The 3rd Indonesian International Conference on Linguistics, Language Teaching, Literature and Culture

DEPICTION AND IMPACT OF ISOLATION IN "ROOM" NOVEL (A POST MODERN STUDY)

Yan Ardian Subhan & Tivani Zarah

Pamulang University
dosen00184@unpam.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study elaborates depiction and impact of isolation in Emma Donoghue's Room novel. Using a Post-modern perspective, this study attempted to compare the theory on that era with the reality that happens in the novel. Michel Foucault's theory of body disciplinary system is applied in this study where isolation occurred in this novel becomes major issues. Descriptive analysis is also used to describe the findings. The results of analysis discovered panopticon, power, torture, punish, discipline that followed by isolation and its impacts through the characters to control and to make the character obedient.

Keywords: *Post-modern, character analysis, isolation, Foucault*

INTRODUCTION

All human being in every situation or different place has different regulation, which means people always being watched by different subject.

Isolation in this study may result bad impact to the object, illustrated by Michel Foucault in Discipline and Punish. Panopticon concept designed by Benjamin Bentham has discussed in Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish. Panopticon is a jail, a circular building, and in the middle of the building there was a tower that makes the prisoner believe they were being watched with the intention feel watched to further limit that focuses on mental attack. The isolation has close relation to the Panopticon theory, it impact to the psychology of the experiencer, but in different character and different personality has also different impact of isolation. However, isolation destruct human nature as a social, being isolated everything became limited.

The novel "Room" is adapted from true story, inspired from story about evil deeds of a father Josef Fritzl to her daughter Elizabeth Fritzl who was being prisoned and rapped for 24 years and Elizabeth gave a birth to four children. In Donoghue's novel, the story is about Josef and Elizabeth Friztl. When Ma was teenager, she was kidnapped by stranger until she gave a birth and had a son name's Jack. Ma was isolated for 7 years and Jack almost in his entire life. Jack, has no idea about real world, the only thing that he knew is room and the stuff in it. In 11-by-11-foot room they live. Ma Planned to escape the room and they were succeed release from that hell after all they sacrificed.

The study concerns to the representation of isolation in "Room" has impact to the main characters. Foucault's theory that consist of panopticon depict the social issue which is panopticon now days apparently evolved to the institution for instance in school, army, hospital, even in social public. The using of CCTV (Camera Circuit Television) as the tool for surveillance that we, people, allowed as the tool mass surveillance.

Post-modern is a general and wide-ranging term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction, and cultural and literary criticism, among others. Postmodernism is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts to explain reality. In essence, it stems from a recognition that reality is not simply mirrored in human understanding of it, but rather, is constructed as the mind tries to understand its own particular and personal reality. For this reason, postmodernism is highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person.

This theory is a broad and ambiguous belief system tied to the philosophical and cultural reaction to the conviction of modernism. Sometime post-modernism equated with humanism. In short, post- modernism theory sees reality as what individuals or social groups make it to be. Some experts argued that Post-modernism begin after world war II until occurred the destruction or slaughter on mass scale, especially caused by fire or nuclear war, named Holocaust, that impacted existential disappointment through society.

The theorists agree that there are two concepts of post-modernism, first as the reaction among modern esthetic such as architecture, art, and literature in the middle of 20th century. The second concept as the reaction of modern tradition occurred among middle ages. There are many of theorists of post-modern, Michel Foucault is one of the theorists upon developing era. This theory focuses on his work Discipline and Punish, in his work there are several concept such as discipline, punish, torture, panopticon, isolation, and power.

a. Discipline

All of this torture and punishment is meant to discipline, which is where the prison

system headed after spectacle and bloody bodily punishment. We now imprison criminals to reeducate them. Intended them to change, transform, be rehabilitated, or conform to societal norms. The attempt of discipline is locking them up. (It isn't very successful) Prison system then become systems of education, and for those who do not accept the discipline of being reeducated as a "normal" citizen, they end up back in prison. Interestingly, as this serves as a form of education, so, too, is education a form of discipline. The fields are divided up and called "disciplines" means "to be redefined by knowledge".

b. Punish

Punishment by the time turn into form of controlling of the body, in called as modern punishment locking it up in prison. This kind of punishment no longer publicly and physically painful and more focuses on psychological burden to the loneliness and separate to the society.

c. Torture

Foucault examines how punishing the body publicly was a huge part of government control and power. Torture is publicly punishment tend to show to the society, offender have such punish to hurting them harmfully even seems uncivilized, to give suggestion to the society that offender would not grow and they did not comply with the laws of the king, or became a warning of what would happen to those who break the law.

d. Panopticon

e. Isolation

Literary isolation is kind of condition of powerful force, as human being socialization that is needed such as to live, love, work, play, socialized with other. It is sometimes more than biological needs. In an essay on isolation in literature, Mark Conliff (2012) points out that the condition hinges on the individual having once been part of a whole. The isolated person is not really a "stranger" or an "outsider," words that might come to mind when thinking of this solitary state. Isolation requires that one was part of the group (at least at one time) and that he or she continues "to be defined, however subtly, by his association with his usual world"

f. Power

The theory of power considered as the main theory in the whole discourse of Michel Foucault during his career. Power in concept of Foucault does not regarded as negative like Marxian perspectives, while Foucault studying power as productive and reproductive things, and focus on discipline formation.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Depiction of isolation

In the particular this study using two main sources to be discussed, Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault and novel by Emma Donoghue entitled Room. In this section the writer only choose some of theory from Foucault to find the relation between isolation in the room novel, the theories are; power, punishment, torture, panopticon.

    a. Power

        The effect of power can be seen from the place of the operation, and the purpose of it. Negative or positive it could be relative based on the benefit and the impact. Now, in this discussion the writer little bit omitted the idea of power based on Foucault, still, basically same. Meanwhile in this study that the issue about isolation which the impact of kidnap it should be negative. Kidnapper or in the Room novel called as "Old Nick", he has a power to control the victims. He uses his power to make them do whatever he wants. Because of dependency of the victim on the holder of the power, there is no other way except to be obedient. Dependency of the victim relate to the Foucault's statement about relation. The relation between abductor and the victims had connection among them, which basically symbiotic mutualism occurred. Old Nick stands for his desire to control his victims, and the victim has no alternatives way to be survived.

    b. Discipline

        In the Room novel, discipline is form of reduction. Unlike Foucault theory discipline to be controlled like much people, in this novel is only bunch of people that Old Nick which has power to control them. Ma and Jack, they supposed to be discipline, they only doing their daily routine in an 11-by-11-foot room. You know, not much things to do in a very small room.

    c. Punish

        Punishment not only physically, in Foucault theory this concept more inclined to the mental attack. Foucault analyzed punishment in the social context, and also determined how changing power relation affected to punishment. In modern era punishment no longer using any ritual of punishing in front of public, also king doesn't involve in process of punished. It has to be ruled by the law. The eighteenth century was the recall of punishment. The transformation, according to Foucault, was not from welfare motivation of concern to regenerated the system but it was only for

make power operate more efficiently.

d. Torture

Torture for Foucault had big deal with government, it always related. This is the real type of punishment that the purpose is to hurting the offender attack physically directly. And before modern punishment it all showing in front of public, to show them, if they are make any law breaking they will get this kind of punishment, and different effect to the offender as well.

e. Panopticon

In eighteenth century Benjamin Bentham concept of panopticon stand for overt social control, while in construction of panopticon concept by Foucault clearer. Foucault has complete the idea of panopticon that uses as the social control, he kind of digging it deeper, and evolve as the modern panopticon which is better. It has no longer this is most relatable to the Isolation concept in this study.

Impact of isolation

After finding the depiction of Foucault's theory and Isolation in room novel, in this passage discussed about the impact of isolation among the characters (Ma and Jack).. They both has a different impact because they live a very different life, Ma who used to life as normal person, and Jack live in the 11-by-11-foot room in his entire life, it supposed to be different

a. Impact to Ma

For this section, the impact not only before they release from the room, but also after they released from there. Ma in the previous life, she has a teenager normal life, Old Nick was took it over from her. In the meantime, not just because she has a normal life then after she release from the room, she can live her life that easy, it's not. As human being, it couldn't possible someone can control everything after all the marvelously traumatic crime. In the beginning of the story Ma tried to hide away everything about outside the room because she just simply cannot explain to Jack with everything that going on for real. Because he just too small to understand, for Ma.

b. Impact to Jack

As a child that have been raised in the Room without knowing about real world, and her mother tries to hide it because she is just not make Jack growing and have thought about negativity, her mother want him to live as normal as he can be. Eventually the day before they release from the room, Ma was kind of explaining about Room, Old Nick, about outside the Room.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing "Room" novel, in particular isolation occurred in this novel had major problem which resulted damage physically and mentally through the characters and certain fascinating experience. The writer formulated this affair of isolation with panopticon, power, torture, punish, and discipline. The analysis found the impact such as depressed, commit suicide, unfamiliar, hard to adaptation, and affectionate. Ma and Jack experienced isolation for 7 years and under control by the abductor as the reflected of power.

The impact of isolation among the characters somehow has a positive and negative impact, "love knows no boundaries" from "Room" novel as the positive because as love as mother to his son Ma to Jack and vice versa, even in the isolation love much more pursue. As human being, the characters need to be free, live their daily routine but still have to develop and improvisation, not being prisoner and doing daily routine as discipline.

REFERENCES

Altifo, A. (2016, November 2). Random. Retrieved august 7, 2018, from Randon: http://sfaalvito.blogspot.com/2016/11/jenis-jenis-genre-novel.html

Apriliana, R. N. (2013). Electronic Theses & Dessertation. Retrieved 11 30, 2017, from http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/index.php?mod=penelitian_detail&sub=PenelitianDet ail&act=view&typ=html&buku_id=61151

Balan, S. (2010). M. Foucault View on Power Relation. Economic Antropology.

Bond, M. (2014, may 14). BBC. Retrieved 11 26, 2017, from www.bbc.com: http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20140514-how-extreme-isolation-warps-minds

Borough, L. (2015). Mental Health Impact of Loneliness & Social Isolation. Journal of Mental-Health.

Donoghue, E. (2010). Room. Canada: Pan Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (1975). Discipline and Punish. France: Vintage.

Fraley, R. C. (2018). Adult Attachment Theory and Research. Psychology.

Gwalior. (2018). Reserach Methodology. Journal of Research.

Janovsky, A. (2003). English Course. Retrieved 12 06, 2017, from Study.com: https://study.com/academy/lesson/character-in-literature-definition-types-development.html

Lite, L. (2012, 08 20). Literary Isolation. Retrieved 01 10, 2018, dari literacle.com: https://literacle.com/literary-isolation/

Maning, S. (1992). Romance Should Not be Confused. London: Oxford University Press.

Maulanski. (2016, 12 02). PsikologiHore! Dipetik 09 24, 2018, from attachment definition - Attachment : https://psikologihore.com/definisi-kelekatan-attachment/

McMullan, T. (2015, July 23). The Power of Privacy. Retrieved September 14, 2018, dari The Guardian: www.theguardian.com

Sheridan, C. (2016). Foucault, Power and the Modern Panopticon. Hartford: Triny Collage.

Starter, P. (2017). Enotes. Retrieved 12 19, 2017, from www.enotes.com: https://www.enotes.com/research-starters/social-isolation-human-development