



**THE CONCEPT OF MASCULINITY SYMBOL WITHIN AMERICAN
SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE AS PORTRAYED IN "THE MORTAL
INSTRUMENTS: CITY OF BONES"**

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Abstract

This study is about concept of masculinity symbol in Cassandra Clare's work entitled The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones. Masculinity concept as portrayed in the novel is closely related to the superiority of alpha male, represented in the characterization of Shadowhunter. This concept then is being related to the portrayal of the Shadowhunters society in which the story set. This study employs masculinity theory, semiotics, and sociological approach. Semiotics theory is applied to find out symbols of masculinity concept. In addition, sociological approach is conducted to describe the masculinity concept shaped within the society in the novel as reflecting American society. The result of the study shows that masculinity concept has symbols in Shadowhunter life in form of characters, object, weapon, and male's action. Meanwhile, the masculinity phenomena, such as homosexual, army membership, and guardian job exist as trends which are popular in certain period of time in American modern society.

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INTRODUCTION

Society consists of both male and female, and male become the gender that described as the masculine one. Men are normally regarded as the leader in many situations. The people have the concept that a man should have strong body, heavy voice, muscle and moustache. Masculinity has become increasingly challenged, in the last century, when women's right and the development of the role of women in society began to rise. Commonly, people are familiar already to a feminist. However, Social scientist and other scholar have long been interested in research about masculinity concepts.

The problems of this study are divided into two. First, what are masculinity symbols revealed in *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* by Cassandra Clare. Second, how is the masculinity concept shaped within the society in *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* as reflecting American modern society.

I will focus on masculinity concept and male role as the main concern of this study. Burke and Stets (1998:1) stated Femininity and masculinity referred to the degree to which persons saw themselves as masculine or feminine given what it meant to be a man or woman in society. I use semiotic theory and sociological theory to support my analysis. This study concerns about symbol of masculinity concept. I used the semiotic approach based on the limitation of the research question and the representation of the background of the story.

I continued to the second analysis masculinity concept shaped within the society in the novel as reflected American Modern Society. Sociological Criticism is [literary criticism](#) directed to understanding literature in its larger social context; it codifies the literary strategies that are employed to represent social constructs through a sociological methodology. Ruhmana (2010: 9) quoting Glickberg Statement, all literature, however fantasy or mystical in content, is animated by a profound social concern, and this is true of even the most flagrant nihilistic work. From that statement,

all genre of literature is reflected of the phenomena that occur in the society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative research will be applied to create more objective and accurate research. Punch (2006: 52) quoting Cresswel, the qualitative research is defined as descriptive research since its interest is in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words and picture. The data used in this type of research is also qualitative ones in the forms of written or spoken, and not numbers. It is in accordance with this study which uses a novel as one source of data.

The main object of this study is a novel entitled "*The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*" by Cassandra Clare (2007) which tells the story about the life of the Shadowhunters. Explanations and quotation are used for typing of data. Explanation is used to explain the topic. Primary data are taken from the quotations in the novel, while secondary data are the supporting data obtained from books, dictionaries, journals, websites and articles correlating with the topic being analyzed.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Symbols of Masculinity Represented in the Novel

The Mortal Instruments: City of bones is a novel based on the Shadowhunter life, as they prefer to be called, who destroyed the demon. Jace Wayland is a Shadowhunter with the independent, wise, brave, and clever characteristic. He is the best [Shadowhunters](#) of his time, currently residing in the [New York Institute](#).

A novel by Cassandra Clare shows symbols which should be interpreted by the readers and it can be conclude as private or contextual symbols. A symbol will present itself in form of the character, event, object, and total action. Symbols in literature can stand for more than one thing. In *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*, there are symbols that illustrate the

concept of masculinity in the form of characters, objects, weapons, and male's action. In my opinion, there are some masculinity symbols contained in this novel. They are a Shadowhunter, an event battle, muscle; and male's and female's weapons.

1.1 Shadowhunter

The first symbol is a Shadowhunter as represented the superiority and heroic warrior. Portrayal of Jace character is dominated as a shadowhunter in this novel. But, almost Shadowhunters who fight the demons are males. On the other hand the female ones have to mastering and teaching the young Shadowhunters. The rule of female Shadowhunters is supporting the male as written in the quotation above. It shows us the masculinity concept in the novel. The male is dominant and more active than the female. Meanwhile, the female Shadowhunters tend to be inferior. Therefore, those rules strengthen the evidence of the superior male.

One character that could be portrayed as warrior in the novel was Shadowhunter. The portrayal of masculinity was also described in characteristics add male's actions as Shadowhunters, for example leadership, brave, loyal, and quick in taking decision.

The loyalty can be seen from their law; each of Shadowhunters possessed a partner in their life.

"Parabatai," said Jace. "It means a pair of warriors who fight together—who are closer than brothers. Alec is more than just my best friend. My father and his father were parabatai when they were young. His father was my godfather—that's why I live with them. They're my adopted family." (Clare, 2007:85)

Jace as a leader in this novel has the loyalty to his community, the Clave, and his family that he will be protect them from enemy. They called it *Parabatai*. They are bound oath that can not be violated that they will protect their *Parabatai* and always help each other. They are warrior who would die for their partner.

1.2 The Battle

A battle is an action to seize power or risk something important, such as region, position, and love. A man's life is a battle, first against himself and everything that can destroy him. Secondly, a man battles against everything that can harm those he loves. In a battle that involved a great deal, most of which involved violence, courage, power and self regard. The Shadowhunters teach their young warrior to fight well and die honorably from a very young age.

Just like many other groups of soldiers, Shadowhunters were educated to become a powerful warrior and have high self-esteem. However, a Shadowhunter who turned into Downworlder is a shame. The concept of masculinity of Shadowhunter can be found also in the concept of samurai in Japan. There is a similarity of illustration written by Clare and the Samurai tradition, *Seppuku*. Both have the concept of killing himself as a pride. They preferred to die with their sense of honor intact.

One more illustration from this novel that depicting of masculinity is someone who kills the clan leader will be the next leader. It shows us about struggle for leadership position.

...And as the sun began to set again, **I sank my dagger into his neck and he died, soaking me with his blood. I expected the pack to set on me and tear me apart. But they knelt at my feet and bared their throats in submission. The wolves have a**

law: Whoever kills the clan leader takes his place. I had come to the place of the wolves, and instead of finding death and vengeance there, I found a new life. (Clare, 2007:361)

A Shadowhunter named Luke turned into a werewolf because of the bite of the werewolf clan leader. Unfortunately, to be a werewolf was a shame among the Shadowhunter. Thus, He planned to make revenge toward the werewolf clan leader.

Seizure of power is part of masculinity concept that is reflected from the battle between the men. They are willing to die for the honor as a leader, who actually has more risk and responsibility for the clan.

1.3 Powerful Physical Characteristic

The human body is a symbol for our soul. A woman's beauty represents the virtue of her soul. Meanwhile, a man's physical strength represents his spiritual wholeness.

The characteristic of powerful physical characteristic is muscle men. Muscles can reflect symbol of man's power. Strong warrior can be said to do anything. Connell classified masculinity into two, physical masculinity working class and technical masculinity upper middle class. She concluded that physical masculinities working class is always associated with physical strength. This is also applied in the novel. Those who fought at the forefront of the war and fight against the devil could be described as a physical masculinity working class. The characters that illustrated with masculinity working class are Jace Wayland, Alex Lightwood, Hodge, and Robert Lightwood. Meanwhile, technical masculinity upper middle class are reflected to Shadowhunters who lived in Idris (Shadowhunter's motherland) and committee of The Clave. They are always associated with people who use their brains instead of muscle. In this novel Clare

forms a physical of masculinity concept in characters Shadowhunters with the athletic and strong body among all of the characters. It proves that they are powerful to against demons and bad Downworlders.

Muscles can reflect symbol of man's power. Strong warrior can be said to do anything. Clare (2007:234) expressed that "Clary watched him as Jace worked at the lock, watched the lean curve of his back, **the swell of muscles under the short sleeves of his T-shirt.**" These figures portrayed bodied muscular and strong and can lift everything depicted with their hands and defeat their enemies. Therefore, Masculinity concept also means as having muscle, strong and powerful physically.

1.4 Male's and Female's Weapons

As a warrior, male's life would never be separated from the weapons. Weapon is one of the important things in his life as means of self defense. It is also a symbol of strength, power and the degree of its owner. It could be concluded that male's and female's weapons are distinguished. It can be seen from the characteristic of each weapon. The characteristic of female weapons are flexible, light, easy to use and to be hid, such as whips, dagger, and spike. Meanwhile, the male weapons are heavy, complex, and obvious, for example pike, sword, knife, bayonet, and bow. Based on the Shadowhunters' weapons apparently could be seen the use of weapons by gender users. Characteristics of the weapons used by female Shadowhunters describe the nature of woman in general as flexible, gentle, and dependent figure. Whereas, the use of male's weapons representing the nature of man as powerful, dominant, and ambitious figure.

2. The Masculinity Concept Shaped within the Society in the Novel as Reflected American Modern Society

A culture expresses its values in many ways, predominantly through media: television, movies, newspapers, etc. How

society reacts to these stimuli reveal its approval or disapproval of the values. Historians and anthropologists have shown that there is no definite pattern of masculinity found anywhere. Different cultures and different periods of history distinguish the construction of masculinity. For instance, some cultures make heroes of soldiers, and regard violence as the ultimate test of masculinity; others look at soldiering with disdain violence as contemptible. More than one concept of masculinity can be found within a certain cultural setting such as in workplace, neighborhood, school, and family. Thus, there are likely different understandings of masculinity in different ways.

2.1 Homosexual Phenomenon

In works of classic and pop literary, some authors write homosexual as the theme of the story. Clare also creates homosexuality as one of problem in her novel. There was a gay character, named Alec, Jace's partner or in that novel called as *Parabatai*. Clare states in Clary and Isabelle conversation,

"Is Alec gay?" Isabelle's wrist jerked. The eyeliner skidded, inking a long line of black from the corner of Clary's eye to her hairline

...

"What, you can't be gay and a Shadowhunter?"

"There's no official rule about it. But people don't like it. I mean, less with people our age—I think," she added, uncertainly, and Clary remembered how few other people her age Isabelle had ever really met. "But the older generation, no. if it happens, you don't talk about it". (Clare 2007: 197)

Isabelle swore Clary to silence when Clary asked if her brother, Alec, was gay. Homosexuality was frowned on by older Shadowhunters. Once if his parents found out that he was a homosexual, they would disown him.

Homosexual phenomenon which is represented in the story of *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* has never been happened in Shadowhunters life before and it is difficult to accept by old generation of Shadowhunter and the Clave since there is no official rule about it. Moreover, there is a serious problem in the regeneration of Shadowhunters. A number of young Shadowhunters fall while they should continue to reproduce to keep the world from the demons. Manliness is supposedly very important for Americans. They have several mythic images to which they should live up. Some may be actively dishonored, for example homosexual masculinities in modern American culture.

The right or wrong in the society is built by themselves and may be it influences by their religions and cultures. Generally, people shape the rules that have been around a long time. Social and Cultural norms can significantly influence both the expression of gender identity.

2.2 Shadowhunters Reflecting in American Army

Clave prefer selected male Shadowhunters than female is an evidence that Shadowhunters has same masculinity concept. Fact shows that most the soldiers in the world are men. Clare states that,

..."it's only been recently that women have been Shadowhunters along with men. I mean, there have always been women in the Clave—mastering the runes, creating weaponry, teaching the Killing Arts—but only a few were warriors, ones with exceptional abilities. They

had to fight to be trained. (Clare 2007:134)

Almost Shadowhunters who fight the demons are all males, on the other hand the female ones have to master and teaching the young Shadowhunters. The male has dominated and more active than the female. This is a result of social changes and gender expectations, where hegemonic masculinity is now conflicting with other expectations. It is a familiar fact that most the soldiers in the world are men. Why, until very recently, has soldiering been an almost exclusively male? I think the society makes the rules. The society is those who make the rules about gender stereotype.

The women who serve in today's military differ from the men who serve in a number of ways. Since 1973, when the United States military ended conscription and established an all-volunteer force, the number of women serving on active duty has risen dramatically. Concept of masculinity is influenced and shaped by the entertainment media. There is also masculinity concept as evidenced by the theme of the film form of military, war, hero, and action. We can see the concept of masculinity that was built by American people can also be seen from the film and military action. Since, most of the characters in these films are male military. It can give us some insight into how the United States thinks about boyhood, manhood, manliness, and masculinity. In short, even though the fact that women in the military employment increased, masculinity concept in America still strong with the persistence of the main male characters in military films.

2.3 Bouncer

Job is also former environment in masculinity concept. Bouncer is a job indicates that the concept of masculinity influence on the western society. In the beginning of story, Clary saw a blue haired boy and a bouncer was in front of row

queue, when Clary went to the Pandemonium Club with Simon Lewis. He joked to the bouncer that he is a vampire hunter. The bouncer is identical with big muscular man, like in chapter 4.1 that muscular man is one of the symbols of masculinity concept.

"You've got to be kidding me," the bouncer said, folding his arms across his massive chest. He stared down at the boy in the red zip-up jacket and shook his shaved head. "You can't bring that thing in here." (Clare, 2007: 9)

From quotation above we can see the big bouncer called Doorman is a type of security guard, who employed at venues such as nightclub, bars, or concerts to provide security and check legal age. The dominance of physically large males as security guards in the entertainment industry shows how bouncers construct masculine identity. Traditionally the role of bouncer has been a working class male dominated occupation. Bouncer is a job indicates that the concept of masculinity influence on the western society. Almost bouncers who work in the nightclubs or bars are all males. They are the embodiment of masculinity concept. The bouncer must be brave, strong, macho, and has all considered manly attitude by people.

The majority of main characters are men. Clare lists is that brave, independence, and masculine characters are predominantly male, for example, Jace Wayland, Alec Lightwood, Hogde, Luke/Lucian Graymark, and Valentine Morgenstern. Clare states that,

"Not after you decided to leap merrily through that Portal like you were jumping the F train. You're just lucky it didn't dump us out in the East River."

"You didn't have to come after me."

"Yes, I did," he said. **"You're far too inexperienced to protect yourself in a hostile situation without me."** (Clare, 2007:106)

Clare described the female main character, Clary as a woman that protected by the majority of the male characters, Jace, Alec, Simon, and Luke. The author wants to show the reader that it should men to protect woman.

The author might suggest that women represented as both strong and weak. It is defined in Jocelyn Fray. She lived a mundane (as human) life with her daughter, Clarissa Fray. Jocelyn leaved her hometown and her previous life to live as a mundane to protect Clary from Shadowhunter world so that she could live in peace without Downworlders and wars. On the other hand, she was overprotective mother who fear of the outside world to disturb her daughter. The discussion above shows the side of female author who want to show that what should be done by masculine people to feminine ones.

Gender of the author more or less will affect the style of his or her writing and the message to be conveyed to the reader. In her official blog, Clare stated that,

But I'm not writing a thinly veiled version of my own life. These characters are created to fit the needs of the story and to be very much themselves. Sometimes they incorporate aspects of people I know, or have met, like Simon's sense of humor or Clary's artistry. **Jace, alas, is definitely not based on anyone real.**

Jace Wayland is a masculine figure character who became the most powerful character formed by Clare. According feminist literary criticism, she formed a masculine character that she thinks qualifies as a masculine figure in her mind. Clare seems to want to convey to the readers that the people who formed her

masculine seen in figure Shadowhunter as heroic figure.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* novel in chapter IV and making some discussion, I was going to draw some conclusions.

First, *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* shows masculinity symbol which should be interpreted by the readers. A symbol will present itself in form of an event, the total action, an object, and a character. Symbols in literature can stand for more than one thing. There are symbols that illustrate the concept of masculinity in the form of characters, objects, weapons, and male's action.

Second, the researcher assumed that masculinity concept shaped within the society in *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* as reflected American Modern Society in some aspects of American people life, such as the way they think of homosexuality which also happened in the novel, bouncer as one of work that best describes masculinity, army in Shadowhunter as reflected army in American Society. In addition, the researcher also found that Clare tried to share about her personal life to the novel.

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