

**REALITY DENIAL IN THE NOVEL *A MONSTER CALLS* (2011) BY
PATRICK NESS**

THESIS

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to Obtain Strata 1 (S1 Degree)*



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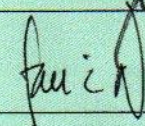
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ABSTRAK

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Skripsi ini merupakan analisa novel *A Monster Calls (2011)* karya Patrick Ness. Masalah yang diangkat pada penelitian ini adalah sejauh mana novel ini merefleksikan *reality denial*. Tujuan penelitian ini menemukan sejauh mana karakter, setting, dan plot (konflik) memberikan kontribusi dalam mengungkapkan *reality denial*. Analisa ini didasarkan pada konsep defense mechanism oleh Sigmund Freud. Hasil analisa ini menunjukkan bahwa tokoh melakukan berbagai cara untuk menolak kenyataan yang terjadi dalam keluarganya. Hal tersebut terlihat dari sikap dan perilakunya.

Kata kunci: *Reality denial, Defense Mechanism, Sikap, Perilaku*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Problem is regarded as an unwelcome situation faced by people. People have a problem in their life, but the way people deal with that problem is different. There are some people choose to face the problems, and the others choose to avoid it. People who dare to face the problems are responsible and able to take a risk. They have knowledge to control themselves. They find a solution in various ways, by using their skills and knowledge. Unlike the first one, people who have no skill and knowledge tend to avoid problems. They do not want to take the risk and feel unable to face the problem. People who choose to refuse the facts that exist in themselves are called *reality denial*.

According to the Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders (2003), denial is the refusal to acknowledge the existence or severity of unpleasant external realities or internal thoughts and feelings. Denial leads to the situation when a person is unable to face or against unpleasant reality. They make a defense to reject the fact. They oppose a situation in reality and prohibit actions that are different from what they think. The denial is done to dismiss the pain, grief, loss and something bad exists.

In the denial phase people tend to experience stress, and cannot control their emotion towards the problem. At the time people can't accept the truth with regards to something that happens in life. P\people who do denial will think and act

as though the painful reality that they encountered never occurred. Denial can be seen from the behavior and attitude.

In terms of behavior, they tend to blow up if other people talk about their circumstance. They tend to get angry if something doesn't live up to their desires. They like to vent their outrage on an item, creature, or event to people. They tend to demolish the item, torture animals, and battle with somebody. Unlike the behavior, in attitude they tend to have awful thoughts. They feel that the thought is constantly contradicted by others. They feel that nobody supports it. They believe that others abhor them. It makes sentiments of scorn and terrible preference towards others. These things happen when somebody dismisses the cruel reality in his life

The problem happens to adults and children, but the children and the adults are different when they come to face the problems. The adults are more patience to deal with problems otherwise, the children tend to bury and sometimes vents their problems. The problem will be worse when the children from broken homes family. They have strong pressure and burden in their life.

They becomes more stressed when faces family problems. They have not been able to accept the reality that will cause them to experience extraordinary fear such as nightmares. Because they have no place to ask help and have no way to overcome the problems. They tend to find their own way to solve the problems and do what they considered right. For instance, they act brutally in a bad situation. They tend to destroy things around. They like to fight to vent their anger. The children cannot control their emotions. They tend to say rude things to

the people they don't like. They are emotional when the idea is disputed. They rebel against the people around them. They tend to hide his problem. They tend to have nightmares. All the things that they refuse reveal in their, behavior and attitude.

This issue is important to be discussed because the children who do reality denial tends to be brutal and cruel. It often occur around us and this is a big problem in the environment. This can disturb people with their naughty actions. They destroy things to vent their anger. This issue also shows that children's brutality tends to start from the problems in their families. The fact that every action that has been done by these naughty children , not from their own will.

The issue about *reality denial* is very interesting to be discussed. It shows problems that are often found in children. The children who have severe problems and get pressure in their family. There are novels, short stories and poems reflect the issue which is related to the *reality denial*. One of them is written by Patrick Ness entitled *A Monster Calls* (2011). This novel shows the character who has complicated problems in his family. His parents divorced, his mother has cancer, and get bully in his school. All these things change him to become temperament, cruel and brutal to the people around him.

1.2 Reality Denial

There are two terms to form the terminology in this study, they are "*Reality*" and "*Denial*". According to SPEARA (2019) reality is what actually happens or is true, not what is imagined or thought. Meanwhile the Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders (2003), denial is the refusal to acknowledge the

existence or severity of unpleasant external realities or internal thoughts and feelings.

In this study, *reality denial* refers to the conditions in which the character refuses to admit that something bad exist or has happened in his family. He refuses to believe all the bitter truths in his life. He denies his mother's illness. He does not admit his parents divorced, and does not admit he was bullied.

1.3 A Brief Description of the Author's Biography

Patrick Ness is a British-American author, journalist, lecturer and screenwriter. He was born in Virginia 17 October 1971. His father was a Lieutenant. According to Patrick Ness website (2019), He has lived in three states in America; Hawaii, Washington and California. He and his family moved to Hawaii, where he lived until he was six. He spent the next ten years on Washington. He went to junior high school and senior high school in Washington. Ness studied English Literature at the University of Southern California. Then moving to England in 1999, where he mostly lived in London ever since and holds dual citizenship.

He graduated and worked as a corporate writer for a cable company, before the publication of his first novel, *The Crash of Hennington*, in 2003. His second book was a collection of short stories, *Topics About Which I Know Nothing* (2004). Patrick Ness has taught Creative Writing at Oxford University, and written journalism and criticism for the *Sunday Telegraph*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*. He currently reviews books for

The Guardian. He has also been a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund, and in 2009 was the first Writer in Residence for Booktrust.

He has written nine books: 2 novels for adults (*The Crash of Hennington* and *The Crane Wife*), 1 short story collection for adults (*Topics About Which I Know Nothing*) and 6 novels for young adults (*The Knife of Never Letting Go*, *The Ask and the Answer*, *Monsters of Men*, *A Monster Calls*, *More Than This* and *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*).

In 2008, he published the first in his 'Chaos Walking' trilogy for young adults, *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. It is set in a dystopian world where everyone can hear everyone else's thoughts. This book won the 2008 *Guardian* Children's Fiction Prize and the Booktrust Teenage Prize, and was shortlisted for the 2009 Carnegie Medal. In 2009, the second book in the trilogy, *The Ask and the Answer*, won the Costa Children's Book Award. The third book, *Monsters of Men*, was published in 2010. Later books include *A Monster Calls* (2011), based on an idea by Siobhan Dowd, which won the Carnegie Medal in 2012 and was adapted into a film, with a screenplay by Ness, in 2016; *More Than This* (2013) and *The Rest of Us Just Live Here* (2015), both shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal; and a novel for adults, *The Crane Wife* (2014).

His first two books were written for Adult. Then he starts to write a young adult fiction. He tries with various idea for a long time, before writing young adult fiction. It can be seen from the novels that he has written. In an interview, PW's children Bookshelf (Oct, 08, 2009). He says:

“What I like to say is “A book is not a song, a book is the performance of a song. So choose a good song, but the reader is paying for how you perform it.” And I really believe that. You’re always going to find similar books to the plot you’re writing, but that happens to everyone. EVERYONE. So just sing it with your own freshest voice. That’s what we want to hear, that’s what we want to be shown: your version of the song. Your version of the world.”

The quotation above explains that he analogizes the book as a performance of a song. It means a book is not just an idea, but book has everything that must be in it. The book must contain things that are full of meaning, about life, philosophy, ways of thinking, behave and useful learning for people. He also emphasizes the writer to express their abilities in a work. Thus, the writer can make an awesome work to the reader. The reader is a benchmark from the book that the author writes. The books are created to satisfy the desires of the reader. He also asserts that the writers must create a book with their own style. The book that has its own uniqueness, identity and characteristic. Therefore, people will know the book belongs to this writer and it will prevent from plagiarism

1.4 *A Monster Calls* (2011)

A Monster Calls (2011), written by Patrick Ness, reflects the issue reality denial. In this study, reality denial refers to the conditions in which the character refuses to admit that something bad exist or has happened in his family. It is represented by a character, Conor O’Malley. He is twelve years old child from broken home family. His parents are divorced, his father works in another city and only goes home just to visit him on holidays. His mother gets cancer, and she has to be checked up twice a week. In school, he also gets cruel treatment from his friends. He gets ridicule about his bald mother by his friends. These situations

make him depressed, lost temper, unstable, and he often has nightmares. These pressures make him begin to put aside and deny all unpleasant things of his life and pretends to be fine to the situation that he faces. The efforts made by character to deny the reality can be seen through his behavior and attitude.

In terms of behavior which shows that he is cruel, he is unable to control his emotion and loses temper easily. He fights with his friends. He speaks harshly to his grandmother. He tends to refute his grandmother and his father's word. He keeps his problem and he solves his problem by his own. He tries to look independent. He is not bother his mother. He tends to experience nightmares about losing family. He refuses the advice and he underestimates his grandmother. He tries to fulfill his desire to make him happy.

In terms of attitude which shows that he tends to believe in illogical things. He tries to find a way to cure his mother. He believes in the monster and asks for drugs in his nightmares. He has bad attitude towards grandmother and father. He has bad prejudice toward his grandmother and father.

1.5 Problem of the Study

Reality Denial emerged as an important issue in Patrick Ness's novel, *A Monster Calls* (2011). Thus, there are some research question used to analyze the issue of Reality Denial which is formulated as follow:

1. How far does the novel *A Monster Calls* (2011) expose the issue about reality denial
2. To what extend do the character, setting and plot (conflict) in novel *A Monster Calls*, support the issue reality denial?

1.6 Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to seek how far the character reflects the issue about *reality denial* in the novel *A Monster Calls (2011)* by Patrick Ness. This study is going to investigate to what extent the characters, setting, plot (conflict) in the novel contributes in revealing the issue about *reality denial*.

1.7 Previous Study

The analysis of *A Monster Calls (2011)* by Patrick Ness which focuses on analyzing about reality denial has not been found yet. However, there are two articles that analyze the same novel. These two articles give contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel. First is the study done by Fatemah Farnia and Farideh Pourgiv (2017), entitled *Empowerment in A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness. Second is the study by Nathan Carlin (2017), entitled *A Psychoanalytic Reading of A Monster Calls: Biblical Congruencies and Theological Implications*.

The first study is *Empowerment in A Monster Calls (2017)* by Fatemeh Farnia and Farideh Pourgiv. This study focuses on the empowering of the protagonist who tries to escape from pressure and heavy problems that exist in his life. The problems help him become mature to face the problems. This study uses the concept “ideas of empowerment” by Elisheva Sadan. They use four kinds of empowerment; literary, linguistic, psychological and social empowerment to reveal the changes that occur in the protagonist. They also use plots, and setting to maximize the results of the study. The result of this study describes a young adult, who is slowly empowering himself to be ready to face the realities of life. The process to accept the realities of life is carried out with the help of the monster and makes the protagonist understand his truth.

The second study done by Nathan Carlin (2017), entitled *A Psychoanalytic Reading of A Monster Calls: Biblical Congruencies and Theological Implications*. He compares the work of Patrick Ness *A monster calls* and Freed Rogers *Wishes Don't Make Things Came True*. This study focuses on experiences of teenagers who are struggling to come to terms with feelings of ambivalence due to a parent's illness. This study uses the concept psychoanalytic insight and also "dream-work" theory by Sigmund Freud. "Dream-work" has four ways of converting the latent content of dreams into the manifest content of dream, they are; condensation, displacement, symbolization, and secondary revision. He focuses on the three stories of the monster stories that occur in the protagonist to explore the feelings of the protagonist that are more complex as children grow. The dream experience of the protagonist can be seen as fulfill wishes in present. The result of this study, protagonist's acceptance of his mother's death will not resolve his grief. His grief will be lifelong.

Those two works give contributions and inspirations in analyzing the novel *A Monster Calls (2011)* by Patrick Ness. Unlike the previous studies, this analysis focuses on the way protagonist avoids and rejects the reality. This study uses fictional devices the character, plot, and setting to reveal the issue of reality denial.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The analysis of this novel is supported by text and context-based interpretation. Text based is done by exposing the fictional devices of the text itself. Meanwhile context-based interpretation means that the analysis of novel is

not only focused on the text, but also involved the phenomenon that really happens in the real world.

The analysis of the novel deals with the concept of Mechanism of Defense by Sigmund Freud and that is developed by his daughter Anna Freud. According to Sigmund Freud in Cecil Baines (1993),

“Mechanism of defense is representative of the dynamic standpoint in psychoanalytic theory, it describes the ego’s struggle against painful or unendurable ideas or affects. (p.40)”

The quotation above explains that Mechanism of defense belongs to the emotions that are frequently changing better known as an unstable emotions, in psychoanalytic theory. It also explain the efforts made by the ego to avoid or eliminate an unpleasant thing that make the ego threatened and feel anxious. The painful and unendurable ideas refers to memories, thoughts, fears and all things that considered dangerous, such as lose, grief and guilt.

The defense mechanism can be defined as the method individuals use to deal with feelings of fear, anxiety, and insecurity. These feeling can be seen through the behavior and attitude. When someone feels scared they tend to be panic, feel difficulties, and lose temper easily. It also happens to people who experience anxiety and feel insecurity. Besides these symptoms they are also feels followed and sometimes has difficulty in sleeping. It also follows by several nightmares. According to Freud’s psychoanalysis theory, the *ego defense mechanisms* are *repression, denial, displacement, projection, fantasy, reaction formation, and fixation regression* (Berry, 2001:79). Three of which are relate to the protagonist; *repression, denial and displacement*.

First is *repression*, it is one of the defense mechanisms by pressing something that threatens from the unconscious enters the subconscious. This will make the conscious unburdened or undisturbed. Freud in *The Freud Reader* (1989):

“I named this process repression; it was a novelty, and nothing like it had ever before been recognized in mental life. It was obviously a primary mechanism of defence” (p.20)

The quotation above explains that repression is a new thing that found by Sigmund Freud to reveal the phenomena that occur in mental life. This repression is the main thing in defense mechanism and the basic of many Freud's theories. The repression is something that greatly affects one's personality. If someone do the repression, their memories or disturbing thoughts will be forget. What actually happens is that memory or thought not forgotten, but rather repressed into the subconscious. However, one time those memories and thoughts release in the waking state of consciousness others are like dreams.

Second is *denial* According to Saul McLeod in *Simply Psychology* (2019), Denial is a defense mechanism proposed by Anna Freud which involves a refusal to accept reality, thus blocking external events from awareness. It can be defined that, denial is a defense mechanism that carried out for denying impulses / instincts / desires that are considered dangerous.

Thirds is *displacement*, According to Saul McLeod (2019). Displacement is the redirection of an impulse (usually aggression) onto a powerless substitute target. The target can be a person or an object that can serve as a symbolic substitute. It can be defined that displacement diverts the drive of the id or

memories or thoughts to something as an outlet, and this is usually occur aggressively. This is a form of transferring anger by making another object as its outlet, it can be objects, humans or animal.

Defense mechanism can be seen from their attitudes and behaviors. According to Hogg & Vaughan (2005), an attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols. It explains that attitudes are person's point of view about a thing. This perspective based on the values and emotions. Attitude is one of the main factors that triggers his emotions, decision making, thinking and behavior in a person and it's related to a person's thoughts, or feelings, or assumptions In this analysis, the protagonist has bad thoughts such as disrespect, rancor and prejudice towards the people who have different thoughts from him. He also believes in the illogical things. He asks the monster to heal his mother.

According to Golledge and Stimson (1997), human behavior refers to the actions and mannerisms made by individuals, organisms, systems or artificial entities in conjunction with themselves or their environment. The range of behaviors exhibited by humans and that is typically influenced by culture, attitudes, emotions, values, ethics, authority, persuasion, coercion and/or genetics. It means that behavior is the way of a person acts. It can be divided into two innate behavior refers to genetic and learned behavior refers to environment of the person. In this analysis, the protagonist shows his refusal by doing violence and

saying rude. In order to solve his problem, he tends to hide and keep his problem to himself.

Attitude and behavior are difficult to distinguish. The attitude leads to the ideas or thoughts of a person towards others, while behavior leads to actions. This can be seen through the actions.

All the problems that the protagonist represses in reality, heap in his unconscious. According to Freud in *a handbook of a critical approach to literature* (2005; 155), the unconscious was active at certain times, although at the time we knew nothing about it. It can be defined that the problems that are hidden by someone are released sometime unnoticed. Freud in *literary theory: a guide for perplexed* (2006), says that three routes of unconsciousness are dreams, parapraxes and jokes. A dream contains unfulfilled desires or fulfillment of wishes. In his book entitled *Interpretation of dream* (2000):

“The dream represents a certain state of affairs, such as I might wish to exist; the content of the dream is thus the fulfillment of a wish; its motive is a wish.” (p.59).

The quotation above explains that a dream is a representation of the condition of a person who is experiencing it. It is probable that dreams are self-desires that want to be realized but not yet realized. On the other hand, a dream can be a nightmare. This happens because of harsh realities and it is an undesirable thing that happens to them.

In this analysis, the protagonist in this novel represses all the problems in his life to his unconscious. Because of the heavy pressures he becomes unstable. The character uses three defense mechanisms to deny reality. He tries to

shows that he can do anything to hide his weakness and repress his problem. The effect of repression of the problems, he frequently has nightmares. He dreams about grief, loss of family, loss of confidence, and fear of abandonment.

The process of analyzing the novel uses fictional devices. Characters, Plot (Conflict), Setting. The first fictional device is character. Analysis of the character in the novel *A Monster Calls* (2011) that become the important thing in revealing the topic *reality denial*. According to Childs and Fowler (2006:23), character is the fictional representation of a person, which is likely to change, both as a presence in literature and as an object of critical attention, much as it changes in society. Ideas of the place of the human in the social order, of human individuality and self-determination, clearly shift historically; and this is often mimed in literature by the relation of characters to actions or webs of story. Meanwhile, according to Abrams and Harpham (2012: 46) characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it-the dialogue-and from what they do-the action. The protagonist may remain essentially “stable,” or unchanged in out-look and disposition, from beginning to end of a work, or may undergo a radical change, either through a gradual process of development or as the result of a crisis. In this novel, the character is depressed because of fear of losing his mother, parents divorced and gets bully at school, it force him to deny the pain reality in his life.

Second devices which used in this analysis is plot (conflict). According to Guerin (2005) states that plot is conflict. They are internal conflict which occurs within a character and external conflict which occurs between two or more characters or a character and environment. Plot is sequence of events or a series of conflicts that make up a story. In this analysis the character have these two conflicts, internal and external conflicts. The most prominent conflict in this novel is, external conflict. The conflicts comes from his family, his parents divorced, his mother illness and his problem at school.

The last fictional device in order to analyze this novel is setting. Setting is related to the situation, atmosphere and condition, these refers to things that develop characters emotions. This device include the time, place taken in the story, situation, condition, and atmosphere or mood that happen along the story. According to Barnet and Cain (2014:139) setting includes not only the physical surrounding but a point or several points in time. The background against which we see the characters and the happenings may be specified as morning or evening, spring or fall, and this temporal setting in a good story will probably be highly relevant; it will probably be part of the story's meaning, perhaps providing an ironic contrast or perhaps exerting an influence on the character. In this analysis, the setting refers to characters fears with the monster that come in his dreams and fears the dreams of his mother who is on the verge of death.

This pressures happen to the protagonist, who is a child a broken home family. He fights against his difficult reality that is happening on him. The pressures make him stressed and depressed. He begins to be unable to control

himself. He begins to act cruelly to vent his frustration and tends to have nightmares.

1.9 Methodology

The analysis of novel *A Monster Calls* (2011) by Patrick Ness is done through text and context-based interpretation. The fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict), and setting are used to analyze this novel. These devices related to each other and give contribution in revealing the meaning of the novel. Character and setting are used to show the *denial reality* by analyzing character's behavior and attitude towards the conflict. Then, the setting deals with the circumstances and atmosphere. In addition these elements are analyzed base on the theory of mechanism of defense by Sigmund Freud. It gives contribution in process of analysis by giving help in revealing the meaning.