



**PSYCHOPATHIC DISORDER IN ROALD
DAHL'S *THE LANDLADY***

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For S-1 Degree in Literature

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that he compiles this study by himself and without taking the results from other research of any university, S-1, S-2, S-3 and diploma degree. In addition, the writer ascertains that he does not quote any material from other publications except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 5thSeptember 2019

Gigih Pangestu

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

To see the world, things dangerous to come to, to see behind walls, draw closer, to find each other, and to feel. That is the purpose of life.

Walter Mitty, The Secret Life of Mitty Walter

We have so much time and so little and so little to do. Strike that, reverse it.

Roald Dahl

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33

This paper is dedicated to

Myself and my beloved mother and father

To everyone who helped me accomplished this paper

APPROVAL

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THE LANDLADY

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I realize that this project is still far from perfect, I therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this project better. Finally, I expect that project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about the inner and the outer beauty that is reflected in the poem or other literary works.

Semarang, 5th September, 2019

Gigih Pangestu

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an analysis of Psychopathic Disorder in *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl. The story tells about Billy Weaver who meets a Psychopath that could hide her true nature. In this paper, the writer analyzes Psychopathic Disorder by discussing the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The writer collected the data for this paper by using library research and using psychological approach as research method. The intrinsic elements that the writer uses character and point of view. The extrinsic element uses theory about the symptoms of psychopathic disorder. The result of this study is the landlady showing several symptoms of psychopathic disorder such as pathological lying, manipulative, superficial charm, and lack of guilt. However, she can hide her psychopathic nature by acting kindly towards her guests. The effect of her psychopathic disorder is that she becomes a murderer of several young men and the protagonist of the story will be her next victim.

Keywords: Psychopathic Disorder, Roald Dahl, Psychopath, Effect.

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Every human feels depression and stress caused by the pressure that surrounds them such as failure in career, family problems, loneliness, and many other things. Too much pressure on one's mind could cause stress which could lead to a psychological problem.

People with a psychological problem differ from those who have a normal psychological condition. They are usually more easily annoyed and angry, have the tendency to blame other people, and could harm other people. However, there are some people with mental illness that can hide their true personality. This kind of people is much more dangerous because they seem to act normal but their true nature could endanger to the level that they can hurt and kill someone without remorse (Hervey, 1988: 16). People cannot be judged just from their appearance because appearance is deceiving and there is no way to tell what is on a person's mind.

An example of a psychopathic character who is able to hide her/his true nature can be seen in a story written by Roald Dahl: *The Landlady*. *The Landlady* is a story about a young man named Billy Weaver who is looking for a place to stay in. He is interested in a boarding house that looks so nice and comfortable. The house is occupied by an old woman who looks so friendly and the lady offers of her price based on Billy's budget. Even though he felt there was something strange about the old lady and the place, he still insists to stay overnight. However,

he doesn't realize that the friendly landlady is a serial killer who has already killed two men and he will be her next target.

The writer chose to analyze the story *The Landlady* because the story shows a character who has a psychopathic disorder and she could hide her true personality. The writer will try to describe the landlady's psychopathic disorder by analyzing her unusual behavior and also try to find the cause of her psychopathic disorder.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What are the symptoms of the landlady's psychopathic disorder?
2. What are the effects of that landlady psychopathic disorder?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to:

1. To describe the symptoms of the landlady's psychopathic disorder
2. To figure out the effects of the landlady's psychopathic behavior

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**2.1. Intrinsic****2.1.1. Characters**

Characters are one of the most important elements in literary works such as prose and drama. They live in a fictional world created by the author. The characters have a function as actors who are involved in a conflict and the author tries to show how they impact the plot and their development in the story. An interesting character can make the reader become more attracted to the story and the characters (Potter, 1967: 1).

In the story, the characters act the way as the author intended to. They will be given their own role that has an impact on the story. The way how the author describes their own characters is called characterization. The author usually makes the characters in his story as realistic as possible, but still within a rules according of fictional world that the author makes (Holman, 1960: 75).

Usually, there is a character who is described as a good person or a bad person. His/her existence is crucial to build up the plot. Characters can be divided based on their motivation in the story, that is, the protagonist and antagonist. The major character who becomes the reader's center of the interest is called the protagonist. Meanwhile, the character who is always opposite the protagonist and draws his attention is called antagonist (Abrams, 2005: 265). The protagonist is usually described as a good character, meanwhile the antagonist is an evil

character. Though that is not always the case, sometimes their roles are reversed in the story.

2.1.2 Point of View

In literary works, there are multiplied different perspectives on how the author tries to give the readers a way to look at the fictional world that the author created. Perspective intends to control the reader's view about the main aspect of the story such as character, plot, and the setting is called a point of view (Meyer, 1990: 128). Point of view helps the reader to understand the event and the emotion of the characters in the story.

According to Meyer in his book entitled *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, "The various point of view that storytellers draw upon can be conveniently grouped into two broad categories: (1) The third-person narrator, and (2) the first-person narrator." (1990; 128). The third-person narrator is a point of view where the narrator tells the story but does not participate in the story. This point of view can be divided into two types: omniscient which means the narrator knows the feeling and behavior of all the characters and limited which means the narrator's knowledge in the story is limited to one or two characters. Meanwhile, the first-person narrator participates in the story as a major/minor character.

2.2. Extrinsic

2.2.1. The Symptoms of Psychopathic Disorder

Psychopathic disorder is a type of personality disorder that changes someone's behavior because of his/her unstable mental health. The unstable way of thinking makes them aggressive that could endanger his/her environment (Michel, 1966:

6). Sometimes, it is difficult to identify someone as a psychopath because they are not aware of their own mental health, but a psychopath could be identified by looking at several symptoms of the psychopathic disorder.

The symptoms of psychopathic disorder are pathological lying, manipulative, glibness/superficial charm, lack of guilt, lack of empathy, poor behavioral controls, promiscuous sexual behavior, grandiose sense of self-worth, need for stimulation to boredom, shallow affect, parasitic lifestyle, early behavioral problems, lack of realistic long-term goals, and impulsivity (Robert, 1993: 34).

2.2.2. The Effect of Psychopathic Disorder

Psychopathic disorder's effect on the sufferers is dreadful. The most obvious effect of psychopathic disorder is their ability to commit crime. Psychopaths are usually convicts such as serial killer, rapists, thieves, swindlers, cult leaders, etc. It is because of their lack of internal control and unconventional attitudes regarding ethics and morality (Hervey, 1998: 83).

Traumatic background that psychopaths have also changes their way of thinking about society. They start to doubt other people and feels that the only one they can trust is themselves. Psychopaths have a weak mental picture of the consequences of their behavior. They always feel right, even when what they are doing is a criminal activity as long as it benefits for them.

3

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Method of Data Collection

Method of research is crucial, to find, develop, and test the validity of this paper. The writer uses library research to support the accuracy of the data related to this paper. According to Jorge Marx Gomez and SulaimanMouselli in their *Modernizing the Academic Teaching and Research Environment* (2018: 8), library research is “a type of research that is gotten principally using written materials located in libraries, World Wide Web, and in virtual databases.”.

The writer gets the information and data by taking the sources from books, journals, the internet, and other valid sources. The source which the writer uses to support the analysis is psychopathic disorder symptoms by Robert, Potter and Meyer’s *Element of Literature*. All the data that were acquired from several books are then noted and listed by the writer to make the draft for this paper. By relating the theory and the object of research, this paper could finally be written.

3.2. Research Approach

In analyzing the poem, the writer uses Psychological approaches. Psychology is defined as the scientific study of behavior and mental process (Lahey, 1998: 2). Psychology can be used to understand humans by observing their action, manner, and thought process.

The use of psychology to analyze literature is explained by Wellek and Warren, which states:

‘psychology literature’ we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as a type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and law present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology). (1977: 75).

The psychological approach can be used to learn the characterization of a character by looking at the psychological aspect such as behavior and mindset of the character. On this paper, the writer will focus on analyzing the character’s psychopathic disorder by discussing the psychopathic disorder symptoms in the story. The writer finds that the Landlady suffers from psychopathic disorder similar to the symptoms. Evident from her abnormal act towards Billy through the story.

4

DISCUSSION**4.1 Intrinsic****4.1.1 Characters**

The writer tries to analyze two major characters in the story. They are Billy Weaver and The landlady. These characters have a big influence on the plot of the story. The characters of these characters can be seen in the dialogues and their action.

4.1.1.1 Billy Weaver

Billy is the main character and protagonist in Roald Dahl's *The Landlady*. He is pictured as a seventeen year old young man who comes from London to Bath for a business trip. He is really enthusiastic about his job and try to look like a successful businessman."He walked briskly down the street. He was trying to do everything briskly these days. Briskness, he had decided, was the one common characteristic of all successful businessmen." (Dahl, 1960: 1). He is polite toward others, it can be seen from when he thanks the porter who brings his suitcase and tells him a cheap place to stay in Bath. He also tells the landlady to not worry about his stay, which implies that he does not need any excessive service during his stay. On the other side, Billy is a naïve character. He trusts strangers way too quickly despite the fact that he has just recently arrived in Bath. He holds no suspicion toward the landlady when she offers him a cheap price to stay in a good-looking boarding house.

When he finds some unusual things, like taxidermized animals and two other guests that already stayed in the boarding for more than two years. Billy just feels weird, but he is still not wary and still believe the Landlady's words. Billy's naivety inadvertently drags his life into something malicious.

4.1.1.2 The Landlady

The landlady is the antagonist of the story. Billy's description of her can be seen in his narration "She was about forty-five or fifty years old, and the moment she saw him, she gave him a warm welcoming smile." (Dahl, 1960: 2). Despite being described as a kind-looking old lady, there is something mysterious about the Landlady. It can be seen from her behavior in the story:

"He pressed the bell. Far away in a back room he heard it ringing, and then at once it must have been at once because he hadn't even had time to take his finger from the bell-button. The door swung open and a woman was standing there." (Dahl, 1960: 2)

It seems that the landlady already noticed Billy in her door and waiting for him to press the bell. When the landlady escorts Billy to his room, she said: "You see, it isn't very often I have the pleasure of taking a visitor into my little nest." (Dahl, 1960: 3). It is weird for a good-looking and cheap boarding house to not welcome so many costumers. From the guest-book, it can be concluded that the Landlady only allows certain people to stay in her "nest" because there are just three costumers including Billy who stays there. She also likes to taxidermize her pets that are already dead. As the story progresses, the reader could notice that the landlady is actually a psychopath that has killed several young men. She keeps and taxidermizes two other guests, Mr. Mulholland, and Mr. Temple on the third floor. This fact is shown in her dialogue as follow: "Left?" she said, arching her

brows. “But my dear boy, he never left. He’s still here. Mr. Temple is also here. They’re on the third floor, both of them together.” (Dahl, 1960: 5). It also implies that Billy will be her next victim, as shown in the dialogue:

“You did sign the book, didn’t you?”

“Oh, yes.”

“That’s good. Because later on, if I happen to forget what you were called, then I can always come down here and look it up. I still do that almost every day with Mr Mulholland and Mr . . .Mr...” (Dahl, 1960: 6)

4.1.2 Point of View

Roald Dahl’s *The Landlady* uses third-person limited omniscient, meaning that the narrator is not a part of the characters, but he could still convey the thoughts and feelings of one character. In *The Landlady*, the narrator tells the story using Billy’s experience as the protagonist and limits the information regarding the landlady. The reason why the author uses third-person limited point of view from Billy is to give a stronger feeling of suspense to the reader. The reader could know that Billy as a character is very naïve and easily trust strangers. His innocence and lack of experience could drag him into situations that may harm him. By conveying Billy’s thoughts and feelings of the situation that he is in throughout the story, the author wants the reader to gradually realize the landlady’s true nature as a psychopath. “For half a minute or so, neither of them spoke. But Billy knew that she was looking at him. Her body was half-turned towards him, and he could feel her eyes resting on his face, watching him over the rim of her teacup.” (Dahl, 1960: 5)

4.2 Extrinsic

4.2.1 The Symptoms of Landlady Psychopathic Disorder

The landlady is an old lady that has a mysterious aura surrounding her. Even though the story does not blatantly depict the landlady as a psychopath, it can be noticed through her behavior and some details in the story that she has killed two men and Billy will be next. The writer finds that the landlady has several symptoms of psychopathic disorder such as pathological lying, manipulative, superficial charm, lack of guilt that could be found in the story.

4.2.1.1 Superficial Charm

Psychopaths usually have the ability to hide their true personality. Psychopaths will try to use their extraordinary charm on others to cover their psychopathic tendencies. As a psychopath, the landlady employs her extraordinary charm toward her guests. It could be seen from Billy's first impression of her: "She seemed terribly nice. She looked exactly like the mother of one's best school-friend welcoming one into the house to stay for the Christmas holidays." (Dahl, 1960: 3). In fact, Billy does not even think twice to spend the night at her place. Billy feels that the desire to follow her was extraordinarily strong.

The landlady can easily allure people to stay at her boarding house. She could act kindly and gives off a comfortable feeling to those around her. She successfully makes Billy think that she is ordinary and a very kind old lady. Her charm can completely hide her psychopathic disorder, most people would have a hard time believing an old lady like her had committed a crime.

4.2.1.2 Pathological Lying

Lying is a common symptom of a psychopath. They usually lie to others to trick and took advantage of them. The landlady deceives Billy when he notices something about two other guests.

“Now wait a minute,” he said. “Wait just a minute. Mulholland ... Christopher Mulholland ... wasn’t that the name of the Eton schoolboy who was on a walking-tour through the West Country, and then all of a sudden ...”
 “Eton schoolboy?” she said. “Oh no, my dear, that can’t possibly be right because my Mr Mulholland was certainly not an Eton schoolboy when he came to me. He was a Cambridge undergraduate.” (Dahl, 1960: 5)

From the dialogue above, when Billy recalls that he has seen Mr. Temple’s and Mr. Mulholland’s names somewhere in the newspaper. The landlady lies to Billy and tells him they are different person. Billy who does not really remember what kind of news that mentions Mr. Temple’s and Mr. Mulholland’s names then decided to believe in Landlady. The landlady wants to hide the fact that it is the same person from the newspaper, to make him not suspicious of her.

4.2.1.3 Lack of Guilt

Psychopaths never feel any guilt when they do negative actions, including crimes. They feel that every action that they do is acceptable, as long as they could achieve what they want. The fact, the landlady has killed two men, and still continue to do so, shows her lack of guilt. “Temple,” Billy said. “Gregory Temple. Excuse my asking, but haven’t there been any other guests here except them in the last two or three years?”. “No, my dear,” she said. “Only you.” (Dahl, 1960: 7)

From the dialogue, the writer will realize that Billy will be the next victim. Although, at the end of the story, Billy’s fate remains unclear. If Billy is killed,

there is a possibility that the landlady continues to do her criminal action until someone could notice what she has been doing all along and brings her into court.

4.2.1.4 Manipulative

Manipulative personality is also one of the symptoms of psychopathic disorder. A psychopath will always try to manipulate his/her victim and make them fall to their trap. Manipulative personality can be found in the landlady's behavior, as the landlady tries to manipulate Billy who is still a young boy.

“If that is too much,” she added, “then perhaps I can reduce it just a tiny bit. Do you desire an egg for breakfast? Eggs are expensive at the moment. It would be sixpence less without the egg.

“Five and sixpence is fine,” he answered. “I should like very much to stay here.”

“I knew you would. Do come in.” (Dahl, 1960: 2)

The landlady lures Billy in by giving him a low price to make him stay at her boarding house and Billy, for sure, will take her offer. She gives so many good services for Billy with the intention to make Billy trust her and think she is harmless. At the end of the story she successfully makes Billy to drink a poisoned tea. The narrator mentions that the tea that Billy drinks tastes bitter like almond. She acts just to make Billy drink the poison that will slowly kill him without realizing it.

4.2.2 The Effect of the Landlady's Psychopathic Disorder

The effect of the landlady's psychopathic disorder that could be seen in the story is the fact that the landlady is a killer and has already killed two people. In the story, the author does not explicitly show that the landlady is a killer. By observing her behavior, it can be noticed that she is a psychopath. Everything is normal at the start of the story, she acts kindly toward Billy and does not appear to be harmful. But, her affection towards Billy seems abnormal.

“But I’m always ready. Everything is always ready day and night in this house just on the off-chance that an acceptable young gentleman will come along. And it is such a pleasure, my dear, such a very great pleasure when now and again I open the door and I see someone standing there who is just exactly right.” She was half-way up the stairs, and she paused with one hand on the stair-rail, turning her head and smiling down at him with pale lips. “Like you,” (Dahl, 1960: 3)

The dialogue above shows how exaggerated she feels about having Billy as a guest. It seems that she does not just accept anyone to be his guest, just a young gentleman that suits her taste. Later in the story, it is shown that the boarding house has two other guests beside Billy, Mr. Temple and Mr. Mulholland. Billy recalls that he has seen their names somewhere in the newspaper, but when he asks the landlady about two other guests, she seems to be hiding something.

The landlady says some things that are quite absurd such as how beautiful Billy’s teeth are, like Mr. Mulholland’s, and Mr. Temple’s unblemished body. She could know something private about her guests, like their body features, because she must have seen them in person. The fact, Mr. Temple and Mr. Mulholland had been there for three years implies the fact that they have been killed by the landlady and their bodies are kept on the third floor. The landlady has a hobby of taxidermizing her pets to preserve their bodies to prevent them from going rotten. The landlady kills her victim by poisoning them. “The tea tasted faintly of bitter almonds, and he didn’t much care for it.” (Dahl, 1960: 6). The dialogue shows that the tea which serves by the landlady for Billy had a unique taste. She poisons Billy and wants to make him one of her collection.

5

CONCLUSION

Roald Dahl's *The Landlady* tells about a psychopath who can hide her true nature. The intrinsic elements which the writer analyzes to support this paper are characters and point of view. Billy, the protagonist of the story, is a naïve young man. He has no suspicion toward strangers that he just met. Later, he meets the landlady, the owner of Bed and Breakfast. Initially, the Landlady is portrayed as a kind character, but at the end of the story it can be concluded that she is actually a psychopath who has killed several young men. This story uses third-person limited omniscient point of view to give more suspense towards the reader by making them think about what will happen to Billy, when they slowly realize that, in reality, the landlady is a psychopath.

The writer finds four symptoms of psychopathic disorder in the landlady character: pathological lying, manipulative, superficial charm, and lack of guilt. She manipulates Billy by acting kindly and gives so much care to make him think that she is not a dangerous person. When Billy realizes that there is something weird about the two other guests, the landlady tries to cover it by lying to him. As a psychopath, the landlady has already killed two other guests, Mr. Temple and Mr. Mulholland, and keeps them in the third floor. She also wants to kill Billy and

make him one of her collections, and she never has any guilt for her actions. She will never stop searching for another victim. The effect of her psychopathic disorder is that she becomes a murderer. Billy is just one of her victims, but before that she has already taken a two lives, Mr. Temple and Mr. Mulholland.

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