

DEUTRAGONIST'S EGOISM IN JOJO MOYES' NOVEL *ME BEFORE YOU*

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Abstract

This study is to explore the deuteragonist's egoism in Jojo Moyes Novel *Me Before You*. The study focuses on the accidental meeting between Will and Louisa which makes them fall in love but they do not end up together. Their love does not make Will egoistic to go away and not to change his decision to end his life. It takes an analysis on psychological egoism and ethical egoism. Additionally, the analysis is concerned with the two characteristics of deuteragonist's egoism before and after the accident. This study used a qualitative method to find evidence from the data identified from the novel. The analysis is done by classifying the data related to the research problem. The results of this study indicate that Will's egoism cannot be imitated, and it is not accepted in an environment such as committing suicide. The obstacles and struggles of the second character are found to fulfill his needs which are also related to the love story in the novel.

Keywords: deuteragonist, egoism, psychological, ethical egoism, rational egoism, love story

1. Introduction

Me Before You is a novel by British writer Jojo Moyes. This novel was first published on January 5, 2012 in England. *Me Before You* (2012) novel was inspired by the author's true story, Jojo Moyes. She was inspired by a couple of her own family members who needed a full 24-hours care. In addition, she also gets inspired from a radio news reporting a young sport man who has been left quadriplegic and he decides to commit suicide by Dignitas. Then, she makes these two things as basic ideas for making *Me Before You*. She says that she wants to write a story about how a man who does not know compromise and makes decisions that will not be approved by others around him, and puts him in the position of those around the man who want to change his decision.

The story is centered on a 35 year old man, Will Taynor, a wealthy and successful person whose life has changed since the accident. He is diagnosed with paralysis by a doctor because of this the accident he suffers. He loses control of his body. Then he becomes irritable and bad-tempered. Then he becomes irritable and grumpy man. One day, a girl who becomes his nurse two years later, changes his life becoming brighter and he regenerates his spirit. She is a 26 year old girl named Louisa Clark who lives with her family. She has lost her job in cafe. She feels she has little expertise. She is always over shadowed by her sister, Treena, a single mother who is

quite shrewd and passionate. Finally, Louisa goes to the Job Center and is offered a job to care for the disabled man.

Then, Louisa knows the fact that Will plans to end his life by enrolling himself into a suicide organization in Switzerland. She and Will's ex-girlfriend, Alicia, tries to prevent Will's suicide plan. Louisa tries many ways to encourage Will again. She takes Will out to many places, even invites him to her birthday party, and even Louisa breaks up with Patrick, his lover, who has been in relationship with her in the last few years. Will also encourages Louisa to be passionate and ambitious for her life. However, Will remains to commit his suicide. His decision to end his life by suicide is based on desperation of his life.

The reason why Deutragonist's egoism in this study is chosen is because this novel contains many moral lessons about life. The novel has two very different characters. Louisa is a cheerful girl but has no ambition for her life; while, Will is a passionate person who loves his life so much. He gives up life because of an accident that makes him lose all aspects of life. The accident requires him to do everything in a wheel chair.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Egoism

According to Atkinson (2010: 30), the egoism has an over whelming sense of the centrality of the 'Me', that is to say of their personal qualities. Egoist means placing one self at the centre of one world with no concern for others, including those 'loved' or considered as 'close', in any other terms except those subjectively set by the egoist.

Egoist is someone who only thinks of himself. He does not care about the fate of others' low emotional intelligence. Many people dislike such a person. When talking, he does not care about other people's feelings. When there is a division of something it is selfish. He never thinks that his actions cause many people to be harmed (Poniman et. al., 2007:282).

Egoism is a behavior that only thinks of one self and does not care about other people. A person who is egoist will never listen to the advice of others even if the advice for his own good and always considers what he is doing is right even if it harms himself.

Shaver (2008) says that egoism can be a descriptive or a normative position. Psychological egoism, the most famous descriptive position, claims that each person has but one ultimate aim: his own welfare. Normative forms of egoism make claims about what one ought to do, rather than describe what one does do. Ethical egoism claims to perform some action if performing that action maximizes the self-interest.

2.1.1 Psychological Egoism

Psychological egoism is a thesis about motivation, usually with a focus on the motivation of human (intentional) action. It is exemplified in the kinds of descriptions we sometimes give of people's actions in terms of hidden, ulterior motives (Rachels, 2003: 69). All forms of egoism require explication of self-interest. There are three main theories. Preference or desire accounts identify self-interest with the satisfaction of one desire. Often, and most plausibly, these desires are restricted to self-regarding desires. What makes a desire self-regarding is controversial, but there are clear cases and counter-cases: a desire for one's own pleasure is self-regarding; a desire for the welfare of others is not. Objective accounts identify self-interest with the possession of states

(such as virtue or knowledge) that are valuable independently of whether they are desired (Broad, 1971).

A bigger problem for psychological egoism is that some behavior does not seem to be explained by self-regarding desires. A soldier throws himself on a grenade to prevent others from being killed. It does not seem that the soldier is pursuing his perceived self-interest. It is plausible that, if asked, the soldier would have said that he threw himself on the grenade because he wanted to save the lives of others or because it was his duty. He would deny as ridiculous the claim that he acted in his self-interest.

The psychological egoist might reply that the soldier is lying or self-deceived. Perhaps he threw himself on the grenade because he believed that he could not bear to live with himself afterwards if he did not do so. He has a better life, in terms of welfare, by avoiding years of guilt. The main problem here is that while this is a possible account of some cases, there is no reason to think it covers all cases. Another problem is that guilt may presuppose that the soldier has a non-self-regarding desire for doing what he takes to be right (Feinberg, 1978).

2.1.2 Ethical Egoism

Ethical egoism claims that morally ought to perform some action if and only if, and because, performing that action maximizes the self-interest. There are possibilities other than maximization. One might, for example, claim that one ought to achieve a certain level of welfare, but that there is no requirement to achieve more. Ethical egoism might also apply to things other than acts, such as rules or character traits. Since these variants are uncommon, and the arguments for and against them are largely the same as those concerning the standard version, set them aside (Brink, 1997).

One issue concerns how much ethical egoism differs in content from standard moral theories. It might appear that it differs a great deal. After all, moral theories such as Kantianism, utilitarianism, and common-sense morality require that an agent give weight to the interests of others. They sometimes require uncompensated sacrifices, particularly when the loss to the agent is small and the gain to others is large. Ethical egoists can reply, however, that egoism generates many of the same duties to others. The divergence between ethical egoism and standard moral theories appears in other ways.

First, the ethical egoist will rank as most important duties that bring him the highest pay off. Standard moral theories determine importance at least in part by considering the payoff to those helped. What brings the highest payoff to us is not necessarily; what brings the highest pay off to those helped.

Second, the cooperation argument cannot be extended to justify extremely large sacrifices, such as the soldier falling on the grenade, that standard moral theories rank either as most important or supererogatory. The cooperation argument depends on a short-term loss (such as keeping a promise that it is inconvenient to keep) being recompensed by a long-term gain (such as being trusted in future promises). Where the immediate loss is one's life (or irreplaceable features such as one's sight), there is no long-term gain, and so no egoist argument for the sacrifice.

2.1.3 Rational Egoism

Rational egoism makes claims about what reason to do, without restricting the 'ought' or 'reason' to a moral 'ought' or 'reason'.

Like ethical egoism, rational egoism needs arguments to support it. One might cite our most confident judgments about rational action and claim that rational egoism best fits these. The problem is that our most confident judgments about rational action seem to be captured by a different, extremely popular theory the instrumental theory of rationality. According to the instrumental theory, to perform some action if and because, performing that action maximizes the satisfaction of our preferences. Since psychological egoism seems false, it may be rational for us to make an uncompensated sacrifice for the sake of others, for this may be what, on balance, best satisfies my (strong, non-self-interested) preferences. This conflict with the instrumental theory is a major problem for rational egoism.

The rational egoist might reply that the instrumental theory is equally a problem for any standard moral theory that claims to give an account of what one ought rationally, or all things considered, to do.

One reply is to argue that non-arbitrary distinctions can be made by one preference, say like anchovies and hate broccoli. This makes our decision to buy anchovies rather than broccoli non-arbitrary. Similarly, our preference for our own welfare makes our concentration on our own welfare non-arbitrary.

There are two problems for this reply. First, we do not always take preferences to establish non-arbitrary distinctions. The rational egoist must argue that his is a case where preferences are decisive. Second, if psychological egoism is false, there will be lack of a preference for our own welfare.

3. Research Method

The research study design applied in this research is qualitative research with library study. Qualitative research method is a method used to describe fact qualitatively. Ismawati (2012: 7) defines that qualitative research is the research procedure resulting from descriptive data pertaining to a problem in a study of research.

This study follows qualitative method of research for it involves the characteristics of qualitative procedure of analysis. This study explores and understands the egoism character found in the novel.

4. Discussion

Only egoism is depicted in the novel. It is analyzed by looking at the story from the viewpoint coinciding with the views of experts in the field. It increases clearly that the novel is not only a story of right or wrong, but also of moral study. This is a story that teaches how to behave towards others. The egoism problems and how they are described in the novel are focused on this study to answer the problems of this study.

4.1 Psychological Egoism

The first form of deutragonist egoism in this novel is psychology egoism, which is a condition where a person feels that his life has ended just because the life, he is experiencing is no longer what he wants, likewise in the novel it is also explained that Will wants to end his life. He seems to be shutting down, and still does not accept the fact that the world is not just about the perfect life. This is of course related to the conditions in the quotation below: It can be seen in the following:

But it's not enough for me. It's not the life I want. 'Now it was my turn to pull away. 'The thing is, I get that this could be a good life. I

get that with you around, perhaps it could even be a very good life.
But it's not my life (Moyes, 2012: 316).

The conversation between Will and Clark shows Will's egoism in wanting to commit suicide without thinking of anyone. He could not accept his destiny to become someone who could only spend time in a wheelchair. If he cannot get his life back to the way it is before the accident, he better ends his life. Being paralysed and unable to do whatever he wants completely unacceptable to Will. Will is an active person before the accident, he has the perfect life, the perfect job. He likes adventurous activities that pump his adrenaline. But after the accident, he loses everything.

I need it to end 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 (Moyes, 2012: 317).

Will's statement above not only shows emotional feelings about his inadequacy, but also physical hurt every day. The pain makes him tired and he wants to give up his life. Every day Will takes a lot of medication, treatments, and therapies, but there is no change during the two years. There are various things bothering him and he does not want to suffer anymore.

Don't say another word.' I was choking. 'You are so selfish, Will. So stupid. Even if there was the remotest possibility of me coming with you to Switzerland ... even if you thought I might, after all I've done for you, be someone who could do that, is that all you can say to me? I tore my heart out in front of you. And all you can say is, "No, you're not enough for me. And now I want you to come watch the worst thing you can possibly imagine." The thing I have dreaded ever since I first found out about it (Moyes, 2012: 319).

The above quotation shows Will's desire to end his life, even though Clark has tried to encourage Will that he can have a better life. Since the first time Clark gets to know Will, she knows that he is the most stubborn man who always speaks sharply and behaves badly, but as time goes by after getting to know Clark, Will begins to deal with other people and he is comforted and begins to care more about others. However, even though Will's attitude is getting better than before, Will's mind to end his life remains unchanged. Many times Lou tries to open Will's mind that there are other better ways than dignity but Will always confirms his decision. It is about Will's life, no one has the right to judge or make decisions on other people's lives, even his own family. Will's choice to end his life is not an easy one. However, living in pain and loss of physical freedom is the most terrifying thing for Will.

4.2 Ethical Egoism

The second form of deuteragonist's egoism in this novel is ethical egoism, that is a condition that has no solution other than to maintain the egoism. In Will's life it is only concerned with living freely by doing whatever pleases him. Apart from the pleasures he wishes for then life is not what he has dreamed of. It can be seen in the following:

It's not going to get any better than this. The odds are I'm only going to get increasingly unwell and my life, reduced as it is, is going to get

smaller. The doctors have said as much. There are a host of conditions encroaching on me. I can feel it. I don't want to be in pain any more, or trapped in this thing, or dependent on everyone, or afraid. So I'm asking you – if you feel the things you say you feel – then do it. Be with me. Give me the end I'm hoping for. 'I looked at him in horror, my blood thumping in my ears. I could barely take it in. (Moyes, 2012: 317)

Will feels hopeless. He does not know what he wants to do with his life. When he looks at his future, he sees nothing but something worse. He does not have any motivation, but to end his pain, his limits, and finally his life.

You're not giving me a 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 –' 'I would never think that! '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 annexed 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 to 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. 'He glanced down at his chair, his voice breaking. 'I will never accept this (Moyes, 2012: 316).

The quotation above shows Will's caring attitude towards Clark. Will's life gets better after Clark's arrival. However, Will realizes that if he stays alive, Clark will always be attached to him. Will realizes that he will become an obstacle for Clark to achieve his dream. On the other hand, Will always wants Clark to live a better life, and that would not have happened if he were still alive and put all his care on her. And this totally discourages Will.

4.3 Deuteronist and Egoism Character

Before his motorcycle accident, Will Traynor is an active, athletic man, passionate about extreme sports and successful in his job. However, due to an accident, he loses everything. Will becomes quadriplegia, a person who experiences paralysis as a result of injury or illness. It can be seen in the following:

I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro when I hit thirty. That was pretty incredible. 'How high?' 'A little over nineteen thousand feet to Uhuru Peak. That said, I pretty much crawled the last thousand or so. The altitude hits you pretty hard. 'Was it cold?' 'No ... ' he smiled at me. 'It's not like Everest. Not the time of year that I went, anyway.' He gazed off into the distance, briefly lost in his remembrance. 'It was

beautiful. The roof of Africa, they call it. When you're up there, it's like you can actually see to the end of the world (Moyes, 2012: 190).

The quotation above shows how Will is truly an active man. He likes activities that challenge his adrenaline, such as mountain climbing and rock climbing. Something like that is the most beautiful thing that has happened in his life before the accident.

I like more metropolitan places too. Sydney, I loved. The Northern Territories. Iceland. There's a place not far from the airport where you can bathe in the volcanic springs. It's like a strange, nuclear landscape. Oh, and riding across Central China. I went to this place about two days' ride from the Capital of Sichuan province, and the locals spat at me because they hadn't seen a white person before. 'Is there anywhere you haven't been?' He took another sip of soup. 'North Korea?' He pondered. 'Oh, I've never been to Disneyland. Will that do? Not even Euro Disney.' 'I once booked a ticket to Australia. Never went, though.' He turned to me in surprise. 'Stuff happened. It's fine. Perhaps I will go one day (Moyes, 2012: 191).

This quotation shows that there are so many places Will has visited in the metropolis as well, not just climbing mountains. For Will, adventure is his way of enjoying life and being an adventurer is the perfect life he has had before the accident.

After experiencing a motorcycle accident, Will is declared completely paralysed. He becomes a sad and angry person, he hates his life. How not, in quadriplegia sufferers, they lose all control of their limbs, both hands and feet. Usually in the paralysed part, they also do not feel any sensation or feel numb. He likes to be alone rather than dealing with other people. He does not talk too much. He loses the meaning of life he has had from his previous life. It can be seen in the following:

In the center of the room stood a black wheelchair, its seat and back cushioned by sheepskin. A solidly built man in white collarless scrubs was crouching down, adjusting a man's feet on the footrests of the wheelchair. As we stepped into the room, the man in the wheelchair looked up from under shaggy, unkempt hair. His eyes met mine and after a pause, he let out a bloodcurdling groan. Then his mouth twisted, and he let out another unearthly cry. I felt his mother stiffen. 'Will, stop it!' He didn't even glance towards her. Another prehistoric sound emerged from somewhere near his chest. It was a terrible, agonizing noise. I tried not to flinch. The man was grimacing, his head tilted and sunk into his shoulders as he stared at me through contorted features. He looked grotesque, and vaguely angry. I realized that where I held my bag, my knuckles had turned white. 'Will! Please.' There was a faint note of hysteria in his mother's voice. 'Please, don't do this.' 'Oh God, I thought. I'm not up to this. I swallowed, hard. The man was still staring at me. He seemed to be waiting for me to do something (Moyes, 2012: 37).

The quotation above shows how Will gives bad impression when the first time he meets Lou. He makes Lou get really scared of him. This shows that Will does not want to deal with others, moreover with a new person.

But oh Lord, he was vile to me. Everything I said, he had a sharp answer for. If I asked him if he was warm enough, he would retort that he was quite capable of letting me know if he needed another blanket. If I asked if the vacuum cleaner was too noisy for him – I hadn't wanted to interrupt his film – he asked me why, had I worked out a way to make it run silently? When I fed him, he complained that the food was too hot or too cold, or that I had brought the next forkful up to his mouth before he had finished the last. He had the ability to twist almost anything I said or did so that I seemed stupid (Moyes, 2012: 49).

The quotation above shows that Will is feeling desperate. He does not have any idea what he wants to do in his life. When he looks into his future, he sees nothing but something worse. He does not have any motivation, but to put an end to his pain and ultimately his life.

In connection with the analysis, the findings encountered in this study are the deutragonist in this novel has the egoism character who only thinks of himself without involving others' feelings. Egoist like this must be discarded because they can harm other people and the fact is that life also requires other people to live life. Meanwhile, egoist is a trait that is hated by everyone. The egoism after an accident experienced by the deutragonist character can happen to anyone, anywhere. The role of family and people around are very influential in the life of someone who has lost the will to live. Accepting reality and being sincere about living are the keys to living a better life. Happiness is not just about life we want it to be; it is about living life with the people who love us.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of the deutragonist's egoism defines its essence. The first is about the form of deutragonist's egoism in novels. Will chooses to isolate himself from people, including Lou, Ruppert's best friend, and his ex-girlfriend, Alicia. Will gets self-isolation because he does not want to seem pathetic about having a life where he could not do anything. And then, Will also chooses to end his life because he could not bear to live.

The second is about how the deutragonist shows the character of his egoism. The second part is explained through the characterization of Will before and after the accident. There is a change in the characterization before and after the motorcycle accident which causes almost ninety percent of his body to be paralyzed. Before the accident, Will is described as adventurous, interesting, and ambitious man. The motorbike accident leaves him paralyzed. He becomes an unhappy person. He also behaves badly. He gives up hope and does not care about himself and his social life. Will's character is totally changed. This means that Will is absolutely selfish but not strong and brave enough to live his own life. When he becomes paralyzed, he refuses all types of interactions. He still wants to control his own life and could not accept the life he does not want. That is why with his selfish character, he decides to end his life.

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