by "shapely" stories. Characters and situations which are obviously intended to instruct adolescent readers how to think will not appeal to them. They do not want shelter. They want reality, even the grimmer aspects of life (47). Teguh Esha, Ashadi Siregar and Yudistira Adi Nugraha are Indonesian writers of adolescent books who are always honest in portraying real life. Given some restrictions resulted from deep-rooted traditions, the highly upheld moral values and strict religions in Indonesia, their books can be considered daring. The above writers do not want to follow the main streams of Indonesian adolescent novels with soft and romantic love or cheerful adolescent life. Yudistira portrays parents' misconduct in *Arjuna Seeks For Love* [Arjuna Mencari Cinta], Teguh Esha depicts the hypocrisy among prominent figures in *Ali Topan*, while Ashadi Siregar illustrates that love rarely ends happily ever after. Anyhow, teenage books with true depth do not foster the notion that reality is uniformly grim. A bright side does exist.

There is a belief among writers that to write novels pertinent to adolescents should include a character or characters with whom the reader can identify. Sheila Ray argues that this relevant characters allow the readers to gain experience vicariously through identification with characters not different from themselves (48). Lauch does not agree with this theory. According to her, "good stuff" books do not ask so much of typical characters. The feelings, ideas and motivation displayed by the characters are not necessarily universally shared. They can be the ones that young readers recognise. Further, she identifies that characters with universally shared feelings are temporarily enjoyable. In the long run, they can be forgettable (49). This argument is reasonable, since the current relevance may be different from the relevance in future. As Richard Peck says, young people "are liable to choose books as they choose friends, more as mirrors than as windows"(50). But, he further says: "Still, the best youth novels portray adolescence as a maturing process. Though the focus may be

upon the young, there is a sense of future- a sense of becoming, as well as being" (51). Characters who have the human spirit to struggle or fight in order to gain their self identity in the unruly universe may give the answer young people look for in five years. The story may not have a happy ending, but it will remind the readers of the amazing human spirit.

There is one factor that is often disputed among writers of teenage novel. So far, the features of adolescent novels discussed always refer to realism or relevance. Some writers believe that adolescent still need fantasy. Peter Dickinson argues that this imagination helps people to be what they are:

It is the core of humanity in two senses. Because it is in the nature of a creature with the imaginative faculty to explore its universe, not only outwards but inwards. It seems to me that imagination is humankind's prime evolutionary specialization. (52)

It is the writers' job how to present the fantasy which helps adolescents gain their maturity. According to Dickinson, both writing and reading a work of fiction "are exercises of the imagination, exercises in creating and then exploring and appreciating coherent imaginative structures" (53). Hence, to write a story which is fantastic but realistic writers should create a structure and maintain its total coherence. The structure can be small but the intensity of the vision should be great. To authenticate the imagination, each part of it fits with all the other parts. In *Stranger With My Face*, for example, the writer gives a reasonable and acceptable explanation as to why somebody's soul can leave the body and wander around. The author, through the characters' actions and speeches, gives the reader logical analysis of "astral project" implicitly with consistent explanation. Thus, the readers might find this fantasy realistic.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE READER AND THE NOVEL

In the previous chapter, it has been discussed that writers should be aware of some features of adolescent novels that can appeal to teenagers in order to make reading activity not only enjoyable but also giving some knowledge to young adult readers. But Protherough believes that literary works cannot be seen as an entity which exists independently (1). This status of text is stated clearly by Roseblatt: "The premise of this book is that a text, once it leaves its author's hands is simply paper and ink until a reader evokes from it a literary work- sometimes, even, a literary work of art"(2). Some other writers also believe that a story will come to life if the readers communicate themselves with the text or put the text inside their heads. This can be seen from the theory shared by Jackson, Alderson and Short which says that the meaning of the text is not hidden away within the text for the readers to discover; and to produce this meaning, readers have to extract the text and set up a "live circuit" between their own perception of the text (3,4). Here, the readers play an active participation through their response and awareness of the text. When the readers read the text, they build up inside their head a coherent unity that ties together each separate story event so that what has gone before and what is going to happen are bound up in the readers' minds. The whole meaning of the text is then formed through the interweaving of anticipation and retrospection. This interplay or interaction between readers and text, according to Emrys Evans, is influenced by the readers' experience and background. In the process of reading, readers tend to relate those experiences which they have not actually lived through to those which they experienced and then compare them with what the text is proposing (5). Hence, the response and the relationship between readers and text are different from one reader to another. It can even be said that one person who reads the same story for the second time might respond differently because his

or her experience in reading the story may influence the response in the second reading. Their expectation and their reaction to the story will also be different. Horst Ruffert thinks this is because readers are changed by a work they have partly constructed themselves (6).

Iser, however, leaves the world open for the world of the reader to relate itself to the text. He sets out to balance "the reader's own disposition" with the role prescribed by the text", and says:

If (the former) were to disappear totally, we should simply forget all the experiences which we are constantly bringing into play as we read- experiences which we are responsible for the many different ways in which people fulfil the reader's role set out by the text. And even though we may lose awareness of these experiences while we read, we are still guided by them unconsciously to want to incorporate the new experience into our own store of knowledge. (7)

This obviously shows a deeper relationship between the text and its readers. The readers' experiences in their lives influence their responses to the text. On the other hand, the experience of the world derived from text also influence readers' future lives. That is why some text are easy to understand and interesting to read while others are not. Indonesian adolescents who live with a strict religion and society who pay too much attention to one another will find it difficult to understand why Caro's mother in Pete Johnson's *We the Haunted* lets Paul, Caro's boyfriend enter her room at night. They may be unable to imagine how people let an elderly man like Mr Pignati in *The Pigman* live on his own and be subject to two teenagers' misconduct. On the other hand, British young people will wonder why Indonesian teenagers make a fuss about virginity, as portrayed in *Adolescent Turbulence in Senior High School*.

This theory about text-readers relationship is also discussed by Robert

Protherough. He says that readers comprehend and weigh up the values and concepts implicit in the text in terms of their own social and ideological views (8). Further, he states that this relationship reveals the quality of books as "aesthetic objects" which other objects do not possess: "they exist as a potential experience to be "realized" or "performed" by readers. It diminishes- or even eliminate- the sense of division between the thinking mind and the objects of thought" (9). Therefore, the text has a really close relationship with its readers. Thirty years ago George Poulet even illustrated how close this relationship was, so that the text becomes a part of the reader or the other way round: "You are inside it; it is inside you"(10).

Similarly. Norman Holland sees the reading experience going on in "a space which reader and work create together" (11). Hence, it can be seen how important it is for writers to create novels that lead adolescent readers to be productive or creative and bring the text into play through the readers' own faculties. In the previous chapter, it has been mentioned that good young adult fiction should have certain features which leave readers sufficient room to remake the book as they read it, bringing to it their own experiences of life and of other books, giving characters and incidents a concrete form, filling what is implied rather than stated, speculating, judging and sympathising. The books which spell out everything leave nothing for the reader to do. This put the authors into the position of instructor. As it has already been remarked, to bring the text into life, the reader should be productive. To this end, readers should not consider a work as an object they hold when they read; they should grow their living experience in their imagination as their lives interact with the authors' written instructions, which are actually their imagination (12).

Geoffrey Hartman illustrates the relationship between a text and the reader with a beautiful and unique comparison between "The Boy of Winander" and owls. As the boy makes the owls respond to him, readers should call a voice out of silence in order to experience a literary text (13). The respond "The Boy of

Winander" receives is, of course, the same as what he gives; his whistles given to the owls are responded with the owls' whistles. Likewise, to experience surprises on the text, readers should give something appropriate. The reader "calls out of silence" should be what Guy Rosaloto terms a "relative voice", a voice that is not the voice of the character, nor the author, nor the narrator. It is an "anonymous" voice that focuses readers' attention upon a secret, upon a vanishing point, near which is to be found the question of the name (14).

Despite the closeness of the relationship between a text and its readers, there were gaps which Evans calls blanks which can be found between chapters or longer sections of novels, between the scenes and acts of plays or between the lines (15). Evans compares these gaps with the ones in people's relationships. He gives an exact illustration when people meet for the first time, they do not know each other. This is a gap that compels people to communicate. To make successful communications people are not supposed to fill the gaps with their own projections. They have to take account of other people and what they believe the other people are thinking (16). Likewise, to bridge the gaps in the text, readers have to predict the future course of the narrative, and to build up horizons for their views (17). In Robert Cormier's *I am the Cheese*, from very early in the book, readers are invited to find out how the apparently told narrative relates to psychologist's tapes on the other narrative strand. The answer is not given till the very end of the book. In Duncan's *Stranger with My Face*, readers may think that the girl seen by Gordon and Natalie on the beach is the real Laurie and when she denies it, readers might think she lies. Their prediction, is, of course, not true, but that is what the writer expects from the readers. As "sub-creator", authors are omnipotent and omniscient who can exclude everything so that readers try to complement the gaps or, as Craig says, "the space between" (18).

Iser stresses the function of the blanks in the text as an aid to the wandering view point. At each individual moment as people read, they see characters, places, and the implications of the work from one single vantage point (19).

The reader's perspective might be of the hero, of the minor character, of the author as narrator or of the author as detached and ironic observer of their own work. But as the process of reading is going on, these perspectives intertwine with each other. The blanks mean that the reader has to link them and so gradually to build up an increasing understanding of the work as a whole. Though these blanks are sometimes very difficult to fill in, Evan thinks the years of adolescence are certainly not too early for reasonably competent readers to be asked to reflect on where they stand at different moments in their reading of a text (20).

YOUNG ADULTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF THE READING PROCESS

From the discussion above, it is obvious that a text has close relationship with its readers, no matter who the readers are; adults, children or young adults. Anyhow, their response and their perceptions of reading are various, not only due to different experience but also to different ages. Children and young adults, according to Protherough, always have a direct relationship between their own lives and the imagined life of the book (21). They repeatedly use spatial images, talking of the way they move through the events, enter or stand beside a character, observe incidents there before them (22). Studies of children in Hull suggest that they instinctively see book in terms of what they do to them as readers (23). Charles Sarland's study shows how older girls almost directly mirror their everyday concerns and experience and boys think that characters presented in popular literature are offering readers empty categories into which they are at liberty to inject their own characteristics, their own motives and their own psychologies (24). Based on his observation and experience in teaching, Yacob Sumarjo also shares this point of view. Young people repeatedly justify their preferences in terms of the effect which a story has had on them (25). The reaction might be essentially emotional. An Indonesian female girl said: "When I read *Reaching out for your love*, I was very angry with Irawati who made a good girl like Widuri raped" (26).

After reading *Seagulls in My Heart* [Camar Camar Di Hatiku], a student claimed

: "I cried when I read Hardiman's letter sent to Widati a day before his plane crashed" (27).

A girl from Hull said: "I hated Mr. Powell because of his job slaughtering animals" (28).

Response can also suggest a changed attitude or behaviour:

"After reading *Lupus*, I will not be ashamed anymore to go shopping with my mother though I am a boy" (29).

"I will never eat bacon again" (30).

Given that there are two extremes in young people's reading responses; at one extreme readers are "wrapped in", "lost", or "carried away" by the story, at the other extreme they are relatively detached, Protherough has suggested that there are five major ways in which they see the process of reading fiction (31). Charles Sarland uses this theory on his study about young people reading, culture and response. Meanwhile, the Corcoran theory on the children's responses in reading process is rather different from that of Protherough's. These points of views will be discussed. Since one theory might match or contradict with each other, the discussion will involve all of them. As for the responses of Indonesian adolescents, since there is no study about it, an analysis of response is drawn from critical discussion and theories together with the responses obtained through correspondent with some Indonesian students of a private high school in Cirebon.

1. Projection into character

In popular forms, character is often defined in action and can be categorized in terms of function within the plot (32). Young readers who are immersed with the story identify themselves with the characters and imaginatively become one of them (33).

"I often think I am a character in the book and feel the feelings that she does" (34).

"I often imagine I am one of the characters, the hero or heroine" (35).

The above responses, according to Corcoran, depict the readers' imagination on the characters and their pictures (36). The response of his respondent below shows a wider self-projection. Not only does she feel she is one of the characters in the book, but she also compares herself with them and analyze her feelings.

As I read a book, my imagination pictures the scenes of the book as if I was actually there and the people in the book I really know. Even as far as the people are my self but somehow I am always looking at the people even if I know their feelings as well as mine own. It seems as if I am somehow detached but my feelings are very much involved. (37)

Sumarjo, on the other hand, suggests that most Indonesian adolescents are immersed in their reading and that they project themselves into the characters, because they want to be like the people in the book who are sometimes richer, prettier, more handsome, and so on (38). Here, it seems that he wants to imply that the imagination young adults use while they are reading lead them to negative things.

The materialization of the characters in engrossed reading, however, is not always completely successful, as Iser says:

"mental images do not serve to make the character physically visible; their optical poverty is an indication of the fact that they illuminate the character, not as object, but as bearer of meaning" (39). Thus, the significance, strength and permanence of these modified images depend on the reciprocal engagement of sense, emotion and intellect as readers encounter text and the text directs

readers.

Robert Cormier's story about young adult readers who called him asking for Amy Hertz and Adam, characters in *I am the Cheese*, is an example of how readers' strong emotion while reading a novel makes the characters so alive that the reader believes they exist in the real world (40).

2. Projection into situation

Many young readers describe themselves as being there, not as one of the characters illustrated previously, but as spectators who observe the situation and the event in the book. Again, as Corcoran says, the readers are exercising their imagination. The responses of the students from Hull support this theory. Most of them begin their answers with "I imagine", "I think", "I feel".

"I feel as though I am there, witnessing the events....I am the characters' friend" (41).

"I usually imagine I am actually there and I know the characters very well" (42).

Sumarjo describes how students imagine themselves in the blue campus and its surrounding when they read *My Love in the Blue Campus* [Cintaku di Kampus Biru] and other Siregar's novels with campus as the setting. Female readers feel that they are at the school yard watching their heroes walking or playing basket ball as portrayed in Edi D. Iskandar's novels (43).

In conclusion, this projection into the situation is a kind of interacting and picturing of activities in which readers try to feel about the character, setting, incident and then picture them in their minds'eye.

3. Associating between book and reader

Whereas at the first stage, readers try to involve themselves and become one with the story, at this stage the readers try to link their experiences with the situation in the story. Michael Benton describes this activity as interacting with

fictional world at an affective level (44). There are two-way movements here. They visualized the story in terms of their own world and imagine what they would do if they were in that situation (45). Responses which show the first movement are like these:

"I place the gran as somebody I know, then I place myself as somebody in it, then I place all my mates in it right, as people" (46).

"When I read about people's emotion, I think to my self, 'Is it like me?'" (47). The second- movement response is depicted by the subject Kenneth, one of Sarland's respondents, when asked about what he would do if he was in Holman's position (Holman is a character of *The Fog*):

If I was in like Holman's position where you've got to defend yourself, I think I cold do that if a load of madmen running at you or you was in the car and they was all just charging along the road you wouldn't think, I don't think I'd think about stopping, you'd just go straight through them. But I don't think I'd be able to chop someone's head off, it's just that if you had to defend yourself and you knew they was mad then I don't think I'd care about them. (48)

4. The distanced viewer

According to Harding, a reader of fiction "normally fills the dual role of participant and spectator"(49). He analyses further that in onlooking activity, readers merely imagine what the situation must seem like and to react with the participant. The more complex observer imagines something of what the participants are experiencing and then reacts to them, for instance with pity or joy on their account (50).

Two fourteen year-old girls expressed their responses to the characters' feeling, characteristics and behaviours:

"I feel differently for the characters: if they are unhappy I pity them, if they are mean I hate them" (51).

"I feel I want to know what their feelings are, if they are in trouble help them" (52).

Similarly, the Indonesian setting, a female student who hates Irawati of *Reaching Out For Your Love*, felt like screaming at Widuri and warned her not to accept Irawati's invitation to go to her party (53).

The above responses reveal that the readers are firmly outside the action, but emotionally involved in what happen and wishing to be able to influence the outcome. Their feelings of empathy, Benton says, show that reading activity is paradoxical: readers are detached spectators and yet they are committed participants. They hold on to their intelligence of their feelings but they also exercise their feelings as quasi-participants in the fiction (54).

5. Detached evaluation

Unlike the previous stages where readers are attaching themselves to what is going on in the book, at this stage they do not want to be a part of the story. They neither identify themselves with the characters nor empathise them (55). They merely analyze them and anticipate the final outcome of the problem or situation. During reading, some questions arise: "What will happen next and why?", "How will it end?" (56).

Some teenage readers were so intense in anticipating what happened to Jerry of *The Chocolate War* in the end, that they called its writer Robert Cormier, to ask what actually happened since the writers ended the book without clear solution (57). Cormier has succeeded in evoking the readers' wandering viewpoint to fill the gap he deliberately made at the end of the story.

Similarly, Duncan has kept the reader's close attention and led them to keep anticipating the next scene in her *The Stranger With My face*. The appearance of Laurie's twin, Lia, raises the suspense of the story that fuels the reader's

interest in how the plot develops. They want to read on to see what happened, to see when and how the situation was going to be resolved. These illustrations imply that while anticipating or predicting, readers also evaluate how the authors tell the story and create the mood. Applebee argues that readers' activity in evaluating the plot and anticipating what will happen, is superordinate:

Not only are most things evaluated, but the way in which they are evaluated becomes a more or less permanent part of our memory of the response. (58)

The importance of evaluation is also discussed by Harding. He emphasises that detached and distanced evaluation is sometimes "sharper for avoiding the blurrings and bufferings that participant action brings" (59). Moreover, being onlookers, readers can see some events which may in certain ways more informative, and thus they see the events in a broader context than the participant can tolerate (60).

The above elements employed while children or teenagers are reading vary in their degrees of intensity and importance, but they appear to be the main activities the readers undergo and, taken together, they provide a helpful working description of what is involved when people become engrossed in a story. One 14-year-old girl began a lengthy analysis of her own reading habits, as quoted by Protherough:

I feel with the characters, sometimes I am an onlooker watching the adventure, sometimes I am one of the characters. I feel great sympathy with the characters if they die or become blind, crippled etc. I enjoy trying to work out riddles and mysteries if they are written like that. (61)

THE INFLUENCE OF NOVELS ON TEENAGE READERS

The existence of text-reader relationship as discussed above, shows how books can influence teenagers' lives. Indeed, stories do things to people; things happen when people read. Research, training and experience have shown that reading affects the development and perceptions of adolescents. Racial, religious, sexual or class bias in books can result in negative attitude and in developmental problems (62).

Most people, however, have no clear idea of the consequences posed by novels or other literary works, whether for good or for bad. John Willet's argument about the consequences of art can be used here. He states that people think that those who do not let themselves be inwardly gripped by these works because they are not good enough, will not be affected at all. Actually, one can be gripped by bad art as easily by good, even if one is not gripped, something can happen (63).

Meanwhile, the validity of beneficial effects on young people's personality and conduct is still in question, because, as David H. Russell argues, based on a large scale survey of the relevant research: "studies on the influences of books on teenagers and their ways of looking at the world are meagre, limited in scope and often indeterminate in result" (64).

Protherough very confidently stresses that reading itself does not make better people, regardless of what is read, how it is read and understood, and the circumstances in which it is read (65). He says further: "These personality stretching effects may take place ('thanks to Betsy Byar's my moral stature has increased by several inches') [.....] But they are more often incidental benefits that don't come by planning" (66).

Despite the dispute above, books really do influence their readers.

Like the process of reading fiction, the influences of books on teenagers are

also different from one individual to another, depending on their culture, background, needs, and on the kinds of the books themselves. The following will discuss the influence of adolescent novels on young adult readers in terms of the kinds of the book and the teenagers' needs in developing themselves towards mature adults.

Books as a means of communication

In the introduction and the first chapter, the nature of adolescent was analyzed, particularly the nature that adolescents relate to each other. But some psychologists believe that there is a time when adolescents want to be on their own (67). At such times, books are a means of communication with others. 'Others' here are the characters of the book portraying other human beings who enable young adult reader to contemplate themselves in relation to other people, and share their joy, happiness, feelings, needs, thoughts, sorrows and so on. And therefore, they gain self understanding and know more about people in general. Indeed, this self understanding is very difficult for young adults to obtain. They either blame themselves or others. Turnbull's *No Friend Of Mine* illustrates that communicating with others, even with the supposed good friends, does not always go well. The authenticity on the characterization of this book could profoundly affect young readers coming to term with communication difficulties. When Ralph, the protagonist, contemplates on why his best friend Lennie, betrays him and let Lennie's father accuse him of stealing gloves and money, the reader will be drawn into similar contemplation. As Ralph does, the reader also tries to understand the reason of the betrayal and then accept it. This is hard, especially for teenagers who only have a few friends. The author does not force Ralph to do this. He let him be upset. The intensity of the anger is displayed by Ralph's yell when his classmates bully him and force him to admit that Lennie is his friend. "I hate him! He is not my friend!" (68). The ending which does not say whether Ralph will really accept the betrayal and forgive his friend, is the author's device to invite the readers to contemplate and think what they would do if they were in Ralph's position. Thus, the book

provides the tool for the reader to communicate with the character. The readers' understanding here is build up gradually and naturally so that they are subconsciously influenced by the action of the character. Rosemary Sandberg believes this influence induced by intimate experience of reading is resulting from private communication between readers and the characters on the book. The readers do not have to act out of role. They can think out for themselves while they are observing others going through comparable situations. They also can see alternative ways of behaviour and resolution to human conflict (69).

Books as a media for sex education

Children learn about themselves and their world from living, from their experiences and relationships with people and things around them (70). However, fiction is one of the mirrors of reality from which children can also learn. Given that current novels discuss sex more openly and sometimes crudely, there is a dispute, even in a free country with an open society like England, among the parties who are concerned with the development of the young on whether these kinds of books will have a negative effect or not. Blume's *Forever*, for example will mislead young readers to believe that sex means love or the other way round. She describes how obsessed the girl is with her boyfriend so that she gives herself very easily; and when the obsession abates she can change her boyfriend and the object of her sex or she thinks the object of love, very easily too. Blume does not give a notion to the reader that sex might be a manifestation of people who care about each other. She disturbingly confuses normal sexual relationship with falling in love. This is shown by her crude description on how the boy ejaculates on the girl's hands. Blume's portrayal on sex may influence adolescents' perception about sexual life. In reality, adolescents undergo a crisis time when they know sex for the first time; they are confused or scared (71). Judy Blume's *Forever* does not discuss this. The girl is completely prepared both physically and mentally, for her first sexual encounter. This might evoke a feeling of alienation for teenagers who have crisis on their first sexual encounters; they may feel they are unusual.

Moreover, young adults cannot find the solution for their difficulties regarding their first sexual activities. Meanwhile, Greenberg points out that due to their feeling of uncertainty and inconsistent image of themselves, adolescents have a need to find out whether their new-found sexuality is normal or not. To this end, they want to compare notes with others(72) *Forever* does not provide this opportunity. Actually, like religious quest or a physical affliction, crises resulting from sexual emergence, according to Eric Ericson as quoted by Hamilton, are "turning points" that are essential for growth (73).

This kind of books does not exist in Indonesia. Indonesian people's attitude towards sex is different. They do not think that making love out of marriage is a manifestation of caring each other however softly this activity is portrayed in books as some English critics have suggested. Therefore, when authors include sex on their books, they want the readers to know the basic knowledge of sex, and thus they will not use it improperly.

Titi Said's *Goodbye Jeannette* [Selamat Tinggal Jeannette] is an example of the book which tries to tell young adults how a female's body responds to sex. Her description on the teenage maid's arousal when she overhears her employers' love making or when she gets aroused just by being touched by her employer (74) gives the reader an understanding about their sensitivity of certain parts of their bodies. This book actually provides basic information on sex. The author presents it naturally. The other teenage maids' conversation about their boyfriends and their courting makes the information accepted by the reader naturally. In Indonesia, it is known that maids are less inhibited than young women in general, when they talk about sex. Indeed, the author uses an appropriate device. The French character, Jeannette, enhances the authenticity. Readers know more about sex without feeling they are being lectured, because western girls are open, they can talk about sex freely. This openness actually helps them know sex more accurately. In Indonesia there is a widely-spread myth that girls with supple hips are still virgin. Being a westerner, Jeannette

argues with her Indonesian boyfriend:

I am not virgin. But I have supple hips.(75)

This information can stop the fear that pervades most teenage girls in Indonesia. The lack of knowledge on sex leads to pervasive misperception about virginity. Some letters sent to Naek L. Tobing, an Indonesian psychologist who hosts a sexology column at *Matra* magazine or to Bu Kar and Mas Iman's "From Heart to Heart" column at *Femina*, have shown that Many Indonesian teenagers think women can lose their virginity by kissing or petting. On this book, readers will understand that girls will remain virgins if they do not have sex; and virginity cannot be seen from the suppleness of their hips (76).

One of dark sides resulting from sexual activities is rape. Whereas Marga T in *Karmila*, emphasizes the effect of rape to the victim is the grief of losing virginity, and to save her face the protagonist accepts the rapist's proposal to marry, Peck in *Are You in the House Alone?*, tries to nurture determination on female readers to regain their self confidence if this traumatic experience happen to them. Readers can learn how to get rid of the scar and begin a new life from the determination displayed by the protagonist. Here the Hitchcock like suspense the author uses to describe Gail Osborne's trauma and her fear in case this tragedy may happen again shows how deep the trauma is, and at the same time, it shows how strong the girl's determination in fighting her own fear. When at the end, the girl is successful with her combat, readers learn that however traumatic rape is, life has not ended for them yet. This is very different from Marga's perception about the effect of rape. She only thinks of the physical effect which can be cured by marriage. Actually, she is not alone. Titie Said in *Good bye Jeannette* and Siregar in *I Reach out for your love* also give a notion to the reader that rape victims can start their new lives by marrying their rapists or any men who are willing to marry them. The authors want to foster hope among female readers that there are some good men and also some bad men who are remorseful. Teew thinks

that this authors' tendency to raise readers' hope, is to cater for Indonesian teenage girls' need to dream of "The knight in the shining armour" or of being the last harbour of men to embark on their new lives (77).

Books and teenagers' need to develop self identity

Ericson considers the essential task of adolescents is to establish a sense of their own identity (78). On the course of this identity quest, teenagers meet many challenges and changes precipitated by a crisis or a conflict. These increase difficulty in achieving positive self identity (79). Books compensate the difficulties of growing up because they facilitate readers discovering more about themselves by easily identifying themselves with the protagonist (80). Therefore, the characters dealing with the same problems of adolescence portrayed on the books can be used as examples which aid young readers' development to responsible adulthood.

Stranger With My Face gives young readers an opportunity to explore themselves through Laurie's identity quest. The story is about the identity confusion of the twins, Laurie and Lia. Laurie sometimes feels Lia intrudes her life and tries to change Laurie's personality with Lia's. Teenagers, however, can discover their own confusion "Who am I?" Readers might see Lia is the other side of Laurie as they sometimes see themselves with their own other selves. As it has been mentioned previously, teenagers have inconsistent image of themselves. They are often confused. This peculiar problem of identity in the lives of identical twins is like adolescents' inner conflict precipitated by their different roles in society. Lia's soul intrusion on Laurie's body is like a challenge that most young adults have to encounter in order to establish positive self identity. Teenage readers learn that in overcoming the conflict, they sometimes lose. When Lia succeeds in entering Laurie's body, Lia's wandering soul tries to do positive things such as watching her father write books, finding out what is actually happening to Lia. Hence, young adults

understand that failure is not the end of the world. It should be used as a driving force to take further actions. The answer to the question "Who am I?" or "What is my role" is skilfully given at the end of the story. Strong determination to combat any hindrances and patience, together with family's support play an important role in accomplishing positive self identity. Meanwhile, the astral project the author uses to explain why Lia's soul can enter Laurie's or the other way round, is a kind of fantasy which gives young adult readers a freedom to wander around, exploring their self identity.

A more complicated process in searching identity is undergone by adolescent gays.

A major burden that they carry is the sense of being "different" and somehow outside the norms of ordinary adolescent activity. They are unsure of how to define themselves in their homes and peer groups. (81)

Like normal young adults, teenage gays also have an interest in exploring their identity. Once the interest is aroused, they want to know how others handle similar experiences. Rather than scholarly studies, adolescent gays need real models to identify themselves in order to obtain an understanding on and positive reaction to their "being different" (82).

There are not any Indonesian adolescent novels providing this example. Zettira's *The Boy's Diary* [Catatan Si Boy] only depicts a gay as a second class individual. Emon is illustrated as a peculiar friend with strange personality and clumsy physical appearance. Since Emon is only a supplement to Boy, readers cannot find any gay's conflict or crisis from which adolescent gays can identify their own problems. On the contrary, teenage gay might feel more alien by gay characterization in this book. Emon's close friendship with Boy and his gang, however, may raise gay readers' hope of being accepted by community. Anyway, that is not young adult gays' only wish. They are looking for answers to their personal questions: "Am I unique?" "What are gay people really like?"

(83). The impact that *Trying Hard To Hear You* gives to adolescents is different from that of *The Boy's Diary* [Catatan Si Boy]. Though readers cannot get the answer to their questions mentioned above, Scoppetone does not describe Phil and Jeff as physically different from straight man as Zettira describes Emon. In this book, teenage gays learn that in order to survive, rather than fighting and struggling to find out their uniqueness, gays should stand against the hostility from their peers and come to terms with their homosexuality; and thus they should be strong.

Books as an instrument to express teenagers' feeling about their parents

On the process of detachment from their parents, teenagers have contradictory feelings. On one hand, they want to be free from their parents' control, on the other hand, they still need their loves and cares. This has resulted in their feeling of emptiness and hostility towards their parents (84). Blatt points out "ready to think about breaking away from home, these teenagers want to see their parents in a negative light" (85).

Many authors of adolescent novels try to fulfil this need. In Zindel's *Pigman*, John's father is a reformed alcoholic and a thorough-going materialist, a preoccupied commodities broker who cheats on income tax while his mother is a compulsive house keeper who will not allow the boy to use her spotless living room. The reader can easily understand why John is rebellious and lonely. Arjuna's and Topan's parents are dishonest to their children, they are also hypocritical. These books drive away children from their parents. They will think that all parents are hateful; they may get an impression that supportive parents have gone out of fashion or disappeared altogether. Thus, it is impossible for teenagers to build up good relationship with their parents.

Blatt, however, considers the negative images of parents portrayed in adolescent fiction help young adults to express and work through the feelings

of difficult preadolescent and adolescent years (86). Further she believes that actually adolescent readers know that their parents are not really bad, but it may give teenagers, especially those who are chafing at restrictions imposed at home, psychological satisfaction and wish-fulfilment to imagine irresponsible, ineffectual and untrustworthy parents (87). Reading about Arjuna's confrontation with his father and his success in catching his father in the act, in *Arjuna Seeks For Love* [Arjuna Mencari Cinta], can be very gratifying to the youngsters who would like to do the same thing but cannot bring themselves to do so. Imagining that the fathers are not their own may help young adult readers to explore the possibilities which the future holds for them. Therefore, adolescents can see the reality of their parents in adolescent books as they might like to see it.

Thus, "young adult" modern realistic fiction provides junior and senior high school boys and girls with a way to organize their current experiences in terms which make sense to them at the moment. (88)

However, not every book paints an unsympathetic picture of parents. There are occasional parents who are supportive and understanding, such as Phoebe's parents in *Sisters: A Friend Like Phoebe*. Knowing that Phoebe is rather envious with her sisters' success, Mrs. Gray, Phoebe's mother tries to comfort her by telling her that she is still her beloved daughter no matter what she does.

[.....] we don't expect you girls to do spectacular things all the time. We love you all equally, no matter what you do. (89)

Similarly, Caro's mother in *We the Haunted* never stops being supportive and understanding during Caro's turbulent days after her boyfriend's sudden death. Lupus's mother in *Lupus: Rubber Thongs*, is not as nagging as Julia's mother in *The Runaways* though she is also a single parent. She is friendly and she often lets her children treat her as their friends. This caring, loving and understanding which help the protagonists undergo their crisis may inspire

young adult readers with a hope that relationships between teenagers and their parents are not always bad.

Books and moral development

According to Scharf, the relationship of literature to adolescent development may lie in an understanding of the adolescent's evolving moral conscience. Therefore, to understand how literature affects the adolescent at different level, one should understand changes in adolescent moral thinking (90).

To this end, Kohlberg's theory of moral development should be used . This theory was based on his longitudinal research with seventy-five American males initially interviewed at ten years of age, and continuing at ages thirteen, sixteen, nineteen, and twenty three. The studies indicate that individuals in a number of different societies move sequentially through each of six moral stages which are divided into three levels: preconventional (ages ten to twelve), conventional (ages twelve through sixteen), and postconventional (late high school or early college years) (91).

The preconventional mode of moral problem- solving is characterized by the orientation of punishment and obedience, the labels of right and wrong, good and bad, which are interpreted in terms of either the physical or the hedonistic consequences of human action (92). For example, John's and Lorraine's behaviour towards Mr. Pignati. To get ten dollars from him they pretend that they are from charity organisation. Children at this stage may respond that they should not lie to the old man, because it is not right. Their conscience would bother them. On the other hand, since at this stage children also assume that a certain action is right if it satisfies one's need (93), they will justify John's and Lorraine's behaviour. They may say that by giving these ten dollars to the two teenagers, Mr. Pignati will have friends, and thus, he will not be lonely anymore. Preadolescent readers would think that the protagonists' lie is not harmful, it is only a way to get to know the old man. At the third stage of moral

development-which is the first of two stages of the conventional level is characterized by good boy/good girl orientation (94). The adolescent readers' respond at this stage might be that John and Lorraine should not deceive an old and lonely man, whatever their reason is because that is inhuman. The adolescents' rationale may be that an old men should be treated kindly and gently.

This book does not seem to stimulate adolescents' moral development at further stages. The reader will not think about an anticipation of dishonour and concern with social rules, which characterize the fourth stage (94), because the protagonists of *The Pigman* are depicted as lonely children with irresponsible and dishonourable parents. Thus adolescent readers at this stage might not think of dishonour John and Lorraine might inflict on their parents by their misconduct.

There is a transition period before moving to stage five which is often stormy.

The adolescent often rejects the conventional moral categories of teachers and parents while declaring that all values are relative and meaningless. (95)

Arjuna Seeks For Love [Arjuna Mencari Cinta] and *Ali Topan* can be good examples depicting adolescents' rejection of social conventions. The protagonists of these two books, Arjuna and Ali Topan, see the world as hypocritical and shameful. Adults lie to adolescents and to each other. Nobody really believes in any of society's expectations and roles.

Adolescents reading *Arjuna Seeks For Love* and *Ali Topan* will strongly identify themselves with the protagonists' rebellion. Strong doubts about their parents' and teachers' perceived moral propriety start to grow when teenagers turn sixteen (96). The images of untrustworthy parents on these books may stimulate young adults' question about moral order of their society.

CHAPTER III

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CONCLUSION

Adolescent years are a very difficult time for young people. Not only have they to fight their internal problems resulting from physical and psychological changes, they also have to cope with the pressure from society; parents, teachers, peers and so on. Though some problems they encounters are different, both Indonesian and English young adults undergo similar kind of turmoil.

Their particular attitudes are actually reflections of their insecurity and uncertainty. Their desire to gain their peers' approval which sometimes endangers themselves and wreaks havoc, is a manifestation of their fear to be on their own. Being together with peers make them feel secured because they get strength from the bonds they build. Meanwhile, the multiple roles they have to play, which are not clear-cut, make them confused over choosing which roles should go first. They end up choosing the one that suits them, which might not be the appropriate one in terms of social values or their own benefits. British young adults have more freedom in choosing their roles than their peers in Indonesia. They have more alternatives so that they can have a wider apporportunity to explore the world in the course of their self-identity quest.

Young adults, or adolescents, or juveniles have often been related to trouble or upheaval. The term 'juvenile' itself seems to be paired with the term 'delinquency'. Once, a group of Indonesian young adults launched a protest through a letter to the editor of a column in the most popular newspaper stating that to match the popularity of 'juvenile delinquency' somebody should start describing adult people's misconduct using the term 'adult delinquency'.

This deep-rooted misperception about teenagers exacerbates the problems the

adolescents already have, resulting in their rebellion or ignorance.

Actually, teenagers are like young birds who try their wings to fly. In this experiment, surely they often make mistakes. Parents and homes are sounding boards and a laboratory for their experiments where they can afford to fall flat without any embarrassment. As it is known, adolescents are very sensitive with their ego, especially in front of other people. Consequently, parents are supposed to support them. Since they are embarked on a period of detaching themselves from parents and seeking new relationships, dealing with young adults is like playing a kite. The player lets it fly high by holding the thread loosely; but when the wind blows too hard and the kite sways, or when another kite is going to cut it off, the player should pull the thread down. Similarly, parents are supposed to give their teenagers freedom to explore, yet they give control and support from behind.

One of the ways to assist adolescents to bridge their transition period from childhood to adulthood and to establish stable and accomplished self-identity is by fostering the reading habit. Though it is assumed that children's reading habit starts in the home, the cooperation between parents, librarians and teachers in creating the environment that lures children, especially teenagers, to read is very important. Whereas young adults in England are fortunate to have adequate facilities such as the continually improved school and public library services, Indonesian teenagers should be happy with the books they sometime buy and then exchange them with others', or the ones they read quickly in book stores. Indonesian people share the British concern with teenagers' reluctance to read; they also realize the importance of books for young adult development. However, to take further action as in Britain is still a dream, due to the lack of funding and knowledge of librarianship.

Teenage books appeared, both in England and Indonesia, to fill the teenagers'

need and to entice them to read more. The findings of some surveys have shown that actually they read a wide range of reading materials, including books. Adolescents' interests in books are as particular as their nature. The age and gender, though not always, tends to determine the differences in reading interests.

Books for British young adults are more various than those for the Indonesian. The openness of the society to accept things that are still taboo in Indonesia, enables the young to gain broader knowledge from a wide range of novels. However, there is a similar stereotyping of the adolescent fiction; young love and teenage problems. The presentation of the book is different due to the different age of the authors and culture. British authors portray many things that may contribute to solving the problems teenagers have or may encounter. Indonesian novels are lightly presented, however complicated the problems are. That is why some Indonesian critics think Indonesian adolescent novels, or pop novels, do not offer anything, let alone problem solving, except dreams and temporary enjoyment.

The analyses of the books and the reader' responses, however, show that both Indonesian and English novels can influence young people. The responses they make in the process of reading give them experiences which may contribute to changes in their behaviours. Books also can be used as sounding boards against which the readers test their own reactions and seek for solutions to their own problems. Problem books give adolescents the insight into their problems and the reassurance they need that they are not unique, there are other people who share the same problem and difficulties. Books depicting happiness and cheerful lives, tenderness, moral support and families deeply concerned with young people, give them illustration that real life is not always dark; there is a brighter side of it. This can raise hope among teenagers who have problem. These influences are actually induced by the interplay between

the text and its readers. Readers play an important role in bringing the text into a life but the features of the adolescent fiction such as realistic, relevant and less of complex literary devices and languages, and less of propaganda contribute to the successful interaction. In other words, books exert influence on their readers through two-way process.

Sex is a part of people's lives. Children need to learn this. Potentially, children's fiction dealing with sexual themes can answer teenagers' questions as non fiction on the topic, and do so in a more immediate and involving way. Thus, it presents a great opportunity not only to provide young people with scientific facts about sex, but also to deal with the emotional and attitudinal concerns that young people have about their own sexuality. This theme, however, should be well-handled. Otherwise, young adults will be misinformed and misled. Some Indonesian authors have the courage to write about sex and teenagers. But the objective of this portrayal is rather different from the British authors, they just want to give a basic knowledge of sex so that they can be cautious in dealing with it.

Great Literature has an impact upon almost any age or developmental level. But some books can only stimulate their readers' moral reasoning at certain stage.

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