

The Masculinity and Its Characteristics Depicted by Dawson Cole as the Main Character in *The Best of Me* Novel

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Abstract

This study aims to analyzing the characterization of Dawson Cole and to find out the characteristics of masculinity through Dawson Cole's portrayal. This study focuses on the main character Dawson Cole who has the characteristics of masculinity. It explaining and analyzing the characterization of Dawson Cole using Edward Jones's characterization theory and Dawson Cole's characteristics of masculinity using Janet Saltzman Chafetz's concept. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. This study finds the masculinity and its characteristics of the main character Dawson Cole. Based on the references used in this study, Dawson's characterization could be found in five ways, they are. characterization through appearance, characterization through dialogue, characterization through external action, characterization through internal action, and characterization through the reaction of other characters. Dawson also has seven masculinity characteristics, they are: physical, a function of the man, sexually aggressive, emotion, intelligence, interpersonal, and other personal.

Keywords: *characterization; gender roles; masculinity characteristics*

INTRODUCTION

Gender roles are a set of behaviors that are expected in a society carried out by women and men. Gender roles also come from values and beliefs in a society. The definition of gender roles is, "the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society's values and beliefs about gender" (Blackstone, 2003). Gender role is a concept of social relations that distinguishes between the roles of man and woman. According to Zahro (2014), a cultural concept which includes distinction in terms of role, behavior, and emotional characteristic between men and women in society called as gender role. From both definitions, it can be concluded that gender roles come from cultural backgrounds of society.

Cultural background in a society greatly affects individuals and groups, one of which is the patriarchal system. According to Sedayu (2018), the culture which gives men ultimate authority over women called as a patriarchal system". The patriarchal system generally considers men more than women. This is related to the concepts of masculinity which are also formed by the cultural background in society. Masculinity itself is closely related to men. Based on Merdeka& Kumoro (2018), a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles that are generally associated with boys and men called as masculinity.

Meanwhile, the term characterization is very familiar in literature because it often appears and is used in work fiction. According to Bannet and Royle (2004), the definition of characterization is, "the process of authors used to develop character and create images of the characters for the audience". It means that characterization is the process used by the author in developing and building the characters in a story so that the nature of the characters can be known.

The existence of characterization helps readers to find out in-depth about the characters in a story so that they know the characteristics of a character and can also distinguish which are the main characters and supporting characters. Furthermore, Edward Jones (1968) in his theory mentioned that characterization is "the depiction of clear images of a person. Characterization, by this definition, means the real description of the characters participating in the story through their actions". Through the actions of a character, the characterization of a person can be described clearly. It can be concluded that characterization is the author's way of giving the characteristics that exist in the character in a story.

Based on Edward H. Jones who is a researcher from New York in his book, there are five ways to analyze characterization, as follows:

1. Characterization through appearance
First is characterization through appearance. It deals with physical appearances, such as clothing, physical body, and tendency (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).
2. Characterization through dialogue
Second is characterization through dialogue. It stares at the way the character projects the speaking, be it in the accent, grammar, or catchphrase. It reveals their social and economic backgrounds, as well as their educational background (think and feel) (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).
3. Characterization through external action
Third is characterization through external action. The external action of a character can reflect his or her personality without being clouded by the appearance (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).
4. Characterization through internal action
Fourth is characterization through internal action. It reveals a character by the way they feel and thinks about themselves, whether it is about their dream, fear, emotion, secret, or aspiration (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).
5. Characterization through the reaction of other characters
Last is characterization through the reaction of other characters. It projects other characters to react towards a character (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).

According to Janet Saltzman Chafetz who is a researcher from Australia in her book about contemporary American gender role stereotypes there are seven characteristics of masculinity, as follows:

1. Physical
The physical area of Chafetz's concept of masculinity refers to the physical image of men. Men with muscular bodies are considered strong, athletic, and energetic. They are also seen as powerful and brave (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).
2. Function
The function of the man in Chafetz's concept of masculinity refers to the contribution of a man to his family or environment. Men who can provide for their family are considered as masculine (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).
Furthermore, Adynugraha also stated that "there are two aspects that belong to functional characteristics of being masculine: breadwinner and provider" (Adynugraha, 2019).
3. Sexuall aggressive

Sexual aggressive refers to men pursuing their love interests and accepting their single status at the same time (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018)

4. Emotion

There are three aspects that belong to emotional characteristics of being masculine: unemotional, stoic, and perception of boys do not cry (Adynugraha, 2019). Furthermore, Amani also stated that "men should stabilize their emotions when they are facing problems" (Amani, 2014).

5. Intelligence

The intelligence area, according to Chafetz, refers to the way men think of a solution to a problem. Men are expected to be logical and objective to solve a problem (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018). Furthermore, Amani also stated that "intellectual is connected with a person's powers of reasoning. This belongs to Janet's concept of"; intellectual logical thinking, intelligence, and practice" (Amani, 2014).

6. Interpersonal

Based on their interpersonal, men usually have leadership, more dominating than women, disciplinarian, more independent, free, individual, and responsibility (Amani, 2014).

7. Other personal

The characteristics in this area are aggressive, success-oriented, ambitious, proud, egotistical, confident, trustworthy, decisive, competitive, and adventurous. Men who have one or more are considered masculine (Merdeka& Kumoro, 2018).

There were some articles discussing the issue of masculinity. Kumoro in his research stated that masculinity is a gender characteristic that describes the traditional value of men's attitude or behavior accepted by the society" (p.109). Furthermore, a study conducted by Amani also stated that masculinity is the result of the perspective and beliefs of the society, which causes the basic standards of masculinity to have differences from one place to another. For example, in Indonesia, especially in Javanese culture, a man is considered masculine if he can fulfill his basic needs, such as having a house, having a wife, having a vehicle, etc. Meanwhile, Sulistia (2016) defined masculinity as "a worthy and important thing since masculinity is a means to differentiate male and female. Masculinity is a shifting concept time by time". Masculinity is passed down from generation to generation or time by time, it causes masculinity is not a biological construction that is owned by men since birth. Therefore, being born as a man does not immediately make someone masculine but masculine comes from the perspective and beliefs of the society.

The focus of this research was to find out the characterization of Dawson Cole using Edward Jones's characterization theory and Dawson Cole's characteristics portrayed which represent the masculinity using Janet Saltzman Chafetz's concept. After close reading some references, the findings of this research concludes that there is a close relationship between characterization and masculinity, because discussing characterization can help define the characteristics of masculinity in the main character. The Best of Me novel was chosen as the object of the research because the story shows the characteristics of a man in depth. It means that the male character has masculine characteristics. Nowadays in real life there are a lot of men, who have the characteristics of men in general, but there are also men who have characteristics like women.

METHOD

This research used the descriptive-qualitative research type as the method, it means that the data collection process was carried out qualitatively while the reporting was carried out descriptively. Besides that, qualitative research used text as the main data source. This is following existing references based on Miles and Huberman the definition of qualitative data is, "the data that is

usually in the form of words rather than numbers. The qualitative data included in rich descriptions and explanations of processes in the context of words, sentences, utterances, and dialogues" (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

This study had four steps in collecting the data. Those were reading the novel, the next one was identifying the data, after that classifying the data, and the last one was reducing the data. There were two types of data in this study, the first one was called primary data, it was gained from *The Best of Me* novel by by Nicholas Sparks. This novel had been published in 2011 by Grand Central Group and includes 318 pages. The second type was secondary data, the secondary data in this study includes a range of scholarly writing related to characterization and masculinity from journals and previous studies.

The final step of this study was analyzing the data. The type of data used in this research is descriptive analysis data. In this descriptive analysis data, the process carried out includes references, theories, and approaches. The approach is to explain, analyze, and interpret all the existing data in the form of a description. While the supported data reported in the appendices and the results of the analysis are reported in finding and discussions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In finding and discussions focuses on the characterization analysis of Dawson Cole in *The Best of Me* novel using Edward Jones's characterization theory and Dawson Cole's characteristics portrayed which represent the masculinity concept using Janet Saltzman Chafetz's concept.

Characterization of Dawson Cole in *The Best of Me* Novel

Characterization through appearance

The first one is characterization through appearance. It deals with physical appearances, such as clothing, physical body, and tendency. In the novel, two monologues relate to characterization through appearance. In the novel, it relates to the monologues below:

His sand-collared shirt was tucked casually into faded jeans, outlining his still-angular hips and wide shoulders. His smile was the same, but he wore his dark hair longer than he had as a teenager, and she noticed a wash of grey at his temples. His dark eyes were as striking as she remembered (Sparks, 2010).

That was when he'd always been most relaxed, and she sensed that feeling in him again as he shifted from one gear to the next, the muscles of his forearm bunching and Relaxing (Sparks, 2010).

The two monologues above tell about Dawson's physical appearance such as physical body and clothing. This is included in characterization through appearance because it deals with physical appearances, such as clothing, physical body. In this case, Dawson is a handsome man, he has long thin black hair, brownish skin, dark eyes, still-angular hips, wide shoulders and he also has muscles in his arms. It means that he is a strong man. While about the clothing, Dawson likes to wear casual clothes such as sand-colored shirts tucked casually into faded jeans and black pants and a crisp white shirt with the jacket. It means that he is a simple person in the style of his clothes.

Characterization through dialogue

The second one is characterization through dialogue. Characterization through dialogue relates to how the character speaks which can be seen from the accent or grammar that can define the economic background or educational background of the character. In the novel, it relates to the dialogue below:

Amanda. "We'll move in together,"

Dawson. "Mere?" lemme know"

Amanda. "Here? In the garage?"

Dawson: "I dunno. We'll figure it out. You needa gonna college, you should know everyone wanna go to college, as well as me"

Amanda. "I don't care about college,"

Dawson: "I care about you and that's why I can't take this from you," Amanda. "You ain't taking anything from me. It's my parents."

Dawson. "It's because of me, and we both know that. If you love someone, you're supposta let them go, Innit?"

Amanda. "We Hafta find a way to make it work. I can get a job as a waitress or whatever, and we can rent a place."

Dawson. "How? you think your dad is gonna stop what he's doing?" Amanda. "C'mon we can move somewhere else."

Dawson. "Where? With what? I have nothing. Don't you understand that? I'm just trying to be realistic. This is your life we're talking about and I can't be part of it anymore."

Amanda: "Mat are you saying?"

Dawson. "I'm saying your parents are right. Go home, get outta here! It's over, okay? (Sparks, 2010).

In the dialogue above, Dawson has an American English accent because he lives in New Orleans, Louisiana USA, and spends most of his time there. When he speaks, he abbreviates some words such as well, that's, can't, it's, doesn't, I'm, we're. He also shortens the words such as dunno, needa, gonna, wanna, supposta, innit, outta. This is included in Characterization through dialogue because it deals with the way the character projects the speaking, be it the accent, grammar, or catchphrase that can define his social and economic backgrounds, as well as their educational background. In this case, the sentence "you should know everyone wanna go to college, as well as me" revealed that his educational background, which is Dawson, was an educated person because he wanted to go to college. While the sentence "I have nothing" revealed that his economic background, which is Dawson, came from a family with lower middle economic background.

Characterization through external action

The third one is characterization through external action. Characterization through external action relates to the personality of the characters like a smart, responsible, decisive, brave, dominant person, stoic, aggressive etc. In the novel, it relates to the dialogue below:

Dawson: "No," he answered, surprising her. He slipped his arm around her. "Not at all. My would I be upset?" He leaned over then, kissing her tenderly before slowly drawing back. (Sparks, 2010).

The dialogues above tell about Dawson's personality. This is included in characterization through external action because the external action of a character can reflect his or her personality. In this case, that Dawson slipped his arm around Amanda, leaned over then kissing her it means that he is a more aggressive than Amanda.

Characterization through internal action

The fourth one is characterization through internal action. Characterization through internal action relates to thoughts and feelings of the characters about their dream, fear, emotion, secret, etc. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

Instead of answering, he forced himself to turn away and walk toward the garage. He knew that if he glanced at her he'd change his mind, and he couldn't do that to her. He wouldn't do that to her. He ducked under the open hood of the fastback, refusing to let

her see his tears. When she finally left, Dawson slid to the dusty concrete floor next to his car, remaining there for hours, until Tuck finally came out and took a seat beside him (Sparks, 2010)

The monologue tells about Dawson's sadness when breaking up with Amanda. This is included in characterization through internal action because it reveals a character by the way they feel and thinks about fear. In this case, Dawson feels sad because break up with Amanda, but on the other hand, he must remain strong in front of Amanda and cover up his sadness. This indicates that Dawson is a strong person because he can cover his sadness in front of people that he loves. So, according to characterization through internal action, it can be concluded that Dawson is a strong person.

Characterization through the reaction of other characters

The last one is characterization through the reaction of other characters. Characterization through the reaction of other characters relates to the reaction or assessment of other characters against a character. In the novel, it relates to the dialogue below:

Tuck: "Thing was,- Dawson was a lot smarter than the meth-head tweakers Ted usually dealt with." (Sparks, 2010).

The dialogue tells about Tuck who said that Dawson is much smarter than his 2 brothers, this is included in characterization through reaction of other characters because It projects other characters' reactions towards a character. In this case, based on Tuck, Dawson is much smarter than his 2 brothers, it means that Dawson is an intelligent person based on Tuck.

Masculinity of Dawson Cole in The Best of Me novel

Physical

The first one is physical. Physical refers to the physical form of a man's body which is characterized by muscles. Muscular men will be considered strong. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

He put on ten pounds of muscle before turning thirteen, and another twenty by fourteen (Sparks, 2010).

The monologue tells that Dawson had 10 pounds of muscle before 13 years old and 10 pounds more at the age of 14. Dawson's characteristic is included in physical characteristics of masculinity because physical refers to the physical appearance of a muscular man who is considered masculine, while Dawson at the age of 14 already has 20 pounds of muscles which indicates that he is strong.

Function

The second one is function. Function refers to the role of a man to his family and environment, including breadwinner and provider. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

That's all he'd wanted since the night of the accident, and it was the reason he'd been sending checks monthly for the past two decades, almost always through anonymous offshore bank accounts (Sparks, 2010)

The monologue tells that Dawson sends a check which is money to the Bonner family every month. Dawson's action is included in the function characteristic of masculinity because function refers to the contribution of a man to his family or environment and provide for their family. Dawson's action is one of his contributions with the closest person by sending money every month to the Bonner family and it means that Dawson also provides for the Bonner family.

Sexual aggressive

The third one is sexually aggressive. Sexual aggressive refers to a man who accepts the status of single, a man who is free to choose a partner, and a man who has more sexual experience. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

His lips grazed her neck first, then gently brushed her cheek, and though she heard a faraway warning echo, she strained toward the butterfly touch. They kissed then, first hesitantly, then more passionately, making up for a lifetime apart (Sparks, 2010).

The monologue tells when Dawson and Amanda kissed. Dawson's action is included in the sexual aggressive characteristic of masculinity because sexual aggressive refers to men who are expected to be more aggressive and have more sexual experience than women. In this case Dawson's action when his lips grazed Amanda's neck first and gently brushed her cheek then they kissed, shows that Dawson is more aggressive than Amanda and because Dawson started it first that means he has more sexual experience than Amanda.

Emotion

The fourth one is emotion. Emotion refers to men who are unemotional, stoic, and men who can stabilize their emotions. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

*He didn't, however, follow in the family business and grew more resolute that he never would. Over time, **he learned that the more he screamed, the more his father beat him, so he kept his mouth shut** (Sparks, 2010).*

The monologue tells that Dawson chose to remain silent and shut his mouth when his father beat him because he knew if he rebelled then his father would not stop beating him. This is included in emotion characteristic of masculinity because emotion refers to men who should stabilize their emotion when they are facing problems. In this case it can be concluded that Dawson can stabilize his emotions because he chooses to remain silent and closes his mouth. It means that Dawson is a person who can stabilize his emotions.

Intelligence

The fifth one is intelligence. Intelligence refers to a man who has logical thinking, objective thinking in solving a problem, and an intelligent man. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

*One of his teachers mentioned to a drinking buddy of his dad's that he was **the best student in his class**, aunts and uncles began to notice that he alone among the cousins was staying within the bounds of the law (Sparks, 2010).*

The monologue tells about his teacher's statement that Dawson is the best student in his class which means that he is a smart or intelligent student. This is included in the Intelligence characteristic of masculinity because Intelligence refers to man must be intelligence. In this case it can be concluded that Dawson is an intelligent person based on what his teacher said that he is the best student in the class.

Interpersonal

The sixth one is interpersonal. Interpersonal refers to men who are independent, dominant, leading, disciplined, individualistic, free, demanding and men who are responsible. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

*That's all he'd wanted since the night of the accident, and it was the reason he'd been sending checks monthly for the past two decades, almost always through anonymous offshore bank accounts. **He was, after all, responsible for the greatest loss their family had experienced**, and as he ran the quiet streets he knew he was willing to do whatever **he could to make amends** (Sparks, 2010).*

The monologue tells that Dawson hit Dr. Bonner while he was driving a truck. Dr. Bonner died because of that accident. It makes the Bonner family live in poverty. Because of this Dawson felt guilty and finally he became responsible by sending a check every month to the Bonner family. Dawson's action is included in the Interpersonal characteristic of masculinity because Interpersonal refers to man must be responsible in any case. In this case it can be concluded that Dawson is a responsible person because he doesn't just run away from the problems, he has created to make Dr. Bonner died but he was held responsible for his actions by sending a check every month to the Bonner family. It means that Dawson is a responsible person.

Other Personal

The last one is personal. Other personal refers to men who are aggressive, success-oriented, ambitious, proud, egotistical, confident, trustworthy, decisive, competitive, and adventurous. In the novel, it relates to the monologue below:

*He also called some of Dawson's prior employers in Louisiana, to verify that his character was sound and **trustworthy** (Sparks, 2010).*

The monologue tells when Mogan Tanner (a lawyer) ask to Dawson's prior employers in Louisiana about Dawson's personality. Then he answers that Dawson is a trustworthy person. Dawson's personality is included in other personal characteristics of masculinity because other personal referencing to man must be trustworthy. While Dawson is a trustworthy person.

CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussion in, having analyzed from Dawson Cole as the main character in The Best of Me Novel were divided into two results, the first one is Dawson Cole's characterization portrayed using Edward Jones's characterization theory. Then the second one is the characteristics of masculinity through Dawson Cole's portrayal using Janet Saltzman's concept of masculinity.

Related to characterization, there are five ways to analyze the characterization of Dawson Cole. The first one is characterization through appearance, Dawson is a handsome, strong man and simple person in the style of clothing. The second one is characterization through dialogue, Dawson has an American English accent because he lives in New Orleans. Dawson was also an educated person and came from a family with lower middle economic background. The third one is characterization through external action, Dawson has a lot of personalities such as a more aggressive, responsible, brave, or dominant person, an unemotional and confident person. The fourth one is characterization through internal action, Dawson is a strong person because he can cover his sadness in front of people that he loves. The last one is characterization through the reaction of other characters, Dawson is an intelligent and brave person based on Tuck and Dawson is a breadwinner based on Amanda.

While related to masculinity, there are 7 characteristics of masculinity in Dawson Cole. The first one is physical, Dawson has muscles that indicate that he is strong, powerful, and brave.

The second one is a function, Dawson is a breadwinner and provider. The third one is sexually aggressive, Dawson is more aggressive than Amanda, Dawson has the freedom to choose a partner, and he also accepts his single status. The fourth one is emotion, Dawson is an unemotional, stoic person and can stabilize his emotions. The fifth one is intelligence, Dawson is an intelligent person and thinks logically in solving the problem. The sixth one is interpersonal, Dawson is a responsible person, independent person, and dominant person. The last one is other personal, Dawson is a trustworthy person and confident person.

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