

Indonesian Literature and Its Identity in the Mood of the Age

Muhammad Hamdan Mukafi

Master of Literary Studies Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

e-mail: dorr.dreamers@gmail.com

Abstract

Globalization era is marked by information and technology advancement. It brings jungle of sign, obscuring definitive convention, or even creating a new definition, which is occurred in Indonesian literature. Colonialism history is a center convention which defines Indonesian literature, the literary genre is one of it. Reflecting a case of colonialism; England with its literary genre convention, that are a poem, fiction, and drama – are getting “resistance” from America, the continent that “occupied” by it, which had been opening free space to establish literary genres, such as sermon and speech are included. Therefore, in this case, innovation to Indonesian literary definition always a chance. Cross-media literature, in a blanket of information and technology advancement, had been born with hybridizing text, audio, and visual. Internet medium such as YouTube being its publication method. In 2011, Fahd Djibran and his colleagues gave birth to literary work named *revolvere project* – when the creation of audio-visual no longer arranged, but parting to literature. The born of *revolvere project* followed by many artists who answered to the mood of the age. Many new names come up like *visual-poetry*, *visual-fiction*, and more – putting them in one room known as *Literary Reformer*. It has its structure, interpreted in hybridative form, but opening to be studied in a different way when separated. This leads to a question of its legitimation in Indonesian literary world. So, Jane Stokes genre theory chose to examine its worthiness as Indonesian literature’s new creation room in genre classification. In this research, the theory of semiotics, the field of cultural production, and basic of taxonomy are implemented to observe its position to classify and struggle scheme in Indonesian literary world. Then, *literary reformer* denoted as Indonesian literature reflection, a success of mixing arts spices in one chalice, creating Indonesian literature new definitive identity.

Keywords

the mood of the age, hybridization, newborn, literature, identity.

Citation: Mukafi, M. H: Indonesian Literature and Its Identity in the Mood of the Age. Proceeding of The American Studies International Conference 2018, Vol. 2, pp. 91-98 UGM Digital Press Social Sciences and Humanities, Yogyakarta (2019).

Published: May, 2019

1 Introduction

Indonesia literature had been in the jungle, always facing to definitive mains and no creation. While the era continues to develop followed by literature creation. Variation of structure which arranges literary work deconstructed to innovate in forming mood of the age. For example, oral literary work that starts to be written in the palace, also arriving of European nations that brought writing tradition during colonialization

era. It is being benefited behind confrontation struggle to be free from it. After Independence Day, Indonesia was in the middle of wavering, hence conventions of colonialist nations remain still. It had been brought and followed, although it is now developing – still rooting, no exception to literature.

America have different issues, big continent of United Kingdom “commonwealth”, on the contrary did military and political resistance to its “land father” – which giving birth to scholarship that developed as result of the resistance. It is as in literature definition, answering his freedom to United Kingdom (representing Europe). In this case, the difference of definition can be found in literary genre convention. If Europe concerned on poem, fiction, and drama – America had been expanding its genre viewpoint so that, such as; sermon, biography as well as president speech can be one of literary genre (in wide area looking to entire literature work as literary genre).

Indonesia had not been doing resistance as in America. Indonesian’s literary genre convention followed the European style. Indeed, such as *strip comics* and *movies* had been started to be studied in literary classes, but are they had been part of literature completely? Strip comics still remains as a fine artwork with dialogues which is studied by literary theory, as to how *movies* as a media work study its scripts by literary theory. Still, this could not be comparable to definitive “resistance” happened in American literature. But this is enough to create a chance of reforming new Indonesian literature genre rooms, as a fruit to define its trees body literature.

That chance is innovation to create in the jungle of signs of globalization era together with the development of information and technology which had been darned by two big continents, America and Europe. Cross-media literary work, hybridization of text, audio, and visual using development of information and technology that born in this era. Fahd Djibran, Futih Al-Jihadi, and Fiersa Besari are three artisans who started it in Indonesia in 2011 which they called *revolvere project*. Fahd Djibran (writer), Fiersa Besari (musician), and Futih Al-Jihadi (visual artist) worked in literature cyber room. Their arrival had been followed by many artists who want to create the same literary work, also inviting questions and contradicting. Are *revolvere project* and the similar literary works (in this research called *Literature Reformer*) legitimate to be part of literature? If so, the reasons why have to be explained.

Teeuw (trans. 1980, p. 12) said that artwork always in the middle of the tension between system and reforming, between convention and revolution, between the old and the new. By this, *Literature Reformer* underlined to create tension facing literary convention to this day. In this research, the researcher position himself as a critic who came up with *Literature Reformer* name as the answer to the globalization era that calling from the cliff of literature to be paid attention to. The basic theory of this research is the statement of Jane Stokes (2003) that says about the genre as one of the most easily identifiable means of classifying films because it is so readily used by the film industry for marketing purposes. The genre study as in art and literature forming Jane Stokes’s theory, even film become its analytical explanation that this theory worth to study this research: (p. 82-83)

To complete it, the invention of classification for a living thing from Carolus Linnaeus become convertive analogy to literary genre, imagine it as a living ideologies creation. Semiotics theory of Roland Barthes use was implemented to be the assumption completion in Jane Stokes genre theory. Furthermore, the study of field cultural production Pierre Bourdieu used to illustrate the schematic position of *literature reformer* among other literary genres.

2 Theoretical Framework

Almost nine years of its born in the Indonesian literary world, *revolver project* tries to do “snapping fire” with its analogical name. Chairil Anwar once had done this to bombard poetry convention. Denny JA did the same when he tried to propose *essay-poetry* as a literary genre, but what he got was “dawn-attack”. *Revolvere project*, on the other hand, with its *bullseye*, caught the interest of many artists to create the same way it does. Just, not all of them use *revolver project* name – there are *visual-poetry*, *visual-fiction*, and many more. So, *Literature Reformer* used to be a name to put them in one chalice, just like a novel, anthology, and drama script that does not have to write their name in their book cover. The difference is they have their classification racks in the bookstores. Therefore, this is the first sign of globalization era brought by *literature reformer*, as communication that does not need facing the face literally – the analogy of WhatsApp, Line, and more other apps which are being the new method without physical subjects in need. *Literature reformer* creates its own new racks which have not to be printed in order to accommodate it. The virtual world is its bookstores, free room for it is to grow to answer ‘mood of the age’. (Bourdieu, 1993, p.30)

In this research four hybridizations literary work chosen to be samples of 33 creation by collecting randomly from *youtube.com*. Their titles are *Tentang Kita (TeKi)* represent *revolver project* by Fahd Djibran and his colleagues (2012), *Kepada Orang Yang Baru Patah Hati (KOYa BaPaH)* by Raditya Dika (2014), *Siapa yang Membela Kita Ibu (Sila Kibu)* by Futih Al-Jihadi (2017) *Jakarta* by @BoringProd (2018). Those objects were selected to answer Jane Stokes (2003, p. 83) who said that within film studies, genre research investigates films by relating them to other films of the same genre. The legitimation to *literature reformer* starts to explain here.

Barthes (1977) said that the press photograph is a message – considered overall that this message is formed by the source of emission, a channel of transmission and a point of reception (p. 15). Piece of *TeKi* is showing a photo of the forefinger and middle finger from two different subjects that are closed together with fluorescent light as the background – filling with means, such as a romantic view of two people. But, the photo is not finished yet, a sentence of “*Lalu kita duduk di kursi yang sama. Kau membelai kepalaku, aku beringsut ke ketiakmu*” sticking it. A mean of, as though, *aku* as character is like a woman who ensconces to man’s armpit – as it viewed from narrative stereotype. In theoretical way, Barthes (1977, p. 16-17) expressed that the structure of photograph is not an isolated structure; it is in communication with at least one other structure, namely the text-title...the image is not the reality but at least its a perfect *analogon*. The same way is described by *Sila Kibu* – with a video of a girl walks to a door, a little lights, and leaves litter scattered – a voice is accompanying “*dari reruntuhan gereja yang terbakar masih terdengar lagu ave maria*”. At this point, *Sila Kibu* is indicating meditation atmosphere of a little girl in the broken room, *Ave Maria* song and the voice then showed that it is in the church.

Then, what happened if there is a photo but no text? *TeKi*’s photo can be interpreted as a couple of lover and *Sila Kibu* means to lose a girl in her seeking. They still have their meaning, but collaborated to create a new meaning. The image no longer *illustrates* the words; it is now the words which structurally are parasitic on the image (Barthes, 1977, p. 25). New meaning appears as a combination of text-visual. *TeKi* arises man’s power to women’s feeling who needs ensconcing. Moreover, *Sila Kibu* precisely illustrates church condition that is burned and the pray is still.

After visual media, audio (such as music, song, and/or dialogue – a single or combination of them) is the formula of hybridization that cannot be excluded. Music by natural bent is that which at once receives an adjective (Barthes, 1977, p. 179). The adjective of music refers to an expressive season, e.g. sadness, happiness, satire, anger, and many more. Music answers the theme that is brought by *literature reformer*. The four objects of this research used a romantic theme with a different story. Romantic seasons, filling with humility, sadness, love, or happiness, are showed by their music. Therefore, the dish of dialogues and narrations that appear in the pitch in harmony with their music. Barthes (1977-180) called it *an imaginary in music* whose function is to reassure to constitute the subject hearing it and this imaginary immediately comes to language via the adjective. If that music separated from its main creations, they still bring romantic atmosphere with interpretative souls – heterogeneous listeners will have a different view of auditory meaning. But, the music hybridized with text-visual creations is to fill the souls in them, strengthen the taste like, as though, happened in movies scenes giving back sound to their seasons.

From this, Stokes (2003) said that genre is also a semiotic category in that there are codes and conventions which films of genres shared. Simply, the visualization uses to sign the source of emission, a channel of transmission and a point of reception – the music establishes imagination. But, this not the end as said that genre is also a narrative category: the boy-meets-girl structure of the romance is an invariable deep structure of any movie of the genre. By explaining this will complete the understanding of *mise en scène* (p. 83). Pavis (2013) defines it; *mise en scène* is a concept in judging how the theatre is set into play, and to some extent in judging how its very existence plays out (p, xv-xvi)

Mise en scène is using some repertoires that become a concept in order to serve, for examples, theatre performance or movie. *Literature reformer* which is using audio-visual as the repertoires constructs settings of times, places, events, and seasons. In those repertoires, a story is made in lyrics, narratives, dialogues, and/or two or three of their combinations. *TeKi* shows a photo of a cat that turns one’s had to the left sides at the grey road and a sentence of “*Dan selamat tinggal...*”. What is the story exactly about? In *KOYa BaPaH*, it illustrates girl wears raincoat in setting of white ground and blue rains are falling – and there is a voice saying, “*tapi percayalah satu hal, semua ini akan berlalu*”. From those two different pieces of literature, there is one pattern of *mise en scène* – leaving apart something sad. This is another pleasure of the genre film by seeing how each key element is reinterpreted or reinvented for more contemporary and values, as genres do change over time.

The proof of *literature reformer* at this point is lighting up transformation to be recognized because genres do go through transformations. (Stokes, 2003, p. 84) This light up also become structural basic of *literature reformer*. In this step, it can be appointed its semiotics and narrative base. Besides that, looking

at to romantic story being brought, it conducts representation of young generation and their world using information and technology that at the state of developing this day. The age brings seasons with its subjects who assimilate with it. Delaying it to be appointed its alignment in the convention of modern literature is the same by putting it as a myth in its young age. Barthes (1991, p. 107) said that everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Since this age still does not recognize, discoursing distance to the convention of modern literature yet. Then, how it can be a literary genre if remain like this?

Explanation to semiotics and narrative category above indicates the first terms of *literature reformer* to be called a genre. It's in line with oral and writing literature. It is a transformation that uses one or two of them by audio-visual course. In its literary tray, it collaborates work of text-audio-visual that can have separated meaning, but unite to create new complete meaning – or at whole. It is not a kind of organization like filming novels. It is not a poetry declamation with theatre act at the stage. Just, from the start, it is being created as a hybrid. The adjective of *literature reformer* can carry a form of lyric, narrative, dialogues, or a mix of them whether in oral or written form. The general form of it is like a confide – a piece of the story – can be found at one or two frames of conventional art, film or theatre, but it serves as a hybrid. For example, in a film, there is a *scene* when the main character alone at the beach and his heart speaks illustrating his mental condition – or a next plan to go to the film. *Literature reformer* is a piece of that, by the difference of analogy of intersection scene is showed as whole literary work. In the work of *Jakarta*, for example, some teenagers take a walk – watching around different locations in Jakarta while lyrics narration serves to describe Jakarta city and their heart filling strengthen by it back sound. It is intended to summarize a little trip to Jakarta city and the meaning of it. From all of that, it seems that *literature reformer* bring the soul of popular culture – the simple, easy way to understand, and does not need a high step to think and feel its meaning. But, it is not always like that, on the contrary, it opens a room to create high literature.

A pattern of high literature is showed by *TeKi*. The whole scripts, photos, lyrics, and its music illustrate relationship of woman and man (*aku* and *kamu*) in a romantic way and the third person come to force *aku* “women” to left for the sake of a new (*kamu* “man”) girlfriend. But, precisely at the end, *TeKi* shows *aku* as a cat who contemplate in the human romantic world – a contradiction of two different worlds, a serious way in a simple theme.

In the forms of narrative with settings of a narrow alley and back sound, dialogues of two-three characters without physical attendance – just photo or video with music to conduct the season, also a creative room that always opening to develop. *Literature reformer* can be high or popular as an expression that the creator wants to bring, accepted by their connoisseur. From this, *literature reformer* become the parent that gives birth for their children – there is an adjective of lyric, narrative, dialogues, or the mixing from them. It can be viewed as overlapping, but the truth is, it can be a way to legitimate it. For example, film and theatre are the same, starting from dialogues scripts. It results in different processes of them become a genre, room of artwork in a different kind. As it happened in *literature reformer* – the inhabited world is a simple room with a wealth of contemplation by choice to follow popular culture or in the field of high culture force.

3 Methodology

These literary works are the population of objects for the research, taken from *youtube.com*. The selected literature are *Kunang-Kunang* by Dialog Senja (2018), *Kau Yang Mengutuhkan Aku* (2011) - *Tentang Kita*, and *Apologia Untuk Sebuah Nama* – revolve project Fahd Djibram and his colleagues (2012), *Aksara Betha* – Visualisation poetry by Lingkar Sastra (2015), *Kerinduan Senja* by Analisa (2016), *Bagaimana Jika Ibumu Bukan Ibu Terbaik di Dunia* by Fahd Pahdepie (2018), *Hujan* by Ali Sastra (2016), *Kau Biarkan Daku* by Ank and Emhaf (2018), *Kembali Jatuh Cinta* by @khairulleon (2016), *Kepada Orang Yang Baru Patah Hati* by Raditya Dika (2015), *Cahaya Ramadhan* by UNWIR (2016), *Peluk Ramadhan* by Ummul Khair A. (2017), *Hujan Di Balik Jendela* by Senandung (2018), *Siapa Yang Membela Kita Ibu* by Futih Al-Jihadi (2017), *Story of You: Tanpamu Aku Baik-Baik Saja* by Hipwee (2016), *Sajak Anak Muda* karya W.S. Rendra in theatrical poetry by Emhaf (2017), *Arti Dibalik Air Mata Pria* by @Akustikalakadarnya (2018), *Pura-Pura* by Alfin Rizal and Febby Ekaputri (2018), *Jakarta* by @boringpro, *The Guradian Angel* and *Stright to Tears* by Amie Ulil (2014), *Perpisahan* by Ashab Hamand (2018), *Puisi Kangen* by @KataMutiarara (2018), *Rumah* and *Cerita Panjang di Hidup yang Singkat* by Fiersa Besari (2018), *Sajadah Ku* by @GphotoNst (2017), *Di Sajadahku* by @signdesign (2015), *Waktu* by @kisah inspirasichannel (2017), *Tuhan tak Pernah Meninggalkan Kita* by Evi Bong (2015), *Tuhan Yang Aneh* by @capunkanakmusick (2011), *Pengikat Cinta* by Angot Angot

(2018), *Menikahimu atau Mengikhhlaskanmu* by @teladancinta (2017), *Ayah* by @kelompokstudiislam (2015), *Ayah* by Rhia (2018), and *Ketika Kamu Sedih dan Putus Asa – Spoken Word* by Merry Riana (2018).

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Literature Reformer in Literature Genre Taxonomy

That sections above show what *literature reformer* is and how it has characteristics as a genre. Refers to *how to classify* what Stokes said before, making genre hierarchy is needed to know and in what level *literature reformer* has to be. This hierarchy converts Carolus Linnaeus method in classification of a living thing. *Literature reformer* considered as ideology creature which born from ideas of human culture development – creation in the globalization era, answering literary evolution.

The principal ranks in modern use are a domain, kingdom, phylum (division is sometimes used in botany in place of phylum), class, order, family, genus and species¹ (Quoted in Lawrence, 1955 and Tjitrosoepomo, 2009)

This principle can be used as references term in genres classification. The genres can be classified by this conventions theory as shown in the scheme below.

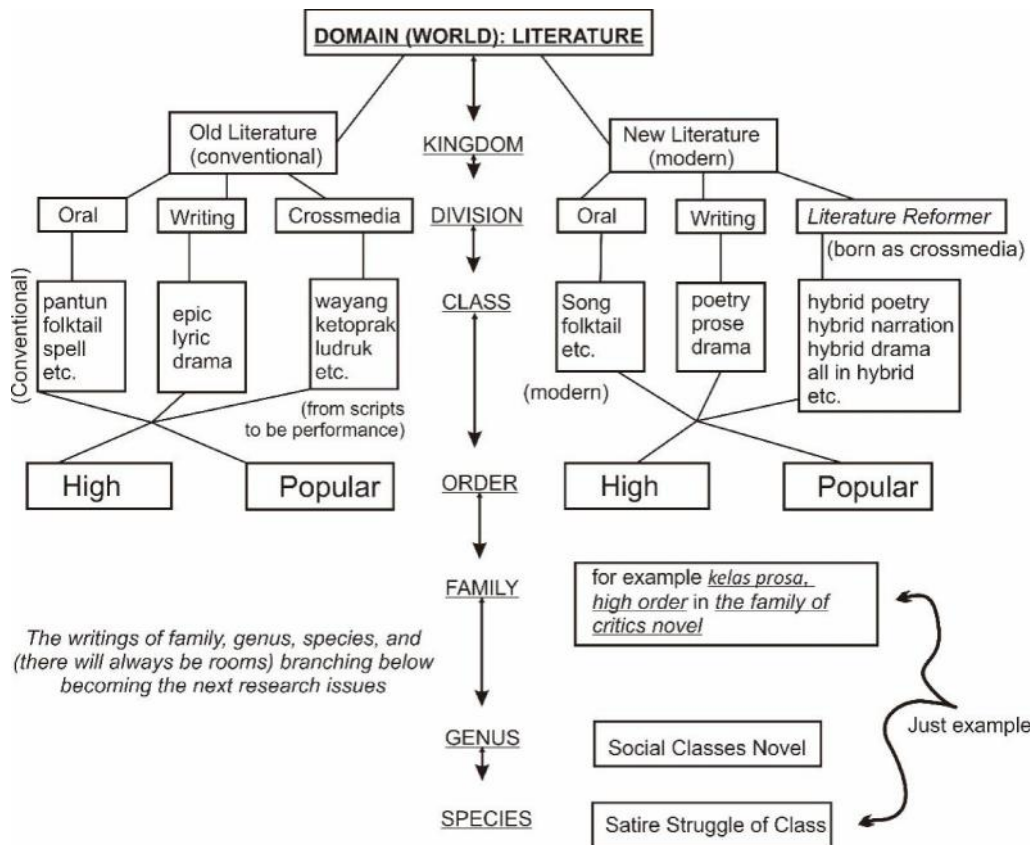


Fig. 1

The-crossing media artwork had been done in a long history, but literature always becomes a drop in the room before it can be advanced. Literature always becomes a script to be processed in that way of bigger artworks, such as *Javanese Puppet*, *Mocopat songs*, *Ketoprak*, and many more. It is just known before it is being shown. Just like poetry or prose before it transformed into live performance or film – even

¹ Base on taxonomy, came from Carolus Linnaeus that can be seen as conclusion in Lawrence, George H. 1955. *An Introduction to Plant Taxonomy*. New York: Cornell University; Tjitrosoepomo, Gembong. 2009. *Taksonomi Umum*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press. As simple sentences that can be found in [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_\(biology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_(biology)). Searching at 16/09/2018 - 15.24.

Indonesian dance (in the time when Indonesian Kingdom era tradition used it as power legitimation). But, *literature reformer* is different since it is known as the whole hybrid (text-audio-visual), and also can be studied in a separate way with the different meaning room. By this, a place for *literature reformer* had been written at the scheme as a division in line with *oral* and *writing* literature – in the kingdom of *modern literature*, exploiting information and technology advancement. The equal line of *literature reformer* is with oral and writing literature, for extent, because it used the same method, mixing it, in a way of a new transformation. It happened in past literature culture when oral and writing tradition lining with traditional cross-media art. But, in the past, the traditional cross-media art could not be called literature, it stays as an art – as it happens in the film, theatre, comic, and other. But, *literature reformer* turns this issues up and down by not letting the text to change the room before it can be an audio-visual. It is what it is from the beginning.

4.2 Reflection of Genre Creating Indonesian Literature Identity

Literature reformer is creating its identity, like a baby who just born in this world and still does not has a name. It can be anywhere, becoming anything. After it is being classified in the section above, it still needs to know more about the circumstance of its literary struggling area for its future. Here, *literature reformer* intact in the universe of a field of cultural reproduction, in the literary units. Bourdieu (1993, p. 30) said that the science of the literary field is a form of *analysis sites* which established that each position the one which corresponds to a genre. It is subjectively defined by the system or distinctive properties that situated relative to other position; the space of positions is nothing other than the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties. It governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field. For instance, a simple scheme is drawn below to explain Bourdieu’s way that was being applied.

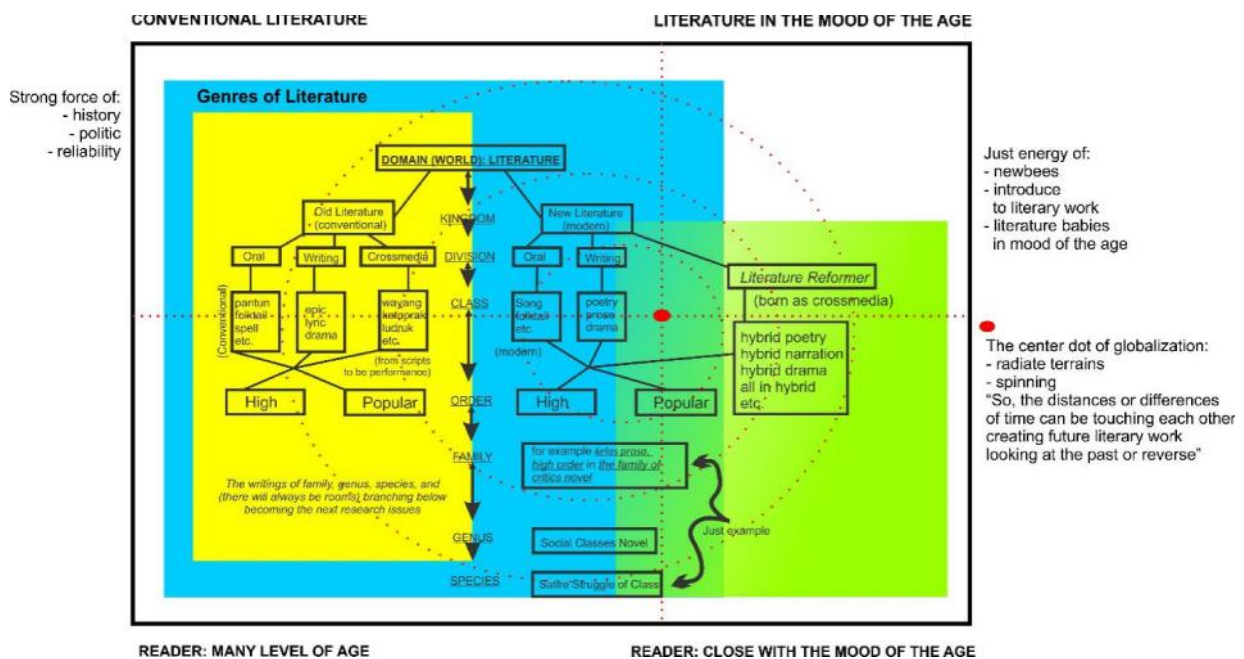


Fig. 2

The literary or artistic field is a *field of force*, but it is also a *field of struggle* tending to transform or conserve this field of forces (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 30). In the *field of force* agents that worked to legitimate conventional literary genre and modern literature in the advancement of oral and writing tradition are being strengthened by elements of long history and political influence that remain still since colonialism, and how this literary genres structures have their reliability. Meanwhile, *literature reformer* still a newborn kid in the history line of globalization era – signed by information and technology advancement, it had been just introducing itself at 8-9 years later, but it is the literature which brings the *mood of the age*.

In that scheme, there is a red dot (as center) who emit *globalization terrain*. In circling blue dots, the terrain infiltrates to every literary world development. It is spinning and continuously spread, so the time distances and differences can touch each other. With that, future literary work can see past literary work that wandering the future, uniting both or beyond. From all of this, *literature reformer* answers the doubts, it is no longer maybe, but it can continue growing, as to how *globalization terrain* keep moving – proofing its reliability in a field of literary production.

It seems that in the field of literary genre productions the appearance of *literature reformer* cannot be ignored. It has its characteristics as it is explained in the section of *The Born of Literature Reformer in Indonesia and Its Theoretical Studies*. That characteristics become its basic structure. And, In the way to interpret it, it is an open chance to be studied as simply *penny romance*, but also can be a deep contemplation. With its capability that not just remaking textual work to be others (like film or theatre), instead of it's hybridizing and giving birth to deep meaning with a *division* in line with oral and writing literature, it becomes a new room to be branching out for many forms. As it happened in writing literature which has the branch for poetry, prose, and drama – in *hybridization of literature reformer* elements of lyrics from poetry is being used, narration in prose developed the story and spices of dialogues such as in drama filling it – giving birth to new forms that will be studied in the next research.

The proof to put it at *division* genres classification define itself, also for extending define Indonesian literature. In this globalization era, everything may happen, and no exception that will be a way of literature definition advancement. The born of *literature reformer* proved that Indonesian literature is a room which gives chance to other arts for working in it, not just as a method to transform text to be audio, visual, or both of them – but the way to hybrid with them. *Literature reformer* becomes a reflection of Indonesian spices to define Indonesian literature identity – uniting spice variations in one chalice to make complex taste.

5 Conclusions

Literature Reformer had been born to literary work. This born had been followed with rapid growth, as a new bee that also had been giving birth to children. In literary genre taxonomy, it is in the level of division, a room that can be branching, reproduce new classes or species, or beyond this hierarchy. It had been following the intellectual current of the age, globalization era with the development of information and technology. By using it, without leaving its basic element as aesthetic textual work, it had been hybridizing with audio-visual.

It is like a piece of scene film, either from the side of the catching picture (movement) or the music as the back sound season. It is also can affixing song like clip video. It also can use narration with illustrations. It is intentionally created for hybrid form, formulate text-audio-visual that does not work separately. It is a whole meaning getting from hybridative work interpretation, but also have the meaning as part to part with the different results.

In becoming division, kinds of lyric, narrative, and dialogues text are showed by *literature reformer*. Then, those kind are putting to order of *high* or *popular*, for example, *TeKi* that playing character illustration, reader horizon in directing to *aku* as women, turns out the ending story is a cat in the impact of contemplation world – or *Jakarta* as whole simple romance manifesting a city from perspectives of different teenagers. That simple example shows that *TeKi* marked as high literature and *Jakarta* is categorized in popular literature. But, for how far those high or popular can be classified, it can be discussed in the next research.

This research focused on *division* – a classification genre room with the name of *literature reformer*. In the terrains of the globalization era, it is still separated from the whole literary room. But, its existence cannot be ignored. In a *field of force*, it is still in a *field of struggle* – a struggle for signing its history. Political forces are needed to arrange a policy to put *literary reformer* as a genre. It is because those elements are part of Indonesian literature development. Indonesian literature is no longer in need of a literal copy from other country's literature definition. Indonesian literature entered a new universe, it is defined from hybridization text-audio-visual. They are spices to cook literature –creativity without boundaries. Indonesian literature is a creative room that gives the workshop to any kind of art, not just a method to transform text as another form, but united for the whole meaning – just like globalization era, in the jungle of signs, they are united in one room.

References

1. Barthes, R. (1977). *Image Music Text* translated by Stephen Heath from its origin. Lonand: Fontana Press.
2. _____. (1991). *Mythologies* translated by Annette Lavers from its origin. New York: The Noonday Press.
3. Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 30
4. Lawrence, G. H. (1955). *An Introduction to Plant Taxonomy*. New York: Cornell University.
5. Pavis, P. (2013). *Contemporary Mise en Scène: Staging Theatre Today* translated by Joel Anderson from its origin. New York: Routledge.
6. Stokes, J. (2003). *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies*. London: Sage Publication.
7. Teeuw, A. (1980). *Tergantung Pada Kata*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
8. Tjitrosoepomo, G. 2009. *Taksonomi Umum*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.