



THE TYPES OF MASCULINITY IN “ME BEFORE YOU”(2012) BY JOJO MOYES

Rialdo Dwi Yesa¹, Delvi Wahyuni²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

email: rialdo.dwi.y@gmail.com

Abstract

This research is an analysis of the novel by Jojo Moyes entitled *Me Before You* (2012). The objective of this research is to find out the forms of masculinity depicted in this novel. This study employs masculinity theory to analyze the novel and is supported by feminist theory and patriarchy theory. This is a qualitative descriptive study using masculinity theory which is supported by feminist literary theory and patriarchy ideologies. The results of this study show that there are several forms of masculinity depicted in this novel, which are: strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, and self-sufficiency. The result of this research shows that disability is the opposite of what is called masculine. A masculine man must have strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self-sufficiency, male companionship, mateship, and work.

Key words: Masculinity, forms of masculinity, glorification, disability

A. INTRODUCTION

Masculinity is one of a theme which recurrently appeared in literary works. According to Ferry (2014) the act of gendering these works of fiction not only allows us to see how masculinity is an underappreciated primary topic of these writers, but it also highlights the social usefulness of the novel as a self-reflective method for contesting established patterns of masculine performance. Also on his book, Ferry (2014) stated that this technique is critical to their capacity to create narratives that eventually support the possibilities of counter hegemonic masculine performances. According to SPEARA (2017) defines masculinity is a value that develops in culture and becomes a requirement to the man. As a result, Will Traynor could be the perfect representation of masculinism because he has everything that required by the rules of patriarchy. A man has the value of being the

¹ English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on September 2022

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



masculinism such as handsome, have a power, have money, and have a high class in social.

However, masculinity and disability has correlation in context the reason of someone losing his masculinity. According to Shuttleworth, Wegwood and Wilson (2012) on their study found that being disabled for a man has a very big influence on masculinity. The study found that for men with disabilities, they can no longer do things that are closely related to men such as sports, adventure, work and other activities that require high mobility. In addition, the study conducted by Pini and Conway (2016) found that there is regret for men with disabilities because they can no longer play the role of men they should be. The study also explained that men with disabilities also experience limitations in their social life so that they no longer have the freedom they had so far. As explained above, it could be concluded that masculinity is a term from the culture of society about how a man should live and carry out his activities, and how men should have form and be reliable in life, especially for himself. Which in this case, when a man experiences obstacles in carrying out activities or becomes a person with a disability, is considered a form of imperfection of the man. This embedded social point of view puts pressure, especially men with disabilities, to end their lives immediately because if they continue to live their lives, they still lose their credibility as masculine men from a social point of view.

Being disable is one of the reason why people commit suicide. The study conducted by Rusell, Tuner and Joiner (2009) found that disable people which take their own life have grown twice than the score of people who doesn't has disability. Moreover, Feldblum (1991) explains that disability is a physical condition of a person that makes them hampered and disturbed from carrying out an activity in daily life. Still according to Rusell, Tuner and Joiner (2009) also found that the reason why many people with disabilities chose to commit suicide was because of social stress which increased from 12.8% to 25.6% of the participants. In line with Rusell, Tuner and Joiner, Santrock (2003) claims being under pressure in life and a lack of affection and emotional support from the people around them can cause a person to commit suicide.

Suicide has been a serious problem. According to the data that released by WHO on 2021 stated that more than 700,000 people died in suicide in a year. According to Harold (1998) explains that suicide is death caused purposely by a person and typically occurs as a result of a catastrophe that causes significant misery and sentiments of helplessness and hopelessness, as well as the fight between life and death intolerable stress, a reduction in the number of possible escape routes observed by the sufferer, as well as the urge to flee from it. In addition, Leenaars (2010) said suicide is triggered by a suffering known as psychache, which is defined as mental agony, soreness, aching, or other psychological suffering. .

Suicide also is one of a theme which also recurrently appeared in literary works. According to Wiedmann (1995), novelistic suicide patterns first emerged in the nineteenth century with five basic themes which include: 'murder-followed-by-suicide; the survivor of suicide; age and the suicide; the suicide's choice of method; and gender and suicide. In addition, Friedman in Miller (2005) claims that suicide existing in several novels serve as social criticism. Furthermore, Berger (1986) claims that young adult novels on suicide also serve the function of demystifying suicide and to eradicating any romantic notions adolescents may have about suicide. Moreover, in another genre, Pridmore and Auchincloss (2015) found that romantic feeling could be a trigger of committing suicide, which shows that Twenty-two events of characters experiencing suicidal thoughts, and twenty five other mentions of suicide were identified, which the main methods were shooting, jumping and drowning with the trigger is romantic feeling.

"Me Before You" (2012) by Jojo Moyes is a romance novel with suicide as the main theme. It tells a story about Will Traynor and Louisa Clark. Will Traynor is a very handsome man from a privileged background. He is also the embodiment of patriarchal masculinity. He is a handsome man, heterosexual, rich, sportsman, very smart, etc. Meanwhile, Louisa Clark is a woman from an underprivileged background. She prioritizes other people's feelings without thinking about what she wants. In the blink of an eye it disappeared because he had an accident that caused paralysis so he could only move his right thumb after undergoing treatment. Because of the circumstances of Will Traynor, Will Traynor's parents are looking for someone who will take care of all the needs of Will Traynor, and Louisa Clark is chosen to be someone who takes care of all the needs of Will Traynor. As time goes by, they involve in love each other, but Will chooses to do an assisted suicide.

In the novel it had been told that committing a suicide is a very logical choice, Will Traynor is a disabled person who needs the help of others to live life, so making the choice to commit suicide is a logical choice to not burden anyone. But actually, all characters believe in masculinity, so this is a very strong consideration for Will Traynor to commit assisted suicide.

There are two studies that discuss the novel *"Me Before You"* (2012). The title of the study is *"Analysis on Languages of Love in the Novel 'Me Before You'"* by Rovy M. Banguis, Shandylou B. Omongos, and Adelyn C. Pino (2021) from Mindanao State University-Buug, Philippines. This study found the language of love used by the characters in the novel in the form of words of affirmation, physical touch, quality time, acts of service and receiving gifts. This study focuses on the language and ways used by the characters in the novel to express their feelings. The second one is *"Love and belonging needs of the main character in novel 'me before you' by jojo moyes"* by Grace Ruth (2020) from Putera Batam

University. The research accentuate on the analysis of Hierarchy of needs tiers and love and belonging needs that found in “Me Before You” novel by Jojo Moyes. From the two discussions above, I focus my study on how importance masculinity is to Will Traynor which can have an impact on his life.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative methodologies used in this study were used to write the analysis. According to Sugiyono (2013), a qualitative research method is a research method based on postpositivism philosophy, used to examine the conditions of a natural object (as opposed to an experiment), where the researcher is the key instrument. In addition, according to Moriarty (2011) it aims to give an in-depth and comprehensive picture of study participants' social worlds by learning about their social and material conditions, experiences, viewpoints, and histories. Because it demands a profound meaning, qualitative research is seen to be the best method for investigating content or difficulties in a literary work. In this study, fictional techniques such as character, narrative, and place were employed to aid in the analysis. The object of the research is the novel by Jojo Moyes with the title *Me Before You* (2012). The data is collected from the characterization, setting and also from the dialogue from the major character and from the minor character in the novel *Me Before You* (2012) by Jojo Moyes. The data is analyzed based on the feminist literary theory, masculinity also the Men studies. Through there theory, it can be seen that there is a correlation on what are the types of masculinity and the glorification of masculinity. The data will be collected by looking at the novel. The based on preliminary reading of the novel which will be looked closely are character, setting, and dialogue.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1) The Types of Masculinity

As explained by Barker (2003), masculinity is a quality of men who have strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self-sufficiency, male companionship mateship, and work. The forms above show that real men who are considered to have masculinity must have the above types. This is also supported by the opinion of Blair (2007) stated that masculinity refers to a set of cultural expectations about how males should behave, think, and seem.

- Strength, power, independence and self-sufficiency

Activities carried out by Mia Clark as someone who takes care of Will Traynor shows a photo showing activities that have been carried out by Will Traynor. In the quote below:

“As I vacuumed around the bed, I allowed myself a quick peek at them. There was a man bungee jumping from a cliff,

his arms outstretched like a statue of Christ. There was a man who might have been Will in what looked like jungle, and him again in the midst of a group of drunken friends. The men wore bow ties and dinner jackets and had their arms around each other's shoulders. There he was on a ski slope, beside a girl with dark glasses and long blonde hair..... "you were just looking at my photographs. Wondering how awful it must be to live like that and then turn into a cripple." (chapter 3, page 32)

This quotation shows the glory of Will before becoming a cripple. Will had a life that he first lived as a perfect man. How this quote glorifies masculinity is from what the man in the photo in Will Traynor's room has done. In the photo, it is shown that Will previously did a lot of physical activities such as doing bungee jumping with other friends. The photo also shows that there are more men than women showing that the activity carried out by bungee jumping on the edge of the cliff shows that it is an activity that glorifies masculinity itself. It also emphasizes that activities that are harmful to the social environment are specifically male activities. All the things that he lives that are exposed in these photos show that Will has the power to live a life that he thinks makes himself fully a man. However, when he became a cripple, he said "you were just looking at my photographs. Wondering how awful it must be to live like that and then turn into a cripple." It is also explained that Will's life after becoming a disability actually makes him a sad man to be called a man, which shows that Will himself is aware that he is no longer a complete man.

This is in accordance with the concept of masculinity itself, namely that a man must have strength and ability in any case and the absence of that power means that he is not a real man who is meant to be. As stated by Pini and Conway (2016) that there is a regret for man of being a cripple because he cannot do anything else as a man should have been. In this idea, there is also a character who believes that being a masculine is not on what Will experienced in that time. It is stated by Louisa: "He could move his hands a little, but not his arm, so he had to be fed forkful by forkful. This was the worst part of the day; it seemed wrong, somehow, spoon-feeding a grown man, and my embarrassment made me clumsy and awkward." What Louisa wants to convey here is that a man should not depend on other people to do an activity that can even be done alone.

The awkward feeling that Louisa felt showed that what Will was experiencing right now was the fault of a man who should have the ability to support himself. The key term of the quotation is the activities of what Will did before being a cripple. By the activities we see the strength, power, action, independence and also the sufficiency of Will Traynor. As stated by SPEARA (2017) in the literature of dictionary in USA, the characteristics of someone who is masculinity are men who are able to do

strenuous activities and stimulate adrenaline. It also shows that for the man, being a masculine is the most important thing that a man cannot lose of it.

- Power, strength, and independence

Patrick is a minor character who plays Louisals lover who is crazy about extreme sports. He conveys his opinion about why for a man, everything must be done alone, especially with small things, because this is related to self-esteem. In chapter 4, page 49.

“You mind if I go, then? I really fancy getting some altitude training in. I”m thinking about doing the big one.” “The big what?” “Triathlon. The Xtreme Viking. Sixty miles on a bike, thirty miles on foot, and a nice long swim in sub-zero Nordic seas,”

The viking was spoken about with reverence, those who had competed bearing their injuries like veterans of some distant and particularly brutal war. Patrick hinted that a man’s pride is when he is able and able to do things that are considered to show the strength of a man himself. The quote also shows that the concept of glorify masculinity is not only from the main character, but also from other characters who in this case are like the past of Will Traynor. The past referred to here are activities that Will Traynor also likes to show how masculinity exists within itself. This quote also shows how the activities that must be carried out by men. As had been explain by Barker (2003) about the terms of masculinity, in this quotes, it shows the strength, power, action, control, independence, and self-sufficiency. It also proves that men must have activity and must move. Moving what is meant here is the ability to do activities that he wants or things that must be done by a man.

- Stoicism, and power

Another data that shows the forms of masculinity as stated below:

“I got to study Will Traynor up close, in those first couple of weeks. I saw that he seemed determined not to look anything like the man he had been; he had let his light-brown hair grow into a shapeless mess, his stubble crawl across his jaw. His grey eyes were lined with exhaustion, or the effect of constant discomfort. They bore the hollow look of someone who was always a few steps removed from the world around him. Sometimes I wondered if it was a defence mechanism, wheter the only way to cope with his life was to pretend it wasn”t him it was happening to. I wanted to feel sorry for him. I really did. I thought he was the saddest person I had ever met, in those moments when I glimpsed him staring out of the window. And as the days went by and I realized that his condition was not just

a matter of being stuck in that chair, of the loss of physical freedom, but a never-ending litany of indignities and health problems, of risks and discomforts, I decided that I were Will, I would probably be pretty miserable too.” (Chapter 4, page 39).

In this quote, what Louisa sees is the outer part of Will itself as if trying to cover up something he should be showing. But in this case, it could be a way for Will himself to cover up how he feels about the life he is currently living. From the quote above, it can also be analyzed how Will has been holding back the pain he feels. Whether it's the pain he suffered, and also the mental pain because as a man, he can only sit in a wheelchair without being able to do other things he usually does. As stated by Pathak et al (2017) that a stoicism is the ideology for a man that the should endure the pain that they got. This is also a form of masculinity about how a man must endure all the pain he gets. Even to express pain is not allowed. This also shows that the man must be strong and must look strong wherever he is. This is also inseparable from the man's self-esteem who does not want to be considered weak.

- Strength, power, independence, action, and control

Also in this quote, shows that masculinity is the important thing for a man, which the forms of the masculinity. The way it glorifies that we can see from the quotation below:

“Leo, they said, had played football since he was three years old. His whole life was football. He had been injured in what they termed a “million to one” accident when a tackle went wrong. They had tried everything to encourage him, to give him a sense that his life would still hold value. But he had retreated into depression. He was an athlete not just without athleticism, but without even the ability to move or, on occasion, breathe without assistance. He gleaned no pleasure from anything. His life was painful, disrupted by infection, and dependent on the constant ministrations of others. He missed his friends, but refused to see them. He told his girlfriend he wouldn't see her. He told his parents daily that he didn't want to live. He told then that watching other people live even half the life he had planned for himself was unbearable, a kind of torture.” (Chapter 14, page 175)

This is a newspaper that had been read by Louisa in the library. Although this story was experienced by other people, but this is a form of replication that is felt by Will which is able to be written in sentence form by someone. The feelings that Leo feels are exactly what Will feels and experienced and there are some similarities, such as wanting to commit suicide to not wanting to meet special people in his life because he thinks he has failed to be a

perfect man. In this case it is also implemented that Will is still trying to maintain his self-esteem that he is able to hide and endure all the pain he feels. From the quote it is also shown that when a person is no longer perfect in physical condition, it will have an impact on him being shunned by the surrounding environment. This is in line with what was conveyed by Shuttleworth, Wegwood and Wilson (2012) which found that when a man becomes disabled it means that the man is unable to carry out any activity related to men, which affects how the environment around him becomes see it. In this case, when a man loses their masculinity, it affects them who are no longer seen in their own environment, thus making them have to face their own shortcomings. In this case it is also meant that men from childhood have been shaped to become strong and respected in their environment. So they can be considered as masculine men. But when the masculine is gone, it means that men no longer have any value except for living humans.

- Action, control

Another forms of masculinity as shown in the quotation below:

“Everything all right, Clark?” “Fine.” I smiled brightly. Good. Got a nice frock?” “What?” “What are you doing on Sunday?” “Um...nothing. Patrick’s away all day training. Why?” He waited just a few seconds before he said it, as if it actually gave him some pleasure to surprise me. “We’re going to a wedding.” Afterwards, I was never entirely sure why Will changed his mind about Alicia and Rupert’s nuptials. I suspected there was a probably a large dose of natural contrariness in his decision – nobody expected him to go, probably least of all Alicia and Rupert themselves. (Chapter 18, page 237.

In the quote above, it was previously told that Will was invited by his ex-girlfriend to his exgirlfriend’s wedding. With Will’s condition who has a disability, this will certainly attract attention from the public which can be disturbing for Will. However, with Will himself having no fear and also having the privilege of himself, Will decided to attend the wedding anyway. However, Will’s thinking time to attend the wedding could indicate that Will actually lacks the courage. This cannot be separated from Will’s condition, which has become a disability since an accident, so that Will is no longer seen as a real man, but as someone with a disability. The quote also shows how one form of masculinity is when a man must dare to take a risk and must dare to take a choice. Will’s attitude that he still wants to attend the wedding shows that Will still wants to have control over himself even though he no longer has control over his surroundings.

- Power, strength and stoicism

Another forms of masculinity as the quotation below:

“I don”t want to live like this, mother. This is not the life I chose. There is no prospect of my recovery, hence it is a perfectly reasonable request to ask to end it in a manner I see fit.”(Chapter 8, page 101)

The implied meaning of the quote above is a form of Will Traynor’s desire for the life he wants to live. This has an impact on his decision to end his own life. In accordance with a study conducted by Rubin et al (2001) that everyone has the right to choose their own path in life. This is also what Will Traynor wants, namely his desire to choose his own path in life according to what he is living at this time. The form of loss of masculinity can be seen from how Will as a man no longer has power and strength. Another thing that is striking as a form of losing masculinity from Will is that he is no longer able to endure the pain of his own feelings after he becomes disabled. In this case, it refers to the stoicism that masculine men must possess. As stated by Pathak et al (2017) which found that men can withstand pain better than women, this shows that men can endure pain very well. And when a man can no longer endure the pain, it can be concluded that he has lost his masculinity.

- Power, strength, independence, action, and control

The quote below shows the loss of masculinity from people who glorify masculinity, as quoted below:

“I just ... want to be a man who has been to a concert with a girl in a red dress. Just for a few minutes more.” (Chapter 12, page 155)

In addition to the form of Will’s father’s desire as a male fellow, here is also given a quote from the form of Will’s desire as a man himself. In the quote, although what Will wants is a common thing maybe for other people, but in his current state it is a very big form of desire. This form of desire also illustrates how Will wants a very wide freedom for what he wants to do. His freedom is hindered by his disability, which makes him someone who can’t do anything anymore. This freedom is in line with the concept of masculinity discussed by Barker (2003) that one of the characteristics of masculinity of a man is independence. This independence is defined by Rubin et al (2001) which says that independence is a condition in which a person feels the freedom within himself to do what he wants. In the quote it is explained that Will’s wish is that he wants to be a man who accompanies his woman in a concert. In this case it also shows that Will has absolutely no power, strength, action and control that makes Will no longer able to do what he wants to do.

- Independence and self-sufficiency

Another form of masculinity as quotation below:

“You feeling okay, Will?”

“I”m fine. Don”t fuss.”

“You want to tell me where it hurts?” He looked a bit resigned then, as if he knew I saw straight through him. We had worked together a long time.

“Okay. Bit of headache. And ... um ... I need my tubes changed. Probably quite sharpish.” (Chapter 19, pages 254)

In this case, Nathan plays the male companionship of Will Traynor. This form of male companionship provides a difference between Nathan who fulfills the masculinity side who can fulfill anything about himself, and can help others in carrying out his activities. While Will Traynor as someone who can not do his own activities and needs help from others. So in this sense, Will has a lack of masculinity in his own life. In conclusion, there are seven forms of masculinity depicted in this novel. There are strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence and self-sufficiency.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This analysis try to find out the glorification of masculinity in the novel entitled *Me Before You* (2012) by Jojo Moyes. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that, first, there are seven forms of masculinity depicted in the novel. There are strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, and self-sufficiency. It means after being a cripple the main male character lost all of the forms of masculinity, which means disability could take away someone’s masculinity also this novel shows that being disable mean that someone has no power and choices in their life. In this case, it was also found that the main character still reminisced about his life before becoming disabled and other character also gave their perspective on what are the quality of masculinity. Second, all of the character idealized the masculinity, which mean there is a form of glorifying masculinity In conclusion, it can be inferred that masculinity is a very important thing for a man. Masculine is no longer seen only from the point of view of men but also from the point of view of women. This also shows that having masculinity becomes a perfection for a man. Also the novel itself is glorifying the notions of masculinity by the results of this study. It also can be concluded that the whole society support the glorification of masculinity. And it also see in the main character that he has been influenced by the patriarchal ideology, where he thinks that it is better to die than to lose masculinity.

Researchers hope that this research could be useful and could have big contribution in the world of literature. This research could help for the future researcher who are interested in conducting similar research or who will conduct research on another novel. For 40 further researchers, they can analyze the glorification of masculinity by using masculinity theory in more depth.

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