

## ABSTRACT

The movies of Wes Anderson, a well-known director of contemporary American indie cinema, feature characters whose lives center on struggles and issues, especially Royal Tenenbaum in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2002) and Steve Zissou in *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004). These men struggle to perform their traditional roles as fathers and husbands, but realize their misdeeds, resolve their problems and reconnect with their loved ones in the end which is presumed as their redemption. Wes Anderson's focus on American middle-aged men struggling with their traditional roles is assumed as one of the particularities that have distinguished him from others, as well as his own personal influence and artistic control of his cinematic world. Therefore, this graduation paper aims to investigate two questions: How is Wes's approach to the construction of middle-aged American men with traditional roles different from other movies that depict similar men? And what is the role of Wes Anderson's quirky style in his construction of these men?

To address these research questions, noted details in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2002) and *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004) are analyzed with two arguments, along with literature review about about Wes Anderson, masculinity and the depiction of middle-aged men with traditional roles in contemporary American movies. This study concludes that Wes Anderson is trying to preserve the traditional roles of white middle-aged American men and uses the quirky style as a means to create a confined cinematic space for this preservation. And unlike other movies that only mention the issue of absent fathers in contemporary America, adopt a nostalgic view on men with traditional paternal role as an image of the past, or create a tragic ending for these men, Wes Anderson signifies the importance and relevance of the traditional father role in contemporary time and gives them a chance for more positive resolution at the end.