

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains five points. Those points are the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The age of the internet has allowed a massive flood of information to reach many people on a global scale. Such massive information brings not only positive content but also negative content. The rapid growth of internet can bring potential spread of low quality information to the public (Coiera, 1998, p. 1). This can be observed when discussing the topic of masculinity. There are many divided opinions and pieces of information about what masculinity is and how it should be treated. Among such popular discourse on the topic of masculinity is the rising popularity of the term "toxic masculinity." It is a popular term used online by many people to describe men who possess negative traits that can become dangerous in society. Many people raise awareness about this issue because they think problematic men have become prevalent in society.

The term "toxic masculinity" became a popular focus in analyzing social problems in gender (Harrington, 2021, p. 2). The masculinity of men has become the victim of all the problems that are caused in modern society. In response to this new term, there are many attempts to influence how men in the modern era should behave and discard their "toxic masculinity". New kinds of masculinity such as "healthy" or "sensitive" have become the standard in both academic and public discussion. It is presented as a different and better way for men (Waling, 2023, p. 4).

While it is true that "toxic masculinity" certainly exist and can become a real problem that affect gender in society and being used to oppress women, masculinity of men used responsibly with the right condition, it can become a

powerful force that greatly benefit not only for individual men, but also women and even society as a whole. One example of masculinity used responsibly is with the context of nationalism. It is a form of masculinity that exists because of the love of the nation, one which celebrates violence and sacrifice, heterosexual conquest and the protection of women and children by external force (Eriksen, 2017, p. 1439). The masculine force helps to influence and maintain the culture of the society as it impacts visible at home and the family, in occupation and the workplace, sports, science, technology, law, and politics (Nagel, 2017, p. 1450).

One interesting literature that discusses the masculinity of men used responsibly is the novel entitled *Armor* (1984) by John Steakly. *Armor* is a novel about military science fiction of courage on an alien planet. Following the story in the lens of the soldier in the novel, it explores the planet called Banshee which is hostile toward humans without life support. In the planet Banshee, the air is toxic and dangerous to breathe, the water is hazardous to consume while also the home of humanity's strongest enemy, an ants monster, in the pursuit of interstellar expansion. The protagonist named Felix is a soldier that is being deployed on such an extreme planet with dangerous enemies. He must actively use his wits and body to fight and destroy his foes, but ultimately, he must use his masculinity to survive and see the next day.

In studying the novel, the writer uses R.W. Connell's theory of masculinity. This theory is used because it explains what masculinity is and the kinds of masculinity shown in John Steakley's novel, *Armor*. According to Connell in her book *Masculinities* (2005, p. 67), in a modern term, masculinity is assumed by society as a behavior that one does as a result of the type of persona one is. That is to say, a person that is not masculine would behave differently: being peaceful than violent, conciliatory than dominating, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual competition, and so forth. In a general term, it is defined that masculinity is a behavior resulting from people being active rather than being passive. Someone that forces his way through their own strength rather

than depending on others and able to fend himself. This contrast is what makes masculinity different from femininity.

This study aims to investigate the masculinity portrayed in John Steakly's novel entitled *Armor*. This study used the theory of masculinities developed by R. W. Connell. The theory of masculinities by Connell is suitable for this study as the writer tries to reveal the patterns of masculinity constructed and represented through the character in the novel entitled *Armor* by John Steakly. Connell (2005, p. 71) explains that masculinity formed in a system of gender relations. Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object, it is preferable to focus on the process and relationships through which men and women interact in gendered environments. Thus, this study will analyze how the masculinity of the characters is portrayed and fitted within the power dynamics, social structure and the conflict of the story in the novel *Armor*.

This study does not stand alone in the analysis of the topic of masculinity. In addition to the study, five previous studies are provided alongside the analysis to find the differences between the related study and the present study in order for the present study to stand out and set it apart from other previous studies. The first related study is by Bata et al. 's study entitled *The Portrayal Of Masculinity Of Captain Frederick Wentworth In Persuasion Novel*, published in 2022. The second related study is entitled *The Masculinity And Femininity Traits Of Female Character In Roth's Insurgent Novel* by Fatimah et al., published in 2019. The third paper article related to the previous study is entitled *Femininity and Masculinity Traits Portrayed in the Female Characters of "Crazy Rich Asian" by Kevin Kwan* by Devi published in 2023. The fourth previous study is entitled *Masculinity Of Percy Jackson In Heroes Of Olympus: House Of Hades Novel By Rick Riordan* by Hakim et al., published in 2023. The fifth previous study is entitled *The Construction Of Masculinity In Rick Riordan's Novel Percy Jackson The Olympians : The Lightning Thief* by Triantoro published in 2022.

Based on the five previous studies of thesis and journal article above, the writer found a research gap between previous studies and the current study. In

comparing the previous studies, there are no studies that analyze the portrayal of masculinity in the novel entitled *Armor* by John Steakly. By conducting study on the novel *Armor*, the writer gained more insight compared to the previous studies. Furthermore, the story of the novel entitled *Armor* by John Steakly released in 1984 could become a reference for future studies in gender research.

1.2 Research Questions

In this study, the writer proposes one research questions:

1. How are patterns of masculinity constructed and represented through the character in John Steakly's *Armor*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

There are one objectives of the study:

1. To reveal the patterns of masculinity constructed and represented through the character in John Steakly's *Armor*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study give two prominent implications, theoretically and practical implementation. theoretically, this study can strengthen the significant theory of masculinity by R.W. Connell. The structure of masculinity hierarchy is always prevalent in society and the portrayal of masculinity in the setting such as in the military institution can bring supportive evidence to this theory.

Practically, this study aims to provide readers with a deeper understanding of how masculinity, as portrayed in John Steakly's *Armor*, is beneficial and not always necessarily toxic in gender norms, using R. W. Connell's theory of masculinities. This study will enable readers to recognize how masculine behaviors are necessary in their own social or professional environment. This study also can serve the students in the English Study Program at University of Trunojoyo Madura case study for applying Connell's theory to literary texts.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the portrayal of masculinity that occurs in the military institution which is experienced by the characters in the novel entitled *Aarmor* by John Steakly and uses the theory of Masculinity by Connell (2005) to identify the pattern and the characteristics of masculinity of the characters. The characters in the novel represent individuals who conducts gender practice in a military institution. This study limits in the novel entitled *Aarmor* are the character's dialogue, utterance and action.