

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis – Mostaganem**  
**Faculty of Foreign Languages**  
**Department of English**



An Exploration of Love and Assisted Suicide in Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You* (2012)

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillments for the Requirement of a Master's  
Degree in Literature and Civilization

**Submitted by:** Kobibi Hocine

**Board of Examiners:**

Mrs. Hairech Faiza	<b>Chairwoman</b>	<b>University of Mostaganem</b>
Mrs. Ghernout Soumia	<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>University of Mostaganem</b>
Mrs. Benmaati Fatima Zohra	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>University of Mostaganem</b>

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents for their patience and support. This work is also dedicated to my brothers and sister, as they have been helping me finishing my studies. Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my friends for being there for me whenever I needed validation.

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I became master student.

## **Abstract**

Although there are many assisted suicide associations around the world that work to defend the assisted dying choice as part of human rights, it is still not socially accepted. Moreover, societies consider assisted dying a crime, and demand that the law should band such acts and punish those involved. 'Me before you' by Jojo Moyes is the chosen narrative to analyze an assisted suicide storyline. The purpose of this research is to depict the reasons that pushed the protagonist to stick to his decision, and commit assisted dying, although he found love and acceptance .over and above, multiple concepts were studied in the novel, such as the conflicts the protagonist is dealing with, and the psychosocial development issues he has after the accident in order for the topic to be analyzed. The novel was used as the main source of data, as well as, multiple books and articles, such as the book of suicide by Durkheim and the psychosocial development theory by Erik Erikson. The results show that Will is not ready to live knowing that his lover is wasting her potential because she has to fulfill his daily needs. In conclusion, Will was conflicted and love added to his struggle; thus, he chose to die protecting his lover from his physical dependency and mental issues.

**Key words:** Assisted suicide, Conflict, Quadriplegic, Accident, Psychosocial development, Love.

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## General Introduction

### General Introduction

Postmodern literature challenges the previous schools where it tackles subjects that were considered taboo or did not go hand in hand with the society norms. This postmodern school emerged with the appearance of freedom of choice and speech that goes further to discuss gender, religion, and even suicide openly. Assisted dying is still a new trend in the world that many nations hesitate to legalize it except Switzerland. However, postmodern literature embraces it as a topic to write about, and tempts to provoke a public opinion.

Jojo Moyes, a British Novelist, based her 2012's novel *Me before you* on assisted suicide. She used a real story as an inspiration exposing the arguments of those who filed for the procedure to take place. Will Traynor was the voice she chose to express their beliefs. On the other hand, she highlighted the counterarguments of those who refuse the idea of suicide. Moreover, consider assisted dying as a criminal act. This qualitative research, that uses the novel as its main source of data and different theories as a guideline to explore Will's life change after the accident, aims to understand Will's reasons to choose assisted dying inspite of finding love and acceptance. Therefore, the objectives of this research consist of exposing the various conflicts that Will Traynor is going though and identifying the outcomes of each conflict. Moreover, analyzing the suicide choice according to the types of suicide presented by Durkheim. The main objective of this research remains in depicting the reasons to which Will Traynor holds on to his decision to commit the assisted suicide despite falling in love with Louisa Clark. In the light of what has been said the following research question is asked: how did Will's love for Louisa reinforce his decision to commit assisted suicide?

## **General Introduction**

The dissertation's hypothesis suggests that Will is already looking to end his life, when Will falls in love with Louisa Clark. It reinforces his decision to commit assisted suicide by giving him more reasons to believe that his life as a paralyzed person prevents him from being the man he wishes to be.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters where chapter one serves to clarify the different theories that could be used to understand Will's character and answer the research question that says how Will Traynor's love for Louisa Clark reinforced his decision to end his life by "assisted suicide ". Five different theories are chosen to be analyzed, but only two were selected which are: the conflict theory and theory of suicide .However, the rest of them are inserted whenever needed.

Chapter two highlights three different conflicts. The first part tackles his struggle with nature and its consequences on his behavior towards everything god sends his way. The second part of the chapter focuses on his conflict with society as it is divided into two parts the small group that consist of his family and the outside world as it explores his relationship with them , his reaction towards each scale, and whether his behavior changes according to the environment his in.

The final part deals with his inner conflict as it explores the different desires inside him where his needs stand as a reminder of what he used to do before the accident. Moreover, Will realises that he cannot be adventurous again feeds this interior conflict to grow. Ending the chapter by the consequences that Will is facing because of these conflicts in a form of bad mental health, as depression takes over and his physical activity decreasing daily because of lack activity and sleep.



## **General Introduction**

Chapter three exposes the suicidal thoughts he has and what motivates will to turn them into a reality. In addition the chapter discusses his relationship with Louisa Clark to analyse their love in order to find out the reasons for him to hold on to his decision although Louisa Clark loved him and accepted who he is.

# **Chapter one**

## **Literature Review**

## Chapter One : Literature Review

### Introduction

Literature went through several changes corresponding to every movement that emerged. From early religious writings to post modern literature, but before speaking of literature, mentioning the changes that happened in the world, which influenced the occurrence of this literature school is necessary. The world kept developing both in industry and in intellectual efforts, bringing new ideas, tendencies and writing purposes. Abdulazim illustrates that

"Postmodernism has appeared in a complex political circumstances, after the end of World War II, especially in the context of the Cold War and the spread of nuclear weapons, the declaration of the birth of human rights, and the emergence of theater of the absurd, the emergence of philosophies irrationality such as surrealism, existentialism, absurdism, and nihilism. Moreover, the deconstruction was expressing president to move from the stage of Modernism to Postmodernism" (2016, 1).

Since literature goes hand in hand with the world development, postmodern literature generated different topics to tackle and challenged every school preceding it.

"Postmodern literature is a form of literature which is marked both stylistically and ideologically, by a reliance on such literary conventions as fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, often unrealistic and downright impossible plots, games, parody, paranoia, dark humor , and authorial self- reference. Post- modern literature also often rejects the boundaries between “high” and “low” forms of art and literature as well as the distinction between genre and forms of writing and story- telling" (Sheeba March, 2017, 184).

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Postmodern authors worked on a new fashion that distinguished them from what the lovers of art and literature are expecting when a new play or a novel is published.

As James Fleming explains "postmodern authors tend to reject outright meanings in their novels, stories and poems, and, instead, highlight and celebrate the possibility of multiple meanings, or a complete lack of meaning, within a single literary work". (Chapter 7, Lesson 12) Multiple aspects made postmodern literature not similar stylistically to other movements as clarified in Fleming online article/course :

" Here are some examples of stylistic techniques that are often used in postmodern literature: The taking of various ideas from previous writings and literary styles and pasting them together to make new styles. First, Intertextuality: The acknowledgment of previous literary works within another literary work. Second, Metafiction: The act of writing about writing or making readers aware of the fictional nature of the very fiction they're reading. Third, Temporal Distortion: The use of non-linear timelines and narrative techniques in a story. Fourth, Minimalism: The use of characters and events which are decidedly common and non-exceptional characters. Fifth, Maximalism: Disorganized, lengthy, highly detailed writing. Sixth, Magical Realism: The introduction of impossible or unrealistic events into a narrative that is otherwise realistic Seventh, Faction: The mixing of actual historical events with fictional events without clearly defining what is factual and what is fictional. Finally, Reader Involvement: Often through direct address to the reader and the open acknowledgment of the fictional nature of the events being described".( Fleming Chapter 7 , Lesson 12).

Many postmodern writers emerged in Britain such as John Fowles and Christine Brooke-Rose. Jojo Moyes is another postmodern author, writing multiple novels. Me before you is a

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postmodern novel written by her published in 2012, which is the novel chosen to be studied in this three chapters dissertation.

In the first chapter, one will discuss the theories that enables him to illustrate the novel's chosen theme "assisted suicide", and analyse the character; the writer focuses on "Will Traynor", in order to clarify how " Will Traynor " ' s love for "Louisa Clark" reinforced his decision to end his life by "assisted suicide ". The theme and the character selected can be viewed through several theories namely the theory of motivation, the theory of characterization, the theory of psychosocial development, the theory of conflict and finally the theory of suicide. One will highlight the theories definitions and explanations of key elements in them. Ending the chapter with mentioning the chosen theories to conduct his study on the novel written by Moyes "Me before You" (2012).

### **1.1 Theory of Characterization**

Because novels depict real life, the author has to provide a description that is as close to reality as possible. Meanwhile, characterization is used to make the reader feel that characters exist in life like through creating an imaginary person (Holman & Harmon1986, p.81).

To have a distinctive understanding of both terms, exposing the relationship between them is very helpful. Chris Baldick states that “character is the result of the characterization process” (1991,p.8). The development of the character throughout the story, knowing about its past and what caused the character to be this way is what is known as characterization while the final product of the personality and what it looks like is the character. In any novel these two steps are very important, Abrams states that characters in a novel are divided into two; major character and minor character. He argues that major characters are involved in main action, as well as,

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becoming the central and the most important in a story, while minor characters are characters that appear in certain settings and they are necessary to become the background of the major character.

The roles of minor characters are less important than the major characters or main characters because they are not fully developed characters and their roles in a story is just to support the development of the major character. (Abrams N.H,1981, p.20).

This division is also known as flat and round characters, unlike round characters, flat characters do not need major development or description. As Murphy argues that there are nine ways to comprehend characterization.

First, the basic description that is concerned with physical appearances ,such as hair, face, and clothing

Second, is the method of reflected image where the character is described through other characters' eyes and opinions.

Third, the speech method. This is used to reveal some of the characteristics and descriptions about themselves through the character's speech.

The fourth method, the past life of the character that can be done by direct comment or memory reflection by the character himself or any other medium such as: pictures, notes or other characters revealing it.

The fifth method is concerned with the conversation of other characters where they speak of the character to give clues about their personality, past life or changing behaviors.

The sixth method, it's the reaction of the character towards events or situation which provides some clues about the character.

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The seventh method, this approach is the easiest one for readers to understand the character where the writer gives a direct comment and description of the character.

The eighth method, it revolves around the character's thoughts, by knowing what they are thinking about, the readers understand some of their characteristics.

The final method is about mannerism, where the author delivers some descriptions through projection of habits and idiosyncrasies; allowing readers to understand characteristics. (Murphy, 1972, pp. 161-173).

### **1.2 Personality (Psychosocial Development Theory )**

Erik Erikson was one of the psychologists studying the human development, although his theories were influenced by Sigmund Freud's work, his approach was different; he focused on psychosocial development because he believed that society as an institution contributes strongly in the psychological development of individuals. His theory was divided into eight stages according to people's age and need. Kendra cherry in her article "Erik Erikson's stages psychosocial development (2019)" clarified that "each stage in Erikson's theory builds on the preceding stages and paves the way for following periods of development. In each stage, Erikson believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in development" (2019). Depending on how well the social interaction is and it's outcome, every stage's conflict will determine how healthy a person's psychological development will be.

The first stage is trust and mistrust. It occurs during the first 18 months of human's life, where he or she is completely dependent on caregivers for food, love, warmth, and everything else. This crucial stage will allow someone to generate trust and feelings of security if his caregivers are providing him with proper care and all his or her needs. "Caregivers who are inconsistent, emotionally unavailable contribute to feelings of mistrust in the children under their care. Failure

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to develop trust will result in fear and a belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable" (Kendra Cherry, 2019).

The second stage is Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, Where children develop little personal control, and freedom of choice after their 18 months dependant stage. This stage allows children to perform basic actions and fulfill some needs on their own; this vital transition needs to be supported by parents or caregivers by letting children choose their toys and provide minor assistance. For example, using the toilet is very important to children, so parents and caregivers need to teach them how to use it and let them learn doing this on their own instead of being with them. Successfully completing these basic tasks gives children confidence and a healthy sense of independence. On the contrary, if they failed or not given the chance to perform them, it will manifest doubt and disability to be independent later in life. "At this point in development, children are just starting to gain a little independence... By allowing kids to make choices and gain control, parents and caregivers can help children develop a sense of autonomy...while those who do not are left with a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt."(Cherry, 2019).

The third stage is Initiative versus Guilt. During preschool years, children who successfully assert their power and control around their peers while playing or interacting with them ,develop a healthy sense of initiative "When an ideal balance of individual initiative and a willingness to work with others is achieved, the ego quality known as purpose emerges"( Cherry, 2019). Those who fail obtaining these skills will develop a sense of guilt, doubt and fear of leadership.

Industry versus Inferiority is the fourth stage in the psychosocial development theory .It takes place between five to eleven years. Early school years where children have a larger scope of social interaction whereby, they develop a sense of pride in their skills and accomplishments. The



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social encouragement and support at this stage is essential. Parents and teachers need to acknowledge children's abilities and commend them. Children who receive support and encouragement will believe in their skills and abilities therefore develop competence. "Successfully finding a balance at this stage of psychosocial development leads to the strength known as competence, in which children develop a belief their abilities to handle the tasks set before them" (Cherry, 2019). Those who receive little or no encouragement will question their abilities.

Identity versus Confusion is the fifth psychosocial stage, which is identified as Cherry (2019) "our personal identity gives each of us an integrated and cohesive sense of self that endures through our lives. Our sense of personal identity is shaped by our experiences and interactions with others, and it is this identity that helps guide our actions, beliefs, and behaviors as we age." Cherry in her article "Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development" illustrated that "...takes place during the often turbulent teenage years. This stage plays an essential role in developing a sense of personal identity which will continue to influence behavior and development for the rest of a person's life" (2019). Erikson focused on this stage because it is the period of developing conscious. Teenage years are the period where you explore your beliefs, values and purpose of being. Those who are supported and reinforced by the people around them will generate a feeling of fidelity, as Cherry explains "Completing this stage successfully leads to fidelity, which Erikson described as an ability to live by society's standards and expectations." (2019). During this stage our identity is consistently under a certain influence, so that ego sense will go from fidelity to confusion, in this matter Cherry stated that "according to Erikson, our ego identity constantly changes due to new experiences and information we acquire in our daily interactions with others.

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As we have new experiences, we also take on challenges that can help or hinder the development of identity" (Cherry, 2019).

Intimacy versus Isolation is the sixth stage of Erikson's theory, as his study suggests, any success or failure met in any of the stages is strongly related to the one preceding it and, since the fifth stage is important in building identity, if it is successful, the individual will not face any difficulty in making secure balanced relationships. If this early adulthood stage is not supported by a well sense of personal identity, security in relationships will decline. Studies have demonstrated that "those with a poor sense of self do tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression " (Cherry, 2019).

Generativity versus Stagnation is the seventh psychosocial development stage; it occurs during adulthood where the feeling of productivity for your community is strong, and taking care of your family is virtue. "Unlike those who are not successful during this stage, those who are successful, develop a strong sense of involvement in the world" (Cherry, 2019).

Integrity versus Despair which is the final stage is mainly focused on reflecting back on life and feeling satisfied and proud of the things you did or you did not. It occurs at the age of 60 where those who are happy with their lives will gain wisdom and an ability to solve problems, on the other hand, "those who are not satisfied during this stage, will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience many regrets. The individual will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair"(Cherry, 2019).

What can also be called personality, choleric temperament can be summarized in four elements, which are: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic. It is natural to develop a personality during your life time, but what almost everyone forgets that personality can be inherited from the family and the bloodline. With that been said, natural selection does not only

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appear in your physical abilities and possible future health problems like Diabetes or Cancer, but also can influence the character. Moreover, it can contribute to the characteristics you generate from your future influences. This claim is supported by the declaration form Ekstrand stating that a generic explanation of human “Temperaments” or “Personalities” is that all of us have been born with genetically inherited “behavioral tendencies” that are as much a part of our DNA as the color of the hair; all of us are made up of DNA combinations passed on to us through our parents and ancestors (2015). Ambition and leadership are qualities possessed by people with choleric temperament leading them to correct that what they believe is wrong. They are energetic and passionate about what they are doing. With these positive qualities, they are usually confident and possessing an unbreakable will which make them very successful. However, everything has two sides. The negative side of someone having it means being bossy, self-centered, impatient and easily angered.

### **1.3 Motivation Theory**

"Motivation is the process of starting, directing and maintaining physical and psychological activities towards a certain goal." ( Gerring and Zimbardo,2002,(346). Motivation in this case is everything that an individual does or plans to achieve a certain desire or decision. Furthermore, when an individual is motivated to reach a certain result, usually there is something missing that he feels the need to fulfill. "Motive and need are interconnected, so for someone to perform an action, the two will always be there and that's what we call motivation." (Drever.J, 1975, p.102). According to Maslow, All needs are inborn, but higher needs develop later in life as the lower ones are satisfied. Moreover, behavior is affected by the needs when they cannot be fulfilled.(qtd in McClelland D.C, 1985, (pp.41-42).Because of motivation people's acts, beliefs and will change when the need of achievement appear, as smith claims that Motivation also leads

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human to act in a specific way which can support them to achieve their goal. Thus, motivation always influences human's behavior because they want to gain something or to adapt to a condition (1982, (282).Motivation can occur because of external or internal factors, but according to scholars; the process starts internally and for that, external factors play a minor role in persuading someone to take action. "Motivation is an internal process that influences the direction, persistence, and vigor of goal directed behavior. Human beings achieve their goals because they are motivated by something as their internal factor in moving to achieve it."(Smith 1982, ( 282).

Maslow claims that there are five classifications to needs; from basic psychological needs to self-actualization needs.(1970,(112).To understand the link between needs and motivation; The Writer is providing an explanation of the needs down below:

A- Psychological Needs are the standard level needs; where food, water, sleep and sex will be the thought and the words someone speaks until they are satisfied.

B-Safety Needs are summarized in the notion of security and protection from anything that is harmful, stressful, fear and disorder, as well as the need for order and discipline.

C- Belonging Needs can be explained by the idea of acceptance and the feeling that you are a productive individual in your society. The ability to love and to be loved is also included in this classification.

D- Esteem Needs: can be sectioned into two sub categories, self-value which involves self-respect, confidence, independence and freedom. On the other hand, there's the need for the other value; it revolves around the desire of position, respect, importance and feeling appreciated by others.

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E- Self-Actualization Needs are the cause of healthy personality and proper functioning of an individual; they consist of self-fulfillment and the urge of realizing someone's potential and capacities.

### **1.4 The Conflict Theory**

To define this theory, comprehending what is meant by the word conflict is crucial; conflict means a clash between two creeds, ideologies, perspectives, desires or people. It exists in a novel as it does in real life; it occurs in a novel between a character and a character, a character and themselves or a character and nature. Stanton Robert, in his book 'An Introduction to Fiction (1965)' distinguishes two types of conflict. Inner conflict that happens when a character is having to choose between two opposing actions, between what is right and wrong between desires or mixed feelings, and external conflict; this category is concerned with the conflict between characters in a story or a character and what surrounds them in the outside world such as environment, work place or at home.

Holman and Harmon in "In a Handbook to Literature" argued that there are three conflicts and they have named them struggles. "There are two opposing focus in a plot that grows out of an interplay, and they create three conflicts, which are the struggle against another person, the struggle against nature and the struggle against society" (1986,(107)).

The struggle against another person may come from social, physical or verbal differences as well as it may appear because of perspectives, religious or moral disagreements, where as the struggle against nature happens when one finds himself fighting against the forces of nature.

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In psychology, when the person is motivated by two or more needs and valued goals, it can be classified as a conflict. Conflict is the condition which can lead to frustration. They are sources of stress or depression, and frequently lead to tension and inner turmoil.

### **1.5 The Suicide Theory**

Before discussing the theory, first, a definition of suicide is needed to clarify the term and distinguish it from other acts that look like suicide, because the term was used loosely until Durkheim's empirical analysis of suicide and its types. First, it is defined as "the action or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally especially by a person of years of discretion and of sound mind" (Merriam Webster 2017). Second, Oxford dictionary defines it as "the action of killing oneself intentionally" (2017).

Before Durkheim it was widely believed that suicide is a psychological issue, but he viewed it as a sociological problem, where suicide is caused by social factors. "Based on his gleanings from the data, Durkheim argued that suicide can be a result not only of psychological or emotional factors but of social factors as well. Durkheim reasoned that social integration, in particular, is a factor" (Ashly Crossman, 2020). The more the person is involved in society, the less the risk of him committing suicide. As Durkheim pointed "suicide is not an individual act but it is caused by some power" (La suicide, 1897).

Based on the strengths and weaknesses of society, Durkheim categorizes suicide into four categories. First, egoistic suicide happens when a person cannot determine a basis for existence in life or does not see a way to live. It is because of the inability to integrate oneself with society. Failure to maintain a closer relation towards a community precludes a person from the support systems needed for adaptive functions, and a person whom cannot receive sufficient support will find difficulties to function adaptively and it makes a person isolated and alienated

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from others. Second, the altruistic suicide. It refers to a heroic decision taken by a person when they are motivated by good deeds or achieving group goals, for example, ultimate political protest or in religious sacrifice. Third, anomic suicide which means “deregulation”. It occurs when a person is undergoing a great change and unable or not ready to deal with it. Furthermore, having an unbalanced relationship with society as well as not being able to stand the change or to cope with something new may choose suicide as a 'way out' when his or her horizons are bounded or constricted by an unstable condition.

Finally, fatalistic suicide, when a person is in an excessive regulation which usually happens among prisoners, slaves and others suffering the same burdens (Durkheim.qtd, Smith, 1983, (p.129-130).

Durkheim dividing suicide into four types was not his only contribution to the study of suicide, he also concluded his research with these findings:

1-Suicide rates are higher in men than women (although married women who remained childless for a number of years ended up with a high suicide rate).

2-Suicide rates are higher for those who are single than those who are in a sexual relationship.

3-Suicide rates are higher for people without children than people with children.

4-Suicide rates are higher among Protestants than Catholics and Jews.

5-Suicide rates are higher among soldiers than civilians.

6-Suicide rates are higher in times of peace than in times of war. For example, the suicide rate in France fell after the coup d'Etat of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. War also reduced the suicide rate: after war broke out in 1866 between Austria and Italy, the suicide rate fell by 14 per cent in both countries.

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7-Suicide rates are higher in Scandinavian countries.

He also pointed out that

" the higher the education level, the more likely it was that an individual would choose suicide. However, Durkheim established that there is more correlation between an individual's religion and suicide rate than an individual's education level. Jewish people were generally highly educated but had a low suicide rate." ( Durkheim, la suicide, 1897).

Suicide is committed when a person does not accept the way he lives or does not cope with a new condition that nature forces it on him specially, when he cannot change it such as the death of loved ones or health problems.

Personal problems, failures, depression and unhealthy work environment can be listed in the causes of committing suicide. According to Coleman James there are for categories to the causes of suicide:

First, the Inner Conflict. It is the stress situation and the debate in human's own mind, internal conflict, which can cause suicidal behavior.

Second, the Interpersonal Crises. Interpersonal conflicts and disruptions linked to marital conflict, divorce, separation, or the death of loved ones might cause severe stress and suicidal behavior.

Third, failure and self-devaluation, failing in something important like business or a goal may result suicidal thoughts.

Finally, loss of meaning and hope suicidal. Thoughts or behaviors can occur when individuals feel that their lives are useless as result of losing the meaning to live.



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Consequently, their sense of hope to survive and keep on living vanishes. (Coleman 1976, (p. p.606-607).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, chapter one serves to explain the different theories that could be used when analyzing the novel, specifically, to understand Will Traynor's character, and the reasons for it to change. It involves five theories which are; first, the characterization theory where it explains how a character is created in a novel, the difference between a character and a characterization, and the different manners to know a character in a story, such as description, the character's own words, or some other characters talking about it. Second, the motivation theory. It tackles the different concepts of motivation; moreover, the strong relationship between motivation and needs. In addition, it explores the categories of needs. Finally, how a motivation is shaped by the changes any need goes through .Third, psychosocial development theory. It focuses on the progress of individuals during each stage of development as it explains the benefits that a person would gain if the stage is completed successfully, and what are the consequences on his personality and behavior if the stage was a failure. Fourth, the conflict theory, as it consists of the categories of conflicts an individual would face and the outcomes of each struggle on people's behavior. Finally, the theory of suicide as it revolves around the types of suicide and explains what pushes a person to choose suicide according to each type. Although, the theories mentioned are useful; the writer sought to select two theories to apply the study of the theme and the character chosen on, with inserting some insights of the other theories when needed. Thus, the two theories chosen are "The Theory of Conflict" and "The Theory of Suicide

# **Chapter two**

## **The Conflict Theory**

## Chapter Two : The Conflict Theory

The novel "Me before You" was written by Jojo Moyes, a British journalist, before becoming a novelist. She won the Romantic Novel of the Year twice, in 2004, for her novel "Foreign Fruit", as well as in 2011, for "The Last Letter From Your Lover". "Me Before You" was inspired by a story of an American football player who suffered the same injury of the male protagonist in the novel. It was a huge success and managed to sell six million copies around the world.

The novel revolves around Will, a successful business man, and a poor woman named Louisa Clark. Will Traynor suffered a spinal cord injury because of a motorcycle accident. Consequently, the injury forced him to live with C5/6 quadriplegic condition. This paralysis which left him with limited arms and hands movements meant that a daily care of his needs was required. His family hired Nathan to take care of his medication and physical training. Unfortunately, Will did not have the same strong relationship with his professional carers. Therefore, Camilla Traynor was forced to seek new professionals frequently.

Louisa Clark who lost her job started looking for a new one to take care of her family, so she accepted to work as a carer for Will Traynor. Her job was simple until she was dragged into the family's darkest secret. Their thirty five years old son wanted to end his life in Switzerland. Will's family believed that Louisa's positive nature could make Will want to live. To meet the family's hope, Louisa took it on herself to change Will's decision. She started planning for trips and things he can do to show him that being in a wheelchair does not stop him from living an adventurous life.

Louisa's mission was not easy because Will made it difficult when he said harsh sarcastic comments any chance he got. In addition, his mom did not give her son his freedom to

## **Chapter Two : The Conflict Theory**

feel like a man. On the other side, Louisa was in a seven years relationship with Patrick who was questioning her job and loyalty to him.

With all these hardships, Louisa managed to stay strong and pushed will to do things his family never expected him to. Even Will was impressed by her strong will. Their daily outings and routine promoted an admiration for each other. Louisa knew who was the real Will under that sarcasm defense mechanism, and Will realised Louisa's potential. They became so involved in each other's lives to the point they fell in love. Consequently, Louisa sacrificed her long time relationship with Patrick.

Eventually, she convinced Will to go with her on a trip, as it was her last chance to change his mind. Although, Louisa would give Will a better life despite being a quadriplegic, he was determined to end his health issues and mental struggles. By the end of the six months, he committed "Assisted Suicide " as he promised his mom. Louisa's mom did not agree with her daughter flying to Switzerland to support Will, but Katrina Clark helped her sister to reach the airport so that Louisa can say goodbye to Will.

### **Introduction**

Relying on psychosocial theory and characterization theory, the second chapter will discuss the different conflicts Will Traynor is experiencing, and his response to each one. Concluding the chapter with illustrating the conflicts consequences. A conflict is a disaccord between two ideas, desires or characters. Stanton (1965) explains that there are two types of conflict ; inner conflict and external conflict. Unlike external conflict, inner conflict happens between two desires, feelings, or between what is right and what is wrong. This division was later

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extended by Holman and Harmon to three categories named "struggles". They explained that "there are two opposing focus in a plot that grows out of an interplay, creating three struggles. The struggle against another person, the struggle against nature and the struggle against society." (1986, (107)

### **2.1 Will Versus Nature**

Will Traynor because of the motorcycle accident suffered an incurable spinal injury. The injury forced him to live with C5/6 quadriplegic condition. Nathan, the one who is responsible with his physical massage and movements, illustrates: "honestly? He's a C5/6 quadriplegic. That means nothing works below about here ...' He placed a hand on the upper part of his chest. 'They haven't worked out how to fix a spinal cord yet.' " (Moyes 137). This condition is further explained by his mom when she hired Louisa Clark as his carer "... There are varying degrees, but in this case we are talking about complete loss of use of the legs, and very limited use of the hands and arms." (42). According to Maslow (1970) needs are divided into five categories which are: Psychological needs, Safety Needs, Belonging Needs, Esteem Needs ,and Self-Actualization Needs. Will limited use of hands, arms, and complete loss of use of legs means that none of his needs will be fulfilled unless someone is doing them for him; Will must be fed, cleaned, dressed, and carried to bed and out of it. His mom explains the intensity of Will's disability regarding his care saying:

He requires twenty-four-hour care, the majority of which is provided by a trained nurse. I have recently returned to work, and the carer would be required to be here throughout the day to keep him company, help him with food and drink, generally provide an extra pair of hands, and make sure that he comes to no harm.(46).

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Furthermore, Louisa describes what she has to do to feed him saying: "He could move his hands a little, but not his arm, so he had to be fed forkful by forkful... spoon-feeding a grown man." (83) .In other words, he cannot perform anything independently.

Will before the accident was a successful man with an athletic body, which allowed him to be fully independent ,as a result, the psychosocial development theory stages were completed successfully, but after the accident ,despite being a grown man, Will feels that he is at stage one all over again. Stage one according to the article of Kendra Cherry 2019, which explained the theory of Erik Eriksen is trust and mistrust. It occurs during the first eighteen months of an individual's life; complete dependency on caregiver and parents what marks this stage. If completed successfully, the individual will trust the world around him and believe in its consistency. If not, mistrust and fear will be the consequence.

Will's first conflict is with nature, as it puts him in a stage that is for babies and not a thirty five years old man. He is protesting against what nature forced upon him and refusing to accept his dependency state. Louisa describing how he feels when she is fulfilling his daily needs saying: "Will hated it so much he wouldn't even meet my eye while I was doing it."(83). His struggle against nature promoted a strong refusal to accept his paralysis and his new life; Will said it clearly to Louisa: " 'You don't get it, Clark. I don't want to go there in this – this thing.' He gestured at the chair, his voice dropping. 'I want to be in Paris as me, the old me.'"(375). His struggle with nature gone further than just a rejection of his situation, Will believes that god is mocking him when he tells Louisa clark about his accident claiming : "God's little joke. I was crossing the road outside my home."(159).

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The accident and its outcome generated a negative reaction and changed Will; he was afraid and questioning everything around him to the point he seems in denial of the condition he is in. Louisa supported this statement when she observes that: "Sometimes I wondered if it was a defense mechanism, whether the only way to cope with his life was to pretend it wasn't him it was happening to." (86) When Will opened up to Louisa, he expressed his fear of this being his future, and how limiting it could be saying: "nobody wants you to talk about being afraid, or in pain, or being scared of dying through some stupid, random infection. Nobody wants to know how it feels to know you will never have sex again, never eat food you've made with your own hands again, never hold your own child." (480). The psychosocial theory stages form a chain of development, where each stage needs the previous one to be completed.

The second stage is autonomy versus shame. According to Kendra Cherry (2019) it starts after the eighteen months dependent phase. Children develop a feeling of independence when they successfully do daily tasks on their own. On the other hand, when they could not or are not allowed to, they develop a feeling of shame and lack of confidence. Completing this stage needs the trust and security gained in the first stage. Will after the accident grew fearful of the world and its unpredictability given that everyone around him changed the way they talk to him or act around him. Moreover, he realizes that restoring his independence is impossible due to his injury. Will confirms this when he talked to Louisa saying: "it's not going to get any better than this. The odds are I'm only going to get increasingly unwell" (632).

Will being unable to be independent again and has to rely on caregivers or family members in doing the easiest need made him feel ashamed. Will expresses his feelings of shame to Louisa saying: "you have no idea, Clark, how frustrating it is to rely on someone else to put your words down for you. The phrase "written on behalf of" is ... humiliating." (326) Will protests

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against nature is still strong because it brought shame to his life when it changed him to a dependent person, so he refuses to accept any positive change nature delivers, and making sure not to be reminded of who he was before the accident. Will says it clearly to Louisa when she suggests they can go for a drive that: "Miss Clark, my life is not going to be significantly improved by a drive around Stortfold's country lanes." (74) . And Louisa describes his desire not to be his old self commenting that: "he seemed determined not to look anything like the man he had been" (85).

### **2.2 Will Versus Society**

Louisa when started working with Will Traynor did not know anything about his past life, but as the story progress, she finds out that he lived an adventurous life; she describes the pictures she sees him in saying: "I allowed myself a quick peek at them. There was a man bungee 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 jungle, and him again in the midst of a group of drunken friends." (69). Besides him being adventurous, he was a successful businessman; Louisa mentions what he used to do for a living saying: "his job, for example, sounded pretty important, even if he played it down. He bought and sold companies and made sure he turned a profit while doing so." (344). As any skillful adventurous businessman, he must had been a leader with a healthy ego surrounding his character. Will confirms the leadership characteristic when he sat down Louisa to watch a movie with him declaring that: "I order you to watch this film.' Will moved his chair back, and nodded towards the armchair. 'There. You sit there. Don't move until it's over." (125). Kendra (2019) demonstrated the two stages of psychosocial development theory which are responsible for maintaining these qualities. Initiative versus guilt and industry versus inferiority; both are concerned with skills and social interactions, but unlike initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority occurs after eleven years old, where the social interaction happens on a larger scale. The



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one successfully completing the stage will gain pride, confidence, and most importantly a sense of leadership. On the contrary, failing to complete it will generate a sense of inferiority and leadership disability.

Will before 2007 was proud of his accomplishments. He says to Louisa: "I will never, ever regret the things I've done. Because most days, if you're stuck in one of these, all you have are the places in your memory that you can go to." (393). These two stages allowed Will to have an identity. Kendra in her article spoke of the fifth stage which deals with identity versus confusion. If completed successfully an individual will have a healthy identity that contributes to his or her confidence. If not, confusion will surround his or her identity". Will after the accident, lost the ability to continue his life style, as a result, he could not be a leader. Consequently, the people surrounding him started making decisions for him or speaking on the behalf of him. Sarcasm was his response. He portrays it to his mother when she talked instead of him, like he is not there commenting that: "I'm here, mother. You don't have to talk across me. My brain isn't paralysed. Yet." (62). In Will's society, being paralyzed means you are not able to decide what you like or what you want to do, so instead of asking questions, people act according to their thoughts and do what they see best for the paralyzed person. Will feels frustrated with these acts so he refuses to be involved in any activity and when forced to go he becomes passive. Will protests against such acts to Louisa saying: "'Do you know what, Louisa? It would be nice – just for once – if someone paid attention to what I wanted.'" (110).

His conflict with society was not only with the small group taking care of him, but extended to the society outside of his house. People added to his frustration because they changed the way they interact with him and felt sorry for him. Will with a sarcastic tone exposing what society think of him saying: 'Clark, every single place I go to now people look at me like I don't

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belong."(304). And Louisa clarifies what will hated about meeting people declaring that: "one of the things Will hated most was the pity of strangers" (329). Moreover, they were careful with their choice of words; Will had been very social and was looked at as someone who needed to be respected and fun to be around, as a result, he refuses the change and isolates himself from his society. Louisa comments about the behavior of Will when he is in a less crowded place saying: "...away from the crowds, he appeared to have cheered up a little. He had begun to look around him, instead of retreating back into his solitary world." (278). Society as an institution will influence the way you see yourself and effect the level of confidence you show to the world. Will's society when he suffered the spinal injury, all they saw was another member in the paralyzed community; he was not allowed to be himself eventually he hid his personality because no one was ready to accept that it still exists. Louisa when they meet with a member of a paralyzed organization remarks that: "this had shown me it could work. He could be happy, if surrounded by the right people, if allowed to be Will, instead of The Man in the Wheelchair, the list of symptoms, the object of pity." (513).

Will has a struggle with society for many reasons, but what pushes him to be more distant is the fact that they do not disagree with him or be rude to him. Louisa observes that: "it even seemed like a relief to him that there was someone prepared to be rude to him, to contradict him or tell him he was being horrible. I got the feeling that everyone had tiptoed around him since his accident" (123).

Intimacy versus Isolation is the sixth stage of Eriksen's theory, as his study suggests, any success or failure met in any of the stages is strongly related to the one preceding it. Thus, the fifth stage is important to build an identity, if completed successfully, individuals will not face any difficulty in making secure balanced relationships. If this early adulthood stage is not supported

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by a well sense of personal identity, security in relationships decline. Studies have demonstrated that "those with a poor sense of self do tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression " (kendra, (2019). Will losing his identity and refusing to be identified by who he became after the accident "I am not designed to exist in this thing – and yet for all intents and purposes it is now the thing that defines me. It is the only thing that defines me." (630), he rejects any relationship and cut ties with everyone, because he does not want them to change their assumptions about him once they see him. Will expresses the change of view people have when he meets them saying: "...thinking how awful it must be to live like that and then turn into a cripple." (71).

To push people away Will develops negative characteristics. In order to understand how characteristics are close to reality in a novel Holman & Harmon (1986) explained that characterization is used to make the reader feel that characters exist life like through creating an imaginary person. Furthermore, M.J.Murphy (1972) claimed that there are nine ways to understand characterization. First, the basic description that is concerned with physical appearances such as ( hair, face, clothing...).Second, is the method of reflected image where the character is described through other characters' eyes and opinions. Third, the speech method; this is used to reveal some of the characteristics and descriptions about themselves through the character's speech. Fourth, the character's past life; can be exposed by a direct comment from the character himself or through pictures, notes or other characters revealing it. The fifth method is concerned with the conversation of other characters where they speak of the character to give clues about their personality, past life or changing behaviors. Sixth, the reaction of the character towards events or situation which provides some clues about the character. Seventh, the easiest approach for readers is to understand the character where the writer gives a direct comment and description of the character. Eighth, this

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method revolves around the character's thoughts, by knowing what they are thinking about, the readers understand some of their characteristics. The final method is about mannerism, where the author delivers some descriptions through projection of habits and idiosyncrasies; allowing readers to understand characteristics. (1972, pp. 161-173).

Relying on these strategies Will negative characteristics are manifested in becoming: first, being unreachable; his mom acknowledges this saying: "you must know by now that if Will decides to make himself unreachable, there is little anybody can do about it." (263) Second, he acts rude and judgmental. Louisa comments that: "...mean with it. Every time I say something or suggest something he looks at me like I'm stupid, or says something that makes me feel about two years old."(79). Third, Will emerges to be stubborn. Camilla describes her son's strong will when it comes to what he wants to do "Being Will, he always had to have the last word" (209). Fourth, silence, Nathan informs Louisa about it saying: "We've had weeks where he would hardly say a thing" (121). Even intimate relationships were rejected by Will Traynor, as he pushes his girlfriend away till they finally broke up. His ex-girlfriend explains the situation to Louisa saying: "I know what you're thinking,' she said, after a pause. 'But I did try. I really tried. For months. And he just pushed me away.' Her jaw was rigid, her expression oddly furious. 'He actually didn't want me here. He made that very clear." (Lissa 98).

### **2.3 Will Versus Himself**

Besides Will struggling with nature and the society around him, he has an inner conflict between what he used to be and what he became after the accident. A strong attachment to what he used to be is contradicting his limited physical movements due to his spinal injury. Consequently, a struggle of desires emerges within him; he wants to do them again, Nathan

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comments on the matter saying: "There have been times when I've stayed over and he's woken up screaming because in his dreams he's still walking and skiing"(589). On the other hand, he does not want to do them as a "cripple". Will declines visiting his favorite places or experiencing anything special in his current situation to Louisa saying: "the day we go and I'm in this bloody contraption, all those memories, those sensations will be wiped out, erased by the struggle" (375).

The seventh stage in psychosocial development theory according to Erik Erikson is "generativity vs Stagnation. It occurs during adulthood where the feeling of productivity for your community is strong, and taking care of your family is virtue. Unlike those who are not successful during this stage, those who are successful, develop a strong sense of involvement in the world" (Kendra cherry, 2019). Will after the accident, loses his job and cannot do anything for his family or anyone, as a result, he sees himself as unproductive. Will asserts his belief to Louisa saying: "I don't do anything, Miss Clark. I can't do anything anymore. I sit. I just about exist." (76). Relationships were not a problem for Will given his success and adventurous life, but now with the C5/6 condition, he is questioning his manhood and the ability to maintain a relationship. What triggered this belief further is the fact that his ex-girlfriend was in love with him. Yet, when he became paralyzed, she got married to his friend, his dad comments on the matter saying: "Alicia running off with his friend had made him feel about as worthless as anyone in his position could feel." (Steven, 566). Moreover, will before the motorbike accident was capable of taking care of himself and his family, and as a confident independent man as he used to be, he does not wish for his partner to be his 24 hours carer ,and him feeling guilty that he cannot make her feel like a woman, unlike someone who is healthy . Will asserts his desire to Louisa saying: "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

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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" (631).

His family added to his inner struggle with their strict rules and involvement in his private life, which does not correspond with the independence he used to live. Eventually, he is not able to feel like a man or has a bit of freedom to cope with his life as a paralyzed man. Instead, they manifest the feeling of disdain for his present life. His father remarks this struggle to his family saying: "Will needs to be allowed to feel like a man. That is not going to be possible if his mother – or his sister, for that matter – is always on hand." (Steven, 246) Over protection from his family pushed his frustrations further. Specifically, his mother because he cannot stand that someone has some control over his life, but he realizes that being wheelchair bound would allow his mother to do so. Therefore, he reminds his mother of his age saying: "and as far as I can see, Mother, as a 35-year-old man I'm not strictly answerable to anybody when it comes to choosing to spend a night at a hotel. Even to my parents." (Will, 520).

Will health problems caused by his spinal injury added to the "present versus past will" conflict, where he misses being healthy and active. Will informs Louisa of what he loved doing when he was healthy saying: "I loved being a physical person. I liked riding my motorbike, hurling myself off buildings."(630). The dreams he has most nights are a proof of how desperate he is to be the old healthy Will. Nathan observes that: "there have been times when I've stayed over and he's woken up screaming because in his dreams he's still walking and skiing" (588). At the same time, he has to take multiple medications to slow down the collapsing of his body, which is a reminder of the impossibility of his dreams. Nathan instructs Louisa about Will's medication saying: " he has two meds for blood pressure, this to lower it at bedtime, this one to raise it when he gets out of bed. These he needs fairly often to control his muscular spasms" (64).

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His problem does not concern his long list of medication only, but also the way his body reacts to illnesses, which is a huge obstacle to his carers to detect what's wrong unless they are professionals; which is another reason why Will does not want a relationship, because he knows his partner will turn to a professional nurse. Hence, it would not be the case if he stayed healthy. Nathan explains the difficulty of Will's condition when it comes to sickness to Louisa saying: "didn't you know he can't regulate his temperature?'... Will doesn't sweat like we do. In fact he doesn't sweat at all from the point of his injury downwards. It means if he gets a slight chill his temperature gauge goes haywire" (149). When the muscles stop being active they suffer soreness and degradation. Consequently, Will lives in constant discomfort that affects his sleeping quality. Louisa observes that: "there were dark shadows under his eyes. Sometimes, Nathan told me, he barely slept at all." (109) So, to reduce the effects of his body lack of activity, Nathan provides him with a daily massage, he explains the purpose of the massage saying: "try and keep his physical condition up – to stop him atrophying and his bones demineralizing, his legs pooling, that kind of thing." (136).

When Louisa took him on a trip, he showed the old healthy Will characteristics that have been buried since he went back to live in the Annexe. Louisa describes the sudden change in Will's behavior saying: "he swiftly seemed more at home in this place than I did. And no wonder. I had to remind myself that, for most of his life, this had been Will's domain" (603). Despite the change when he was in a familiar place, health problems reminded him of his disability. Pneumonia is one of his biggest health issues, because it threatens his life. Nathan explains the danger of this disease to Louisa saying: "it's not the first time, Lou. He gets a bit of bacteria in his lungs, his cough mechanism doesn't work like it should, he goes down pretty fast" (572). Moreover, Will realises the dangers he would suffer in the future, given that the Scientific advancements did not discover

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a way to even prevent the repercussions of being quadriplegic. He informs Louisa of what he expects from his condition saying: "it could get worse. I could end up not being able to breathe by myself, not being able to talk. I could get circulatory problems that mean my limbs have to be amputated" (479).

The conflicts faced by Will Traynor daily viz. his doubts, unacceptance of his disability, and the fear of being in any relationships, pushed his alienations further. In spite of the feelings he has for Louisa Clark caused him to be lonely and depressed, Louisa comments on the matter saying: "I thought he was the saddest person I had ever met"(86). On the light of the conflicts discussed in this chapter and Will's mental state, he generated suicidal thoughts more often. Therefore, the third chapter will discuss the theory of suicide and answer how his love for Louisa reinforced his decision to choose assisted suicide.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Will's quadriplegic condition causes him to be conflicted. His conflicts are divided into three. To begin with, he has a conflict with nature where he does not accept the limited life chosen for him by god. Moreover, he is struggling with society, because since the accident, they change the way they behave around him. The cautious selected words and actions when will is present, pushes him to be mean and sarcastic. In addition, he isolates himself from any social interactions.

Finally, he is dealing with an inner struggle. He is filled with doubts about himself as a man and as a productive member of society, as well as, questioning his ability to maintain a relationship. Adding to his unanswered questions, Will's health issues serve as a reminder of his



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helplessness. As a result, he realises that regaining his old life is impossible which manifests in him being less confident and more troubled inside.

These conflicts promote for new thoughts and behaviors to occur. Suicidal behavior and depression become more clear, and the desire to end his life is his only motive. Therefore, chapter three will discuss the theory of suicide and explore the concept of "Assisted Suicide ". Hence ,answers the question “how his love for louisa clark reinforced his decision to choose assisted suicide?”

# **Chapter Three**

## **The Suicide Theory**

## **Chapter Three: The Suicide Theory**

### **Introduction**

Chapter two dealt with the different conflicts faced by Will Traynor . Moreover, it highlighted the different changes his character went through. These changes brought up negative thoughts and behaviors; suicidal thoughts were the most negative effect of these changes. Therefore, chapter three will discuss the theory of suicide and explore the type of suicide committed by Will Traynor. Hence, it will answer how Will Traynor's love for Louisa Clark reinforced his decision to end his life by "assisted suicide ".

As already mentioned in chapter two, Will Traynor's conflicts caused him to be alienated from the society and even from his family. These actions were caused by his disability and him not accepting his current situation. As a result, he lost his identity and directed his thoughts and beliefs towards a negative approach. Erik Erikson tackled this topic in his psychosocial development theory and coined its term. According to him identity crisis is questioning your sense of self or identity especially during adolescence, as it is the time where individuals need to achieve ego identity. The crisis appears due to big changes or stressors in life, or due to factors viz. age or advancement from a certain stage such as, school, work, or childhood (Jamie Elmer, 2018). Will Traynor achieved ego identity before the accident, but after his paralysis, along the other psychosocial stages, he lost his ego identity as well. When people lose their identity or fail to achieve it, they suffer negative effects. As mentioned in Elmer's article, Erik Erikson declared that Struggling to achieve identity. Specifically Ego Identity will generate several issues which are

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First ,questioning who you are — overall or with regards to a certain life aspect such as relationships, age, or career.

Second, experiencing great personal conflict due to the questioning of who you are or your role in society.

Third, questioning things such as your values, spirituality, beliefs, interests, or career path that have a major impact on how you see yourself.

Finally, searching for more meaning, reason, or passion in your life. (2018)

Moreover, choosing a negative approach to achieve an identity as believing having a negative one is better than having none at all. This is exactly what happened to Will Traynor, he became depressed and looked at things negatively. Before discussing Will's depression and its outcomes, defining depression is necessary.

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home.(Ranna Parekh, 2017).

Furthermore, depression has several symptoms and setbacks, which will is suffering from. The first symptom is feeling sad or having a depressed mood. Louisa describes Will saying: "Oh God, Treen. It's worse than I thought. He is so miserable."(78). The second symptom consists of having unstable mixed emotions. Sometimes Will smiles, but at any second he could become angry or sad. Louisa comments on the sudden mood change saying: "it might sound a bit sad, but Will's smiles were so rare that prompting one made me feel a bit light-headed with pride." (186).

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The third symptom involves losing interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed. Louisa talking to Nathan about his lack of interest in doing anything saying: "he doesn't seem to want to do anything that I suggest."(137). The fourth symptom includes going from chatty and funny, to completely distant and sad. To begin with, Will instructs Louisa to stay quiet saying: "Can we strike a deal? Whereby you are very un-chatty around me?"(77). But then again, Louisa describes the sudden change in his desire to chat and be around her saying "Will didn't ask me to leave him alone quite as often, and a couple of afternoons had even asked me if I wanted to stay and watch a film with him." (124).

The fifth symptom revolves around having turbulence of sleeping, Loss of energy, or increased fatigue. Louisa remarks his sleeping problems saying: "I saw the mauve shadows that told of nights and nights of lost sleep" (188). The Sixth symptom of depression is being unable to see any prospect in his present, Will portrays this belief when he had "Best before: 19 March 2007" tattoo ,which is the day of the accident. Seventh symptom comprises feeling worthless or guilty . The drastic changes that Will lived because of the accident manifested in him feeling worthless . He states how he feels about himself to Louisa saying: "...Let's put the bloody photos back together. Give the poor invalid something to look at."(111).

Finally, thoughts of death or suicide. Will lost his purpose of existence, which are adventure, success, and sex. In addition, he became defined by restrictions. As a result, the thoughts of suicide were everything he thought about. Hence, trying to end his life before Louisa came into it. His mom comments on the incident and describes the determination he had to kill himself saying: "I cannot to this day imagine the determination that kept him going, even though he must have been half delirious from the pain." (211).

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According to Merriam Webster (2017) suicide is defined as "the action or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally especially by a person of years of discretion and of sound mind". Moreover, Oxford dictionary defines it as "the action of killing oneself intentionally" (2017). Suicide as a term was used loosely until Durkheim conducted an empirical study which illustrated that it is not psychological issue only, rather a sociological one as well. He proved that society does help an individual to generate suicidal thoughts. "Based on his gleanings from the data, Durkheim argued that suicide can be a result not only of psychological or emotional factors but of social factors as well. Durkheim reasoned that social integration, in particular, is a factor" (Ashly Crossman, 2020). Louisa Clark before being accepted to be Will Traynor's carer, Will's mom agreed that she will accept her son's desire to end his life after 6 months "Six months, George. He promised to give me six months."(199).

She had no choice because Will was determined to commit suicide. Will demonstrates his strong desire to his mom saying: " I don't want to live like this, Mother. This is not the life I chose. There is no prospect of my recovery, hence it is a perfectly reasonable request to ask to end it in a manner I see fit." (209). This quote provides two notions to discuss. First, Will is having no intention to live as a paralyzed person anymore, because he feels that he is not created to live with limitations which according to him promote the feeling of inferiority. Second, he refuses to die of any health problems caused by his spinal cord injury.

Determination and motivation go hand in hand, so Will's motivation needs to be viewed in order to understand his strong determination. "Motivation is the process of starting, directing and maintaining physical and psychological activities towards a certain goal."( Gerring and Zimbardo,2002, 346). The goal is to commit suicide; therefore, Will thoughts and actions are directed towards suicide. Moreover, his motivation is driven by his needs, which are not

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fulfilled since he cannot perform them by himself . "Motive and need are interconnected, so for someone to perform an action, the two will always be there and that's what we call motivation." (Drever 1975,p. 102). Will's motivation to suicide changed his beliefs and attitudes towards life. The change can be seen in the conflicts he developed. As smith claims that Motivation also leads human to act in a specific way which can support them to achieve their goal. Thus, motivation always influences human's behavior because they want to gain something or to adapt to a condition (1982, 282). Will was persistent and stubborn when he wanted something to be done. His motivation to commit suicide nurtured that characteristic further. His mom explains it to his sister saying: "Do you think for a moment that if I said I refuse, he wouldn't ask someone else?" (199).

Failing to kill himself the first time, created an urge to find a different manner to end his life. Therefore, He approached a new form of suicide. Assisted Suicide is "The deliberate hastening of death by a terminally ill patient with assistance from a doctor, family member, or another individual" (William C. Shiel Jr. ,2018). For this procedure to be done that are certain conditions and experts to decide if the person fits the requirements of "Assisted Dying".

who want an assisted death have to prove that they are of sound judgement, and have to be able to bring about their deaths themselves. They must submit a formal request, including a letter explaining why they want to die, and have their wishes approved by doctors who aren't part of the organisation. (George Harrison, 2018)

This form of suicide is not legalized in England, so a formal request was sent to an organization in Switzerland called "Dignitas". Dignitas was founded 1998, according to Harrison (2018) it is "a non-profit society which provides assisted or accompanied suicide to its members,

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provided their wishes are signed off by independent doctors.” Louisa confronts Camilla saying: "But you're ... you're going to take him to that place where people commit suicide. Dignitas ." (219). Camilla said that: "Louisa is here to make sure nothing like that happens again." (197) confirming that Louisa would change Will's decision by her cheerful spirit and happy nature.

### 3.1 Will and Louisa's Relationship :

Will had a long history of making the job of his carers difficult. He used the same strategies with Louisa in her first few weeks. In fact, he tried to shake her balance when they met the first time Louisa commented on her first meeting with Will saying: "he let out a bloodcurdling groan. Then his mouth twisted, and he let out another unearthly cry." (60).

Will was rude and mean to Louisa for two things. First, he hated the fact that he was being watched over despite being an adult. Louisa explained the situation saying: "I had been babysitting. I hadn't known it, but Will had, and he had hated me for it." (198). Second, he wanted to test her to see if she would stick around, or she would be just like any other professional he had to work with. Louisa's sister speculated the reason of Will treating Louisa rudely saying: "Well, maybe he's like that with everyone at the start, until he knows whether you're going to stick around." (79). Katrina's assumption was right because after Louisa reacted to his rude comments and attitude evenly, there was a change in his interaction with Louisa. The change became evident when he wrote a letter to her saying:

“ Dear Clark,

This is to show you that I am not an entirely selfish arse. And I do appreciate your efforts." (327).



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When Louisa confronted him about his attitude, Will let his guard down and allowed himself to let Louisa know him and talked to her about his fears and his past. Will confessed: "You, Clark,' he looked down at his hands, 'are the only person I have felt able to talk to since I ended up in this bloody thing.'"(481).

When Louisa Clark knew about Camilla and Will's intention, she refused to work with him, as it did not correspond with her religious beliefs and perspectives in life. She commented on the new secret she was sharing with the Traynors saying: "How could you live each day knowing that you were simply whiling away the days until your own death? How could this man whose skin I had felt that morning under my fingers – warm, and alive – choose to just extinguish himself?" (215). Louisa expressed her rejection to his mother despite Mrs Traynor's efforts in persuading her to return. However, one message got stuck in her mind and it was one of the reasons that made Louisa comeback to work with him that embodied in what Camilla said to her in the car: "Louisa. Seeing him without that awful beard yesterday ... you seem to be one of the few people who are able to get through to him."(229). Louisa took a huge responsibility once she decided to try and change his decision, her new goal was inspired by her sister's words including: "you tell them that you want a budget and then you use that money, and you use the – what was it? – four months you've got left. And you change Will Traynor's mind."(239). In the remaining four months till he went to Switzerland, Louisa dedicated her efforts planning for trips and activities to do in order to show him that even with a spinal cord injury life was still worth living. She found a purpose to her life and formed a new connection with Will. Her first idea was a disaster that left Will uncomfortable and grew fed up with people deciding for him. Will expressed his frustration with Louisa's attempts that: "I could have told you. I hate horses, and horse racing. Always have. But you didn't bother to ask me. You decided what you thought you'd like me to do, and you went

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ahead and did it."(295). After this dispute, Louisa got used to him and did the opposite of things. She started consulting him more as well as taking his words more seriously. As a result, Will appeared to be more happy and involved with their activities. In addition, Louisa became a motivation and a reason of existence to Will. He told Louisa that: "Sometimes, Clark, you are pretty much the only thing that makes me want to get up in the morning."(519). The more time Louisa spent with Will the more she forgot about his condition and saw the man rather than a "paralyzed bloke" asserting that: "Now he was just Will – maddening, mercurial, clever, funny Will" (353). In addition, Will spending more time with her allowed him to know her better and be amazed of her innocence and lack of experience. she managed to bring out a side of him that was hidden for years viz. showing his feelings. His mother acknowledged Will's feelings saying: "Will ... I think Will is very fond of you." (460).

Their love was clear to everyone around them, even Patrick broke up with Louisa Clark when she chose to stay with Will rather than saving her relationship. Louisa admitted that: "All I know is that most of the time I would rather be with him than anyone else I know." (548). But with love comes Will's decision that appears to grow stronger with him having feelings for Louisa Clark.

### **3.2 Love is Another Reason to Suicide**

Before elaborating on the reasons that pushes Will to stick to his decision despite finding love and acceptance, illustrating the type of suicide Will is choosing is needed. According to Durkheim there are four suicide categories. First, the egoistic suicide happens when a person cannot determine the basis of existence in life because of the inability to integrate the oneself with society. Failure to maintain a closer relation towards a community precludes a person from the

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support systems needed for adaptive functions, and a person whom cannot receive sufficient support will find difficulties to function adaptively and it makes a person isolated and alienated from others. Second, the altruistic suicide which refers to a heroic decision taken by a person when they are motivated by good deeds or achieving group goals, for example, ultimate political protest or in religious sacrifice. Third, anomic suicide or in other words “deregulation”. It occurs when a person is undergoing a great change and unable or not ready to deal with it. Furthermore, having an unbalanced relationship with society as well as not being able to stand the change or to cope with something new may choose suicide as a 'way out' when his or her horizons are bounded or constricted by an unstable condition.

Finally, fatalistic suicide, when a person is in an excessive regulation which usually happens among prisoners, slaves and others suffering the same burdens (Durkheimqtd, Smith, 1983, (p.129-130). Analysing the data provided by Durkheim asserts that the type of suicide chosen by Will Traynor is anomic suicide. Will went through a dramatic change in a short period; he went from a successful adventurous man to a completely dependent man suffering from C5/6 quadriplegic condition. In addition, Will cannot accept the spinal cord injury, and refuses to be dependent on caregivers claiming that: "I don't want to live like this" (290).

In addition, he refuses to be a paralyzed person, he declines the idea of coping with his condition stating that:"perhaps it could even be a very good life. But it's not my life. I am not the same as these people you speak to. It's nothing like the life I want. Not even close." (629).

Finally, the change Will is living made him inferior and a symbol of pity, as a result, he is having an unbalanced relationship with society because of the way they treat him, and what

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frustrates him further is them deciding his life for him. Nathan comments "we become just another shitty bunch of people taking away his choices." (591).

Will reasons to suicide are mentioned in his conflicts. Furthermore, they are clear when his motivations and needs are analyzed, but his love for Louisa added to them and made his decision seems fairly right to him. First, he knows she is innocent and has no experience in life so he is constantly supporting her to experience new things in life saying: "You're twenty-six years old, Clark. You should be out there, claiming the world as your own" (184). She will not be able to widen her horizon if she is with him, because he realizes that she has to take care of him every day and she will be too focused on his needs rather than experiencing life. Therefore, he believes that his death will allow her to do so saying: "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." (631). Second, even though there is love, he knows that their sexual and intimacy needs will not be fulfilled and he cannot accept that he is unable to satisfy the woman he loves, so instead he is willing to give her chance to be in a relationship with someone who can saying:

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 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.  
(631)

Third, he does not wish for Louisa Clark to be dragged into his dark world of illnesses, depression, dependency, discomfort, and consistently thinking that any health problem could be

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the end of him. He wants to die once and for all and save her from the consequences of living with a quadriplegic man. He affirms that: "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. "(Will). Fourth, Will was going to suicide no matter what, he knows that staying with her and accepting her offer will not be enough, because he will eventually suicide. Therefore, according to him, he is saving her from building a stronger attachment. His choice was decided. No matter how long he lived, the result will be the same. He clarifies that: "Louisa, nothing was ever going to change my mind. I promised my parents six months, and that's what I've given them. You have made that time more precious than you can imagine. You stopped it being an endurance test." (634).

Finally, after the accident he lost the chance to live the life that he wanted, Louisa being his lover, he saw in her his motivation to live fearless, as well as the desire to succeed. Will told Louisa in his last letter that:

Your face when you came back from diving that time told me everything; there is a hunger in you, Clark. A fearlessness. You just buried it, like most people do. I'm not really telling you to jump off tall buildings, or swim with whales or anything (although I would secretly love to think you were), but to live boldly. Push yourself. Don't settle.(707).

As a result he wished for her to live and to lead the live he wanted for both of them. He trusted his lawyer, specialist in wills, to transform his money into her account ; Moreover, Will pushed her to get a college education elucidating that:

he will give you the relevant documents so you can access an account he has set up for me in your name. This account contains enough for you to buy somewhere nice to live

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and to pay for your degree course and your living expenses while you are in full-time education. (705).

Furthermore, he persuaded her to realize her potential and value. Louisa told her mother: "Who do you think encouraged me to make something of myself, to travel places, to have ambitions? Who changed the way I think about everything? About myself even? Will did". (679).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Will chooses to isolate himself from his family and society, and in order for him to do that he develops multiple characteristics such as silence, rudeness, and stubbornness. His alienation, added to the conflicts lived by Will Traynor, cause a mental health issue, as well as negative thoughts and behaviors. Will becomes depressed and the desire to end his life is getting stronger every day. Louisa Clark and his family detect symptoms of depression in a form of loss of sleep, tiredness, and sadness. His depression prevented everyone from reaching him in order to stop him from committing suicide, so his family places big hopes on Louisa Clark because she is the only one who gets through him. In two months, their relationship moves from sarcasm and rudeness to admiration and love. Louisa manages to show what Will is hiding from everyone, but despite her efforts and unconditional love she cannot change Will's decision. Since the accident, Will's motive is not to live with a spinal cord injury consequences, but his love for Louisa Clark reinforces his decision further and accumulates more reasons to end his life. There are myriad reasons that pushed Will to commit suicide after falling in love with Louisa Clark.

First, he does not wish for Louisa to be his carer. A spinal cord injury means that he cannot do anything independently. In addition, she has to watch his health problems with a

## **Chapter Three: The Suicide Theory**

professional eye; therefore, she will turn from a girlfriend to a nurse. A change that Will cannot witness every day.

Second, he sees the potential of Louisa Clark and what she is capable of; thus, he wants to give her an opportunity to live the life she deserves. He realizes that if he stays alive, she will focus on him which will prevent her from studying and working. Moreover, the trip shows the hunger for adventure that Louisa has; nevertheless, she cannot travel and see the world if they are in a relationship.

Third, Will's sexual needs were fulfilled before the accident. After 2007, it is not the case. When he falls in love with Louisa Clark, he knows that he is unable to satisfy his needs. In addition, he cannot please her. As a result, he will not feel like a man. A feeling that he cannot live with, so he needs to end his life for Louisa to find a man that can make her feel like a woman.

Finally, he wishes that Louisa would live his life instead of him. It is proven when he leaves her an amount of money to start a life, and a letter filled with instructions how to get to his favorite place in Paris. As he sees it, Louisa Clark's love for him allows him to be there with her.

# **General Conclusion**



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In order to explore Will Trayonr's reinforced desire to commit suicide after falling in love with Louisa Clark in the Novel *Me Before You* written by Jojo Moyes, a dissertation of three chapters was written . To answer the research question, different theories were taken into consideration, such as the theory of motivation and the theory of suicide. Chapter one serves to explain the theories and analyze them, but after reading the novel multiple times, two theories appear to be dominant topics in the novel which are the conflict theory and the theory of suicide. Furthermore, the other theories like the psychosocial development theory and characterization theory were used when necessary to justify the existence of conflicts or to clarify the suicide decision.

The next two Chapters were dedicated to depict and analyse the conflicts that Will was dealing with plus, explain the reasons for him to commit assisted suicide despite finding love. In the novel, Will suffered from three conflicts. The First struggle was against nature where he did not accept what the accident made him suffer. The second struggle was divided into two scales where he was having conflicts with his family and carers as well as, the outside world. The final struggle was an inner conflict. The doubt that Will had in his abilities and him hating his dependency on others promoted for a feeling of alienation. As result, he became depressed and suicidal; his main motive was not to a live as a paralyzed person, therefore, he sought to file for assisted suicide in Switzerland. He informed his mom that he has six months until he goes to Digintas. Louisa Clark was the family's last hope as she was hired to change his mind. She managed to get through him and make him fall in love with her, but she gave him other reasons to see his decision as fair. When will had feelings for Louisa he realized multiple things that

## **General Conclusion**

prevented from living with her the way he wished. A realization that was not true before the accident. First, he rejected that Louisa would be his professional carer. Second, he did not wish for Louisa to waste her potential while taking care of him. Third, he knew that he could not fulfill his love and sexual needs while in a wheelchair. Fourth, Will's health issues were increasing .he was losing his vital abilities meaning that at anytime he could lose his life for any of his health issues ,so he did not desire that Louisa might be worried every night. Finally, Will wanted his lover to live for both of them. .

No one can know how a paralyzed person feels, and for that saying that his decision was wrong is not fair, but at the same time, supporting his decision is unrealistic. Humans are created to be challenged wether physically, psychologically, or emotionally. They have to accept the hardship. Only then, they realise it's purpose. Paralysis is not a burden, paralysis is a way of life where you do things differently and see life from a different angle that people with a full functioned body cannot realise.

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