

Toxic Masculinity Represented in Collen Hoover's *It Ends With Us* (2016)

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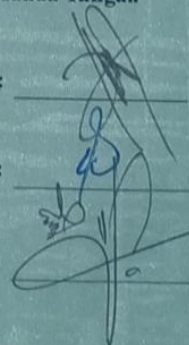
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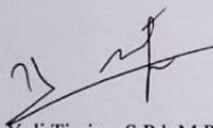
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ABSTRACT

Waruwu, Arni Kristin (2023). **Toxic Masculinity Represented in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us* (2016)**. Padang: English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang

This research delves into the theme of toxic masculinity as portrayed in Colleen Hoover's novel, *"It Ends with Us"*. Toxic masculinity is one of a theme which discussed in literary works. Toxic masculinity refers to harmful social norms and expectations that promote traditional gender roles that associated with how man should behave to be called as being a real man. This research aims to find out the aspects that caused the male characters named Ryle Kincaid and Andrew Bloom in the novel *It Ends With Us* by Colleen Hoover could be toxic by using the patriarchy theory of Johnson, the forms of toxic masculinity that represented by these male characters in this novel by using the toxic masculinity theory of Kupers, and how the woman character named Lily Bloom in this novel responses towards toxic masculinity by using existentialist feminism by Simon de Beauvoir. The results of this research found that the aspect that influenced the male characters in this novel to be toxic is the traditional gender roles. Then this research also shows the forms of toxic masculinity that can be found in this novel such as misogyny, domination and physical violence. Last, the research depicts the woman resistance as the responses towards toxic masculinity by showing intellectual, being herself and breaking through the toxic cycle.

Keywords: *Toxic Masculinity, Feminist Literary Theory, Traditional Gender Roles*

ABSTRAK

Waruwu, Arni Kristin (2023). **Toxic Masculinity Represented in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us* (2016)**. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Padang

Penelitian ini menggali tema toksik maskulinitas yang digambarkan dalam novel Colleen Hoover, *"It Ends with Us"*. Toksik maskulinitas adalah salah satu tema yang dibahas dalam karya sastra. Toksik maskulinitas merujuk kepada norma-norma sosial dan ekspektasi yang merugikan yang mempromosikan peran gender tradisional yang berkaitan dengan bagaimana seorang laki-laki seharusnya berperilaku agar dianggap sebagai seorang laki-laki sejati. Dalam novel tersebut, karakter-karakter laki-laki menunjukkan ciri-ciri toksik maskulinitas yang merugikan baik perempuan maupun laki-laki. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan menerapkan teori sastra feminis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari tahu apa saja aspek-aspek yang menyebabkan karakter-karakter laki-laki Ryle Kincaid dan Andrew Bloom dalam novel *"It Ends With Us"* karya Colleen Hoover bisa menjadi toksik menggunakan teori patriarki oleh Johnson, seperti apa bentuk-bentuk toksik maskulinitas yang diwakili oleh karakter laki-laki tersebut dalam novel ini menggunakan teori toksik maskulinitas oleh Kupers, dan bagaimana karakter perempuan Lily Bloom dalam novel ini merespons toksik maskulinitas tersebut menggunakan teori feminisme eksistensial oleh Simon de Beauvoir. Hasil dari penelitian ini menemukan bahwa aspek yang memengaruhi karakter-karakter laki-laki dalam novel ini menjadi toksik adalah peran gender tradisional. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini juga menunjukkan toksik maskulinitas yang dapat ditemukan dalam novel ini, yaitu misogini, dominasi, dan kekerasan fisik. Terakhir, penelitian ini menggambarkan perlawanan perempuan sebagai respons terhadap toksik maskulinitas dengan menunjukkan kecerdasan, menjadi dirinya sendiri, dan melampaui lingkaran toksik.

Kata kunci: Toksik Maskulinitas, Teori Sastra Feminis, Peran Gender Traditional

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Traditional gender roles is the societal expectations for individual based on their gender, and this is a form of gender stereotype that differentiate of how men and women should behave. Wienclaw (2011:33) describes gender roles as the ways in which men and women behave in accordance with societal norms. Many individuals struggle to comprehend that gender is continuously shaped through human interactions and social existence. Eisenclas (2013) stated that gender roles are described as society's shared beliefs that apply to individuals based on their socially identified gender. Traditional gender roles often emphasize certain aspects of masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness, stoicism, and the provider role (Barker, 2004). These roles have historically placed men in positions of authority and responsibility, while expecting them to suppress emotions and avoid behaviors perceived as feminine, and they are required to fullfil the societal expectation to be call as the real man.

Masculinity refers to the characteristics, behaviors, and qualities traditionally associated with being a man or considered cultururally and socially masculine. According to Connell (1995), masculinity refers to the role that men and women play in gender dynamics and the effects that such practices have on one another's physical

characteristics, personalities, and cultural customs. Male and female individuals can both exhibit masculine behaviors, still according to Connell (1995) masculinity is a social construct; its definition changing according to place and time. Connell's examination of masculinity as hegemonic or even called as hegemonic masculinity offers a conceptual framework that takes into account societal structures and hierarchical mechanisms responsible for empowering men in Western society. This framework acknowledges the significant role played by historical processes in the development of hegemonic masculinity, which has evolved over the years through shifting stereotypes, definitions, and perceptions of what it means to be masculine. Males must be strong, powerful, and competent according to the western cultural definition of masculinity and traditional gender roles (Ricciardelli 2012). Males appear to have acted more aggressively than females throughout history, and their violent acts have been documented more frequently because they were motivated by a desire to maintain their reputation (Eibach 2016). In this instance, it is clear that men are using violence as a means of maintaining their manliness. So, it can lead men to be included on the term of toxic masculinity. In addition, Blair (2007) stated that masculinity refers to a set of culture expectations about how males should behave, think, and seem. Thus, Toxic masculinity refers to the negative and harmful aspects of this dominant form of masculinity.

Toxic masculinity is one of a theme which discussed in literary works. Toxic masculinity refers to harmful social norms and expectations that promote traditional

gender roles that associated with how man should behave to be called as being a real man. It is usually used to describe practices related to gender inequality, male dominance, and control (Johnson, 2005) that will be used to dissect the reason of why man could turn to be toxic. This kind of phenomenon is most likely to happen in a society that adopts a patriarchal system. Toxic masculinity is often associated with rigid gender roles and the suppression of vulnerable emotions, which can have detrimental effects on both men themselves and those around them. The concept of toxic masculinity has been increasingly recognized in recent years. It describes a prevalent expression of masculinity in which men employ dominance, aggression, and authority to establish their strength and supremacy, as a result, men who live in culture of violence are demanded to perform that they have the capability to become violent (Patterson in Maghfiroh: 2017). According to Terry A. Kupers (2005: 714), he defines the phrase of "*toxic masculinity*" as the set of socially regressive male characteristics that support homophobia, misogyny, violence, subjection of women, and dominance, and in this study the researcher limit 3 prominent kinds of toxic masculinity that can be found in this *It Ends With Us*, such as Misogyny, domination and Violence. Also, this study shows the form of woman resistance by using existentialist feminism by Simon de Beauvoir.

The reality of such as toxic masculinity that appears in society also can be reflected in the literature work such as novel, and for doing this study the researcher chose the novel entitled *It Ends With Us* (2016) by Collen Hoover to be the

instrument of the research to dissect the term of toxic masculinity. The novel *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover delves the term of toxic masculinity. This novel is set in contemporary America where societal expectations around gender roles can still perpetuate harmful beliefs and practices related to masculinity. This novel shows how social expectations affect the male characters to be toxic. One of the central characters representing toxic masculinity in the novel is Ryle Kincaid. At first glance, Ryle appears to embody the qualities typically associated with masculinity. He is confident, successful, and physically attractive. He exudes a strong and assertive personality, which can be amazed some people. He is also emotionally guarded and hesitant to fully open up about his past and vulnerabilities, which can be interpreted as the typical stoicism. However, as the story unfolds, it becomes evident that Ryle's masculinity is intertwined with toxic traits. The other male character that reflects the behavior of toxic masculinity is Lily's father. He also plays a significant role in highlighting the impact of toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity is one of a theme which discussed in literary works. Toxic masculinity refers to harmful social norms and expectations that promote traditional gender roles that associated with how man should behave to be called as being a real man. It is usually used to describe practices related to gender inequality, domination, and control (Johnson, 2005).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in discussing about the theme of toxic masculinity. The researcher uses the feminist literary approach to analyse the caused man in this novel to be toxic, and to see the woman

resistance towards toxic masculinity from the lense of feminist literature by using existentialist feminism by Simon de Beauvoir. Beginning from a position that sees masculinity as socially constructed idea in patriarchal culture (Connel, 1995), this study works through the idea that hegemonic masculinity under patriarchy can turn toxic. There is a connection between toxic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity because toxic masculinity deviates from hegemonic masculinity aspects that are destructive. The forms of toxic masculinity are found in this novel, these include what the form of toxic masculinity that is found destructive to woman even man. There are many toxic masculinity traits that can be found in the society and harmful to others. However, the writer limits three traits that are found in the novel. The most prominent traits that can be found in the novel are domination, misogyny and physical violence based on Terry A Kupers's theory.

1.2 Focus of the Problem

The focuses of the problem is to see what are the aspects that caused the male characters in the novel *It Ends With Us* by Collen Hoover could be toxic, what are the forms of toxic masculinity that represented by the male character in this novel that harmful both to the woman and man, and how does the female character in this novel responses towards toxic masculinity.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the background that is stated, the analysis helped by three questions below:

1. What aspect that caused the male characters in this novel to be toxic?
2. What are the forms of toxic masculinity that represented by the male characters in this novel?
3. How does the female character in this novel responses towards toxic masculinity?

1.4 Purpose of Research

The purpose of the research is concentrated on examining the forms of toxic masculinity, what aspect that caused the male characters in the novel *It Ends with Us* to be toxic, and how does the female character in this novel responses towards toxic masculinity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Review of Related Theories

2.1.1 Feminist Literature Theory

Before discussing the theory of feminism, the reason why this theory is used in this research is because the origin of toxic masculinity comes from the term of masculinity that is actually the part of the ideology of patriarchy, while feminism is a form of rejection of the ideology of patriarchy. So, it can be concluded that to see how this toxic masculinity works requires a feminist point of view. According to Wallstonecraft, in her book *The Right of Woman* in 1972 that retrieved from *Princeton Alumni Weekly* by Susan (2022), she argues that feminism is a movement of women's emancipation, the movement loudly voices about improving women's position and rejecting the differences in degrees between men and women. So, it can be concluded that feminism is organized activities that fight for the rights and interests of women. According to Sugihastuti et.al (2002:61), feminism is a movement primarily led by women, aimed at achieving self-determination and autonomy. The central of this movement is to find the fundamental right of women to independently make choices regarding their own bodies and reproductive functions, which forms the cornerstone of their fundamental rights to equality, personal privacy, and bodily integrity. This statement also supported by the idea of Hook in Biana's journal (2020) that says feminism started off as a movement to end sexist oppression,