PORTRAYAL OF DESPERATION REFLECTED IN JOJO MOYES’ ME BEFORE YOU NOVEL (2012):
AN EXISTENTIALIST STUDY

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education in English Department

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Herewith, I testify that there is no such thing of plagiarism with literary work in this research paper. There is no study which is similar before this research paper which has been submitted to obtain bachelor degree of university. Nor there are opinions or masterpiece which have been written or published by others, except those in which the writing are referred manuscript and mentioned in this research paper and bibliography.

Therefore, if it is proved that there are some untrue statements in this testimony, I will hold fully responsible.

Surakarta, June 4, 2018

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ABSTRAK


Kata Kunci: eksistensialisme, Me Before You, penggambaran keputusasaan

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the issue about portrayal of desperation reflected in Jojo Moyes’ Me Before You novel (2012) which is analyzed by using Existentialism study. The objectives of this study are to describe the characteristic of desperation through Existentialism, to identify the indicators of desperation, and to reveal why desperation can be the basic issue of Me Before You novel. This study is descriptive qualitative research. The primary data source is Me Before You novel (2012) by Jojo Moyes, while the secondary data source are taken from books, websites, articles, dictionaries, and others that match with this study. The result of this study as follows: Firstly, the characteristics of desperation can be found through five principle of Existentialism theory; Secondly, there are five indicators of desperation which are losing interest in daily activities, being self-defeating, becoming more emotional, losing self-identity, and lacking productivity; and the last, desperation can be the inspiration of the novel based on Jojo Moyes’ family members real life and a story that she heard from radio.

Key: Existentialism study, Me Before You, portrayal of desperation
1. **INTRODUCTION**

There are many studies which are related to the object of this study. The researcher found five literature reviews which have different focuses. The first study observes on deixis in *Me Before You* movie as a pragmatic analysis (Turambi, 2017). There also three literature reviews which is focused to analyze Existentialism theory, as follows: A study focused on Roobonson Crusoe to defend existence and find out relationship between Existentialism and freedom of life (Wirahadi, 2008), a study analyzed the main character in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by using Existentialism theory (Azizah, 2016), and a study which is aimed to find out the analysis of Sartrean existentialistic of *No Exit* drama (Senejani, 2013). Another literature study which is related to this study is a study which is analyzed desperate issue on *Kamala Das* (Prakash and Sujata, 2014).

From those literature reviews above, there are similarity and differences. There is no literature review which analyzed *Me Before You* novel. The similarity is the three of them have the same theory with this study, one of them has the same issue, and the rest of them is conducted *Me Before You* but in movie version.

While, this study aims to identify the portrayal of desperation which is portrayed by the second lead character of *Me Before You* novel by Jojo Moyes. So, this study uses Existentialism theory to analyze the data through library research. In this study, the researcher also provides several indicators of desperation and how the characters face his desperation.

2. **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study included as qualitative research which uses library research for collecting the data. The object of this study is the portrayal of desperation as reflected in Jojo Moyes’ *Me Before You* (2012) which analyzed using Existentialism study. The type of this study is text which taken from the novel includes dialogues, narration, quotes, and thoughts of the character. To conduct this study, there are two sources of the data
namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data taken from *Me Before You* (2012) novel by Jojo Moyes, while the secondary data came from other sources which is used for this study such as books, website articles, dictionaries, and any other sources. In collecting the data, there are several steps as follows: 1) Reading *Me Before You* novel, 2) Searching through many media to get much information about the theory and the novel, 3) Identifying the problem statement and find the data, 4) Taking notes for information from both primary and secondary data, 5) Classifying the data, and 6) exposing the issue from the novel by using Existentialism study. The researcher also uses descriptive analysis as the technique of the data analysis. The validity of the data which is used in this study is data source triangulation by Huberman (1994).

3. **RESEARCH FINDING**

3. 1. **Will’s Characteristic from Existentialism Study**

3. 1. 1 Will’s Facticity

Will Traynor has facticity of his life, as he grew up in a rich family and he is also kind of hard worker man, one of his facticity is where he lived in a luxurious and classy house. Another Will’s facticity is when and where he committed his own dead through Dignitas, an organization which helps suicide, in Switzerland.

3. 1. 2 Will’s Freedom of Life

Will makes his own decision for his life; he is such a passionate and perfectionist man. He prefers to do many activities which takes risks and does his job well even he will do anything to get that, and his biggest freedom to choose his own life is the suicide.

3. 1. 3 Will’s Decision Affects The Other

Will’s decision to commit his suicide through Dignitas in Switzerland got many responses from his family and relation. Most of them have refused to accept his decision. Although his family
members refused his decision, Will is still in what he wants because he thinks that his life is not life he wanted anymore.

3. 1. 4 Will’s Authentication and Bad Faith

Will is kind of authentication man. Sartre defines that authentication means that a man who can choose his own decision without getting influenced from any other man. Whereas, bad faith is the vice versa of authentication which means a man who believes that his life (in Being and Nothingness, 2001:68).

3. 1. 5 Will’s Etre En Soi and Etre Pour Soi

Etre pour soi is belonging to Will, which means that he is a man who has consciousness about his life. It is proved by the fact that he is still on his desire to end his life. He does not want to life like that even how hard Louisa tries to change his mind.

3. 2 Indicators of Will’s Desperation

3. 2. 1 Losing Interest in Daily Life

After he has his accident and leave the quadriplegic, Will Traynor begins to lose his life spirits. He is always aloof and closes himself from others even his family. He feels like he lost the purposes of his life he always dreamed of before. He thinks that his paralysis becomes bad thing that makes him unable to do more thing he like before and makes him feel that his life does not have any means anymore.

3. 2. 2 Being Self-Defeating

Will expresses his desperation through various things. One of them was by trying to hurt himself. He tries to make himself like his life will be useless to life like before anymore, whether it is mentally or physically. It is proved by scars on his arms and many side effects pain of his mental problem.

3. 2. 3 Becoming More Emotional

After he got quadriplegic as the effect of his accident, Will turns into different person than he is before. He turns into an
annoying person and always thinks what everyone else does for him is a mockery.

3.2.4 Losing Self-Identity

Will believes that his life has ended since he paralyzed. He does not even want to do or hear all the things he had done before. Worse, he does not want to meet his friends even his ex-girlfriend, Alicia, who left him after seeing his paralyzed. His personal nurse, Nathan, explains that the most important that Louisa should to do for Will was to encourage him and give him spirits. He feels sorry for Will who is becoming more and more depressed day by day.

3.2.5 Lacking Productivity

Will says to Louisa that only things he wants to do now is just sit idly for his time. Even tough, Louisa tries many things to make him realizes that there are still many activities that he can do.

3.3 Depiction of Desperation by Jojo Moyes in Me Before You

Through the novel, Jojo Moyes want the reader to feel how to be people around Will. She also put herself become Will, Will’s parents, or everyone around Will. So, even though Louisa is the main character which is the first third of the novel, she divides the parts of the story into different perspective or view of several characters in the novel. Moyes wants to provide different feeling and dilemma from different character such as Treena, Steven, Camilla, or Nathan, to give more feeling and thinking from those character around Will.

3.4 Discussion

In Me Before You novel, Will’s desperation is started after he got his accident and left paralysis named quadriplegic. Will is kind a passionate and ambitious man. Do many things like travelling around the world or meeting with his business relation is his routines. Until, someday he got a car crash accident that make him become paralysis and left quadriplegic. So, he cannot control his body by himself from the neck down. Will also think that his current condition is the end of
his life, and he does not want to continue his life as the same as before. So, he asked his parents to take him to Dignitas because he feels desperate. Will Traynor’s desperation can be analyzed by using Existentialism study. Therefore, through Existentialism study, the researcher found that Will’s desperation characteristic can be identified using five principles of Existentialism study which consists of facticity, freedom, the other, authentication and bad faith, and etre en soi and etre pour soi.

Using Existentialism perspective, the researcher try to elaborate Will’s characteristic through five principles. Firstly, there are several Will’s facticity which can be found in the novel. His facticity is a choice that cannot be chosen by himself, such as his place (where he is), his past, environment, other people around him, and his death. The facticity itself may be forgotten, manipulated, or it also can be processed, but it cannot be eliminated by human (Hassan, 1992:140). From the novel, the researcher found Will’s facticity which consists of his where he lived, what he have, and when he dead. They are as follows: he is living in a luxurious house; having many friends, girlfriend, and wealth; and he died on thirteenth August in a Dignitas organization in Swiss. Secondly, as Sartre (2002:36) affirmed that man can be something through his own choice. It means he has freedom to give his own meaning. From the novel, his freedom is illustrated by his choice to commit suicide. His freedom to commit suicide affects people around him, which influenced the other people around him. Thirdly, all that human chose can be affected to the others in the end. Like Will’s choice to commit suicide which makes others people give him many reaction. The principle of the other which can be found in the novel is how his family and many people around him tried to prevent him from suicide.

Fourthly, in *Being and Nothingness* (2001:68), Sartre divides human into two namely Authentic and Bad Faith. Authentication means
that a man who can choose his own decision without getting influenced from any other man. While, bad faith is the vice versa of authentication which means a man who believes that his life is under rules of other people. If we come to Will’s life, he is an authentic man who chooses his own decision by himself. Lastly, related to his consciousness of his existence, there are etre en soi and etre pour soi to divide human into two kinds based on his consciousness of his own life. Will’s consciousness included as etre pour soi. It means that, he is kind of conscious-being man who can give meaning of his life existence.

From the novel, the researcher found five indicators of desperation which is depicted by Will Traynor. There are: Losing Interest in Daily Life, Being Self-Defeating, Becoming More Emotional, Losing Self-Identity, and Lacking Productivity. Losing interest in daily life is one of many indicators which are showed by Will to portray his desperation. He does not want to do his daily activities that he had done before, but just doing anything in his wheelchair alone. Will is also being self-defeating which is proved by his scars in his arms and his pain over all his body as the effect of his mental health. His emotional that becomes worse as the reflection of his frustration and anger. Then, losing self-identity is also the indicator of his desperation which appears since he thinks that his life is not the same as he had before. He is also lacking productivity which happens because of his paralysis and losing hope of his life.

The term of desperation is depicted by the author of the novel, Jojo Moyes, through divided part of some character. She wants to make clear about Will’s Traynor existence and his meaning for people around him. She also provides different feeling from different character in the novel to explain and shows how Will’s decision, as his freedom to choose for his own life, affects other people. As the divided part which Moyes provide in the novel, the researcher found that it is purposed to make a portrayal on how the other people’s perspective to face Will’s
situation. It is also to depict Will’s character as authentic man who makes his own decision without influenced by other people.

4 CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher draws the conclusion about the issue which has taken from *Me Before You* novel by Jojo Moyes. Based on the analysis from the previous chapter, the conclusions as follows:

Firstly, the characteristics of Will Traynor’s desperation, a man who suffered quadriplegic after the accident he suffered two years earlier, can be explained by some of the principles of Existentialism theory. The principles are facticity, freedom, the others, authentication and bad faith, and etre en soi and etre pour soi. Will’s facticity described in the novel, such as about Will's luxury and classy lifestyle. He also lives in a luxurious and admirable home, Granta House, with his parents who previously more often do not exist at home. Another facticity was when Will Traynor died, on thirteenth August in a Dignitas organization that helped to commit suicide in Switzerland. He also has freedom that is illustrated by the way he still insists on choosing his way of life that ends with a suicide. In the others principle, the decisions he takes to end his life through dignity affect the people around him. Will is included in the authentication man, a person who has the confidence to make decisions without being influenced by others. In addition, Will belongs to the category of person etre pour soi which means one who has an awareness of his existence even though he still feels lacking.

Secondly, some indicators that describes Will's desperation that is seen from his life after he suffered quadriplegic. Some of the indicators are losing interest in daily life, which can be proved that he looks lazy in doing many things or doing the things he used to do. The second is that he is self-defeating, which is doing things that can harm him mentally or physically as it hurts his body. Becoming more emotional also becomes one of the indicators of his decision. He became an irritable and offended person. After
his accident, he also becomes a different person from before, which means he is losing his identity. Before he was a man who always eager to do many things and try new things, now he becomes a person who likes to be alone and separate from others. Lastly, lacking productivity is one of the indicators, too, which can be seen from how he does not want to do things that can fill his days.

Thirdly, Moyes gets the story inspiration in *Me Before You* from a couple in his family members who need twenty-four-hour care. In addition, Will's character is inspired from the story he read about a rugby player who lost control of himself after an accident and wanted to commit suicide. Through the novel, Jojo Moyes wants to ask reader to feel how to be people around Will. She also put herself become Will, Will's parents, or everyone around Will. So, even though Louisa is the main character which is the first third of the novel, she divides the parts of the story into different perspective or view of several character of the novel. Moyes wants to provide the different feeling and dilemma from different character such as Treena, Steven, Camila, or Nathan.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


