

DAVID HENRY'S DEPRESSION IN KIM EDWARDS *THE MEMORY KEEPER'S DAUGHTER*

Ulia Irhami*
Mateus Rudi Supsiadji**

ABSTRAK. Dalam artikel ini, penulis mengeksplorasi tema depresi yang dihadapi oleh tokoh utama, David Henry dalam novel karya Kim Edwards yang berjudul *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. Penelitian ini memakai metode deskriptif konfirmatori dan pendekatan intrinsik. Hasil penelitian terhadap perilaku David sebagaimana dinyatakan dalam karya ini menunjukkan bahwa David mengalami depresi yang disebabkan, yang utama, oleh keputusannya untuk menyingkirkan bayi perempuan mereka, yang ia duga mengalami kelainan jantung, dan yang diakui David telah meninggal saat dilahirkan. Akibatnya, David harus bercerai dari Norah yang tidak dapat menerima kenyataan kehilangan bayi mereka. David menjadi jauh dengan anaknya Paul dan akhirnya David harus menjalani hidup kesepian seorang sendiri.

Kata kunci: *causal analysis, depresi, konflik*

INTRODUCTION

This article is interested in analyzing David Henry's depression in Kim Edwards' *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. There are two reasons to choose this topic as a focus of discussion. *First*, depression is a common phenomenon that may happen to everyone and becomes one of the factors that may cause a stroke. *Second*, it is interesting to discover David's way to overcome his problem. David Henry is the main character of the novel who is waiting for new born twin babies. When the babies are delivered, one of them is diagnosed to have abnormal heart condition. This reminds David of his childhood and in turn reminds him to what has happened to his father, mother, and himself: a gloomy past life. David does not want this to repeat in his own family now. So he gives the abnormal-heart baby away to prevent his wife from knowing the matter. However, his decision does not bring him happiness but sadness. The novel shows how depression can attack someone life by telling the phenomenon that occurs toward the main character until he gets depression.

Rey and Birmaher (2009:7) define depression as "an episodic or chronic disorder characterized by persistent and pervasive sadness or unhappiness, loss of enjoyment of everyday activities, irritability, boredom, an associated symptoms such as negative thinking, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, and appetite and sleep disturbance." When someone has a depressive disorder, the individual functioning must also be impaired.

Depression can occur alone, as in major depression or it can alternate with mania, as in bipolar disorder. Commonly, depression is a reaction of looseness such as, the death of family, job loss, or support. Depression exists in a continuum, although manifestation may vary according to age, gender, and cultural background.

Some the symptoms of depression include: core symptoms fatigue or loss of energy, excessive guilt, diminished ability to think or concentrate of indecisiveness, loss of confidence or self esteem, lack of reactivity, delusions, chronic feelings of worry and boredom (Rey and Birmaher: 2009:7). Core symptoms are depressed or irritable mood most of the day, nearly every day, as indicated by subjective report or observation made by others. The mood is often irritable rather than depressed, particularly in children. The children may not be able to

* Ulia Irhami, S. S., alumni Prodi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya Surabaya

** Mateus Rudi Supsiadji, S. S., M. Pd., dosen Prodi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

articulate their feelings well. It is marked diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day. It can present as chronic boredom.

Another symptom is fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day. Symptom that seems to be in excess of the level of physical morbidity may raise the possibility of depression. It is also marked by feeling worthless or excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day. Most young people experience transient crises of confidence to be significant. These feelings need to be enduring.

Furthermore, an excessive guilt is uncommon but is a discriminating symptom in young people. Occasionally, these symptoms can be of delusional intensity, recurrent thoughts of death, recurrent of suicidal ideation, a suicidal attempt, or a specific plan for committing suicide. This does not include fear and dying. Suicidal thoughts or attempts must always raise the possibility of depression. Such ideas need to be differentiated from hurtful or manipulative statements made in anger but independent of low mood.

Diminished ability to think or concentrate or indecisiveness nearly every day. This problem usually comes to light because a decline in academic performance. In the presence of preexisting problems with attention or concentration, there needs to be clear increase in the symptom within the context of the depressive episode.

In addition, the symptom or sign of loss of confidence or self esteem is one the symptoms. Frequent unexpected somatic complains, feeling sick, headaches, stomachaches. Clinicians must judge whether the symptom may be better explained by inter current medical illness or other psychiatric disorders (e.g anxiety).

Furthermore, there are hallucinations and delusions. Hallucinations are defined as perceptions in a conscious and awake state in the absence of external stimuli which have qualities of real perception, in that they are vivid, substantial, and located in external objective space. Auditory hallucination is usually in children (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hallucination>). A delusion is a belief held with strong conviction despite superior evidence to the contrary. As pathology, it is distinct from a belief based on false or incomplete information, confabulation, dogma, illusion, or other effects of perception. Delusions are more common in adolescent (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/delusion>).

There has not been a study of this particular topic of depression as being depicted in the novel being discussed. This article, therefore, aims to investigate the topic. The questions being posed are: 1) what are the causes of David Henry's depressions in *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*?; 2) what are the impacts of David Henry's Depression toward his family?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopts descriptive confirmatory method, which means the analysis of the study which is based on the confirmation of the theory and the data taken from the novel itself (Roth, 1986: 75). Furthermore, the theory of conflict is used as intrinsic approach in conducting this study. Intrinsic approach is a way of analyzing a literary works based on the elements of the literary works itself, such as setting, character, point of view, plot, style, and theme (Abrams, 1979: 26). According to Wellek, intrinsic emphasizes on the elements of literature itself, such as characters, theme, point of view, plot and others. In addition, the writers also use extrinsic approach which means that the research is also examining the outside aspects of the literary elements that has a great influence in shaping the literary works (Wellek and Warren, 1956:73).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study analyzes the cause and impact of the character's depression. Each analysis is presented and discussed separately as follows.

The Cause of David Henry's Depression

David's depression can be seen from his behavior following his decision to give the new baby daughter under other person nurturing. David Henry is the main character of this novel. He has a hard childhood in West Virginia. His family is dirt poor and his sister, June, whom he loves, has to suffer from a heart defect and grow very slowly with her breath catching and coming gasps. This condition makes his mother's attention goes to his sister more and it happens until she dies when she is only twelve years old and the death of June hurts him and his mother.

This event occupies David's mind a lot and it will influence him in his decision making later concerning to his baby daughter. For a moment, David is able to forget the memory as he succeeds to be an orthopedic surgeon. He has a family with Norah and the family goes happily until Norah delivers twin babies. The first baby is a boy, he is perfectly healthy. They name him Paul. The second baby girl is born but she is not normal. She is diagnosed to have symptoms of a heart defect. David's childhood memory of his sister and his mother comes to play in his mind.

David thinks that having such symptoms, his baby daughter will suffer from heart defect just like his sister. The memory of his mother's grief plays inside his mind. Clearly, he remembers her mother's walk uphill to the grave every morning, her arms folding against whatever weather she encounters. Henry does not want his wife to feel what his mother has felt, so he decides to take the girl into the institution by asking a nurse who also loves him secretly. The nurse name is Caroline. When doing this, Henry remembers his sister who is pale and thin, she tries to catch her breath and his mother always tries to hide his tears. Henry thinks that by giving the girl away he can spare all the terrible grief from his family. Besides, he does not want to destroy his wife. He tells a lie by saying to his wife that their daughter dies when she is born. The true is that David is always informed about the girl's condition from Caroline by letters. His daughter grows healthily and even she does not have any heart attacks. Caroline also sends him her photo.

Having informed that his daughter growing well, David Henry becomes panic of what may happens if her wife, Norah, knows that. What he wants is to spare and protect her from loss and pain. He does not understand that loss will follow her regardless as persistent and life-shaping as stream of water. Nor has he anticipates his own grief, weave with the dark threads of his past. When he imagines the daughter he has given away, it is his sister's face he sees, her pale hair, her serious smile. He loves his sister, June, so much, her sweet laughter. June is the center of his family attention. Her illness makes her weak. He thinks a lot about his daughter and his sister all the time. When Norah wants another baby, David refuses it by telling their son is still a year.

Actually, June's death has broken their mother spirit and David can no longer believe himself immune from misfortune. It is what David does not want to happen to his family. He thinks of his daughter a lot but he does not want to try finding her. However, he blames himself but it does not change his decision. What has happened to him reminds him to his present life. How hard he pays his school by looking for the snakes and sells them. His depression comes when his sister dies but he never shows it. His all days are in the office with his patient. He does not care of his son. Even little mistakes that his son, Paul, does, he gets angry.

There is another problem happens to his family that worsens David's depression, that is Norah's affair with a man. David does not do anything but he blames himself for what Nora does. The worse is that their son knows Norah's having affair outside there. David loses his courage to discuss the matter with Norah to solve the problem. Even he tries to run himself away and David tries not to think of everything to much by listening to Paul's music while thinking of his sister. She loves music also like Paul. A deep sense of loss rises up in him. Living by the shadow of his daughter and sister makes him think that it's so forceful, woven of so many memories.

David's disability to forbid Norah from doing an affair cannot be separated from his feeling of worthless that comes from his feeling guilty because of what he has done toward their daughter. His concealing secret about his decision to send her baby daughter away put David under a burden. All he has done change his habitual. He becomes a mysterious father for Paul, a cold husband for Norah. His time is just to spend in his room. This condition clearly shows that David is really in a depression. He forbids Paul to take music because he thinks that music doesn't promise anything for his life. Having daily argument with Norah, he never goes to the clinic anymore. They live like strangers in their house. Of course Paul becomes a sufferer because of this condition. David's mood changes all the time, he gets angry easily even when Paul makes a little mistake. Paul becomes more sensitive and David becomes more protective. Both of them are easy to be angry.

...on that day in the cottage, in the instant before he felt Paul's presence and looked up, his father's expression had been utterly open, washed with emotions like rain-some old love and loss. He glanced away, and when he looked back his father's expression was distant again, impassive." (Edward Kim, 274)

His aims are actually to protect his son and his family from the thing he has suffered poverty, worry and grief. However, what he thought to be a good idea in fact results in unexpected negative impact that he never anticipates it. The separation of his family is causing by his fault. He blames himself for this and David, then, decides to move away from the house and live in his old house alone. He brings his regret without doing anything to his family. The effect is Paul does not get any attention and be naughty. His trauma of his sister's death, her down syndrome daughter and also his mother's grief pulls him away from the happiness.

The Impact Of David Henry's Depression

Depression gives bad impacts for David's family. Though he thinks that his decision will save his family, he cannot do it well. He himself cannot control his emotion so Norah begins to think that she has to find a better life than with David because she lives once. They always do the argument even the conflict usually appears between them. Besides that, David becomes bad temper. He is easily to get angry. As the one who begins the argument, David does not want that Norah announce the death of their daughter because the fact is their daughter is still alive and Caroline knows that. This is the beginning of conflict that happens in David's family. The death of the baby brings him away of his wife. As the bad impact, conflict happens every time to David's family because David's habit has changed. David's determination that the baby should get a medical care brings him to do the wrong decision without thinking of his wife's feeling.

David's being depressed also affects on his relationship with his son Paul. Paul is a teenager who is so attracted with music. He likes music so much. He believes that how music is being played can touch everyone heart. Through playing music, he feels he can express his feelings. David, his father, thinks that he knows the best for him. Paul is not allowed to prepare music as his work. Because he thinks that music is not contributing much for him. Paul does not agree with him. He likes music and has to concern about it.

Paul also knows what has happened to his mother. Her affair to a guy is shocking him. Paul's anger to his father arises because he does not do anything for his mother. Perhaps he is still young but he knows that his mother has an affair with another guy.

"You and mom," Paul said, his words bursting out, as if he'd been holding them back a long time. "What's wrong with you, anyway? You live like you don't care about anything. You don't have any joy. You just get through the days, no matter what. You don't even give a damn about that guy Howard" (Edward Kim : 252).

Paul thinks that he does not pay attention to his mother. His anger is because his mother attitude which shows living alone. He feels no one cares of him, not his life and not his dream.

The worse impact that happens next to David is the broken family. He loses not only his wife but also his son and his daughter. His purpose of throwing away his daughter is to protect Norah from pain, but the truth is that she seems to get pain all day. It is not his want. He regrets his decision. He tries to fix his family by asking Caroline to meet him with his daughter but Caroline refuses it. Meanwhile, Norah becomes more changes. Paul also has his own life. He decides to divorce Norah and prefers to live alone; he is back to his childhood home and lives there alone. He dies because of heart attack and Norah gets married again to a businessman and Paul decides to live alone in another city.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, David's depression can be seen from his behaviour. He becomes inferior to other people, represented by his incapability to prevent Norah from having an affair with another man. And this happens because of his guilty feeling for sending their new born daughter away. Next, David easily loses control of his temper. He easily gets angry even when there is only a small mistake that his son, Paul, does. David also suffers from having to get sleep easily. Those are some symptoms that characterize people with depression syndrome.

David's depression affects himself and other persons around him. He has conflict with Norah, Paul, and Caroline. The conflict with his wife, finally, goes further and comes to its climax when they decide to divorce. David tries to fix his family by asking Caroline to meet him with his daughter but Caroline refuses it. She is afraid that he will take her. Caroline is a calm woman changes into a very protective woman. She has done everything for his daughter even she gives his daughter her love. David cannot take her easily. The conflict they face is unsolved. This conflict makes him depressive. David brings the truth till he dies. Before he dies because of heart attack, he decides to move to his hometown and lives alone there. Norah gets married again to a businessman and Paul lives alone in another city. David finally has to live alone, away from people that he loves before.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M.H. 1979. *The Mirror and The Lamp; Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. New York: Oxford University.
- Brewin, Chris R. 1997. *Depression*. UK: Psychology Press Ltd.
- Edward Kim. 2006. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Hugh, Holman C. 1986. *The Roots of Southern Writing on The literature of the American Club*. United States of America: The Universing of Georgia Press.
- Perrinck, Laurent. 1970. *Structure, Sound, and Sense*. England: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
- Rey, Joseph M, Bons Birmaher. 2009. *Treating Child and Adolescent Depression*. Philadelphia: Lippincow Williams and Wilkins, a Wolflis.
- Rober, Edgar, Henry E Jacob. 1995. *Literature : An Introduction To Reading and Writing*. New Jersey: Prentis-Hall Inc.
- Roy, Jennifer Rozines, 2005. *Depression*. New York: Marshal Cavendish Corporation..
- Roth, Audry J. 1986. *The Research Paper, Process, form, and Content*. California: Wadsworth Publishing
- Tyson, Lois. 2006. *Critical Theory Today*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group
- Wellek, Reene & Austin Warren. 1984. *Theory of Literature*. New York: Marines Books.
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hallucination>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/delusion>.