THE PORTRAYAL OF SOLIPSISM IN JACK'S CHARACTERIZATION AS SEEN IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S *ROOM*

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Abstract

As one of famous fiction books, *Room* can describe how the portrayal of solipsism seen in one of character which is Jack, through his characterization in Emma Donoghue novel entitled "Room" using Solipsism theory by Wittgenstein. The function of character is to help the readers understand about the story through their characterization such as dialogue, action, appearance, etc. In order to describe the portrayal of solipsism in this novel, this research is conducted by used qualitative method with philosophical approach and solipsism theory to describe all the solipsism that appears on Jack's characterization in the novel. Hopefully, this research can be useful for the readers who study about philosophy and increases the knowledge about solipsism, because Solipsism is one of philosophical idea in philosophy. This research shows that in the *Room* novel, the portrayal of solipsism can be seen through Jack's characterizations. He can lead us to the solipist toughts, because we can see that from his behaviour, emotions, thought and how he reacts to something that shows he as solipist based on concept and theory used by researcher.

Key words: Philosophy, Solipsism, *Room Novel*

INTRODUCTION

Nowdays, most of people are busy with themselves, they do not care with surrounding. Sometimes they do not notice the existence of other people arround them, something that they believes is only theirselves and what exist in their mind. Everything that they believes is something that becoming their experience only and what exist in their mind, especially in urban area like Jakarta. People who live in elite housing mostly consist of busy people, who are only come home at night, so it is not strange if they do not know each other (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), (Pettersson, 2009), (Heaverly & EWK, 2020), (Kuswoyo et al., 2021). Even they helper also not allowed to do interact with they neighbors continuously (Endang Woro Kasih, 2018), (Hosseinzade et al., 2019), (Adhinata et al., 2021), (Journal & Kiranamita, 2021). It makes they really live each other and no longer know the life of surrounding (Gita & Setyaningrum, 2018), (Dharlie, 2021), (Nurmalasari & Samanik, 2018). This phenomenon can be appear in your society (Windane & Lathifah, 2021), (Yudiawan et al., 2021). Sometimes it is so hard for you to argue with somoene that did not trust you, then they always think if she or he always in the right decision (Abidin & Ahmad, 2021), (Ahdan et al., 2019). They never think if other minds is exist except their mind, and they always ignore your opinions (EWK, 2018), (Chen, 2004), (Styawati & Mustofa, 2019), (Susanto et al., 2021). Therefore, those people who are believe on solipsism has their own consequences (Kuswoyo & Audina, 2020), (Shi et al., 2021), (Tan et al., 2021). The good consequences they will be called as consistent person, meanwhile for bad consequences they should have responsibility if what they think is wrong to society (Kurniawan et al., 2018), (Wibowo Putro et al., 2022), (Nurkholis & Sitanggang, 2019).

For these kinds of people maybe you can see them in the real life or through someone characters in the story, such as novel and movie (Asia & Samanik, 2018), (Keanu, 2018), (Sasalia & Sari, 2020), (Pajar & Putra, 2021), (E. Fitri & Qodriani, 2016). Then, this phenomenon called as Solipsism. Solipsism comes from the latin "Solus, meaning "alone", and ipse, meaning "Self" - the sole self (Endang Woro Kasih, 2018). Solipsism is the philosophical idea   that   only   one's   own mind is   sure   to   exist.   As an epistemological position, solipsism holds that knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is unsure; the external world and other minds cannot be known and might not exist outside of the mind (Borman et al., 2018), (Robertson, 2020). As a metaphysical position, solipsism goes further to the conclusion that the world and other minds do not exist (Setri & Setiawan, 2020), (Nurkholis et al., 2022), (Yudiawan et al., 2021), (Fahrizqi et al., 2021).

Anthony Flew defines solipsism as "The theory that I am the sole existent. To be a solipsist I must hold that I alone exist independently, and that what I ordinarily call the outside world exists only as an object or content of my consciousness." Moreover, Thomas Mautner defines it as "(1-metaphysics) the view that nothing *exists* except one's own self and the contents of its consciousness; (2-epistemology) the view that nothing can be known except one's own self and the contents of its consciousness." In addition Wittgenstein in *Lycurgo,* (2010:75), argues solipsism is the idea that only a person and this person's thoughts and experiences exist.

Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Solipsism is therefore more properly regarded as the doctrine that, in principle, "existence" means for me my existence and that of my mental states. Existence is everything that self experience it can be physical objects, other people, events and processes. For the solipsist, the case that he believes that his thoughts, experiences, emotions are, as a matter of contingent fact. Rather, the solipsist can attach no meaning to the supposition that there could be thoughts, experiences, and emotions other than his own. In short, the true solipsist understands the word "pain," for example, to mean "my pain." It means pain that they experienced. They cannot accordingly conceive how this word is to be applied in any sense other than this exclusively egocentric one. This kind of case can be seen trough someone's character or can be easily found in characters of the story.

Characters in the story is the figure's form in story who appear in the story (Kardiansyah, n.d.), (Nindyarini Wirawan, 2018), (Yulianti & Sulistiyawati, 2020). The figure not only can be looked at narration of the author, but also at appearance, speech, thought and action of the character. Character is the aggregate of traits and features that form the nature of some person or animal (Samanik, 2019), (Nababan & Nurmaily, 2021), (Amelia & Dintasi, 2019). Character also refers to moral qualities and ethical standard and principles (Setri & Setiawan, 2020), (Nurmalasari & Samanik, 2018), (Sulistiani et al., 2021). Character is one of the interesting things for personal opinions that the readers want to see how is the other people life and how they effort to pursue the goals (Nani, 2019), (Nurmala Sari & Aminatun, 2021). Character also a vehicle for the author in order to convey to the reader about her/his view of the world (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021). The reader can learn about individual characters from their own words and action, from what other characters said about them and the way others act towards them. Character in a novel can be differentiated in to several kinds based on point of view, based on function character can be divided into two, protagonist and antagonist character.

Protagonist character, is character that usually likes by reader because they usually do good actions, admirable, like hero in the story. Meanwhile, Antagonist character usually hated by reader, because they usually do bad actions, and causing conflict in the story, *Morner and Rausch (2005;31).* The function of characters itself to helping the readers understand about the story that is presented by an author through character's characterizations such as dialogue, action, appearance, etc. Through the explanation above the writer uses one of novel that become bestseller in 2010 to explain the portrayal of solipsism as described in one of character which is Jack, through his characterization as seen in Emma Donoghue novel entitled "Room".

Room is novel was written by Irish-Canadian auothor Emma Donoghue. The story is told from the perspective of a five-year-old boy, Jack, who is being held captive in a small room until 7 years with his mother. Donoghue conceived the story after hearing about five-year-old Felix in the Fritzl case that has smillar story. This novel was published in Canada, Ireland on September 13, 2010. It consists of 336 pages. Her novel was became a finalist for the Man Booker Prize, and won the 2011 Commonwealth Writers' Prize regional prize (Caribbean and Canada) and was shortlisted for the 2010 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, then won The 2010 Governor General's Awards and choosen as international best-seller by New York Times bestseller Fiction in 2010.

Her novel also has been filmed with the titled "*Room"*, was released in November 2015, starring Jacob Tremblay and Brie Larson and was nominated for four Academy Awards, with Larson winning the Oscar for Best Actress. The writer chooses this novel beacuse the story is interesting, and the story was influenced by real case that happen at the time. Then, Emma Donoghue as the writer makes this story because the influence of her environment, which is the case that happen arround her. Then, it becomes one of the proves if the environment and knowledge can influence the creativity process of someone when making story.

Behaviour and mental processes of Jack characterization as victim and protagonist character in this novel can lead us to the solipist toughts, because we can see that from his feeling, emotions, experiences, knowledge and how he reacts to something. King (2009;3), argues that knowledge is a storage and organizational of information in memory. It means that knowledge as set of information that organized in the memory of each person. Knowledge is often defined as a justified personal belief. It means knowledge is what person beliefs and they states as their beliefs. Belief refers to person's subjectivity probability of relation between the object of the belief, some other object, and value.

Jack only believes with his own thought, and what he already experienced before, for the first time he only believes that only he, and his mother that exist in the world beside of small kitchen, a bathtub, a wardrobe, a bed, and a TV set in the small room, until he find the truth and experienced it by he himself if there is life outside of the room that called as the real world. Trough the explanation above the writer describes how the portrayal of solipsism seen in one of character which is Jack, through his characterization in Emma Donoghue novel entitled "Room" using Solipsism theory by Wittgenstein.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Solipsism

According to Thonton (2004), Solipsism believe that a solid proof that exist in the world, and asserts that no such proof can be made. The foundation of solipsism is the term of

individual gets his own cases which come from their experience, what they know most certainly in the contents of their own thought and experience. Solipsism believes in themselves that only thing exist (Damayanti et al., 2019), (A. Fitri et al., 2015). It can be seen from the principle of solipsism, the first is evidence, evidence means for me my experiences, the second is reality, reality means the world that I percieve, the last is exsistance, existence means everything that I meet like people, event and anything proccess (Schrape, 2018), (Afrianto & Inayati, 2016), (Nani & Safitri, 2021).

Solipsism Theory by Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein in *Lycurgo,*(2010:75), argues that solipsism is the idea that only a person and this person's thoughts and experiences exist. "Now the man whom we call a solipsist and who says that only his own experiences are real, does not thereby disagree with us about any practical question of fact, he does not say that we are simulating when we complain of pains, he pities us as much as anyone else, and at the same time he wishes to restrict the use of the epithet "real" to what we should call his experiences; and perhaps he doesn't want to call our experiences "experiences" at all. For he would say that it was *inconceivable* that experiences other than his own were real."

METHOD

This research is conducted to give the readers information about Emma Donoghue novel *Room* that contains of the portrayal of solipsism in one of character inside of the story which is Jack. In this research, the writer does the analysis through library study. Library Study based on Nazir (2003) "is a form of method research that only rely on books, articles, document that have a relationship with the problem to be solved by researcher". It means that library study is one of methods to do research by using only books, articles, document that can helps the writer to get more information about their analysis and the purpose is to solve the research problem of analysis. Furthermore, In this study the researcher will use qualitative as the research method. According, Holloway and Wheeler (2002:30) define a qualitative research as "a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live". The data in qualitative research is in the form of word or pictures not numbers. The data are stated in the form of words or sentences. It can be from characteristic, definition, quatation or other information in a form of pictures or words rather than using statistic. This method can help the writer to describe the portrayal of solipsism in Jack's characterization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Generally, this chapter focuses on the analysis of the data of *Room* novel. This chapter which become the answer of the research question that was stated on the previous chapter. The chapters are about Jack's character and the portrayal of solipsism that happen to Jack based on the concept of solipsism. It describes inside of Jack's dialogue in the story.

Jack lives with his Ma in *Room*, a secured single-room outbuilding containing a small kitchen, a bathtub, a wardrobe, a bed, and a TV set. Because it is all he has ever known, Jack believes that only Room and the things it contains (including himself and Ma) are "real." Ma, unwilling to disappoint Jack with a life she cannot give him, allows Jack to believe that the rest of the world exists only on television. Ma tries her best to keep Jack healthy and happy via both physical and mental exercises, keeping a healthy diet, limiting TV-watching time, and strict body and oral hygiene. The only other person Jack has ever seen is "Old Nick," who visits Room at night while Jack sleeps hidden in a wardrobe. Old

Nick brings them food and necessities. Jack is unaware that Old Nick kidnapped Ma when she was 19 years old and has kept her imprisoned for the past seven years. Old Nick regularly rapes Ma; Jack is the product of one such sexual assault.

A week after Jack's fifth birthday, Ma learns Old Nick has been unemployed for the past six months and is in danger of losing his home to foreclosure. Feeling certain that Old Nick would kill them both before letting them free, Ma comes up with a plan to get Jack out of Room by convincing Old Nick that Jack is deathly ill. Jack is unable to conceptualize being outside of Room or interacting with other people, but Ma eventually convinces him to help her. When Old Nick refuses to take Jack to a hospital, Ma then pretends that Jack has died. Old Nick removes Jack, wrapped in a rug, from Room. Jack escapes Old Nick and manages to reach a friendly stranger who contacts the police. In spite of his inability to communicate effectively, Jack directs the police to Room to free Ma.

The two are taken to a mental hospital, where they receive medical evaluations and a temporary home. Old Nick is found and faces numerous charges of abduction, rape, and child endangerment that will likely lead to 25 years to life in prison. While in the hospital, Ma is reunited with her family and begins to relearn how to interact with the larger world, while Jack, overwhelmed by new experiences and people, wants only to return to the safety of Room. Meanwhile, the case has attracted much attention from the public and the mass media, making it even harder for Jack and Ma to start leading a normal life. After a television interview ends badly, Ma suffers a mental breakdown and attempts suicide. While Ma is in hospital, Jack lives with his grandmother and her new partner. Without the security of his mother nearby, Jack becomes even more confused and frustrated by his surroundings, including his new extended family, who, while kind and loving, often do not understand how Jack's limited experience, particularly his concept of personal boundaries, impact his behavior.

After Ma recovers, she and Jack move into an independent living residence, where they begin making plans for the future. Ma's growing independence conflicts with Jack's desire to keep her for himself, just as they used to be. At the same time, Jack himself is growing and changing as his world expands. Finally, Jack requests to visit Room. He and Ma return to the scene of their captivity, but Jack no longer feels any emotional attachment toward it and is able to say his goodbyes before he and Ma leave Room for the final time.

Characters in Emma Donoghue's *Room*

Characters in the story is the figure's form in story who appear in the story. The figure not only can be looked at narration of the author, but also at appearance, speech, thought and action of the character. Character is the aggregate of traits and features that form the nature of some person or animal. Character also refers to moral qualities and ethical standard and principles. Character is one of the interesting things for personal opinions that the readers want to see how is the other people life and how they effort to pursue the goals. Character also a vehicles for the author in order to convey to the reader about her/his view of the world. The reader can learn about individual characters from their own words and action, from what other characters said about them and the way others act towards them. Character in a novel can be differentiated in to several kinds based on point of view, based on function character can be divided into two, protagonist and antagonist character. Protagonist character, is character that usually likes by reader because they usually do good actions, admirable, like hero in the story. Meanwhile, Antagonist character usually hated by reader, because they usually do bad actions, and causing conflict in the story. The function of characters itself to helping the readers understand about the story that is

presented by an author through character's characterizations such as dialogue, action, appearance, etc. In *Room,* there are some characters. Jack who has solipist thought. Ma is overprotective mom. Old Nick is bad father.

Jack

Jack only five years old boy. He is super curious and really insightful, busting out with the kind of philosophical logic like a solipist when he says, "If I was made of cake I would eat myself before somebody else could." We know what that means, if he always arguing something, but it sounds genius. Ma has raised him well. That is maybe the only benefit of living in Room. It was a controlled environment that allows Ma to give Jack 100 percent of her love and attention. She raises him to be a hero, calling him everything from Prince Jacker Jack to Samson and Superman and everything in between. He wonders why he so wonderful, and she says, "That is just the way you popped out." Maybe that is true, but he has been raised in a way that makes him even more wonderful and totally brave.

Bravery is important, because Ma eventually puts a lot of pressure on Jack when she asks him to get them both out of Room. Jack really is her only hope, the Obi Wan Kenobi to her Princess Leia, because she has reason to believe that Old Nick will abandon them and they will starve. She tells him, "I'm your mother. That means sometimes I have to choose for both of us." Whether she realizes it or not, she is putting him through a crazy guilt trip. The last thing Jack wants is to disappoint his mother. She is the only person he has. Even though Jack is scared, he pretends to be dead gets rolled up in a rug and is taken by Old Nick to be buried. Even though he is never been in the outside world he escapes a moving pickup truck and gets help, breaking his mother free from the prison she has been in for seven years.

The Portrayal of Solipsism seen in Jack's characterization

Based on concept the portrayal of solipsism be seen in Jack characterization in Emma Donoghue novel entitled "Room" through the quatation below.
     "Listen, Jack, I need to tell you another story."
     "A true one?"
     "Totally true. You know how I used to be all sad?"
I like this one. "Then I came down from Heaven and grew in your tummy."
"Yeah, but see, why I was sad--it was because of Room," says Ma. "Old Nick--I did not even know him, I was nineteen. He stole me."
I'm trying to understand. Swiper no swiping. But I never heard of swiping people.
                (Donoghue, 2010: 33)

This quatation above shows the portrayal of solipsism when his mother told him the true story about Old Nick kidnapped her when she was nineteen years old and has kept her imprisoned for the past seven years until now. From the quotation above, it explains if Jack doesn't know about stoling somoene or kindapping someone. So he only focus on what exist in his mind, **I'm trying to understand. Swiper no swiping. But I never heard of swiping people.**

Moving now. I'm zooming along in the truck for real for really real.
I have to try harder, I don't know what."But it's locked and we don't know the code."
    "You wanted to unlock the door and get outside?"
    "Like Alice."
    "Is alice another friend of yours?"
    I nod. "She's in the book."
"Alice in Wonderland. For crying out loud," says the man police.
I know that bit. But how did he read our book, he wasn't ever in room. I say to him, "Do you know the bit where her crying makes a pond."
"Your Ma was crying?" asks Officer Oh. Outsiders don't understand anything , I wonder do they watch to much on tv.
"No, Alice. She's always wanting to get into the garden, like us."
                                        (Donoghue, 2010: 38)

Through the explanation above it can be seen if Jack tries to explain by his own way to police. He tries to describe the place and condition of the room, based on what exist in his mind. Which is by talking about Alice, he talks based on his experienced inside the room and what exist in his mind. "No, Alice. **She's always wanting to get into the garden, like us."**

This is become the idea that only a person and this person's thoughts and experiences exist. Therefore, we know if his mother already told him the story, but he can't explain it to the police.

CONCLUSION

As one of famous fiction books, Room can describe the portrayal of solipsism in one of character which is Jack, through his characterization as seen in Emma Donoghue novel entitled "Room" using Solipsism theory by Wittgenstein. The function of characters itself to helping the readers understand about the story that is presented by an author through character's characterizations such as dialogue, action, appearance, etc. Jack who is being held captive in a small room until 7 years with his mother believes that only Room and the things it contains (including himself and Ma) are "real." Ma, unwilling to disappoint Jack with a life she cannot give him, allows Jack to believe that the rest of the world exists only on television. Then, it makes behaviour and mental processes of Jack's characterization as victim and protagonist character in this novel can lead us to the solipist toughts, because we can see that from his feeling, emotions, experiences and how he reacts to something. Jack only believes with his own thought, and what he already experienced before, for the first time he only believes that only he, and his mother that exist in the world beside of small kitchen, a bathtub, a wardrobe, a bed, and a TV set in the small room, until he find the truth and experienced it by he himself if there is life outside of the room that called as the real world. The portrayal of solipsism started when his mother told him the true story about Old Nick kidnapped her when she was nineteen years old and has kept her imprisoned for the past seven years until now. Meanwhile, Jack does not know about stoling somoene or kindapping someone.

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