

PESSIMISM IN JOJO MOYES' *ME BEFORE YOU*

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Abstract: *Me Before You* tells about a man named Will Traynor. He is a rich and successful man who loved all aspects of his life, until he lost control of his body due to a motorcycle accident. Things worsen after Will's ex-girlfriend, Alicia, and best friend Rupert reveal that they are getting married. The purpose of this research is to reveal about Pessimism in Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You*. This research is categorized as a qualitative research in which the data are in the form of words. The data collection is categorized as primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the novel itself, and the secondary sources are other books and references that used support this research. The writer uses objective approach to analyze the data. The analysis shows the pessimism of Will as the main character in the novel. Pessimism starts to appear when he suffers a traffic accident that leaves him paralyzed in a wheelchair. He is a rich and successful man who loved all aspects of his life, and suddenly he lost control of his body because of the accident. It makes him being a pessimist.

Keywords: *Pessimism, Novel, Me Before You, Jojo Moyes.*

INTRODUCTION

After facing sadness and suffering, human beings tend to be sensitive (Umboh et al, 2022). An attitude may come as a result of a strong rebellion inside someone's emotions and feelings, that is described with the characteristics of not sure, moody, sad, despair, hopeless, and like being in very bad times. That is pessimism. The word pessimism comes from the Latin word "*pessimus*" which means "*worst*". Thus, the image of life that is shown is bleak and hopeless. According to *Merriam Webster's Dictionary*, Pessimism is an inclination to emphasize

adverse aspects, conditions, and possibilities or to expect the worst possible outcome. Pessimism relates to the way a person thinks in a long period of time, so pessimism is closely related to the character or perspective of a person to a problem or event that occurred in his life. According to (Thacker, 2016), "Pessimism is the night-side of thought, a melodrama of the futility of the brain, a poetry written in the graveyard of philosophy. Pessimism is a lyrical failure of philosophical thinking, each attempt at clear and coherent thought, sullen and submerged in the hidden joy of its own futility. The closest pessimism comes to philosophical argument is the droll and laconic "We'll never make it," or simply: "We're doomed." Every effort doomed to failure, every project doomed to incompleteness, every life doomed to be un-lived, every thought doomed to be unthought."

Pessimism appears in a character in the novel "Me Before You" written by Jojo Moyes. Pauline Sara-Jo Moyes was born on 4 August 1969 in Maidstone, England, the only child of Elizabeth J. McKee, an illustrator, and James C. Moyes, a sculptor. She studied at Royal Holloway, University of London whilst for the Egham and Staines News. She is an English journalist and, since 2002, a romance novelist and screenwriter. She is one of only a few authors to have twice won the Romantic Novel of the Year Award by the Romantic Novelists' Association and has been translated into eleven different languages.

Me Before You tells about a man named Will Traynor. He is a rich and successful man who loved all aspects of his life, until he lost control of his body due to a motorcycle accident. Things worsen after Will's ex-girlfriend, Alicia, and best friend Rupert reveal that they are getting married. Because of all those problems, he decides to ending his life through Dignitas, a Swiss-based assisted suicide organisation. All the problems that happened to Will make him being a pessimist.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research. "Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. The written result of the research contains quotation from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation (Bogdan and Biklen 28)." That means that qualitative research deals more with descriptive form, whether the data and the result fits analysis. (Maru, 2009) states that qualitative method is a method that is wanted in studying a literary work and additionally the maximum appropriate method in reading literary works. So with this clarification this research is going to be descriptive shape, describing all facts wanted.

Data Collection

The instrument of the research is the researcher itself. "Qualitative research has natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument of analysis (Bogdan and Biklen 26)."

In collecting data, the writer classifies the data into two categories:

1. Primary source

The primary source used in this research is the novel itself, in this case *Me Before You*.

2. Secondary source

The secondary source is from other books that explains the study and contains theories concerning with literatures and some source from the internet.

Data Analysis

In doing the study, the writer use objective approach. Objective approach is applied to analyze the data (Maru et al, 2021). "The objective orientation which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyzed it is a self-sufficient entity constituted by its part in their internal relation and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being (Abrams 26)."

The writer chooses the objective approach on consideration that this approach is sufficient in analyzing the data. From the novel itself the writer collects the data, until analyzing and drawing addition from the external source.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pessimism is a form of life choice (Rorintulus, 2018). Pessimism is a choice to see and assess the world in a different way, from another point of view, which is complicated, full of risk, maybe even terrifying. Pessimism may be a necessity of life that is so absurd. Therefore, it can be regarded as a naive honesty (Ibrahim et al, 2021). Life is like this, we can only accept it. Pessimism is a celebration of passiveness and it can be do no good to dwell on what *could*, even what is likely to happen (Bailey, J vii). According to Folens Dictionary, Pessimism is a feeling that things will turn out badly. Pessimism can be interpreted as an attitude of giving up

easily, not being confident, and giving up before fighting. In life sometimes you have to face some challenges. Often a person experiences failure and then tries again until he gets the best result. However, there is disappointment from failure that gives rise to a pessimistic attitude. In this chapter, the writer tries to reveal the pessimism of Will Traynor. Will Traynor is a handsome man, comes from a wealthy family (his family owns a castle), intelligent, has a brilliant career at a relatively young age to become a company CEO, traveler and adventurer who is of course admired by women. But a tragic accident makes his life shrink and turn into 360 degrees. Will suffers from quadriplegia, which is paralysis of the hands, feet, body and pelvic organs caused by spinal cord damage (Potu et al, 2021). As a result, Will has to sit in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, every activity he has to depend on others, not to mention the various illnesses, convulsions, pneumonia, and various infections that he may experience. After two years of medical treatment there was no significant progress. This made him think that his life is useless so he attempted suicide several times.

Will Before Accident

Will Traynor was a person who experienced many adventurous things, he had ambitions in good ways before his accident.

“I can not do those sorts of holidays. I need to be doing something.”

Doing something means that he is a man who never wastes his time not to do anything useful. He makes his life worth in his own way. His adventurous life portrayed by his experience in doing physical things. He used to do some extreme sports such as trekking up mountains and hanging over ravines.

“There was a man bunge 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 a jungle, and him again in the midst of a group of drunken friends.”

“I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro when I hit thirty. That was pretty Incredible.”

Will Traynor enjoyed his life and he had passion in all things he did before the accident. He always do something every day even he is busy with his job and business. He wants his life to be meaningful.

“I worked out what would make me happy, and I worked out what I wanted to do, and I trained myself to do the job that would make those two things happen.”

He was so excited when he thought about his life before the accident. He really loved his life when he could do anything he wanted. He experienced many thing in his life before his accident.

Pessimism-revealing After Accident

Will is a successful bussinessman and has a life full of adventure, until a motorcycle hits him when he is about to get into a taxi. The result leaves him a quadraplegic. In quadraplegic sufferers, they lose all control af their limbs, both hands and feet. Usually in the paralyzed part, they also don't feel any sensation or numb. Nathan, Will's primary physical caregiver, said that Will had a spinal injury that was impossible to heal. No matter how much physiotherapy that had done by Will, nothing seems to have changes. For two years, he endures physioteraphy, uncouncted doctors visits, bouts of pneumonia and constant pain. But nothing changed. His body didn't improve. He could only sit in a wheelchair and could not do much for himself. He loses his home, unable to stay there as it is not wheelchair accessible. He also loses his girlfriend, Alicia, because she is unable to reach Will through his post-paralysis depression and leaves him. He is an adult man, but he cannot do anything by himself. All things that happens to him make him being a pessimist.

“I don't do anything, Miss Clark. I can't do anything any more. I sit. I just about exist.”

The quotation above shows that he is pessimistic. A pessimist thinks there is nothing they can do to make life better. He assumed that whatever he does won't change anything. He became a pessimist after he realizes that he would not recover at all. It made him think that his life is no more worth.

Will's pessimism can also be seen from the fact that he pushed Alicia, his ex-girlfriend, away after the accident. Alicia explained that she tried to stay by Will's

side after his accident, but Will's unwillingness to be helped made it impossible. All the things Will did was just push her away from him. The fact that he is not a man who he was before makes him give up and chooses not to be with Alicia.

"He's so . . . different now. It's like he's determined not to see the good in anything."

This sentence was said by Will's sister, Georgina, the person who knows him, Will's closest person. She knew that Will is not the same person as he was any more. He became a different person after his accident. He was a man who led a good life, a big life. But because of the accident, he could not do the things he loved and it made him became the opposite type of person from he used to.

"Clark, every single place I go to now people look at me like I don't belong."

Will had no self-confidence in front of other people. He assumed that people underrate him because he could not do anything without someone's help and because sitting on a wheelchair made him feel like a weak person. He had a good life before and people saw him as a man who deserved respect from others but after the accident that made him paralyzed, people saw him in a different way.

Through his struggle with his life, he met a girl named Lou Clark. Lou is hired by Will's mother with hope that Lou can bring joy and happiness to Will's life. And it happens. Will is finally be a little cheerful. But at first, Will is so rude to her.

"You thought a little drive would be good for me? A breath of fresh air?"

"Miss Clark, my life is not going to be significantly improved by a drive around Stortfold's country lanes."

The sentences above is about when Lou tried to invite Will to go somewhere out of the house but he didn't want. He was just being rude.

"Let me get this straight. You think a teaspoon of carrots would improve my quality of life?"

But not long after every day they meet, even though Will was so rude to Lou at first, without knowing it they end up fall in love each other. Will started to open up by accepting Louisa's help. Will even let Louisa shave his beard and cut his long hair. They even went to watch music shows, watch horse races, and even went on

vacation in Mauritius. But sadly, all those things could not change Will's decision to end his life. Will remained firm with his decision.

"I can't do this because I can't . . ." he swallowed. "I can't be the man I want to be with you. And that means that this -" he looked up into my face "- this just becomes . . . another reminder of what I am not."

"No, Clark."

"I'm sorry. It's not enough."

"It's not enough for me. This – my world – even with you in it. And believe me, Clark, my whole life has changes for the better since you came. But it's not enough for me. It's not the life I want."

Will felt that all the things after his accident was still not enough for him even it changes better since Louisa came to his life, but it was not the life he wanted. Will loved her, but he didn't want to just look at her every day without doing something. He got that his life could be a good life. He got that with Lou around, perhaps his life could be a very good life. But it's nothing like the life he wanted. Not even close. He didn't want to try and give Lou chance to make his life a good life.

"But it does define me, Clark. You don't know me, not really. You never saw me before this thing. I loved my life, Clark. Really loved it. I loved my job, my travels, the things I was. I loved being a physical person. I like riding my motorbike, hurling myself off buildings. I liked crushing people in business deals. I liked having sex. Lots of sex. I led a *big life*." His voice had lifted now. "I am not designed to exist in this thing – and yet for all intents and purposes it is now the things that defines me. It is the only thing that defines me."

The life before the accident was everything for Will. That made him more pessimist because his heart was still in his old life. He could not cope the fact that he could not do all of those things any more. If only he could move on from his old life, he might be able to live happily with Lou. There were still many beautiful things they could do together, without thinking of Will's flaws. But Will kept his decision and didn't want to give Lou chance.

"It's not a matter of giving you a chance. I've watched you these six months becoming a whole different person, someone who is only just beginning to

see her possibilities. You have no idea how happy that has made me. I don't want you to be tied to me, to my hospital appointments, to the restrictions on my life. I don't want you to miss out on all the things someone else could give you. And selfishly, I don't want you to look at me one day and feel even the tiniest bit of regret or pity that –"

On the other hand, Will was also thinking about Lou, how Lou lived her life if she stayed with Will, what would happen to her life if Lou stayed by his side. He knew Lou's life would be useless if she continued to be with him. He could do nothing, but he knew Lou could still do a lot without him. He could no longer walk, but Lou could still walk even run to chase her dreams. Will didn't want just because of him, Lou gave up her dreams.

"You don't know that, Clark. You have no idea how this would play out. You have no idea how you're going to feel even six months from now. And I don't want to look at you every day, to see you naked, to watch you wandering around the annexe in your crazy dresses and not . . . not be able to do what I want with you. Oh, Clark, if you had any idea what I want to do with you right now. And I . . . I can't live with that knowledge. I can't. It's not who I am. I can't be the kind of man who just . . . *accepts.*"

When we love someone, we definitely want to do something for them, so did Will. He wanted to do something for Lou, but he could not. He could not accept a life that could only sitting, relying on someone else, and doing nothing. He could not accept the fact that he was paralyzed and his situation if he lived with Lou and relied on her.

"I need to end it here. No more chair. No more pneumonia. No more burning limbs. No more pain and tiredness and waking up every morning already wishing it was over."

"I don't want to be in pain any more, or trapped in this thing, or dependent on everyone, or afraid."

The quotation above showed that Will was enough with all his suffering. He wanted to be free from all of it. He gave up his life because he knew he would never be better, and if he stayed, it would be a never-ending suffering.

"Nothing was ever going to change my mind."

By seeing the quotation above, we could understand, whoever or whatever it is would not be able to change Will's decision to end his life, whether his family, or

the woman he loved. He knew, it was the only big thing that he could do in his life. He wanted a better life, but he didn't want to live with such a paralyzed condition. He felt that there's nothing he could do with his life, so he decided to ending his life through Dignitas, a Swiss-based assisted suicide organisation.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

After analyzing the novel of Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You*, the writer concludes that the pessimism of Will starts to appear when the accident happens. He is a rich and successful man who loved all aspects of his life, until he lost control of his body due to a motorcycle accident. Will suffers from quadriplegia, which is paralysis of the hands, feet, body and pelvic organs caused by spinal cord damage. As a result, Will has to sit in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, every activity he has to depend on others, not to mention the various illnesses, convulsions, pneumonia, and various infections that he may experience. After two years of medical treatment there was no significant progress. And because of that, he becomes a pessimist, who always thinks that his life won't get better. He becomes a pessimist after he realizes that he will not recover at all. It makes him think that his life is no more worth, so he attempted suicide several times.

At first, when the writer read the novel, the writer thinks that Will will change his mind to end his life because he met Lou. But he doesn't. Lou's presence is not enough to bring back his desire to life. In the end, Will still committed suicide through Dignitas, a Swiss-based assisted suicide organisation, and leaves Lou with the funds to live up to her potential.

1. Studying and reading literary works especially novel is so important because we can deepen our understanding of life and we can get valuable lesson from it.
2. By analyzing the pessimism in *Me Before You* the writer realizes to pay more attention to the positive things in life.

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