

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

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Abstract

This research aims at identifying, analyzing and describing the psychological condition in *Room* by Emma Donoghue, and also the causes and effects of the problem which are described in this novel. In the novel, the writer analyze the problem by using theory of Islam (2007), Jung in Emir (2016), and Van Dijk (1997) which explains about psychological effect, psychology, and captivity. This thesis uses qualitative method in analyzing the data to be flatly described to show the evidence of the data identified from the novel. The analysis is conducted by classifying the obtained data in chapter four related to the problems of the study. Hence, there are two kinds of psychological effect and three causes of the effect to be analyzed, i.e. social anxiety disorder and posttraumatic disorder, and the causes are: held captive, domination of Old Nick and hard attempt to escape. The results of this study depict that someone who has a mental illness within himself is not spared from the causes behind them, and be brave to get out from comfort zone to be a better version of your life like what is done by Jack by bravely escaping from the room.

Keywords: Room, Psychological Effect, Psychology, Captivity, Escape

1. Introduction

Room is Canadian Novel that talks about abduction story of Ma which uses first person point of view, Jack, the protagonist, a five year 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 is 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.

Psychology is the science of behavior and mind. Psychology includes the study of conscious and unconscious phenomena, as well as feeling and thought. It is an academic discipline of immense scope. Psychologists seek an understanding of the emergent properties of brains, and all the variety of phenomena linked to those emergent properties, joining this way the broader neuro-scientific group of researchers. As a social

science, it aims to understand individuals and groups by establishing general principles and researching specific cases.

The writer confines the psychological effect since the discussion only copes with mental condition such as trauma, depression, fear, and others as normal reaction experienced by someone who experiences events such as abduction, loss, and other obstacles in life. If the psychological problems are considered as trivial matter, so it does not rule out the possibility of someone committing fatal actions such as suicide.

In this respect, this study becomes important to entertain readers. We also get a moral message and understand how if we are a captive who only lives in a room about only 3 x 3 m for seven years. By analyzing this topic, it can be understood what causes a person could experience psychological effect in their life without judging them.

2. Literature Review

In 1990 William James defined psychology as the 'science of mental processes'. In his view, psychology may be defined in terms of conscious states. James Sully in Bacarro (2016) defined psychology as the science of the 'inner world' as distinguished from physical science which study the physical phenomena. Wilhelm Wundt in Bacarro (2016) defined psychology as the science which studies the 'internal experiences'. According to Jung in Emir Khazar (2016), it is obvious that since psychology explores mental processes it will also provide insights into literature; because the human mind is the source of all science and arts. In short, psychology is defined as a science that deals with emotional and mental processes; psychology also assesses the characteristics of a person including how they think, feel or behave.

Psychological effect is the effect of mood on human activity and behavior. A person's mood and character is defined 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. Knowing the type of mood and the ability to determine the characteristics of the mood of a particular person or group can help people find a way out and play a better relationship with him and the group (Islam: 2007). Below, there are several types of psychological effects that can occur to someone such as:

- a.) **Social anxiety disorder (SAD)**, also known as **social phobia**, is an anxiety disorder characterized by a significant amount of fear in one or more social situations, causing considerable distress and impaired ability to function in at least some parts of daily life. These fears can be triggered by perceived or actual scrutiny from others. Individuals with social anxiety disorder fear negative evaluation from other people. Physical symptoms often include excessive blushing, excess sweating, trembling, palpitations, and nausea. Stammering may be present, along with rapid speech. Panic attacks can also occur under intense fear and discomfort.
- b.) **Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** 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 include disturbing thoughts, feelings, or dreams related to the events, mental or physical distress to trauma-related cues, attempts to avoid trauma-related cues, alteration in how a person thinks and feels, and an increase in the fight-or-flight response.
- c.) **Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)** is a mental disorder in which a person feels the need to perform certain routines repeatedly (called "compulsions"), or has certain thoughts repeatedly (called "obsession"). The person is unable to control either the thoughts or activities for more than a short period of time. Common compulsions

include hand washing, counting of things, and checking to see if a door is locked. Some may have difficulty throwing things out. These activities occur to such a degree that the person's daily life is negatively affected. This often takes up more than an hour a day. Most adults realize that the behaviors do not make sense. The condition is associated with tics, anxiety disorder, and an increased risk of suicide.

It is shown that psychological effect is a mental condition caused by something that triggers trauma, fear of one's thoughts and behavior. This is related to the topic that will be discussed in this thesis, which includes the symptoms in the form of social anxiety disorder and post traumatic stress disorder to the protagonist. Given this, that happens to the protagonists matched with what is explained in points a and b above.

Since psychoanalysis concentrates much on unconscious level, a fiction through a novel represents the unconscious state of its author. It can be said that when an author writes a novel in the same time he/she also deals with imagination. Thus, Wellek and Warren in Endraswara (2003:105), divides two types of the authors' imagination such as:

a. Plastic Type

The author can get sharp vision toward their surroundings. They are able to compose the outside problems through their works. Their works do not come from their life.

b. Diffluent Type

The works of an author of this type are based on the emotion and imagination. He/she could shape its works imaginatively and rhythmically. In brief, according to Endaswara (2003), of two types of the authors' imagination above, it can be concluded that Emma's in her novel *Room* enters that two element points in her novel, because the same story of *Room* ever happens in real life and also it can be only her emotion and imagination like the second point.

2.3 Captivity

Captivity is a human experience of any situation in which an individual is subjected to the control, will of another person or entity, and surrender power, autonomy, and independence. The victim has his or her will controlled by the other person and complies as a consequence of his actions of this other person or entity. Captivity may be legitimate or socially sanctioned within a particular context, such as when individuals are medically or criminally institutionalized. It may extend to another extreme that is criminal, deviant, and harmfulness, as in kidnapping situations.

Captivity as a concept which may provide a unifying theme to describe the dynamics that underlie many victim experiences, thus enhancing the knowledge base of victimology, the social science examines how people become victims and react to these experiences (Van Dijk, 1997).

A broader definition of captivity is offered in Black's Law Dictionary (1990: 1528): "Persuasion; pressure, or influence short of actual force, but stronger than mere advice, that so overpowers the dominated party's free will or judgment that he or she cannot act intelligently and voluntarily, but acts, instead, subject to the will or purposes of the dominating party."

Thus, the captive in the novel describes "Ma and Jack" that have been kidnapped by Old Nick (the captor). The captive definition and the story in the novel really has a relationship. As verified, the definition takes after the story of captivity in the novel, and

it can uncover everything that concerns with detention, torture, and coercion. In the story, the protagonist is also set by the captor instead of act as he wanted to do.

3. Research Method

This research adopts qualitative design. Creswell (2009) defines that qualitative research is the research procedure resulting from descriptive data pertaining to a problem in a study of research. The data was collected by reading and understanding the novel. 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 analysis is conducted by reviewing, classifying, and analyzing the collected data in accordance with the theory adopted in this research.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Room by Emma Donoghue reveals that Jack who has a mental illness. Jack, 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 new 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. Furthermore, 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 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 uncertain times.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Kinds of Psychological Effect to the Protagonist

The focus of the discussion 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 defined 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 are 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.

4.2.1.1 Social Anxiety Disorder

The first psychological effect in this story is social anxiety disorder--a condition where a person has difficulty in interacting and socializing 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. This matter is 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 college.” 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 quite, ok?” (Donoghue 2010: 258)

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

Quotations above show 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.

4.2.1.2 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

The last 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 analyzed 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.

Furthermore, the second cause 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.

Inroom 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 scared.

4.2.2 Causes of psychological effect to the Protagonist

After analyzing the types of psychological effects experienced by Jack, the causes of the effects are generated to discuss. As being argued, if there is a cause, that should be there is an effect. Anyhow, the analysis will be done in reverse. The cause may be searched for after knowing the effect, as verified in the following sub-sections.

4.2.2.1 Held Captive

The first cause is that they become captives by Old Nick, and it takes after the situation of captivity. Captivity is a human experience of any situation in which an individual is subjected to the control, will of another person or entity, and surrenders power, autonomy, and independence.

That statement more or less is relevant to the experience of Jack and Ma, at that time Ma is still 17 years old; he has become a captive by Old Nick and raped every night until finally two years later Jack is born as a result of raping. They lived together for an unpredicted time and Ma tries as hard as possible to educate Jack until Jack is five years old. As long as they become captives in the narrow room it makes them unknown to the

outside the room. However there are a lot of things he can find. Therefore, when he manages to get out of that narrow room that has already become the center of his life, he is confused, afraid of the crowd, and trauma if one day he will return to that cramped place again. The condition of being a captive is explained in the quotation below:

“I must be asleep but I don’t know it, because then I wake up. I’m still in Wardrobe, it’s all dark. Ma didn’t bring me into Bed yet. Why she didn’t bring me in? I push the door and listen on her breath. She’s asleep, she can’t be mad in her sleep, can she? I crawl under Duvet. I lie near Ma not touching, there’s all heat around her.”

(Donoghue 2010: 56)

It seems that the atmosphere when Jack tries to sleep and also wonders why he has to sleep in the wardrobe. While his mother does not sleep with him, he could not ask his mother directly why they should sleep separately. Nevertheless if he asks about it, his mother would be angry with him.

There’s a little bit of light at skylight’s top, the rest of her is all dark. TV snow’s white but the real isn’t, that’s weird. “Why it doesn’t fall on us?”

“Because it’s on the outside.”

“In outer space? I wish it was inside so I can play with it.”

(Donoghue 2010: 9)

The conversation between Jack and Ma above shows that Jack feels confused with what he has already seen, but could do nothing to reach it. Because of their situation of being held captive, it makes Ma confine to explain something that Jack had never seen while in the room.

4.2.2.2 Domination of Old Nick

Domination is said to be someone’s power or influence over other person or something. This is what has been done by ‘Old Nick’ to kidnap Ma and Jack, and then, he dominates all of their lives together so that they feel scared with him.

The domination and pressure of Old Nick have created severe lives for them in seven years, and have made them feel like imprisoned. Inevitably, they have to follow whatever that Old Nick says and orders. If they violate, or do not follow the rules that he has made, then, they will get punishment. This matter is described in the quotation below:

Ma's staring at thermostat. "Power cut." "What's that?" "There's no power in anything just now." "It's a strange kind of day. We have our cereal and brush teeth and get dressed and water plant. We try and fill Bath but after the first bit the water comes out all ice so we just wash with cloths. (Donoghue 2010: 85-86)

The conversation between Jack and Ma above explain the situation when Ma shouts and keeps Old Nick from Jack's face by pushing and beating Old Nick. As a result, Old Nick is very angry and does not give them food for one week and turns off the electricity in the room. They feel cold because the temperature control device in the room is off.

“What I’m mad about”—her voice is getting bigger and scratchier—“is that you woke him up.”

“Jeep?”

“Old Nick.”

It makes me jump that she says him out loud.

“You scarred him.”

“He got scared at me?”

“He didn’t know it was you,” says Ma. “He thought I was attacking him, dropping something heavy on his head.”

I hold my mouth and my nose but the giggles fizz out.

“It’s not funny, it’s the opposite of funny.”

I see her neck again, the marks that he put on her, I’m all done giggling.

(Donoghue 2010: 60)

With the above distinction, when Jack unconsciously does something that makes the Old Nick think that Ma has the intention to hurt him. It certainly brings about anger for Old Nick concerning Jack’s behavior. However, Ma always defends on his son; for her, whatever Jack does is under her responsibility.

4.2.2.3 Hard Attempt to Escape

Ma tries hard to enforce her son to run away from the place where they are treated like prisoners. Jack, a boy who has just turned five, is strongly encouraged by his mother Joy to learn to run away. All of this is done by Ma for their own good. Jack attempts to keep in his mind what Ma has said so that he can get out of the room.

However, because their effort to escape does not go smoothly as Ma predicted, it causes a huge trauma for Jack. It reminds him so much that it makes him afraid to interact with people. Even though it does not go smoothly, yet in the end, Jack manages to bring himself and Ma free from the room they have been living in.

....Oh, I have to *Wriggle Out*, I was forgetting. I start to do like a snake, but Rug’s got tighter I don’t know how, I’m stuck I’m stuck. *Ma Ma Ma...* I can’t get out like we practiced even though we practiced and practiced, it’s all gone wrong, *sorry*. Old Nick’s going to take me to a place and bury me and *the worms crawl in the worms crawl out...* I’m crying again, my nose is running, my arms are knotted under my chest, I’m fighting Rug because she’s not my friend anymore. I’m kicking like karate but she’s got me, she’s the shroud for the corpses to fall in the sea...

(Donoghue 2010: 155-156)

With the above point in mind, the process of escaping is not as smooth as Ma and Jack imagine. The process makes Jack very depressed and scared. He is afraid that Old Nick would bury him and also he is scared that Ma will be disappointed with him. Although in the end he succeeds, still the incident is extremely bad for his mind. He finds it hard to forget the way he does for the escape.

....Dr. Clay says I’m really brave but I’m not, I used my brave all up doing plan B. I scream and scream. Ma holds me on her lap while he sticks his needles in over and over and they do hurt because he took the patch off, I cry for it and in the end Ma puts it back on me.

(Donoghue 2010: 203)

Jack explains that he feels very frightened and tries to be brave to avoid the fear that he faces. He realizes that he is not as brave as people says; the escape still brings him much trouble to leave her mother in the room. His mother tells him that she will not come with him to get away from the room. She chooses to stay there while Jack goes away as they planned before.

“When Old Nick comes back—tonight, or tomorrow night, or whenever—I’m going to tell him you died, I’m going to show him the rug all rolled up with you inside it.”

That’s the craziest thing I ever heard. “Why?”

“Because your body didn’t have enough water left, and I guess the fever stopped your heart.”

“No, Why in Rug?”

“Ah,” says Ma, “Smart question. It’s your disguise, so he doesn’t guess you’re actually alive. See, you did a super job of pretending to be sick last night, but dead is much harder. If he notice you breathing even one time, he’ll know it’s a trick. Besides, dead people are really cold.”

(Donoghue 2010: 139)

Ma explains to Jack about their plan B to escape from the room after the first plan with Jack pretending to be sick has failed. This time Ma tries a more dangerous way with Jack pretending to die so that Old Nick could bury Jack outside the room, and this plan B succeeds in bringing Jack out of the room and then getting Ma free from the room. It is because of Jack’s intelligence of in giving the police clue as seen in the dialogue below:

Officer Oh rubs her face. “Work with me here, Jack. Is this room near a backyard?” “Not Near.” “OK.”

Ma, Ma, Ma. “It’s all around.”

“This room’s in the backyard?”

“Yeah.” I made officer Oh happy but I don’t know how. “Here we go, here we go,” she’s looking at her screen and pressing buttons, “Freestanding rear structures on Carlingford and Washington..”

“Skylight,” says the man police.

“Right, with a skylight..”

“Is that TV?” I ask.

“Hmm? No, it’s a photo of all these streets. The camera’s way up in space.”

“Outer Space?”

“Yeah.”

“Cool.” (Donoghue 2010: 171)

The room where Jack and Ma have been confined for seven years is finally discovered by the expertise of the police in line with Jack's explanation. The police manage to find and reunite Ma and Jack again. This matter is illustrated in the quotation below:

Ma makes the door be open and I fall halfway out. She’s got me, she’s scooped me all up. It’s her for real, she’s one hundred percent alive.

“We did it,” she says, when we’re both in the back of the car together.

“Well, you did it, really.”

I’m shaking my head. “I kept messing up the plan.”

“You saved me,” says Ma, she kisses my eye and holds me tight.
(Donoghue 2010: 173)

After the touching incident above, the police immediately take Ma and Jack to the hospital where they had to be treated after getting free from the room.

5. Conclusion

The analysis concludes some points related to the subject matter of this research. Kidnapping and captivity are criminal cases that need more attention. Psychological effects after painful events such as captivity that can occur to anyone. The existence of parents has an important role in supporting the process of children's intelligence. Bravery is the key to convert into a better version of life. Happiness does not have to be in a luxurious place; happiness is when we feel safe with the people we love.

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