

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF THE PROTAGONIST IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S NOVEL ROOM

Iin Almeina Loebis

Computer System, Sekolah Tinggi Manajemen Informatika Dan Komputer Royal, Indonesia

Corresponding author:

lubisiinalmeina@gmail.com

Keywords:

Psychology,
Social Anxiety Disorder
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

ABSTRACT

Research about psychology always become an interesting topic, because there are many psychological condition, especially in the novel Room by Emma donoghue. Those are psychology, the relation between psychoanalysis and literature, protagonist and characterization. In this study analyzed kind of psychological effect to the protagonist, include Social Anxiety Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Jack, a boy that has been locked in his whole life in the narrow room in which only a few boy has an experienced like him. In this novel, Jack only knows his mother, Joy or the so called Ma-the only human living in this world. he never knows if there are many people outside of the room. Therefore, when Jack does to get out of the room by running, he is extremely shocked and could not believe that Ma is not the only person in the world. This study was done by using a qualitative research with library study. Qualitative research used to describe fact qualitatively.

INTRODUCTION

Literature and psychology [1] are two branches of science that study human soul. Psychology researches human behaviors and their causes while literature depicts human behavior through fiction. These two branches of social science studying human behavior are interrelated and mutually beneficial. Besides the basic building block of the correlation between literature and psychology is a literary work.

Literary works study human beings and describe their inner world with all its aspects. The reason is that a literary work is at the same time a product of a certain psychological condition. A literary work supports psychology [2] in terms of depicting human psychological conditions. At the same time, Jung noted in Emir's Journal (2016), psychology also provides insights into literature by exploring mental processes. A literary work benefits from psychology in terms of successfully presenting characters, expressing their moods, and bringing the reader into the psychological dimension of

human reality. Psychology and study of literature meet in their focus on phantasies, emotions, and human soul. In this thesis, the literary work that will be discussed is a novel; it tells about how the creation of psychological effect to the cast.

Room is Canadian Novel that talks about abduction story of Ma which uses first person point of view, Jack, the protagonist, a five years old boy. *Room* has completely different situation from any condition she has ever lived. Jack grows in a room and lives with his mother only. Ma herself is kidnapped since she was 19 years old. It has been seven years ago. She raped and locked in a Room till she gave birth to a son, Jack. For Ma, life in Room which is what Jack calls their zone of containment is an ongoing torment, mitigated only by the desire to protect her son. In daily life in Room makes them suffers traumatic which can be called as symptoms of psychological effect for Ma and Jack. With the above points in mind, the writer will only discuss the psychological effect of captivity on Jack.

METHOD

Study Design

The research study design applied in this research is qualitative research with library study. Qualitative research method is a method used to describe fact qualitatively. Ismawati (2012: 7) defines that qualitative research is the research procedure resulting from descriptive data pertaining to a problem in a study of research.

Data Collection

There are some techniques to get the data. Reading and understanding the novel are the most appropriate data collection technique in this research. Those are the first thing should be done to make a valid data. Reading and understanding the novel are aimed to get description of the content of the novel.

The data of this study are obtained from the following steps:

- a. Reading and understanding the novel. In this step, the writer reads attentively to understand the content of the story.
- b. Choosing and selecting the data dealing with each problems of this research.
- c. Classifying the required data to answer the statements of the problems correctly.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a selected data to be analyzed. In this study, the writer will analyze the data that have been collected briefly. The analysis is aimed to get valid data which are appropriate with the research problems. There are some steps in doing data analysis as indicates below:

- a. After the data have been collected, the writer reviews the data that have been collected.
- b. Classifying the data that deal with the statement of the problems.

- c. Analyzing the data explaining aspects of psychological effect and the causes of psychological effect itself experienced by Jack based on the statement of the problems in line with the story of the novel.
- d. Making a conclusion after the data have been analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discussion about psychology always becomes an interesting topic because there are many psychological condition in this novel, this research only analyzes psychological effect of the protagonist, Jack, a boy that has been locked in his whole life in the narrow room in which only a few boy has an experienced like him. This is analyze, Jack's psychological effects depicted in Emma Donoghue's novel *Room*.

The focus of the research is on what kinds of psychological effects experienced by Jack in the novel *Room* is related to Jack who become a captive victim and who managed to escape from the room. As indicated by (Islam: 2007), that Psychological effect is the effect of mood on human activity and behavior. A person's mood and character is define as his characteristic reaction to the condition of his life, and the response to others in his behavior depends largely on the temperament of the formation of a person's character.

Concerning this matter, Islam's definition of psychological effects is it true if these effects is closely related to what is experienced by Jack in the novel *Room*. The kidnapping of Ma, who successfully succeeded in bringing a boy named Jack who has to live for years in a small room and never knows the outside world due to a lot of trauma and fright. Related to this point, the writer will describe the psychological condition of what happened to Jack in the novel.

The first psychological effect in this story is social anxiety disorder[3]-- a condition where a person has difficulty in interacting and socializing[4] with people or the environment. Likewise, in the novel, it is also described that Jack only knows his mother, Joy or the so called 'Ma'-- the only human living in this world. He never knows if there are many people outside the room. Therefore, when Jack does to get out of the room by running, he is extremely shocked and could not believe that Ma is not the only person in the world. Like what he has in mind for five years, it makes him look strange and difficult to interact with many people. He seems to shut down and still confused accepting the fact that the world is not only about him and Ma[5]. This matter is very related to condition in the quotation below:

“My ears are tired from all the talking. When they're gone I thought we were just us two again but Grandma comes in and gives Ma a long hug and blows me another kiss from just a bit away so I can feel the blowing.” (Donoghue 2010 : 239)

As informed in the quotation above, Jack is truly disturbed by the noise and the people around him. He feels uncomfortable and tired of facing a life that is beyond his expectations.

Then, anti social on Jack also continues on the other page of the novel, as follows:

“I don’t want to go to collage.” I say, “I want to go in TV with you”

Ma puffs a long breath. “Change your plan. You can come down just to watch if you stay absolutely quiet, ok?”
(Donoghue 2010: 258)

“I can’t go in the playground because there’s kids not friends of mine” (Donoghue 2010: 292)

Quotations above shows that Jack still cannot accept that in this world, there are so many people who could be friends with; he still considers it strange and kind of weird to him. This condition is very well understood by people around Jack because they know that Jack is a captive victim since his birth, making it difficult to accept if life is not as small as a room and humans on earth are not just himself, Ma, and Old Nick alone.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Another psychological effect that will be discussed is posttraumatic stress disorder. It is a mental disorder that can develop after a person is exposed to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, or other threats on a person's life.

The psychological effect to be analysed in this section is concerned with his success in escaping from Old Nick, although at last it causes enormous trauma. Nevertheless, the escape process he experiences does not run smoothly and creates a fear for him. Even after knowing the outside world, Jack still feel comfortable in that room. But he does not want to go back there. However, there is fear for Jack if one day he and his mother would return to that small room again. As depicted in the quotation below:

“Ma?” “What?” “Are we locked in?” “No.” She nearly barks it.
“Of course not. Why, are you not liking it here?” “I mean but do we *have* to stay?” “No, no, we’re free as a bird”
(Donoghue 2010: 214)

It illustrates Jack's confusion and worry if they will be locked again. Jack feels very traumatic if he returns to the soundproof room after he knows how vast and free the world outside the room. He no longer wants to be locked, and must sleep in the Wardrobe.

Futhermore, the second causes is when he finally has gone out from room. He looks at the wide world; many people, many trees, sky and others makes him trauma. In this case, sometimes Jack thinks that it is better to be kept safe in room with his Ma, instead of wondering outside that makes him tired and confused.

...I say,, “Want to go to Bed.”
“They’ll find us somewhere to sleep in a little while.”

“No. *Bed.*”

“You mean in Room?” Ma’s pulled back, she’s staring in my eyes.

“Yeah. I’ve seen the world and I’m tired now”

(Donoghue 2010: 174)

Actually, after seeing the world, for Jack it is not as easy as we think that he directly likes the other side of room. He often asks his Ma to return to the Room. The reason why it is included in this part is because trauma is a condition where a person always remembers or returns to a time when he feels comfortable, but he cannot go back there again. What he does continuously is trying to return to the place that makes him feel convenient. This statement is clarified in his soliloquy and dialogue below:

...I don’t say because of manners, but actually he’s got it backwards. In room i was safe and outside is the scary.

(Donoghue 2010: 245)

I stare up at the sky, it’s gray. “Is it going to fall on us?”

“It’s fine, Jack.”

I want to be back in Room Number Seven with Ma even if she’s gone.

(Donoghue 2010: 270)

In the above mentioned quotations, it is understood that Jack has a huge traumatic with the world or the place outside room. He is traumatized by the crowd, noise, the vastness of the world and also he feels alone if Ma is not with him; he is very scare.

CONCLUSION

Room by Emma Donoghue reveals that Jack who has a mental illness. Jack[6], the protagonist, is a five-year-old, and he is locked up in a narrow room with his mother. In this thesis explained that Jack has some psychological effects such as social anxiety disorder which is evidenced by how he looks very insecure being in crowded place and also frightened if Ma is not with him. Then, he also suffers posttraumatic disorder where he feels his world outside the room is never imagined by him, it makes Jack not easy to interact with his ne life and always ask Ma to go back to the room again. Behind his courage, he keeps a very deep fear; still, he can ignore it. Futhermore, he does it to make his mother happy and not disappointed with him. Her mother’s hatred is quite deep for Old Nick because he rapes her many times in that isolated room, and therefore she should gives birth to a baby Jack. When Jack is five year old, she plans for Jack’s escape from the place in order that she and Jack are free from Old Nick. Finally, he had done successfully in his escape. He and his mother[4] are free from Old Nick’s

traps. Considering the outside world it is very different from the room where he had lived. Jack feels depressed and extremely confused about life that beyond his expectation. It brings out some mental illness to him in an uncertain times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] W. James, *The principles of Psychology*. New York: cosimo, 2007.
- [2] D. (Harvard university) Fernald, *Psychology :Six Perspectives*. SAGE Publications, 2008.
- [3] M. B. Stein and D. J. Stein, "Social anxiety disorder," *Lancet*, vol. 371, no. 9618, pp. 1115–1125, 2008, doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(08)60488-2.
- [4] K. E. Donoghue, "Perempuan Yang Tergambar Dalam Novel Room."
- [5] B. Yorgancı, "MA'S STRUGGLES REFLECTED IN EMMA DO," *Gastrointest. Endosc.*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 279–288, 2018, [Online]. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.gastro.2014.05.023><https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gie.2018.04.013><http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29451164><http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=PMC5838726><http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gie.2013.07.022>
- [6] E. M. Lengkong, "Depresi dalam novel "," pp. 1–14, 2016.