

CHILD ABUSE IN ROWELL'S ELEANOR AND PARK

by Bella Melvina Wijaya

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Bella Melvina Wijaya

Sastra Inggris

Ilmu Budaya

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945

Email: blmelvina@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study discusses about child abuse that is experienced by Eleanor in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*. This study tells about the abuse that is done by Richie as Eleanor's stepfather. This discussion also talks about how Eleanor is struggling her abusive. This study aims to provide three points: types of abuse, causes of abuse, and effects of the abuse that happen in Eleanor. This study uses the psychological approach of literature as it helps to find out how Eleanor is experienced the abuse that is done by her stepfather, Richie. Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* is used as the source of the data. Some quotations are added to support the analysis. This study uses qualitative research which is focusing on the main characters, Eleanor and her stepfather, Richie. As the result, the writer finds four types of abuse such as terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, and verbally assaulting. Those four types of abuse are mostly caused by form of cause of abuse called role maltreatment and lead to the effect of abuse that is called as psychological consequences in form of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Keywords: *child abuse, verbal abuse, role malfunction, psychological abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang kekerasan anak yang dialami oleh Eleanor dalam novel *Eleanor and Park* karya Rowell. Penelitian ini menjelaskan tentang kekerasan yang dilakukan oleh Richie sebagai ayah tiri Eleanor. Penelitian ini juga membahas bagaimana Eleanor berjuang dalam kekerasan yang ia alami. Penelitian ini menyajikan tiga poin pembahasan: bentuk kekerasan, penyebab adanya kekerasan, dan dampak dari kekerasan yang terjadi pada Eleanor. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologis sastra dalam membantu untuk mencari tahu bagaimana Eleanor mengalami kekerasan yang dilakukan oleh Richie sebagai ayah tirinya. Novel *Eleanor and Park* karya Rowell digunakan sebagai sumber data dalam penelitian. Beberapa kutipan ditambahkan untuk mendukung analisa. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif yang berfokus pada karakter utama yaitu Eleanor dan ayah tirinya, Richie. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penulis menemukan empat bentuk kekerasan seperti teror, pengabaian, pemisahan, dan kekerasan secara verbal. Keempat bentuk kekerasan tersebut disebabkan oleh bentuk penyebab kekerasan yang disebut role malfunction (kegagalan fungsi peran) dan menyebabkan dampak kekerasan yang disebut konsekuensi psikologis dalam bentuk gangguan pasca trauma.

Kata Kunci: *kekerasan anak, kekerasan verbal, kegagalan fungsi peran, konsekuensi psikologis, gangguan pasca trauma*

INTRODUCTION

Abuse is an act that leads to a harm, an intimidate, bullying, isolate, or control another person. The act of abuse can be happened continuously in a pattern or it can be happened only once at a time in a single incident. The act of abuse might take acts or words even neglects. Abuse happens in someone who harms and hurts others or it happens to someone who does something bad to others. Abuse happens to anyone such as in family, community, friendship, relationship, a child, an adult, young and older person, and many more. The form of abuse can be psychological, emotional, verbal, physical, and even sexual. The ideas are supported by David Lametti (2009:03). David lametti (2009:07) also stated that abuse happens to individuals of all backgrounds and at any stage of a relationship. Abuse can be said that it happens in a cycle. Which means firstly, the person will do the abuse and create a climate of fear and fight. After the abuse and the climate explode, there will be a time of calm or quiet and then the person who does the abuse will say sorry, ask for forgiveness, and say that the thing will not happen again. However, the person who has already done the abuse will do it again and hurt the person again. David Lametti (2009:10). WHO (2010:60), supported the idea of abuse that it happens because of the lack of parents to provide children's need and support their child's development in one or more are such as health, education, nutrition, and safe living. In the idea is also supported that abuse can happen since the parents are experienced pregnant period.

According to the idea stated by Karst, Nijs, & Bilo (2012:101), all people has a responsibility in taking care of their

children and make sure that their children are being well-cared. The parents also have to realize the possibility²¹ of abuse. In their idea also supported that child abuse is an act or series of acts of commission or omission done by the parent that results in a harm and hurt to the child. Child abuse can happen everywhere. It can happen at home, school, community, organization, and other places a child interacts in. Tehrani (2018) stated that child abuse is an issue that the system and society should recognize and pay attention on it. Child abuse is an issue that should be ended. Child abuse is a kind of issue that can be prevented and stopped if the parents take care their children in well treatment. however, when the parents fail and lack in taking care their children, it can result in a traumatic in the lives of the children who have affected.

In Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*, the person who does the abuse to the child, Eleanor is Richie who is actually Eleanor's stepfather. Richie gets married to Eleanor's mother after her mother gets divorced with Eleanor's father. At the first time, Eleanor and her siblings hate their stepfather, but as time goes by her siblings start to adapt to their new life with Richie and they also start to love Richie. Eleanor is the one who still hates Richie. She cannot accept that she has a new father. Richie starts the abuse to Eleanor after he knows that Eleanor does not like him. At Eleanor's first abusive, she increasingly hates her stepfather. This study focuses on the main character Eleanor who experiences the abuse from her stepfather, Richie. The writer chooses Eleanor because of interested in how Eleanor is facing her abusive that is done by her stepfather, Richie and because of the issue of child abuse has still been happening in society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Related to the problem of the introduction above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the kinds of abuse experienced by Eleanor in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*.
2. To analyze the causes of abuse experienced by Eleanor in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*.
3. To analyze the effects of abuse experienced by Eleanor in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

Types of Abuse

In this study the types of abuse are divided into three kinds: psychological abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse.

¹² Psychological abuse happens when the children are seen by their parents as unwanted, worthless, troublesome. Children feel that it is frightening to know when their parents do not have their safety and well-being uppermost in their minds. The children will think anything bad can happen anytime to them after they know that their parents are so scary and cannot take care of them as well as how parents should be taking care of their children in the right way. Howe (2005:31). According to Ainsworth & Wittig (1969:307), they conducted four basic types of psychological abuse. They are secure attachments, resistant attachments, avoidance attachments, and disorganized attachments.

Emotional abuse is produced the same emotional in different person. The emotional abuse is related to feelings such as fear, fight, and initiating to escape. Yasoshima (2016:04). Glaser (2002:697)

³⁰ on his idea stated that emotional abuse is also a form of child abuse. According to Garbarino et al (1986:08), he proposed seven types of emotional abuse. They are rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, ignoring, corrupting, verbally assaulting, and overpressuring. Rejecting abuse happens when the adult refuses to ³⁴ knowledge the child's needs and refuses to show affection to the child. Isolating abuse happens when the adult cuts the child from making relationship or friendship so the child will think that no one loves them. ⁴⁰ Terrorizing abuse happens when the adult creates a climate of fear and frighten the child. Ignoring abuse happens when the adult shows no affection and does not care about the child presence. Corrupting abuse happens when the adult teaches the child in contrary such as telling the bad is good and the good is bad. Verbally assaulting happens when the adult is calling the child with constant name ⁵², saying something bad to the child, and telling the child that he or she is worthless. Overpressuring ²⁶ abuse happens when the adult makes the child feels that he or she is never good enough and the adult compares the child with another child's accomplishment.

Verbal Abuse is ¹⁹ similar with the verbally assaulting in the emotional abuse. According to Grady (2003), verbal abuse is done by words that hurt an individual and words that make an individual ¹⁹ trust untrue words. On his idea also stated that verbal abuse is worse than physical abuse because of verbal abuse can lead to a psychological violence that hurts someone's emotional and mental. Vardigan (2009) identified verbal abuse in three types. They are name calling, belittling, swearing, insulting ("You are stupid!"; "You're a rotten kid"); rejecting or threatening with abandonment

("I wish you had never been born."; "I should put you up for adoption."; and threatening bodily harm and blaming ("You're the reason this family is such a mess!"; "If I didn't have to take care of you, I could have a better life."; "If you weren't so clumsy, your sister wouldn't have gotten hurt. ").

Causes of Abuse

The causes of abuse are divided into four forms: personal pathology, role malfunction, social factors, and system failure. Personal pathology is a caused related to psychological problems, alcohol and drug dependence, mental disability, and emotional instability. Garbarino (1977:721). Role malfunction is a cause of abuse that happens when the parent's relation is broken. It can be said also that role malfunction is a cause of a failure to learn how to properly function as a parent. When the parents are lack of knowledge on child's development or do not know how to take care the child it will result to an abuse to the child. Baumrind (1994:360). Social factors is a cause of abuse relate to the parents who are poor education system. Not only poor education of parents but also it is caused by poverty level and unemployment rates. Poverty and employment result to an abuse to the child because of the parents cannot stand with the situation and condition, therefore they wreak their angers to their children. System of failure is a cause of abuse when the system in responding the cases of child abuse has not been effective and run well. When the system is not responding fast enough to the cases of child abuse it will increase the case of child abuse.

Effects of Abuse

There are three effects of abuse namely psychological consequences, behavioural consequences, and societal consequences. Psychological consequences damage children's psychic such as depression, excessive anxiety, dissociative identity disorder, and increase the risk of suicide. Gelles (2007:57). Psychological abuse also related to diminished executive functioning and cognitive skills that can cause impairments to the brain's function such as self-control and working memory. Kavanaugh, Dupont-Frechette, Jerskey, & Holler (2016:64). Poor mental and emotional health that result the child to depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders. Choi (2017:252). Posttraumatic stress or it is commonly called as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that results to the child for experiencing the feeling of fear, anger, guilt, irritability and can make the child avoids people, places, and events. Behavioral consequences related to the unhealthy sexual practice that makes the children reach adolescence such as sex exchange for money, gifts or other material support). Thompson et al (2017:69). Behavioral consequences also related to the criminality, the use of alcohol and drugs, and future perpetration of maltreatment. Societal consequences is an effect related to direct and indirect costs. The direct costs such as foster care payments and hospitalization and the indirect costs such as long term care. Lost productivity at school, and criminal justice system costs. Peterson, Florence, & Klevens (2018:178).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses psychological approach to analyze the character's

behaviour and thought in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* novel since this study is related to psychological aspects. The writer uses the psychological approach in order to find out how Eleanor, the main character in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* is experienced abuse that is done by her stepfather and how she survives for her life. This study uses qualitative method that focuses on the main characters, Eleanor and her stepfather, Richie. The data source that will be used in this research is the novel written by Rainbow Rowell entitled *Eleanor and Park* that contains of 328 pages in 58 chapters. The data source is focused on two characters, the first character is Eleanor as the main character and the second character is his stepfather. The data is note taking by reading the novel and taking notes for important parts between Eleanor and Richie from the novel.

In this study, the writer applies some procedure of data collection as follows:

1. The writer collects the data from data source Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*.
2. The data taken is only focused on the part of the story between two characters which is the main problem of research.
3. After the data is gathered, the writer indicates what type of abuse that is done by Richie as the stepfather towards Eleanor.
4. After finding the type of abuse the writer identifies what causes Eleanor has received due to abuse by her stepfather.
5. Last, the writer identifies what effects Eleanor has received due to abuse by her stepfather.

After the data are collected, the writer applies the procedure of data analysis as follows:

1. The type of abuse that has been indicated from each different part of the story between Eleanor and her stepfather, Richie will be analyzed and supported with the theory that proposed by Garbarino et al (1986:08).

2. After that, the causes and effects that have been identified also will be analyzed related to the type of abuse.

RESULT OF THE ANALYSIS

In analyzing the types of abuse in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*, the writer indicates four types of abuse. They are terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, and verbally assaulting. Those four types of abuse are formed in emotional abuse. As what is already stated by Yasoshima (2016:4), emotional abuse play a role in response to emergencies such as fear, fight and escape, this means that the four types of abuse that are identified can lead to a feeling of fear and desire to escape on Eleanor. The terrorizing abuse is identified when Eleanor goes on her first day of school and the terrorizing abuse is done by Eleanor's friends. The following types of abuse such as isolating, ignoring, and verbally abuse are done by Eleanor stepfather. The ignoring abuse happens when Eleanor comes back home from school and one of her sibling asks Richie whether he knows Eleanor or he does not. The isolating abuse happens when Richie as Eleanor's stepfather cuts Eleanor for making relationship with Park. The verbally assaulting happens when Richie is in a badmood and Eleanor is making such as noisy on the upstairs that makes Richie gets more angry on her.

In analyzing the causes of abuse in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*, the writer

indicates only one form of cause of abuse that appears from all of the conflicts happened. It is Role malfunction. Role malfunction explains about the role of parents that does not function on its place. The ¹⁴ are actually four forms of causes such as personal pathology, role malfunction, societal factors, and system failure. The personal pathology might not be happened in the conflicts between Eleanor and her stepfather because personal pathology related to the use of drugs and alcohol, mental disability, and emotional instability. The societal factors is also not the cause of the conflict between the main characters because societal factors related to the poverty, poor education and unemployment parents. It is also not the system of failure because the conflicts that happen are not a kind of severe conflict that requires the system to take part in resolving the conflict that occurs.

In analyzing ¹³ the effects of abuse experienced by Eleanor in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*, the writer only finds the psychological effects that belongs to the posttraumatic stress disorder that is experienced by Eleanor. There are actually three kinds of effects of abuse. They are Psychological, behavioral, and societal consequences of abuse. But only the psychological consequences which belongs to the conflicts between Eleanor and her stepfather. As what have already showed in the types of abuse that Eleanor is experienced terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, and verbally assaulting from her stepfather, and in the theory of psychological consequences it is clearly explained that maltreatment can cause victims to feel isolation, fear, and distrust, which can translate into lifelong psychological consequences that can manifest as

educational difficulties, low self-esteem, depression, and trouble forming and maintaining relationships. Thus, from the psychological consequences it enters to the form that is called posttraumatic disorder. As what is mentioned on ¹ the theory of posttraumatic disorder, children who experienced abuse or neglect can develop posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is characterized by symptoms such as persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic events related to the abuse; avoiding people, places, and events that are associated with their maltreatment; feeling fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame; startling easily; and exhibiting hypervigilance, irritability, or other changes in mood. As the result of the conflicts experienced by Eleanor, she is obviously feeling fear, anger, guilt as the feeling of fear occurs when she is facing Richie directly. The feeling of anger occurs when she knows that she wants to resist her stepfather but she knows if she does it she will be even worse. The feeling of guilty occurs when she knows that she can not do anything to help her mom for being hurt by Richie.

²⁷ CONCLUSION

Child abuse is a physical, sexual, or emotional mistreatment that is done in a child. Child abuse divides into seven forms (e.g. terrorizing, isolating, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, verbal assaulting, and over pressuring). Those seven forms of ¹⁴ abuse can be caused by four causes (e.g. personal pathology, role malfunction, societal factors, and system failure) and can lead to the three kinds of impact (e.g. psychological, behavioral, and societal consequences). Eleanor is a girl unlike another girls in common. She is not beautiful and she doesn't have good shape

of body. She also dresses like a boy. She has a stepfather named Richie. Since her mother married to her stepfather, everything in her whole life has changed into nightmare.

From the data analysis above the writer finds 4 forms or types of abuse that is experienced by Eleanor. The first abuse is terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, and verbally assaulting. The terrorizing abuse happens when everyone inside the bus especially Tina creates a climate of fear by saying things that makes Eleanor feels scared then everyone else laughs at Eleanor. The ignoring abuse happens when everyone at Eleanor's house doesn't recognize the presence of her especially her stepfather. The ignoring happens when the family shows no affection anymore and Eleanor feels like nothing. The isolating happens when the parents isolate Eleanor to have relationship with Park. The verbally assaulting happens when Richie says bad names to Eleanor (e.g. fat, fuck, and bitch.). The four abuses are mostly caused by role malfunction. Role malfunction happens when the person does not know how to function well as a parent. Role malfunction also happens when the parents is lack of knowledge about child development or it can be said when it comes to a such poor parenting than the role malfunction will be happened. The first cause happens when Eleanor feels that her mother is treating her differently unlike when they were in the old house. She then finds bruises on her mom's wrist that it makes Eleanor has a feeling of hatred towards her stepfather, Richie. Another cause happens when she finds out that Richie makes all her siblings like him and it makes Eleanor feels that she is the only one who hates Richie and no one is on her side to hate Richie. The last cause that

makes Eleanor really hates her stepfather is when she sees her mother is crying for a long time and she could not do anything to help her mother because if she tries to be against her stepfather and helps her mother it would only make things worse. Those causes of abuse provoke bad impacts to Eleanor. The impacts are lying and running away from home. Those two impacts lead to the psychological consequences that belong to the posttraumatic stress. Posttraumatic stress happens when the person who experiences the abuse feels a fear and irritability then it makes the avoiding of person such as Eleanor avoids her stepfather so that she will get no question about Park, and the avoiding of place such as Eleanor who runs away from her home because she can't stand with the situation anymore.

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