

**“Neither man, nor woman, nor transgender”:
Towards a celebration of gender and sexual diversity beyond categorisations**

Teguh Wijaya Mulya
University of Surabaya

Abstract

Recognising and protecting LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex) identities and rights have been the central feature of contemporary global activism around sexual diversity. In some countries, these identity-based movements have achieved a degree of acknowledgement and protection of LGBTI rights. However, as queer theorists have noted, this identification, specification, and categorisation of sexual desires might have limited the radical possibility of gender and sexual diversity into these narrow categories. In this paper I seek to explore alternative ways of being a sexual subject by examining a unique narrative from Naomi, an Indonesian Christian youth whom I interviewed during my doctoral study. This young person does not identify themselves as man, nor woman, nor transgender; and they engage in the so-called “self-harm” practice. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s (1978) comparison of *scientia sexualis* and *ars erotica*, I argue that one way to expand our ways of seeing and being sexual is by focusing less on the science of sexual desire and more on the art of exploring bodily pleasure. Using Naomi’s narrative, I propose an alternative way to celebrate gender, sexuality, and pleasure beyond specifying and categorising sexual identities, that is, by giving new meaning to the practice of “self-harm.”