

“Let’s Make a Home for You”: A Reparative Reading of *Lunar Boy*

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Abstract—This paper examines *Lunar Boy* (2024) through Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s concept of reparative reading, analysing the graphic novel as a vital cultural text for the Indonesian queer community amid socio-political vulnerability. Rather than centring trauma, reparative reading highlights the cultivation of hope, joy, and care, offering marginalized readers affective resources for survival, flourishing, and fight for equality. The analysis highlights how *Lunar Boy* reimagines the understanding of gender and sexuality by centring Indu’s trans identity and his queer relationship, challenging rigid binaries that empowers a new vision of belonging. Moreover, the paper discusses the importance of queer visibility through its portrayal of community and family. Drawing on José Esteban Muñoz’s (2009) concept of queer futurity focusing on the horizon of genuinely possible futures and affirming present identities, the paper highlights the normalizing of queer identities within the family, friendships, and community that models the future possibility of equality and recognition. Read reparatively, *Lunar Boy* empowers Indonesian queer readers to resist erasure, cultivate resilience, and imagine a future with acceptance. Ultimately, *Lunar Boy* exemplifies the power of graphic narratives to embody reparative practices, offering strength and hope to communities navigating systemic marginalization. This paper contributes to queer studies by expanding reparative reading into Southeast Asian contexts, and to graphic narrative studies by attending to how the visual grammar of *Lunar Boy* – its colour, panel structure, and embodied representation – enacts reparative possibilities that prose alone cannot achieve, addressing the gap in research that has largely focused on Western queer narratives.

Index Terms—reparative reading, Indonesian queer community, graphic narratives, acceptance, hope

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian queer community today exists in an uncertain situation, shaped by both systemic marginalization and resilience. Many grassroots activism organizations such as GAYa NUSANTARA (2012) aim to create “an Indonesia that respects, guarantees and fulfils human rights where people can live in equality, freedom and diversity in matters relating to the body, gender identity and expression and sexual orientation”. Despite this, queer Indonesians continue to face state-sanctioned discrimination and social stigma. In February 2025, police in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, conducted a discriminatory raid on a hotel. They held dozens of LGBTQIA+ individuals on the basis of their supposed sexual orientation and gender identity. This incident was condemned internationally as harassment without legal basis (Amnesty International Australia, 2025). Since late 2024, Indonesia has witnessed democratic lapsing and increased state-sanctioned discrimination and restrictions on civil society organization, with queer rights vulnerable to rollback (Institute of Development Studies, 2025).

Schäfer (2024) argues that the new criminal code passed in Indonesia in 2022 threatens the rights of women and LGBTQ+ people and has shifted the perspective of heteronormativity to a “more violent anti-queer climate” (Schäfer, 2024, p. 811). The current situation of Indonesia highlights the urgency of cultural interventions that not only critique the oppression, but also imagine a reparative future for queer Indonesians.

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Sedgwick's (2003) concept of reparative reading offers a theoretical lens for such interventions. In her essay *Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is About You* (2003), Sedgwick introduces the contrast between "paranoid reading", a mode of critique that focuses on exposure, suspicion, and anticipation of harm, and "reparative reading", which seeks to assemble, nurture, and imagine alternative possibilities of survival and joy (Sedgwick, 2003; as cited in Emily, 2024). This allows the marginalized community to imagine futures beyond trauma. For queer Indonesians living through the frames of danger and erasure, reparative reading provides a methodology to reclaim cultural and literary texts as a site of healing and affirmation.

Sedgwick's framework acquires additional theoretical depth when read alongside José Esteban Muñoz's concept of queer futurity. In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009), Muñoz argues that queerness is fundamentally oriented towards a future that does not yet exist, that it is "essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world" (p. 1). For Muñoz, queer cultural texts are not mere reflections of queer life but enactments of utopian possibility. Read together, Sedgwick (2003) and Muñoz (2009) provide a dual framework for understanding how *Lunar Boy* functions as a site of both reparative and futuristic cultural work by assembling affective resources in the present while projecting hope towards a transformative future. Muñoz (2009) calls this optimism "educated hope" (p. 3) that is historically grounded, and politically serious.

The choice of a graphic novel as primary text is theoretically motivated. As Hillary Chute argues in *Graphic Women* (2010) and *Disaster Drawn* (2016), the graphic narrative form possesses a unique capacity to render testimony, memory, and affect in ways unavailable in prose alone. The panel composition, colour, gutters and the drawing of bodies create a form of witness that makes legible experiences resist pure linguistic representation, and can offer imaginative worlds where queer identities flourish. For queer narratives in particular, these visual dimensions create significant theoretical weight. The graphic novel can draw bodies, render gestures of care, and visuals of belonging that directly enact the affective dimensions of reparative reading.

This paper focuses on the graphic narrative *Lunar Boy* (2024) by Jes and Cin Wibowo, Chinese-Indonesian twins. The story of Indu, a boy from the moon navigating belonging, queerness, and family, resonates deeply with Indonesian queer experiences of displacement and yearning. Awarded the 2025 Stonewall Children's Literature Award, *Lunar Boy* is now celebrated for its inspirational tone, queer representation in Indonesian culture, and imaginative and tender exploration of alienation and community. By situating Indu's struggles with fantastical yet emotionally grounded narratives, the text offers Indonesian queer readers a reparative vision, one where difference is the source of connection, creativity, and hope. It is time to focus on the reparative spaces that the communities need to gather the strength to protect, because

during the darkest days of the AIDS crisis, we buried our friends in the morning, we protested in the afternoon, and we danced all night, and it was the dance that kept us in the fight because it was the dance we were fighting for. - Dan Savage, an American queer activist. (Forrester, 2025)

This paper takes *Lunar Boy* as a reparative narrative that speaks directly to the Indonesian queer community's present problems while embodying Sedgwick's (2003) call to imagine futures of care, survival, and joy and the strength to fight for equality.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The argument that *Lunar Boy* functions as a reparative narrative for queer Indonesians aligns with previous research on queer vulnerability, queer agency, and affect. Sotevik (2024) highlights that queer youth use vulnerability as a form of collective agency and note that the social is vital in creating space for resistance. This resonates with Indu's discovery of a queer centre, Bhinneka community centre, where the supportive networks transform isolation into belonging. Similarly, Carnes (2017) documents the persistence of queer communities in the waves of activism and argues that "still here, still queer" signalling the continuity and transformation of queer communities. *Lunar Boy* embodies this argument by normalizing queer acceptance within the family and the community. It offers Indonesian readers a reparative vision of continuity against erasure.

Sedgwick's reparative narrative, which is elaborated by Hawthorne (2018), insists on developing "multiplicity, surprises, rich divergence, consolation, creativity, and love" (p. 157). This framework is important for Indonesia, where queer narratives are often viewed with paranoia and suspicion. By focusing on Indu's trans identity and queer relationship, *Lunar Boy* represents the reparative turn that offers Indonesian readers the affective resources of joy and hope rather than trauma alone. Kimura (2024) shows how reparative reading in Japanese queer art destabilizes heteronormativity by "transing spectatorship" (p. 1). This highlights how reparative readings can localize the queerness, and *Lunar Boy* extends this practice into Southeast Asia.

The body of literature relevant to this paper is the field of Indonesian and Southeast Asian queer studies. Tom Boellstorff's *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and the Nation in Indonesia* (2006) remains the fundamental text on gay and lesbian identity in Indonesia. Boellstorff demonstrates that Indonesian queer subjectivities are not Western imported but culturally specific formations that negotiate the local concepts of self-identity, religion, and nationhood. He highlights that Indonesian queer identity is often constituted through mass media and cultural production. This finding lends direct support to this paper's claim that *Lunar Boy* can function as a meaningful site of identity formation and community building for its queer Indonesian readers. Rodriguez (2024) applies this analysis to contemporary events, examining how queer Indonesian Muslims navigate the demands of family, religion, and sexual identity within religious conservatism

and neoliberal policy. These analyses provide the sociocultural framework within which this paper positions its reading of *Lunar Boy*.

Donovan and Ustundag (2017) show how graphic narratives convey trauma and social justice by rendering affect visible, presenting opportunities for “a more complicated understanding of trauma, which in turn enhances possibilities for achieving social intelligibility, recognition and justice for survivors” (p. 234). *Lunar Boy*’s visual grammar of colour and panel can enhance reparative reading precisely in these ways. Jarrard (2022) examines care in queer Christian communities and adds another perspective where response to trauma cultivates solidarity. Indu’s supportive mother and inclusive communities reflect this care, situating reparative narratives as both affective and political.

While previous research has highlighted the need for reparative narratives, vulnerability, and queer community building in Western and Japanese contexts, few studies have applied these frameworks to Indonesian queer narratives and graphic novels specifically. This paper addresses this gap by situating *Lunar Boy* within Indonesian sociopolitical situations, highlighting how reparative reading can empower marginalized communities in Southeast Asia and how the graphic novel form amplifies that reparative potential.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in literary analysis. The aim is to examine *Lunar Boy* (2024) as a reparative narrative for the Indonesian queer community, placing the text within both theoretical frameworks and sociopolitical contexts.

The theoretical framework that is central to the paper is Sedgwick’s concept of reparative reading, which emphasizes the assembly of affective resources of hope, care, and joy rather than focus solely on the paranoid exposure of oppression and marginalization. Reparative reading, according to Sedgwick (2003), does not deny the reality of violence but insists on cultivating affective resources of joy and hope. The aim of the reparative perspective is to build up rather than tear down. Unlike paranoid reading, reparative reading adds, builds, and enriches instead of dismantles. It gathers meanings, affects, and cultural fragments to make something whole and sustaining. As Indonesian communities, like many others, may not provide enough support to the queer community, reparative reading tries to create a reservoir of richness in stories, art, or communities.

The close reading focuses specifically on *Lunar Boy* as a graphic novel where meaning is produced through the interaction of verbal narrative and visual grammar. This requires literary close reading focusing on dialogues, characterization, and thematic structure, along with visual analysis of panel compositions, colour palette, and page architecture. This approach is theoretically driven by Chute’s (2010) argument that the graphic novel form demands interpretative attention to the visual and not just the verbal.

Lunar Boy is set in a fantastical, speculative future world rather than a realistic contemporary Indonesia. This paper argues that this setting does not represent indifference to Indonesia’s political relevance but is rather a condition of its reparative function. According to Muñoz’s (2009) argument, utopian possibility is not an escape from politics but rather the fuel. The fantastical setting enables a form of educated hope that is grounded in the specific cultural landscape of Indonesian queer life while projecting towards transformation.

The methodology involves close reading of *Lunar Boy* while focusing on key plotlines, character development, and thematic analysis. Particular attention is paid to Indu’s gender identity, sexuality, family relationships, and community interactions to create the reparative environment for the Indonesian queer community.

The paper focuses on three potential areas:

- gender and sexuality
- community and understanding
- acceptance and hope

It argues that *Lunar Boy* highlights reparative reading, offering Indonesian queer readers affective resources of hope, care, and strength to imagine a future of equality and acceptance.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Gender and Sexuality

One of the most prominent aspects of *Lunar Boy* is its sensitive handling of Indu’s gender identity. The narrative discloses the kid’s name and identity in a way that enhances their recognition as a boy, not for the external validation but for their self-understanding. The narrative begins with a nameless, nonverbal child being found in the moon and brought back to the spaceship. The beginning of the novel develops the theme of gender identity. When the child is initially gendered and named in a different way, it made them uncertain and uncomfortable in their own body.

Mom? Can I talk to you about something? ... I don’t think I wanted to be called that anymore ... I ... I don’t know. I don’t understand why I feel this way ... or what this feeling even is. I don’t think I’m ... whoever it is everyone thinks I’m supposed to be. (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 11)

The subtle and powerful choice of hiding their initial misgendered name under scribbles (Figure 1) situates Indu’s gender not as something imposed or questioned but as something lived and affirmed. The visual dimension of this moment is crucial to its reparative function and merits close attention. Wibowo and Wibowo’s (2024) choice to render Indu’s

deadname, physically erased from the visual surface of the page, performs a graphic act of repair that prose cannot replicate. A written narrative would be compelled to use the deadname to describe its erasure; the graphic novel creates its absence directly. The scribble is the erasure accomplished before the readers' eyes. This is the reparative gesture that is made visual, where the partial, fragmented, misnamed self is repaired into Indu, a trans boy whose identity is affirmed on the very page. As Chute (2010) argues, the graphic novel can make visible what prose erases. In Indu's story, it makes invisible what prose would be compelled to name.



Figure 1. Initial Misgendered Name Under Scribbles (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 9)

Similarly, an essential element in the narrative is Indu's desire to participate in the Kemajuan ceremony, a rite of passage where boys in his community are sent out to the wilderness to strengthen their masculinity and "having completed the Kemajuan ... the boys receive honorary tattoos upon their return to mark the passing of their Kemajuan, and their place among the men in their community" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 65). The ceremony is not symbolic but is a communal recognition of boyhood and a collective affirmation offering a sense of belonging. Being a trans boy, the desire that Indu has for participating in the Kemajuan ceremony highlights the difficulties and possibilities of gender identity within the cultural traditions.

The Kemajuan ceremony, which follows a tattooing ritual, highlights the tension between normative masculinity and trans embodiment. Indu's insistence on participating in this form of inclusion reflects Sedgwick's (2003) idea of reparative narrative. He does not intend to dismantle the tradition but reimagines it as a space where trans people can belong and exist. This aligns with Sedgwick's (2003) emphasis on the possibility of nurturing an alternative future through reparative reading, rather than merely focusing on the exclusion. She states that "this is the position from which it is possible in turn to use one's own resources to assemble or 'repair' the murderous part-objects into something like a whole" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 8).

Indu's participation in this ritual becomes a reparative act, which allows the readers to imagine a community that does not rigidly police the notion of masculinity and instead redefines and expands it.

Read through Muñoz's (2009) framework of queer futurity, Indu's insistence on participating in the Kemajuan carries an additional political charge. For Muñoz, the queer gesture, which is a small, particular act in the present, carries the utopian charge of a differently organised world. Indu's Kemajuan participation is not just about inclusion; it enacts a transformed future, suggesting that culture, tradition, and trans identity are not incompatible. For Indonesian queer readers, this is not escapism but what Muñoz (2009) calls "concrete utopia" (p. 3), where the projection of a future that is not yet real can be genuinely imaginable from the present condition.

Indu's journey as a trans boy is represented with tenderness and complexity. His struggles of being a trans boy, with both linguistic and cultural adjustments, and yearning for a shared community are not framed as a pathology but a part of a broader narrative of self-discovery. The story centres on his longing for recognition and navigating the family expectations and cultural rites. Essentially, *Lunar Boy* does not isolate Indu's trans identity as an individual, singular issue but sets it within a broader affective space of alienation, belonging, and care. When Indu is welcomed to the "Bhinneka community center, a care shelter for all queer people who needed a community" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 149), an old Priawan,¹ Pak Ismaya, makes Indu understand that every one of them "share a history ... you may not be from here, but that doesn't mean you don't share history with us. Take it from an old Priawan, we both share the future" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 152).

This representation is reparative, because it resists the dominant Indonesian heteronormative discourse that frames trans identities as marginal and sin. The narrative that centres Indu's experience affirms trans boyhood as legitimate and meaningful. For Indonesian queer readers, this creates a counternarrative for the stigmatized trans identities. This graphic

¹ Indonesian term for "transmasculine", a person who was born female and identifies as a man.

novel provides a vision of a transperson's life that is celebratory and not just about survival, rooted with a community's care and tradition.

Alongside gender identity, Indu's sexuality unfolds through his encounter with his language tutor, Aminah, a trans woman and the girlfriend of Indu's stepbrother Alan. This dynamic is crucial in the narrative, as it situates queer desire within relational bonds rather than isolating them into an individual secret. This allows the readers to understand and be reassured that love can exist openly within family structures. This narrative becomes a sense of solidarity and "compelling as alternatives to text-based representations of testimony. They present opportunities for a more complicated understanding of trauma, which in turn enhances possibilities for achieving social intelligibility, recognition and justice for survivors" (Donovan & Ustundag, 2017, p. 234).

This narrative allows the reparative reading, as it keeps queer relations supportive and generative. Indu realizes that Aminah being called Waria² by his classmates is not derogatory; rather, it is "an older, kind of umbrella term for feminine gender-nonconforming people ... Waria gave a name to something so many people felt. That helped build communities" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 45). This reassures Indu that queer identity is not peculiar but part of the fabric of everyday life. It provides him with the courage to tell someone outside his family that he is a "trans too! I'm a transgender boy" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 47), and that made him feel welcomed outside his house. It helped him explore his own desires, to see himself reflected in others, and to imagine a future where his gender identity and sexuality is not hidden but embraced.

This willingness to embrace his own sexuality and his relationship with Noah (his pen-pal crush) deepens the reparative narrative. It was in the conversation with Noah, who identifies as bisexual,³ that Indu discloses for the first time that he likes boys. His validation of queer love becomes a road map to his brother's coming out. These dynamics show how queer relationships and their open representation can ripple outwards and support others to find courage and affirmation. Indu's relationship is not just personal but communal. It creates a space where his brother can also articulate his identity and his emotions freely. Because of this inclusive and inviting space, Alan opened up to Indu during the Kemajuan ceremony:

I remember being so scared of what was ahead of us. Whenever I thought about how I'd come out to my family, I'd always overthink ... I couldn't mess it up. I wanted so badly to tell dad about that part of me.

Then I just couldn't do it. I wasn't ready. But now I'm ready to tell you. I'm panromantic,⁴ Indu. I've known that I like all sorts of people since I was your age. (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 202)

This intergenerational aspect of queer disclosure is significant in the current Indonesian context. Family often serves as a site of repression and control. This representation of how Indu's relationship works within his family, which helps his brother come out, creates a reparative family structure, where queer identities are not silenced but nurtured with mutual recognition.

By and large, Indu's gender and sexuality narrative represent Sedgwick's reparative reading, rather than solely focusing on paranoia, a "position-understandably marked by hatred, envy, and anxiety" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 8). *Lunar Boy* assembles moments of care, recognition, and possibility. Indu's participation in the Kemajuan ceremony, his affirming attitude as a trans boy, his recognition of queer relationships, and having a progressive, affirming family structure all contribute to a reparative vision.

For Indonesian queer readers, this vision is potentially powerful. In a limiting sociopolitical environment where queer identities are often criminalized or erased, *Lunar Boy* offers a counter discourse. It allows readers to imagine a future where trans people can participate in cultural traditions, where queer love can openly exist and be acknowledged, and where families can become supportive rather than repressive. This reparative narrative does not deny the reality of hostility but insists on cultivating hope, joy, and belonging. *Lunar Boy*, as a graphic narrative, enhances this reparative narrative. Centring trans identity and queer relationships, the text affirms the identities that are marginalized in Indonesian culture. It offers the readers care and imagination, and in doing so *Lunar Boy* becomes a reparative narrative that speaks directly to the Indonesian queer community, providing affective resources for survival and imagining futures with joy and connection.

Indu's journey as a queer person is profoundly shaped by his supportive mother. In many cultural contexts, especially in Indonesia, family functions as a repressive site. Indu's mother, Dariya, symbolizes potential affirmation of queer identities. When Indu comes out to his mother as a trans boy, she offers him the recognition and care that counterbalance the hostile society.

B. Community and Understanding

² Indonesian term for "trans woman", a person who was born male and identifies as a woman.

³ Experiencing attraction towards those of one's own gender and of other genders.

⁴ A panromantic person experiences romantic attraction to individuals of all genders, regardless of their own gender identity.



Figure 2. Dariya's Acceptance of Indu's Gender Identity (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 12)

The acceptance of Indu's trans identity and his mother's willingness to nurture his desires provide a reparative foundation (Figure 2). This maternal support is crucial, because it situates Indu's identity within a family framework of love more than rejection. Sedgwick's reparative reading emphasizes the importance of assembling resources of joy and care: "Hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 24). This allows marginalized individuals to survive and flourish, and that creates a sense of "home":

Homes for queer individuals can be seen not just as places of resistance to heteronormativity, but as settings where daily life is shaped by taken-on responsibilities, and where personal autonomy is manifested within, rather than against, prevailing norms and values. (Rodriguez, 2024, p. 15)

Indu's mother becomes one such resource. She, along with her husband and daughter's acceptance, enables Indu to imagine himself embedded in a network of care, which is a utopian expectation in Indonesian society. This dynamic representation of home in literature will allow the community to imagine a potential future where acceptance is possible and stimulate the strength to fight for that potential future in the political hostility.

Beyond the family, Indu visits a queer care centre, Bhinneka community centre, that introduces him and the readers to the historical presence of queer culture. This centre shapes visibility, education, and affirmation. By positioning queer individuals within the historical context, the narrative challenges the dominant heteronormative norms that frame queerness as foreign and deviant. It demonstrates that queer culture has always existed and is intertwined in the fabric of society.

Boellstorff (2006) argues that Indonesian queer identity is not constituted through biology or geography but through a shared cultural memory and community belonging. When Pak Ismaya tells Indu that they "share the future" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 152), he is performing precisely the kind of community building that Boellstorff identifies as foundational to Indonesian queer life, where a stranger claims someone as their own through a shared history of survival and resistance. For Indonesian queer readers who have internalized the narrative that queerness is foreign or recent, the Bhinneka community centre's visual archive of historical queer presence, rendered by Wibowo and Wibowo (2024) in warm tones and careful details, constitutes a direct counternarrative enacted through image rather than argument.

This queer centre is transformative for Indu. It allows him to see himself echoed in history, recognize himself in a broader continuum, and fight the erasure of the queer identity from the historical narrative. It provides Indu with a sense of belonging that moves beyond the present moment, placing his identity in a lineage of resilience, and this recognition manifests a reparative narrative.

The Bhinneka community centre functions as a space for Indu to connect with others. The centre is a place where he develops solidarity, connections, and affirmations. The relationships that Indu creates are not incidental; they are nurtured within a shared space that validates queer existence. The centre, by assembling resources of community, history, and friendship, provides a reparative site for the readers.

Similarly, Indu's relationship with Noah is influenced by the supportive environment of the queer centre. In a culture where queer desire is often stigmatized, a representative centre providing a space where such relationships can be explored openly, without fear, allows the readers to experience queer love as something legitimate and celebratory: "I already like

you Noah, every part of you. Even the part you're still figuring ... with my whole heart" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 228).

Aside from his romantic relationship, his friendships also deepen in this community centre. When his friend group tries to fit him in a normative rule, he connects with Yuliana. She was also the silent victim of these normative rules and was forced to hide her sexuality. She frequently visits the Bhinneka centre, because "I don't belong anywhere" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 154), something Indu had also felt. By connecting with his peers who share similar experiences, Indu finds solidarity and understanding. "If Aminah hadn't told me otherwise, I would've thought 'Waria' was a bad word. I would've thought all sorts of hurtful things. I'd be exactly all like the people making Yuliana feel this way" (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 155).

The centre fosters a sense of belonging that counters the isolation in real life, a form of reparation providing a sense of network and care. This narrative describes how queer life is not solitary but communal, sustained through bonds of friendship and love. The confidence Indu gains from his mother's support, the Bhinneka community centre's affirmation, and his friendships allow Indu to articulate his identity with the family. This reparative discourse transforms the family into a site of mutual recognition.

"In recent years, the landscape of Indonesia's family values and moral citizenship has witnessed shifts influenced by religious values and neoliberal policies" (Rodriguez, 2024, p. 4), and the presence of the community as a centre of the narrative creates a reparative environment. Sedgwick (2003) emphasizes that reparative narrative assembles the resources and allow the individuals to imagine a future beyond the trauma. Similar to Dariya being a resource, the community that accepts queer individuals in the New Earth, the speculative Indonesian setting, is one such resource. This community provides visibility and solidarity to Indu, his friends, and the readers. This community is not just an abstract idea for Indu and the readers, but a counter to the paranoia of exclusion by assembling the possibilities of care and acceptance.

When Indonesian queer people face systemic discrimination, from law to social stigma, this representation of a queer community is often prominent. By placing Indu within such community, the novel demonstrates that even among the discrimination, community acceptance can provide resources of care, and its importance among queer individuals. The graphic novel becomes a reparative narrative that speaks directly to the Indonesian queer community, filled with futures of joy and connection.

C. Acceptance and Hope

One of the most reparative gestures of *Lunar Boy* is its normalization of acceptance with the family. As discussed earlier, Indu's mother provides a foundation for care. But beyond that, the novel expands on the acceptance of siblings and extended kin. In the Indonesian context, queer identities are often silenced by the families due to social stigma and religious conservation. But the novel proudly celebrates Indu's transition by displaying his new name for his birthday.

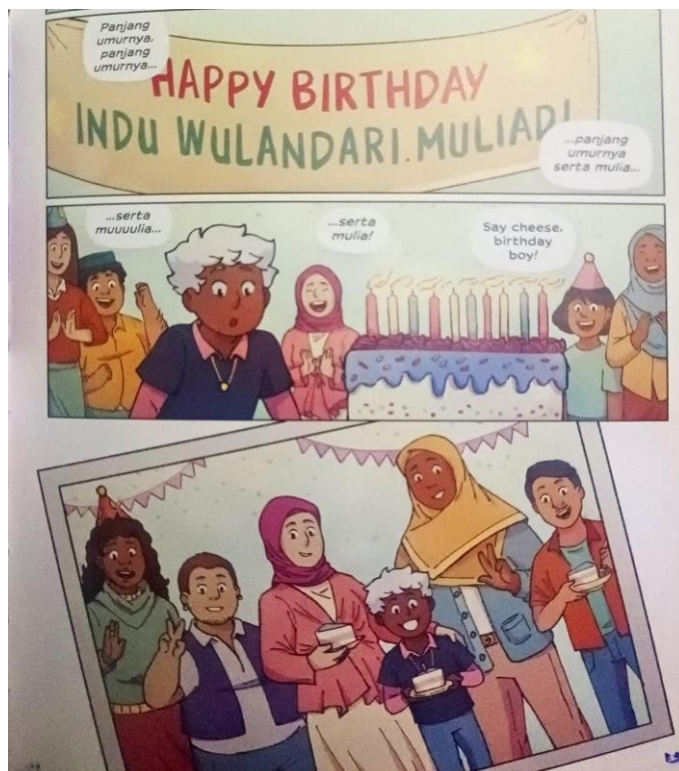


Figure 3. Indu's First Birthday as a Trans Boy (Wibowo & Wibowo, 2024, p. 13)

This reparative narrative models a family dynamic where acceptance is possible, not hidden but embraced. This normalization of acceptance within the family provides hope for the readers that their own families might also become the site of affirmation and that they might move towards that potential future.

The visual presentation of this birthday scene (Figure 3) carries particular weight. The banners, the warm colour palette, and the assembled family gazing at Indu's name together enact Muñoz's queer gaze that carries the utopian charge of a differently organized world. It is a performative moment, where the family display acceptance openly and publicly. For Indonesian queer readers who may have experienced their family as a space of silencing, this public and celebratory act of recognition is a concrete possibility.

The acceptance from family, friends, and community taken together centres Indu's self-discovery journey. This counterargument against the current society of Indonesia provides hope, a crucial resource for the Indonesian queer community to hold on to and with which to continue the fight for justice and inclusion. Hope allows the marginalized community to breathe, to understand what they are fighting for, that queer life is not all about survival but also about acceptance and celebration with solidarity. Hope allows activism, which in turn empowers the individuals to imagine and fight for equality.

It is worth acknowledging that not all representations of hope are politically equivalent. Lauren Berlant's work on *Cruel Optimism* (2011) cautions that hope can itself become a form of harm when it attaches to futures that are structurally excluded, when the promise of acceptance becomes a reason to endure the present rather than transform it. *Lunar Boy* navigates this tension carefully. The hope it offers is not the generic optimism of liberal inclusion, with the assurance that patience and goodness will eventually be rewarded; rather, it is the "educated hope" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 3) that understands the structural obstacles to equalities and insists on collective political action as the means of realizing possibilities. Indu gains the confidence through his mother's support and the Bhinneka centre's affirmation to articulate his identity within his family, which enables the affective foundation from which political agency becomes possible.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper situated *Lunar Boy* through the lens of Sedgwick's (2003) reparative reading and analysed the text as a vital narrative for the Indonesian queer community at this unfavourable moment. It focused on three central themes: gender and sexuality, community and understanding, and acceptance and hope. Together, the novel functions not just as a story of individual self-discovery, but also as a reparative cultural text that provides hope, strength, and affirmation to queer Indonesians.

Lunar Boy demonstrates how graphic narratives can become the site of repair, resistance, and hope for marginalized communities. Indu's journey of self-recognition and self-acceptance, his encounters with an inclusive community, and the normalization of queer identities is more than just a story; it creates a cultural space where Indonesian queer readers can imagine themselves as visible, valued, and resilient.

Sedgwick's reparative reading insists that texts can nurture and "leave us in a vastly better position to do justice to a wealth of characteristic, culturally central practices" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 25). The novel's narrative does not linger on trauma where "the sanctity of the family, underpinned by fundamental heteronormative and heterosexist values, requires safeguarding it from perceived contaminations, with LGBT + people being categorised as a threat" (Rodriguez, 2024, p. 4). Rather, it transforms the vulnerability into possibility, which offers readers affective resources of joy, care, solidarity, and resilience.

It is crucial to read from a reparative perspective rather than a paranoid one in a climate where queer lives are marginalized and erased. The novel's reparative position lies in the ability to show that difference among people is a source of connection and that queer love and identity can be celebrated within the cultural traditions rather than excluded from them.

The graphic form strengthens this reparative potential. It makes the emotions concrete, accessible, and shareable. It modifies the experience of recognition, ensuring that reparative reading reaches a broader audience who may find themselves reflected not just in Indu's struggles, but in his triumphs and fleeting happiness.

The paper's engagement with *Lunar Boy* as a specifically visual text makes a contribution to queer studies as well as graphic narrative studies. Following Chute (2010, 2016), the analysis emphasized that the formal properties of the graphic novel – such as panel structure, colour grammar, the drawing of bodies – independently enact reparative possibilities. The scribbled out deadname, the chromatic shift from dysphoric tone to warm tones shows belonging, and the open splash panels of queer solidarity together constitute a visual argument for reparative reading. This registers the potential of graphic narratives, which make readers feel the reparative before they fully articulate it.

This novel is not a narrative of survival, but a forethought of flourishing. *Lunar Boy* bestows the Indonesian community with hope and strength. It enables Indonesians to imagine futures of equality and belonging. It reminds the queer community that reparative narratives create resilience, affirm identities, and inspire collective action that is "invisible or illegible under a paranoid optic" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 25).

Thus, this paper argues that *Lunar Boy* is not just a literary text, but a cultural intervention. With reparative reading, it empowers queer Indonesians to fight for recognition and imagine a future where acceptance is not exceptional, but ordinary. Moreover, the paper contributes to queer studies by extending Sedgwick's framework and Muñoz's queer futurity into a Southeast Asian context. It also contributes to Indonesian literary studies by applying graphic narrative

theory to a culturally significant queer text. Additionally, it demonstrates how the visual grammar of *Lunar Boy* enacts reparative possibilities unavailable to prose. Together, these contributions answer Sedgwick's (2003) challenge to attend to "the many ways in which selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them" (p. 35).

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