



RAPE CULTURE PICTURED IN BARBARA DEE'S *MAYBE HE JUST LIKES YOU*

THESIS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. My mother Nunung Kusumaningrum and my late father Arief Iman Santosa for support me spiritually and financially.
2. My sister Gita Nanda Safitri who supports me emotionally.



MOTTO

“Everything you lose is a step you take”
(Taylor Swift - You’re On Your Own, Kid)



DECLARATION

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I, Ardy Cahya Pertiwi, student number 190110101072 declare that the thesis titled **“Rape Culture Pictured in Barbara Dee’s *Maybe He Just Likes You*”** is an original writing of mine. I confirm that this study have never been submitted for another degree or publication. To the best of my knowledge, I declare that all sources utilized and assistance obtained in the creation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

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SUMMARY

Rape Culture Pictured in Barbara Dee's *Maybe He Just Likes You*: Ardy Cahya Pertiwi, 190110101072, 2023: 33 pages: English Department, the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember.

This research analyzes how rape culture is pictured in Dee's novel *Maybe He Just Likes You*. This novel was published by Aladdin in 2019. *Maybe He Just Likes You* tells about a middle school girl named Mila who receives unwanted attentions from a group of boys in her school. One issue to look at in this novel is rape culture.

Rape Culture is when sexual violence and abuse are normalized, played down, and laughed off in society. People around the main character, Mila, such as her best friends and teachers blamed her for what had happened to her. There are some signs of rape culture occurred in society, these signs include victim blaming and toxic masculinity which will be the focus of this research.

The constructionist approach from Hall's representation theory and Foucault's discursive approach are used to analyze the rape culture pictured in the novel and to analyze the voice of the author. This research is qualitative research whose data were collected data from the narratives and dialogues in the novel, journal articles, academic publications, and other relevant information to support the discussion of the matter.

The analysis using Hall's theory of representation and Foucault's concept of discourse reveals 2 things. First is how rape culture took place in the society and factors trigger this type of sexual harassment unfold. By connecting the data found in the novel and the context of sexual harassment happened in the U.S. between the year 2015-2018, the causes of this rape culture is unfolding. Second is the author's voice is unveiled.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the overview of the topic of this study, rape culture as the main issue and victim blaming as the following issue as the result of the rape culture itself. In this chapter, four sub-chapters consist of firstly, the background of the study that explains reasons of choosing this topic and the author's background which provides the motives behind the writing of the novel. Secondly, it is the research problems which explain the problems raised in this study. Thirdly, the research questions guiding this study. Fourthly, is the goal of the study that reveals the purpose of this study.

1.1 The Background of the Study

Rape Culture is a pervasive ideology that supports or excuses sexual assault (Johnson and Johnson, 2021), in other words, rape culture is when sexual violence and abuse are normalized, played down, and laughed off in the society. Society thinks that sexual harassment is a common thing happened on a daily basis. It is part of life, just like death and taxes (Burnett, 2016). According to National Survey of Family Growth, a nationally representative US government health survey, more than 3 million American women lost their virginity because they were raped (Mahdawi, 2019).

Barbara Dee is one of the best authors of a middle grade novel. Middle-grade novel is a book or novel aimed at readers aged 8-12 years (Lamba, 2014). She has written twelve middle-grade novels including *Maybe He Just Likes You*. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York. She loves reading very much, so she spent most of her times reading and writing.

Maybe He Just Likes You was published in 2019. This novel has won two awards; A 2020 ALA Notable Children's Book and A Washington Post Best Children's Book of 2019. Dee wrote the novel in support of the #MeToo

movement which invites victims of sexual violence to speak up and fight for their lives. One issue to look at in the novel *Maybe He Just Like You* is a rape culture.

This novel tells about a middle school girl named Mila who received sexual harassment behavior from a group of boys in her school. Sexual harassment is when people are targets of unwanted sexual comments, sexual gestures, or sexual actions because of their actual or perceived gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation (Burn, 2018).

What happened to Mila is considered a child sexual abuse because Mila is still an under-aged girl. Any sexual behavior with a person under the age of consent is considered child sexual abuse (Craig, 2022). Contact abuse, such as penetration assault, touching body part without consent (unwanted touching), and non-contact abuse, such as collecting or viewing sexual photos of a kid, are both covered by Child Sexual Abuse or commonly abbreviated as CSA (NSPCC, 2018; World Health Organization, 2006). NSPCC is the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, according to its official website, NSPCC is the top children's charity in the UK, working to stop abuse and aid those who have been affected to recover. In this novel, Mila was harassed by her friends from the opposite gender. She got some unwanted hugs and any other unwanted touches that made her uncomfortable. Her friend, Zara, who had a crush on one of those boys does not stand up for Mila. Zara thought that this incident was very common among teenagers when they had a crush on someone, often also called flirting. She accused Mila of being too sensitive instead. Not only were children who likely to get assaulted, but women were also more likely to experience sexual harassment (Cotter and Laura, 2019). In relation to the novel, Mila is a child, a teenager to be precise, and likely becomes a woman who makes her very vulnerable to being a victim of sexual abuse.

From the novel *Maybe He Just Likes You*, it can be seen that rape culture is still very close to the society. There are several characteristics of rape culture developed in society. One of the indications where rape culture exists in a society is the presence of victim blaming. It is done by the public against the victims of sexual harassment which causes the victim to be afraid to speak up. What makes

this issue interesting to discuss is because it happens in a middle school area. In this school area, they are supervised and guided by the teacher, however, sexual harassment still occurs within the school area that should be safe for everyone in it. The society views the victim of sexual harassment as the sinned one, and being a victim of sexual harassment brings a disgrace to themselves and their family. Society's bad view of victims of sexual harassment can have a bad impact on the mental health of the victim. Many victims of sexual assault face secondary trauma as a result of the unfavorable reactions of others, in addition to the physical and emotional damage (Gravelin, et.al, 2019).

1.2 The Research Problems

Rape, as well as the culture that normalizes it, is a global issue that still lives in the society (Burnett, 2016). In gender studies, there is a problem called "toxic masculinity" where rape culture is a manifestation of this toxic masculinity (Posadas, 2017). The society often normalizes sexual assault or they do not even know that some behaviors are considered as a sexual assault since no one educates them. This can lead to victim blaming because they do not sympathize with the victims, or worse, they blame the victims. They are victims but are often treated as if they were perpetrators.

Sexually harassed people will be viewed as immoral and lacking in self-respect. Even worse they are blamed for the abuse that befell them and it is said that it was their fault. They have seen the victims as if they were being harassed because of their own mistakes, they will be blamed for wearing inappropriate clothes, for going out at night and alone, and for being too pretty. Sometimes, victims are also blamed for having sensitive feelings so they misinterpret jokes as sexual harassment because perpetrators usually justify their harassing actions behind the word "joking".

In some cases, the public does not trust the victims' stories due to the perpetrator's good reputation in society, more specifically in the school

environment. That is why the victims are blamed for what happened to them most of the time. This can be the reason why the victims choose to remain silent rather than listen to unpleasant responses from the society.

1.3 The Research Questions

From the novel *Maybe He Just Likes You* written by Barbara Dee, there are two questions that will guide this research. These questions are:

1. How is rape culture represented in the novel?
2. What is the voice of the author?

1.4 The Goals of The Study

The general goals of this study are twofold. First, it is to describe rape culture in the school environment portrayed in the novel using the representation theory from Hall (1997). Second, it is to find out the author's position on the issues contained in the novel. The contribution of this research to society is to learn more about what rape culture is and the signs of rape culture in society.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The second chapter discusses two points; these are the review of the previous research, and the review of the representation theory by Stuart Hall (1997). The previous research contains previous studies that have similar themes, research objects, or theories used in this research to compare and find areas of research that have not been done before. The review of representation theory, on the other hand, defines how the theory is used to address the research questions in this study.

2.1 The Review of the Previous Researches

In this sub-chapter, several studies with theories, data sources, and research objects that are comparable to or different from the current study will be presented. These earlier studies are used as a basic resource to develop and widen the theories that will be applied in the current study.

The first previous research is a study by Gravelin, Biernat, and Baldwin (2019). This article talks about the power and powerless position of someone in blaming the victim of sexual assault. Men's experiences of powerlessness led to less victim blaming, whereas women's feelings of powerlessness led to more victim blaming. This article also talks about rape myths. There are two studies in this article. Each study used a different method to do the research. The first study involved one hundred thirty-nine participants recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) online service (59% female), and the procedure used power manipulation and thought listing as the variables of interest. The result of the first study discusses the influence of gender and power on victim blaming and perspective taking, and tests whether the gender and power condition interaction on victim blaming was mediated by perspective taking. The researchers conducted a moderated mediation analysis using the process macro for SPSS. In the second study, one hundred thirty participants (56% women) from a major Midwestern

university participated in an evaluation of the same sexual assault case to investigate the effects of power priming on victim blaming. From these two studies, it can be seen that power and powerlessness mean something different for women and men in the context of sexual assault.

The second study was written by Hlavka (2014). This article talks about the reasons behind the silence of sexual harassment victims. This article also talks about how sexual harassment is normalized because it happens in everyday life. The focus of this research is on the sexuality, harassment, assault, coercion, and consent experiences that females have in their interpersonal relationships. The theory used in this research was compulsory heterosexuality. This research was conducted by Hlavka using data that she took by interviewing children aged 3 to 17 years. This journal mentioned that 48 percent of the 1965 students had experienced sexual harassment, but only 9 percent reported the incident to the authority figures. Girls were more likely to experience sexual harassment more than boys (56% vs. 40%); they were also more likely to experience pressure to go out on dates, pressure to engage in sexual activity, and verbal harassment (American Association of University Women, 2001; Finneran and Bennet, 1999; Hlavka, 2014). Sexual harassment is not just rape, it includes unwanted touch of someone's body part or even unwanted attention that makes someone feels uncomfortable. The results of this study found that sexual abuse is considered as everyday violence. Assaultive behaviors were frequently justified, particularly when they were represented as indiscriminate (Hlavka, 2014). In peer groups, violence became more accepted, and one older man frequently became the assailant. The connections between everyday harassment and violence were further reinforced by attributions of blame.

The third study was written by Indriyana and Albab (2020) wrote that women are most likely to become the victims of sexual harassment. This article talks about how women are portrayed in most films, especially M.F.A (Master of Fine Arts) film. The researchers of this article used semiotics to analyze texts (M.F.A) is the concept of radical feminism. Women are still seen as helpless objects by men for sex as written in this article. According to the National

Commission on Violence Against Women and 2019 Annual Notes, 3,915 instances of violence against women were reported in the public and community (Indriyana and Albab, 2020). Sexual assault, including molestation (1,136 cases), rape (762) and sexual harassment, constitutes 64% of all violence against women in the community or public domain (394). The victim in this novel is a girl, this strengthens the statements written by Indriyana and Albab. The boys here have full authority of their body while Mila does not. She is trying to protect herself but she can not due the circumstances. Women never have complete autonomy over their bodies like men do (Indriyana and Albab, 2020).

The fourth study was written by Darma, Triwulandari, and Bunga (2022). The article talks about how the society labeling the women victims of sexual violence in the perspective of human rights. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of patriarchal culture on women's subordination, the notion of blaming the victim against women victims of sexual violence, and human rights studies on victim blaming and labeling for women victims of sexual violence. This study is a normative juridical research that uses secondary data to conduct a legal analysis. This research has an analytical prescriptive typology, which means it seeks to provide suggestions and alternative ways for overcoming an issue. The data collection technique applied to this study is a documentation study in which records linked to victim blaming of women who are victims of sexual harassment are collected and analysed from the point of view of human rights. Books, scientific journals, rules and regulations, and other publications are examples of these documents. There are 3 points generated from the study, namely the implications of patriarchal culture on the position of women as subordinates, the concept of victim blaming to the women victims of sexual harassment, and human rights study on victim blaming and labeling for women victims of sexual violence.

The fifth previous research is a study by Shopiani, Wilodati, and Supriadi (2021). This article discusses the factors behind the phenomenon of victim blaming among students against victims of sexual harassment. The research design used in this study uses the approach qualitative with case study method.

The subject of this study is students as perpetrators of victim blaming, victims of sexual harassment and the community of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). The place of this research is at Bandung precisely at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. The researchers collect the data using interview techniques, observation and documentation. From this research, 3 points were produced, these are forms of victim blaming, factors that can trigger victim blaming towards students whose the victims of sexual harassment, and the impacts of victim blaming occurs in the victims of sexual harassment.

Those previous researches above talked about the relationship of a variable with sexual harassment and its victims. These variables include the relationship of power and powerlessness with reactions to victims of sexual harassment. However, the focus of this present research is on rape culture which talks about how the society normalizes rape behavior and the factors behind it such as victim blaming and toxic masculinity. Rape culture is very important to study considering that society normalizes rape. While three of the data from the five studies above are sourced from research taken directly from the field, one research of which its data is sourced from film, and one research using documents (books, scientific journals, rules and regulations, and other publications) as the data source, the data source for this study is a novel written by Barbara Dee entitled *Maybe He Just Likes You*, which was published by Aladdin in 2019.

2.2 The Review of Representation Theory by Stuart Hall

In this sub-chapter, the researcher discuss the theory used for this research. The main theory used to analyze rape culture in *Maybe He Just Likes You* is representation theory by Stuart Hall (1997). Any journals, articles, and books that relevant to the topic are used to support the main theory.

According to the theory of representation and signifying practices, representation entails using language to say something meaningful about, or to

show the world to other people in a meaningful way (Hall, 1997). Because it functions as a representational system, language is capable of doing so. The researcher combines sounds, written words, technologically produced visuals, and musical notes as signs and symbols in language. even objects- to symbolize or stand for our views, ideas, and feelings to others (Hall, 1997). Things such as sounds, and written words could represent something. However, the data the researcher have for this research is written words from a novel *Maybe He Just Likes You*.

According to Hall, there are two important processes to construct the meaning; the mental component and the language component. Both of them are often called as the representational system.

“Mental representation: all things which carry around in our heads. Meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thought which can stand for or represent the world language: to present and exchange meanings and concepts we can only do that when we also have access to share language. Language depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arrange or organized into various language which stand for or represent those concepts.” (Hall, 1997:17)

Language is one of the 'media' through which a culture's thoughts, ideas, and feelings are expressed (Hall,1997:1). According to this quotation, Hall wants to convey that language is only one medium to represent something and there are other media that can be used to represent the culture. Meaning and language are linked to culture through representation. Representation is an important aspect of the process of producing and exchanging meaning among members of a culture (Hall, 1997:15).

The construction of meaning through language is known as representation. The Oxford English Dictionary's Shortel's Oxford English Dictionary proposes two possible meanings for the word (Hall, 1997:16):

1. To represent something is to describe or depict it, to conjure it up in the mind through description, depiction, or imagination; to project a likeness of it in our minds or senses.
2. To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, be a specimen of, or substitute for.

According to Hall's theory of representation, there are three ways to describe how linguistic representation of meaning works in general. These are known as reflective, intentional, and constructionist approach. In his book, Hall wrote that in reflective approach, meaning is believed to be contained in the actual object, person, idea, or event, and language serves as a mirror to reflect the true definition as it already exists in reality (Hall, 1997:24). The second approach in representation theory is intentional approach. In this approach, the author's intended meaning is conveyed through the use of words. According to this theory, the speaker or author is the one who uses language to impose his or her personal meaning on the outside world (Hall, 1997:25).

The third is constructionist approach and this is the one the researcher will use to conduct this research. Based on what Hall had said in his book, Meaning is created, produced, and comprehended in relation to oneself rather than being contained in things. Representation is an activity, or sort of "job," that makes use of real aspects and effects. However, the significance is determined by the sign's symbolic role rather than its material quality.

2.3 Discursive Approach

The discursive approach is associated with the French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. While the semiotic approach is concerned with the how representation, or how language produces meaning, the discursive approach is concerned with the effects and implications of representation - its 'politics' (Hall,

1997). Foucault's concept of discourse is different from what is used as a linguistic concept. Discourse, according to Foucault, refers to the production of knowledge through language (Hall, 1997).

Discourse creates and defines the objects of our knowledge. It determines how a topic can be meaningfully discussed and reasoned about. It also has an impact on how ideas are implemented and utilized to manage the behavior of others (Hall, 1997). From the explanation above, the concept of discourse is concerned with where meaning comes from rather than whether things exist.

2.4 Rape Culture

Rape culture was originally put forth in 1980 and improved upon in the 1990s. A rape culture is made up of five fundamental elements: sexism, traditional gender norms, antagonistic sexual attitudes, antagonism against women, and acceptance of violence (Johnson and Johnson, 2017). Rape culture was believed to consist of traditional gender roles, hostile sexual ideas, and acceptance of interpersonal violence (Johnson and Johnson, 2017).

According to Herman (1984) in Burnett (2016), rape will continue to persist as long as male dominance and sexual violence are given an acceptable social stigma. Male dominance could lead to the occurrence of rape culture. Male domination pressure from society produces a culture where rape is considered a normal part of being a guy (Burnett, 2016). Rape culture does not just affect women, anyone could be the victims of rape in this society (Burnett, 2016).

2.5 Victim Blaming

One of the results of rape culture is victim blaming. In other word, rape culture could lead to victim blaming. In the society, most of the victims of rape are women, however it could happen to anyone including men. According to the

National Commission on Violence Against Women's 2019 annual notes written in Indriyana and Albab (2020), 3,915 instances of violence against women were reported in the public and community. Sexual assault, including molestation (1,136 cases), rape (762) and sexual harassment, constitutes 64% of all violence against women in the community or public domain (394). Those number above are still considered high.

2.6 Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity comes from Connell and Messerschmidt's concept of hegemonic masculinity (2005). Hegemonic masculinity is a concept that has been used in education studies to better understand the dynamics of classroom life, particularly patterns of boy bullying and resistance (Connell, and Messerschmidt, 2005). The theory of toxic masculinity claims that the definition of "manliness" supports oppression, homophobia, and hostility. There are cultural expectations placed on men to act a specific way, which leads to toxic masculinity (Morin, 2022). This concept of masculinity can be detrimental to society, especially men themselves because they are required to be the best in many things. Many of men also get pressure from their families to be the breadwinner of the family. Of course, there are also many stereotypes created by society itself that a man must act in a certain way.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is used as a guide to design and obtain the results. The type of the research, the data collection, the data processing, and the data analysis are all included in this chapter. Firstly, the type of the research is the kind of research used. Secondly, the data collection which explain about how the data was collected from the novel. After the data was collected, it needs to be processed. This sub-chapter explain how the data will be processed after it is collected.

3.1 The Type of The Research

This study is classified as qualitative for the data can be in the form of spoken words, written words, or visual images at this phase (Denscombe, 2007: 273). The data used in this research is based on words rather than numbers. *Maybe He Just Likes You*, a novel written by Barbara Dee in 2019 is the subject of this study, and the data are in the form of selected quotations and conversations linked to the topic of discussion, that is rape culture.

3.2 The Data Collection

There are two kinds of data involved in this research, the primary and the secondary data. *Maybe He Just Likes You* by Barbara Dee as the subject of the study as the primary data. The data are in the form of narratives text such as dialogues and quotations within the short story above. While the secondary data are gathered from a variety of books, journals, and websites, with a focus on Stuart Hall's operation of representation theory.

The primary data was collected from the novel *Maybe He Just Likes You* by Barbara Dee. First of all, the researcher reads carefully the novel *Maybe He*

Just Like You to collect the data that contain dialogues or quotations related to the topic about rape culture. While reading, the researcher highlights conversations and sentences that support the topic. *Maybe He Just Likes You* consists of 75 chapters. However, because this research focuses only on rape culture, there are only 18 chapters use for the research. In these chapters, the researcher can find the data that can support the research. These chapters are chapter 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 29, 30, 32, 39, 52, 54, 68, and 74.

The secondary data are gathered from a variety of journals, books, and online resources, including video and digital news, and the youtube videos interview with Barbara Dee. The secondary data collection process involves multiple steps. The first stage is to read the journals, books, and online news thoroughly while repeatedly watching the video to have a better comprehension to the topic. The second stage involves underlining the language that refers to Barbara Dee and the context or putting the information on the note for the video's data. The last stage is to use Microsoft Word to enter the data.

3.3 The Data Processing

After the data was collected, the collected data then got processed. There are some steps in performing the research that are based on data processing. The collected data were categorized in three categories. The first category is about victim blaming, the second category is data about self-blaming, and the third data category is about toxic masculinity. After categorizing the data, the researcher will bold specific words, phrases, or sentences that depicts those themes. In the following step, the researcher gave a code for the data that have gathered. The researcher used the letter D as the code for the data's number, the letter C for the novel's chapter, and the letter P for its page when encoding the data from the book. Examples are (D1, C1, P21), which refers to the initial data from chapter one on page 21.

3.4 The Data Analysis

After processing the data, the next step is to analyse the data to answer the research questions. To answer the first question, the first step is to describe how rape culture represented in this novel. There are 3 points have discussed in the first question which are also signs of rape culture in the novel. These signs are victim blaming which can lead to self-blaming, and toxic masculinity behavior. In this case is how people around Mila including her close friends and teacher reaction to the sexual harassment that Mila had experienced. The representation theory by Stuart Hall used to construct the discourse of rape culture in the novel. The researcher has connected rape culture in the novel with the context of rape culture that occurred in the United States in 2015-2018. From 2015 to 2018, there were 3.3 million violent crime victims aged 12 or older, up from 2.7 million in 2015. The majority of these victims were sexual assault, aggravated assault, and simple assault victims (Morgan, 2019).

To answer the second question to analyse Dee's social background and her answer in an interview related to the issue rape culture, the next step is to connect the analysis in the third step to the context of the US in the 21st century and to connect the analysis to the discourse of rape culture in the novel.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

This chapter contains two sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter is the discussion of how rape culture represented in the novel, which is divided into two sub-chapters, containing the explanation of victim blaming, and the impact of toxic masculinity on the occurrence of rape culture. Sub-chapter 4.1 contains one sub-chapter; self-blaming. The second sub-chapter, chapter 4.2 is the discussion of the voice of the author regarding the issue of rape culture.

4.1 Rape Culture Represented in *Maybe He Just Likes You*

This sub-chapter focuses on elaborating how rape culture is represented in Dee's novel by analyzing some of the characteristics that underlie the rape culture phenomenon itself, namely victim blaming and toxic masculinity. However, for victim blaming, it was found that it was not only done by other people, but also from the victim herself. Therefore, this sub-chapter contains stages divided into two sub-chapters. The first is 4.1.1 Victim Blaming Pictured in *Maybe He Just Likes You* explains about victim blaming happened in the novel. In the sub-chapter 4.1.1, it contains one other stage that is 4.1.1.1 explains about self-blaming as the result of victim blaming.

Rape Culture is a pervasive ideology that supports or excuses sexual assault (Johnson and Johnson, 2021), in other words, rape culture is when sexual violence and abuse are normalized, played down and laughed off in the society. According to Psychology Benefits (n.d) Society, there are three components of rape culture. These components are Power, Anger, and Hyper-Masculinity; Sexual Objectification of Women's Body; Systemic and Institutional support. However, in the novel *Maybe He Just Likes You* had found the power and hyper-masculinity components that makes this research only focuses to the first and third point to reveal problems of victim blaming and toxic masculinity.

4.1.1 Victim Blaming Pictured in *Maybe He Just Likes You*

Rape victims are usually held accountable for the horrific event that happened to them and are often accused of having caused it. Victims are accused for being viewed as docile (surrendering, accepting, and relishing the rapist's sexual attention). Because it is impossible to control one's lust, criminals are often thought to be innocent (Darma, et. al, 2022).

Victim blaming can be done by other people or the victims themselves (self-blaming). Therefore, in this research, the researcher found two kinds of victim blaming in the novel *Maybe He Just Likes You*. These are victim blaming done by other people and self-blaming. Victim blaming done by other people in Dee's novel is represented through the response of people around Mila as the main character to what she has experienced. It can be proven in the following data.

On the day Mila and her friends celebrating Omi's birthday, she gets an unwanted touch from Leo that makes her feel uncomfortable "I wriggled my shoulder, but Callum's hand was squeezing. And not leaving. Now I could feel my armpits getting damp." (Dee, 2019:5). From what Mila said, it looks like Callum was touching Mila without her permission since she felt uncomfortable with Callum's sudden touch. According to Hall's theory of representation, what Mila said about Callum's unwanted touch toward her in the data above represent sexual assault. Sexual assault is an offensive behavior or attention of a sexual kind that makes the victim uncomfortable (Adizza, 2019).

[1] I wriggled my shoulder, but Callum's hand was squeezing. And not leaving. Now I could feel my armpits getting damp. "Well, thanks, but I'm kind of getting smooshed here," Omi called out. "So if you guys wouldn't mind-". "Okay, sorry!" Leo said. "Happy birthday, Omi! Bye!". All at once, like a flock of birds, they took off for the basketball court. Immediately my friends and I pulled apart, and I could breathe normally again. "Okay, that was weird," I said, brushing boy molecules off the fuzz of my sweater. "Oh, Mila, don't be such a baby, Zara said. "They were just being friendly." I Snorted. You think getting smooshed like that is friendly?". "Yeah, Zara," Max said. "You're only saying that because you like Leo." (D1, C1, P5)

Mila's response to Callum's unwanted touch shows that she felt uncomfortable by saying "Okay, that was weird". Zara, as her close friend and one of the witnesses of what Callum did to Mila, instead of defending Mila, she said "Oh, Mila, don't be such a baby, Zara said". According to Hall (1997), she blamed Mila for being such a baby, a baby that can not take a joke and take everything in a serious way. The line where Zara accuses Mila a baby represents victim blaming.

People like Zara can make the harassers get away with their mistake easily since they have other people justified their behavior. Victims of sexual harassment frequently get blamed by the people around them and this can be used by the perpetrator to defend himself, so that the victims could not defend themselves for sexual harassment befell them (Shopiani, et al, 2021).

[2] Zara snorted. "Why would they think that?" I tried to look at Max, but he'd turned away, watching something or someone across the blacktop. "Who knows," I said. "They have this dumb superstition." "Or maybe Tobias just likes you, Mila," Omi said in a teasing voice. "No, Callum likes Mila," Zara declared. "Me?" Where had she gotten that from? I made a noise like pffft. "Zara, I'm positive he doesn't, okay? Callum's a total jerk to me in band. But even if he did, what does that have to do with Tobias?" "Maybe they both like you," Omi said. She was grinning now. (D2, C8, P28)

According to the constructionist approach written in Hall's representation theory, meaning is created in relation to oneself rather than being contained in things. Mila's friend assumes that the boys behavior is caused by their feeling towards Mila. This assumption exist because the society normalize teasing behavior when one gender attracted to other gender. Teasing occurs often among friends and close relatives (Hack, et. al. 2020). The boys think they are close enough to Mila so that they can tease her and they did not realizes that what they did can be considered as sexual harassment.

Omi and Zara even argued about which boy really has feelings toward Mila by saying "Or maybe Tobias just likes you, Mila," and Zara replied to Omi

by saying “No, Callum likes Mila,”. Omi make things worse with her sentence “Maybe they both like you,” since she and Zara do not have any proofs so they assume that Tobias and Callum like Mila. They did not even listen to Mila when she says it is not true. They indirectly ignored Mila’s feeling. In this data, both Omi and Zara represent the act of ignorance.

[3] “Okay, that’s crazy,” I said. “Anyhow, I told Tobias he couldn’t hug me, but he did it anyway. “ Zara kicked some pebbles. “Well, Mila, no one can hug you if you don’t let them,” she said, not smiling, not looking at me. (D3, C8, P28)

The conversation above is a continuation of the conversation in data 2. In this passage, Mila makes it clear that she did not give Tobias permission to hug her but he still hugs her anyway. However, Zara still did not listen to Mila’s explanation and blamed Mila instead. “Well, Mila, no one can hug you if you don’t let them,” If analyzed using Hall’s representation theory, what Zara said represents victim blaming since Zara is still cornering and blaming Mila for the sexual harassment that happened to her even though she already said that she did not give Tobias permission to hug her. According to Aulya (2019) in Shopiani, Wilodarti, and Supriadi (2021), what Zara said to Mila can be considered as victim blaming since she showed no sympathy to Mila as a victim of sexual harassment.

[4] “That was weird on the bus yesterday,” she announced suddenly. I swallowed. “Yeah. It was.” “Why were those boys teasing you like that?” “I really don’t know.” She frowned. “If it was me, I wouldn’t allow it.” “You think I allowed it?” “I’m just saying, you don’t have to put up with stuff like that, Mila. It’s just really wrong, you know?” Maybe I was reading too much into it, but it kind of felt like Samira was saying the whole bus thing was my fault. “I didn’t ‘put up’ with it, Samira,” I said, my throat tight. “I told Dante to move and he refused. What else should I have done?” (D4, C14, P44)

Same thing happened to Mila when she attends Karate class with one of her school friend, Samira. “If it was me, I wouldn’t allow it.” this is what Samira says to Mila. She indirectly blames Mila for what happened to her. Sexual

harassment that happened to Mila happened because she allowed it to happen, she allowed the boys to do that to her and did nothing about it. However, Samira said that she did not mean what she said by saying “I’m just saying, you don’t have to put up with stuff like that, Mila. It’s just really wrong, you know?”. In fact, Mila had already done something to confront the boys and told them that she felt uncomfortable with their unwanted treatment. “I didn’t ‘put up’ with it, Samira,” I said, my throat tight. “I told Dante to move and he refused. What else should I have done?”. What Mila said represents self-defense she did to defending herself.

What Samira said in data 4 is the same as Omi and Zara said in data 3. Those kind of responses make the victim (Mila) afraid to speak up and seek justice for herself since she does not get the support that she needs from the people closest to her. Even worse, it can lead to self-blame that will be discussed in the next sub-sub-chapter.

[5] “So here’s the best I can do, under the circumstances. You’re aware, I bet, that seventh grade boys can be very immature. They act like big shots, some of them, but they can say some gross and stupid things. And the truth is, they’ll pretty much tease anyone or anything that moves.” Yes, but I know what teasing is. This is different. Mr. Dolan leaned toward me; his swivel chair squeaked. “It doesn’t mean these boys are gross and stupid inside; mostly they’re just showing off for their friends. So if that’s what’s going on, Mila, I can tell you from experience that the best course of action is to try to ignore them.” (D5, C16, P57)

When Mila finally has the courage to tell her teacher about the incident, instead of validating her feelings, Mr. Dolan excuses the teenage boys behaviour by saying the boys are immature and needed her attentions. “So here’s the best I can do, under the circumstances. You’re aware, I bet, that seventh grade boys can be very immature. They act like big shots, some of them, but they can say some gross and stupid things. And the truth is, they’ll pretty much tease anyone or anything that moves.”. What Mr. Dolan said represents the rape culture behavior by normalizing the boys jerky behavior and asked Mila to understand instead.

This make Mila feels that there is no point in reporting because there has been no action regarding Mila's report. Mila was taught to understand that this is very normal for teenagers to do these kind of things. Mr. Dolan did not consider those behaviors as sexual harassment or even bullying. According to a recent epidemiological survey, 19.3% of women claimed having been raped at some point in their lives, and 43.9% of American women reported being the victims of different types of sexual violence (Kline, et. al, 2018).

[6] “So was Ms. Fender. “Is there a problem over in the trumpet section?” she demanded. “Some reason to be rude to a fellow musician?” It took me a second to realize that by “fellow musician” Ms. Fender meant Samira, not me. “Sorry,” I said. “Dante was crowding my chair just now.” “I didn’t mean to,” Dante insisted. “I was just trying to read the music. And Mila didn’t need to react like that anyway.” “Overreact,” Callum said.” (D6, C17, P62)

[7] “All right,” Mr. McCabe said. “Mila, can I hear from you why you kicked Callum?” “Self-defense,” I said. “That’s stupid,” Callum muttered. “Because I didn’t do anything.” “Yes you did! Of course you did! You grabbed my arm!” “See? And you overreacted again.” (D7, C52, P153)

Mila was accused of overreacting by Callum when Dante asked her to share her music but actually he had an ulterior motive to touch Mila without Mila's permission. “I was just trying to read the music. And Mila didn’t need to react like that anyway.” “Overreact,” Callum said.”. Callum and Dante blamed Mila for reacting the way she reacts and even lied to their teacher about what really happened. The boys do not want to be blamed for what they did, they blamed their victim instead so they could keep their good reputation. The same thing also is also repeated in the data 7 when their teacher wanted to help Mila to solve her problem by asking her to tell the truth, but Callum, also blamed Mila for overreacting. “See? And you overreacted again.”

Men who felt powerless tended to less blame their victims, whereas women who felt powerless tended to blame their victims more (Gravelin, et. al, 2019) In the novel, Dante and Callum were portrayed as popular basketball boys. As the favorite student of his teacher, Callum has power in the school area. This can

increase victim blaming behavior because the perpetrator is someone who has power within the area (school area).

[8] “That was when I felt it. Someone’s hand grabbing my butt. I spun around. Tobias. “Hey, what was that?” I said, barely breathing. “Nothing.” Tobias’s eyes were huge. His face and his neck were bright red. “Don’t say nothing! I felt your hand just now, Tobias!” “No, you didn’t, Mila. It’s probably your imagination.” (D8, C29, P94)

Mila was harassed by another boy at her school, Tobias. “That was when I felt it. Someone’s hand grabbing my butt. When confronted by Mila, Tobias denies the incidents and blames Mila for making things up. “No, you didn’t, Mila. It’s probably your imagination.”. What Tobias said to Mila represents victim blaming. He confused Mila’s mind with his statement because there are no witness at all, so, he used the situation to defend himself and hide from his mistakes. “The two of us were alone in the hallway. No one to witness what had happened.” (Dee, 2019). To prove that a rape happens was especially challenging if there were no eyewitnesses (Darma, et. al, 2022).

[9] “Come on, Zara,” Omi said softly. “That’s not really fair.” Zara ignored her. “Look, Mila, there’s got to be a reason why they’re picking you. Those boys are super awkward and stupid sometimes, but they aren’t monsters, right? So maybe if you think about what you’re doing—” “I’m not ‘doing’ anything, Zara!” (D9, C30, P98)

Zara, one of Mila’s closest friends also did not validate Mila’s feeling and she has defended the boys who have been harassing Mila this whole time. She even asked Mila to look back to see if she did something that could be the reason why the boys chose to mess with her. Zara’s act represents the rape culture since she normalizes the rape behavior done by the boys and even defended them.

[10] “Zara stopped walking. She crossed her arms. “Mila,” she said too loudly. “Can I ask you something? Do you think it’s possible that Leo was right—the boys were just fooling around? And maybe you were being a little too sensitive?”

“No,” I said. “That’s not possible.” “Because it feels like you’re just criticizing everyone! Everything everyone does is wrong with you lately!” (D10, C32, P104)

[11] “So can you explain to me what happened?” he asked. “Because I have to say I’m extremely surprised. At both of you.” Callum hunched his shoulders. “Nothing happened. Mila’s so sensitive about everything these days, and she just went crazy for no reason!” “That’s a lie, and you know it,” I snapped.” (D11, C52, P153)

[12] “I’m waiting for an answer to my question,” Ms. Fender warned. “It was just Mila being psycho,” Dante said. “Overreacting the way she always does.” “To what?” Silence. “To what?” Ms. Fender repeated, her voice as sharp as broken glass. “Callum said something to me,” I said. My throat was so dry I could hear my voice croaking. “Right before we went onstage. It’s been happening a lot lately, not just with him, and I didn’t know what to do. But I guess I just... figured out how to speak his language.” Everyone was staring at me. “So you needed to trash the performance,” Dante said. “Not just for Callum. For the whole band.” Callum muttered. “A joke?” Ms. Fender said. She looked at Callum, then at Dante, then at me. “What kind of joke?” Nobody answered. “What kind of joke?” she demanded. “Mila just takes everything too seriously,” Leo said. “She’s way too sensitive.” “That’s not true,” I snapped. “You know it isn’t, Leo.” (D12, C68, P199)

There is a similarity could be found in data number 10, 11, and 12. Those data showed that Zara as Mila’s close friend, and the boys as the perpetrators blamed Mila for being too sensitive for the way she reacted to what happened to her. “Can I ask you something? Do you think it’s possible that Leo was right—the boys were just fooling around? And maybe you were being a little too sensitive?”. “Nothing happened. Mila’s so sensitive about everything these days, and she just went crazy for no reason!”. “Mila just takes everything too seriously,” Leo said. “She’s way too sensitive.”. Callum even called Mila crazy for reacting the way she did. Worse, Dante called Mila a psycho. If the victim continuously receive unpleasant responses, this can lead to self-blame. The perpetrators usually hide behind the word joking, and the same thing happened to Callum. He hides his wrong doing by using the word joking. “Anyhow, it was just a joke,” Callum said.

According to Hall's theory of representation, what Zara and the boys said represents a victim blaming behavior.

4.1.1.1 Self-Blaming

One of the most harmful types of emotional abuse is self-blame (Formica, 2013). Self-blaming has a strong relation with emotions (Sheikh, and McNamara, 2014). As an illustration, human experience unpleasant emotions like regret, shame, and guilt when we place the blame for failures on ourselves. These feelings are a necessary component of blame itself, not a side effect of it. It magnifies our real or perceived weaknesses, impairs us before we can even start to go forward.

In this novel, Mila as the main character has experience self-blaming due to the assault that had happened to her and the reaction of people around her. Self-blaming can slowly destroy a person's mental condition if not handled properly because the victims would always think that if they had done something different, the rape would not have happened (Snow, 1994). In Mila's case, she started to blame herself and questioned what is wrong with her and her appearance.

[13] "You mean a pinata," Leo said. "And that's just for little kids, moron. Anyway, Mila, if you don't want to give me a birthday hug, it's cool. My feelings aren't hurt at all." Dante laughed and slapped Leo on the shoulder. Callum kept smiling. I could feel the back of my neck getting damp and my heart speeding. What exactly was going on here? Whatever it was, it felt weird. And where was Ms. Fender? For someone with perfect timing, she should be walking in here right now. *Right now. Right... now.* "Whoa, Mila, don't you think that's a little nasty?" Dante was saying. "We all hugged Omi for her birthday, didn't we?" *Nobody asked you to. Plus, you messed up the O.* (D13, C5, P18-19)

Leo wanted to make Mila feel guilty for not giving him a birthday hug by saying "Anyway, Mila, if you don't want to give me a birthday hug, it's cool. My feelings aren't hurt at all." He gaslights Mila to believe that what she did was

wrong, she should have hug him when he asked her to. Gaslighting is a psychological manipulation that aims to instill doubt in the mind of the target(s) by leading them to doubt their own memory, perception, and sanity (Petric, 2018). Leo tricked Mila to get what he wants by gaslighting her.

In the other hand, Leo's friend, Dante, support him by cornering Mila using his words. Dante said to Mila "Whoa, Mila, don't you think that's a little nasty?". What Dante said can be considered as gaslighting and can lead to self-blaming. Mila will doubt her own sanity since what he said can make her questioning herself, "Did I just hurt Leo's feeling?", or "Am I being too much?".

[14] "So lately what I did was just keep wearing the fuzzy green sweater. Not only did it fit across my chest, but also it was long enough to cover the top of my jeans. Wearing the sweater, I didn't wonder how I looked, because I knew: basically like a fuzzy green potato." (D14, C4, P14)

[15] "As soon as I'd had a glass of water and a handful of Korn Krunch (this sweet and sticky store-brand kind of snack Mom always bought), I went into the bathroom and stared at the mirror. What are the boys seeing? My sweater went all the way up to my collarbone, and all the way down to my hips. Nothing was showing, or poking out. And yes, I had boobs and a butt, just like plenty of girls in seventh grade—but no one had ever made any comments about them. At least, to my face. I wasn't fat, or skinny like Zara. Ugly, or pretty like Omi. As far as I could tell, I was just average-looking, really. Right smack in the middle when it came to seventh grade girls. Are people—and by people, I mean the basketball boys—seeing something about me that I can't? Am I missing something about myself? Something obvious?" (D15, C10, P33)

Mila, as a victim of sexual harassment done by group of boys in her school, starts to blame herself for what she was wearing, and her overall appearance. She also questioned what was wrong with her that she became a victim of sexual harassment by her friends. According to South Pacific Private (2021), self-blame might result from a need to know "why me?" and blaming oneself can also develop into a harmful coping strategy after going through a deeply painful or traumatic experience. "So lately what I did was just keep wearing the fuzzy green

sweater. Not only did it fit across my chest, but also it was long enough to cover the top of my jeans. Wearing the sweater, I didn't wonder how I looked, because I knew: basically like a fuzzy green potato." In the data above, Mila starts to wonder what was wrong with the way she dressed. She even looked for what the boys saw in her so that they assault her. "What are the boys seeing? My sweater went all the way up to my collarbone, and all the way down to my hips. Nothing was showing, or poking out. And yes, I had boobs and a butt, just like plenty of girls in seventh grade—but no one had ever made any comments about them. At least, to my face. I wasn't fat, or skinny like Zara. Ugly, or pretty like Omi. As far as I could tell, I was just average-looking, really. Right smack in the middle when it came to seventh grade girls. Are people—and by people, I mean the basketball boys—seeing something about me that I can't? Am I missing something about myself? Something obvious?. From what Mila said in the data above, it represents self-blaming because she starts to blame herself. It could be seen that Mila feels something is wrong with her, but she could not see it just yet.

[16] "So that whole morning, while I basically sleepwalked through science, math, ELA, and Spanish, I couldn't stop replaying the scene in the band room. The whole thing had felt strange and creepy, so why hadn't I just walked out of the room? Or even thought of a lame comeback (No hug, but I'll play you "Happy Birthday" on my trumpet)? Why hadn't I challenged Leo's birthday in the first place? The more I thought about it, the more obvious it was the boys had been lying." (D16, C7, P22)

The victim feels haunted by her past actions examining her part in the situation, and reviewing her motions, attitudes, gestures, speech, makeup, and attire in an attempt to bring down herself (Snow, 1994). Mila reviewing her past action that she thinks could be the possibility for the boys to harass her. "The whole thing had felt strange and creepy, so why hadn't I just walked out of the room? Or even thought of a lame comeback (No hug, but I'll play you "Happy Birthday" on my trumpet)? Why hadn't I challenged Leo's birthday in the first place? The more I thought about it, the more obvious it was the boys had been

lying. Mila blames herself for doing nothing back when she was harassed. This can lead the victim's mind to a series of "if only". A series of "if onlys" keep running through the victim's head. The rape would not have occurred if I had not done this, said that, worn that skirt, walked down that street, or been so trusting (Snow, 1994). In Mila's case, she regrets for doing nothing and wonders about what might have happened if only she had done something differently.

[17] "Hey, Dante, watch your arm," I said. "And please move over, okay?" Dante looked surprised. Maybe too surprised. "You want me to move over?" "Yeah. We're supposed to be sharing this seat equally, aren't we? And I'm getting squished." "Oh. Sorry," he said. Right away I thought: Okay, Mila, now you're being paranoid. The seat isn't wide enough; he can't help it if he smooshes into you. And that pothole wasn't his fault. Except the thing was, he didn't budge. His legs stayed spread and his shoulder kept bumping. (D17, C9, P31)

[18] As soon as I said this, I knew I was wrong. Unfair to Mom, and fresh. What was wrong with me? Maybe Zara was right—I was being too hard on everybody these days. Maybe I was turning into Dad, always saying the wrong things, hurting everyone's. (D18, C54, P157)

There is a similarity between data 17 and 18. It is when Mila blames herself for the way she reacts. "Right away I thought: Okay, Mila, now you're being paranoid. The seat isn't wide enough; he can't help it if he smooshes into you. And that pothole wasn't his fault." According to Hall's theory of representation, what Mila said to herself represents self-blaming because Mila convinces herself that her reaction was too much when in fact she could have been calmer while dealing with the situation, so she blames herself for being paranoid. The next data is about Mila blaming herself for being too hard on everybody. There are many factors that cause Mila to blame herself. One of which is the negative response of people around her to the harassment that happened to Mila. Self-blame was linked to less sympathy from those who found out about the rape and more reactions from official authorities, who usually react negatively to victims (Ullman and Najdowski, 2011).

4.1.2 Toxic Masculinity

Within this newly popularized "post-feminist" feminist vocabulary, toxic masculinity is a prominent word that treats sexism as a character problem of some men (Harrington, 2020). According to the toxic masculinity theory, the idea of "manliness" encourages oppression, homophobia, and competition (Morin, 2022). Toxic masculinity is when all of the aforementioned preconceptions of males as being aggressive, heartless, and sexually violent have a harmful impact on both society and the individual (Makhanya, 2023). When men are required to do things in a specific manner in order to be recognized as real men, this is where masculinity turns toxic.

Using Hall's theory of representation and Connell's toxic masculinity theory, the researcher connects the data found in the novel with the context of toxic masculinity happened in the society to prove the data. Hall's constructionist approach is used to find the discourse.

In Dee's novel, toxic masculinity occurs when the boys play a scorecard game. They get points for saying things to Mila, touching her body and her clothes.

[19] "Omi twisted her hands. "So anyway, what he showed me was this sort of game the boys are playing. Like a scorecard." "Uh-huh." My mouth dried up. I felt cold. "And Mila, it was about you. The points were for saying things to you, touching your body, your clothes—" Omi's hand flew to her mouth, and she started crying. "I'm so sorry." (D19, C39, P122)

From Omi's statement, it can be seen that the boys are competing to harass Mila to get points. "The points were for saying things to you, touching your body, your clothes." What the boys do represents toxic masculinity since the boys in the group participated to show their masculinity and not to be shunned by them because they were not considered masculine. Men who have been exposed to

toxic masculinity are more vulnerable to feel entitled to women's bodies, which leads to sexual comments and harassment directed at women as well as a greater tendency to believe rape myths (Vallie, 2022). It can be said that sexual aggression toward women is one of the result of toxic masculinity.

One of the boys knows that what they did was wrong but he did not want his friend to leave him. This statement can be proven by the data below:

[20] "I knew it was wrong, the whole time," Tobias said in between gasps. "I only did it because we were all doing it. And we were like a team, right? I mean, we are a team. And I thought if I said something, if I told you guys, 'Stop, leave Mila alone, I don't want to do this anymore,' you'd be like, 'Okay, fine, now you're off the team.'" (D20, C74, P220-221)

Tobias was afraid that his friends would leave him because he did not want to join the stupid game. For that reason, he did nothing to stop the assault towards Mila. He also said that he also did it because all of his friends were doing it. If Tobias chose not to join the game and tried to stop it, his friends will see him not as a masculine person since he does not view a woman's body as an object.

4.2 The Voice of the Author

This sub-chapter provides an analysis of the critical position of Barbara Dee as the author of *Maybe he Just Likes You* (2019). Hall's constructionist approach from the representation theory and Foucault's discursive approach are applied to the data to determine the author's alignment on the issue of rape culture. Dee's background is also important to find the discourse.

Dee grew up in Brooklyn, New York. As a person who lives and grew up in U.S, she knows and takes part in the issues that are happening in America. One of the issues is sexual harassment which often occurs in teenagers in the school area. According to Balingit (2020) in The Washington Post, The Education Department found that reports of sexual assaults at elementary, middle, and high schools in U.S increased substantially between 2015 and 2018.

Barbara Dee is also an author of twelve middle grade novels, meaning all of her books are aimed for readers age between 8-12 year old. According to her interview with publishers weekly, she chose to write stories about teenagers' struggles because she did not want them to deal with the struggles alone without any adult guidance. Dee also said in her interview with Fairfax Network (2021) that it is important for her to write a book that address the issue and help them to get through the issue.

Maybe He Just Likes You was inspired by the #MeToo movement in 2018. The #MeToo campaign was created in 2017 in response to news stories about American film producer Harvey Weinstein's sexual misconduct. It raises awareness of the problem of sexual harassment and abuse of women at work (Brittain, 2023). Dee herself once experienced sexual harassment when she was in the middle school which also inspired her to write *Maybe He Just Likes You*. Her action to write the novel *Maybe He just Likes you* represents her support toward the #MeToo movement.

In the novel, Mila as the main character has experienced sexual abuse from her friends. As a middle schooler, she has no idea about what is going on and what to do with the situation. Dee used Mila to represent teenage girls out there who is looking for their identity and experiencing many new things that require adult guidance to get through it. In the novel, Dee shows how to overcome this situation with the help of Mila's friends who encourage Mila to speak up and address the problem.

From the analysis above, it could be seen that Dee believes sexual harassment is an important issues that America society still facing even to this day. As an American woman and a part of America society whom herself was a victim of sexual harassment, through *Maybe He Just Like You* (2019) Dee wants to bring the issue that women and girls in America is still have to fight for their body authority and their right to be heard. Dee believes that this issue about sexual harassment needs more awareness in society.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Maybe He Just Likes You is a novel written by Barbara Dee and was published by Aladdin in 2019. In this novel has found an issue namely Rape Culture. There are several factors behind the rape culture behavior in society, two of the factors are victim blaming and toxic masculinity. Victim blaming happened when rape victims are held accountable for the incident befell them. Victim blaming can be done by other people, but when the society keep to put the blame on the victims, it can lead to self-blame. The second factor is toxic masculinity, comes from a hegemonic masculinity concept by Connell (2005).

In the analysis, it has found 12 data for the victim blaming sub-chapter. Analyzed using Hall's constructionist approach, it was found that Mila has received victim blaming behavior from people around her. They blamed Mila for the sexual harassment that happened to her. Victim Blaming could lead to self-blame. It has found 6 data for the self-blame. Mila also started to blame herself for the accident befell her. This happened because Mila kept listening that people blamed her. Mila started to blame herself for what she wore, she looked back for the way she acted, and a series of 'what ifs' haunt her.

The second factor is toxic masculinity, 2 data has found for this sub-sub chapter. Toxic masculinity could be one of the reason for the existence of rape culture behavior in society. The perpetrators are a group of boys, the reason behind the assault was a score game. The boys played a scored game, they get a score for doing things to Mila such as touch her, and say things to her. If it is a game, member with the most-score is the winner. They compete among boys to win something, this is when toxic masculinity happened.

The last sub-chapter is related with the contextual background. Analyzed using Hall's constructionist approach and Foucault's discursive approach, it has found that *Maybe He Just Likes You* is a media for Dee to help teenagers around the world especially the U.S to overcome sexual harassment in the school area. Dee is a U.S citizen and she herself was a victim of sexual harassment when she was in the middle school. Sexual harassment case in the U.S was increase

between 2015-2018. Dee wrote this novel in support of #MeToo movement in 2018.



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