



KEKOSONGAN EMOSIONAL DAN TRAUMA MASA KECIL: KRITIK PSIKOANALISIS FREUDIAN TERHADAP MAT HAIG DALAM *MIDNIGHT LIBRARY*

EMOTIONAL VOID AND CHILDHOOD TRAUMA: A FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS CRITICISM ON MATT HAIG'S *THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY*

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ABSTRACT

Emotion is something that is always attached to every human and holds a substantial influence in affecting humans' cognitive processes. There are a lot of factors influencing the creation of emotion. One of the examples is childhood trauma. Childhood trauma can affect behavior problems such as emotion regulation. This study aims to reveal that there is a strong relationship between behavior and emotion, and childhood trauma can affect emotion in adulthood through the portrayal of the main character in Matt Haig's The Midnight Library. It is a British science-fiction fantasy novel released in August 2020. The present study applies a qualitative approach and close reading by observing the textual context of the novel. In understanding the novel the intrinsic elements of the story such as plot, characters, and conflict will be analyzed. The data are analyzed by applying Freudian Psychoanalysis theory. The expected result will show that emotion in adulthood is affected by childhood trauma.

Keywords: *Defense mechanism, emotion, psychoanalysis.*

ABSTRAK

Emosi adalah sesuatu yang selalu terhubung dengan manusia dan memegang peranan besar dalam mempengaruhi proses kognitif manusia. Banyak sekali faktor yang mampu mempengaruhi terciptanya emosi. Salah satu contohnya adalah trauma masa kecil. Trauma masa kecil dapat mempengaruhi masalah tingkah laku seperti regulasi emosi. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bahwa ada terdapat hubungan yang sangat erat antara tingkah laku dan emosi, dan trauma masa kecil dapat mempengaruhi keduanya melalui penggambaran tokoh utama pada novel *The Midnight Library* karangan Matt Haig. Buku ini adalah sebuah novel fiksi ilmiah fantasi yang diterbitkan di Inggris pada bulan Agustus 2020. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan *close reading* dengan cara mengobservasi konteks tekstual novel. Dalam upaya memahami novel, unsur intrinsik seperti alur, karakter, dan konflik akan dianalisa. Data yang telah dikumpulkan akan dianalisa menggunakan teori Freudian psychoanalysis. Ekspektasi hasil akan diketahui bahwa emosi saat dewasa sangat dipengaruhi oleh trauma masa kecil.

Kata kunci: Emosi, mekanisme pertahanan diri, psikoanalisis.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Emotion is something that is always attached to every human and holds a substantial influence in affecting humans' cognitive processes. It is a complex state of feeling that can influence people's thoughts and behavior. There are a lot of factors influencing the creation of emotion. One of the examples is past experience. Emotion is the product of humans'

brains. It is the way the brain reacts and gives meaning to every experience. As the most substantial element of humans' cognitive process, there is a strong relationship between emotion and behavior. All psychological processes, and certainly emotion, exist in part to influence behavior (Baumeister, et al. 2007, 168). Both our emotions and behavior development are affected by our surroundings. People's emotions can change fastly after facing an unpredictable moment. This matter will influence emotions as well as behavior. Traumatic experience seems to become the most influential for emotions and behavior. Trauma that the survivor encounter will create an impact to their lives. Depression is one of the examples of psychological disorders caused by trauma. Depression may disturb daily activity and cause someone to lack meaning in their lives. The great depression might cause the survivors to think that their lives are useless. Feeling of hopelessness will create an emotional detachment that becomes an emotional void.

Trauma relates to the level of growth that a patient will undergo (Tyson 2015). The kind of trauma that can be very painful and lasting is childhood trauma. Everyone in their childhood can encounter trauma because of family issues. The most common is parents' pressure. All traumatic experiences will trigger anxiety, the feeling of discomfort.

People always have fear towards certain things. They tend to avoid something that will make them uncomfortable. They want to "protect" themselves from painful past experiences. The process of protecting ourselves from painful past experiences will create new destructive behavior called defense mechanisms. Defenses are the process by which the contents of our unconscious are kept in the unconscious (Tyson 2015, 15). According to Freud (1930), defense mechanisms are defense systems against unpleasant recollections. It means defense mechanisms help us to avoid knowing the things that we feel we could not handle.

Many factors can cause childhood trauma. One of the examples is parents' pressure. Some parents might put a very high expectation on their children due to many reasons, such as they hinge their self-esteem on their children's achievement or expect their children to be able to achieve more than other kids. The most important factor affecting children's self-esteem and behavior is parenting style (Moghaddam, et. al. 2017, 3). Parents who have an authoritarian parenting style tend to have cold interactions with their children because they have full control over their children. Children could not freely choose the path that they want to choose. This would slowly make children doubt themselves. It will affect children's emotions towards themselves and their behavior. It will last and affect their future. This issue is depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* which is discussed in this study.

The Midnight Library is a British science-fiction fantasy novel written by Matt Haig. It was first released on 13 August 2020. Matt Haig is a British novelist and journalist who was born on 3 July 1975 in Sheffield, United Kingdom. His first novel entitled *Shadow Forest* was released in 2007 and its sequel, *The Runaway Troll*, in 2009. *The Midnight Library* is Matt Haig's latest work. This novel was successfully spotted on the number one bestseller of *The New York Times Bestseller*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Washington Post*. This book is also selected in *Good Morning America* as *Book Club Pick*. Not long after its release date, *The Midnight Library* gained its first win on *Goodreads Choice Awards for Fiction*. Many reviewers such as *The Guardian* said that this book is very enjoyable and gives a charming way of presenting the genre.

The story of *The Midnight Library* is delivered from the third-person omniscient point of view. Nora Seed is in charge as the main character of this novel. This novel tells about Nora Seed, an ordinary thirty-five years old woman with superior intelligence who decides to commit suicide after a series of unfortunate events that happens in her life. Nora Seed feels useless. Her cat is dead, her brother does not seem to meet her again when he visits Bedford,

and she has been fired from her job as a private piano teacher. She thinks that nobody needs her. At her younger age, she was the brightest star. She was the best student in her school, a vocalist of a rock band, a professional swimmer, and a fiancée of a perfect man named Dan. Everything became miserable when she decided to quit all of them. She feels neither happy nor sad about her current life. Everything just feels so numb. So she decides to commit suicide to end her suffering. In between life and death, she wakes up inside a library called The Midnight Library. She is allowed to erase her regrets inside The Book of Regret by choosing the new book that will give her a new life.

The issue of this novel is Nora Seed does not feel happy about herself. She never feels happy after she gets all of her achievements. She thinks that she still lacks many things. She always doubts herself. Because of her superior intelligence, her parents always expect her to do more than she already does. It leads her to be a people pleaser. She always chooses a path that will satisfy other people rather than herself. Therefore, she always avoids certain situations that will remain with her childhood trauma and denies her feelings to pretend everything is okay.

A previous study that discusses the same object could not be found because Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* is a newly published novel. However, some related studies discuss the relevant defense mechanisms and core issues. In analyzing the issues, this study refers to some related studies. According to research conducted by Achmad Rozaq Nur Utomo in 2015 entitled *The Narrator's Defense Mechanism on H. G. Wells's War of the Worlds*, rationalization and avoidance help the Narrator to avoid the guilty feelings of his action. Sometimes people do avoidance to help prevent themselves from feeling guilty. An attachment might trigger the core issues. This hypothesis is also supported by research conducted by Wa Ode Nia Fadillah in 2018 entitled *Self Defense Mechanism of Character in Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover*. She said that denial will eliminate the danger from the outside by disowning or assuming that there is no danger. People tend to refuse to acknowledge something wrong. It helps them to cope with emotional conflict and painful thoughts. The researches above contribute to supporting this study's argument that avoidance and denial would help people to separate themselves from unpleasant events.

The present study will utilize Freudian Psychoanalysis theory. The goal of psychoanalysis criticism is to help people in solving psychological problems (disorder or dysfunction). The reason why this study uses Freudian Psychoanalysis theory is that this theory believes that childhood memories hold a crucial influence in people's adult lives. The family is very important in psychoanalytic theory because each of the individuals is the product of the role they play in the family complex (Tyson 2015, 13). Through Freudian psychoanalysis theory, this study could analyze the defense mechanism and core issues of Nora Seed.

In order to analyze the relation between parents' pressure and the emotional void of Nora Seed in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* (2020), this study tries to elaborate on some questions.

1. How does the parents' pressure Nora Seed got when she was a kid cause an emotional void in her current condition?
2. How do Nora Seed's avoidance and denial affect her current personality?

Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the emotional void of the main character depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* (2020), this study utilizes a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of social and human problems (Creswell 2007, 65). This study applies the Freudian Psychoanalysis theory as the main theory, which becomes essential in understanding the core issues and defense mechanisms of Nora Seed, the main character of the novel.

1. The Unconscious, Preconscious, and Conscious Mind

The unconscious is a train of thought which has a right to occupy our conscious act, yet the thought is unconscious (Freud 1917, 87). The creation of every individual's unconscious mind is very complex because it has been through several processes starting the psychosexual stage. The unconscious forces is very important in humans' lives because it influences our everyday thoughts and actions (Freud 1915, 3). In understanding human unconscious mind, we have to understand the preconscious and the conscious mind because everything is related to one and another. The analogy of iceberg is often used to describe the three levels of the mind.

The Unconscious

The unconscious mind is defined as a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that outside of conscious awareness. It is the complex of mental activities within an individual that proceed without awareness (Britannica 2017). Many of thoughts which are stored in the unconscious are unpleasant and conflicting.

The Preconscious

The preconscious can also be known as the latent parts of the brain. It contains set of thoughts and feelings that a person is not currently aware but somehow the feeling can be brought into the conscious at any times (Freud 1924). The preconscious is like a mental waiting room, in which thoughts remain until they 'succeed in attracting the eye of the conscious' (Freud 1924, 306). Preconscious is frequently used in our daily lives. For example, in the present people might not think about their telephone number but they can recall it many times. Mild emotional experiences can also be found in the preconscious (McLeod 2009).

The Conscious

Freud explains that the conscious mind consists of all the mental processes that people are aware (Freud 1915). It is not process in the brain but kind of behavior. This includes sensation, memories, and feeling within individuals' current awareness. The conscious has limited capacity because it is somewhat a short-term memory. It can also be seen as the results of our unconscious process.

2. The Life Instinct

Every human always has instinct. Instinct could be very influential for someone's personality development (Lemek 2008, 22). It is a strong drive that could lead someone's attitude and action (Freud 1920). Freud (1975, 43) once mentioned that there are two fundamental instincts that inherent in a person, which are Eros (the life instinct), and Thanatos (the death instinct). There is a strong relationship between emotion and instinct. Fears, emotion, thoughts, and feelings can be the factors that contribute towards the process of instinct awakening (Lemek 2008, 43). Being in certain situations forces human to adapt to the environment and condition.

a. Eros

Eros is well known as life instinct. It operates from the beginning of individuals' lives and appears as a 'life instinct' in opposition to the 'death instinct' (Freud 1920, 55). The life instinct usually refers to sexual urges, desires, love, and satisfaction. It aims to create the desire to preserve life. Eros is always in battle against the destructive death instinct (Thanatos).

b. Thanatos

Different from eros, thanatos is well known as death instinct. It is explained as an aspiration, a drive to be dead (Freud 1920). Death instinct refers to destructive instinct, the drive to annihilate ourselves.

As the first environment that children encounter, parents hold a crucial role as 'the composer' in forming children's behavior and emotion. Parenting style is also influential in affecting children's perspective in seeing themselves and perceiving their identities. Researches from Ewaidat (2021), Hrehor (2021), Sasikumar, N, and Vijayalakshmi (2021) affirm that children who are raised by authoritarian parents will deal with more personality complexes. They will become adults who do not believe in everyone, including themselves. Parents with authoritarian parenting styles might be one of the reasons why children have childhood trauma.

Parents' pressure that children got when they were kids will be impactful in creating children's psychological trauma. Research from Herdindha and Riyanto (2014) mentions that children who got parents' pressure when they were kids will have an excessive fear of the future in their adult lives.

A traumatic experience is the most influential factor that influences emotion and behavior. The kind of trauma that can be very painful and lasting is childhood trauma. A study from Waldron (2008) mentions that individuals who have experienced childhood trauma sometimes cling to a memory of childhood that can, in one sense, be a sustaining paradigm but can also become imprisoning later in life.

Traumatized childhood and the absence of emotionally parental figures will shape an emotional void in children's lives. A study conducted by Monaco (2020) confirms that the tangled web of family conflicts and unresolved grief will create complications of effect, such as unhappy lives and unspeakable loss and grief.

Children who grow up under emotionally distant parents will face some psychological issues. Research by Ahmed (2020) claims that children raised by uninvolved and emotionally distant parents are often self-conscious, antisocial, immature, depressed, and lonely. Emotionally distant parents usually associate love with basic needs, such as food, shelter, and clothes, but neglect other equally essential needs like love and understanding.

METHOD

In analyzing the emotional void of the main character depicted in Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* (2020), the study utilized a qualitative approach. In collecting the data, the writer of this study closely read the novel, marked dialogues and narrations that represent the issues then analyzed the elements found through the lens of Freudian Psychoanalysis theory. In collecting the data, the writer divided the source of data of the study into two main data: primary data and secondary data. The main data of the study was *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. The formal elements of the novel such as characters, conflicts, and plot of the story were the most important data for this study. For the secondary data, this study used some legitimate data from credible sources such as books, theses, and journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Parenting Style of Nora Seed's Parents

The role of the family as the first social environment is vital for children's behavior development. The most important factor affecting children's self-esteem and behavior is parenting style (Moghaddam et al., 2017, 3).

Parenting styles will not only be the first composer of children's behavior but also be the reason for childhood trauma. The parenting style that could likely compose childhood trauma is the authoritarian parenting style. Authoritarian parents display a high level of control and little warmth (Levin 2011). If children do not follow the order, they will get punishment. Parents' pressure burdens children. Parental pressure is a condition that children perceive as an expectation of an unlikely or even suffocating accomplishment target (Herdindha and Riyanto, 2014). There are two types of parental pressure: direct parental pressure and indirect parental pressure.

Direct Parental Pressure

Parents do direct parental pressure by forcing children to accomplish something or forcing them to follow their parents' ambitions (Herdindha and Riyanto 2014, 10). Since Nora was a kid, she did not have many choices. She was designed to be a professional swimmer by her father. Her father was very strict about Nora's life choices. Besides swimming, Nora's father did not hear Nora's opinion. "She had associated swimming with her father's approval." (76).

The quotation above shows that Nora's father is a dictator. He wanted his daughter to follow his order. He ignored Nora's wishes and dreams. As human beings, everyone has opinions that need to be heard. If the right is suppressed, people will have trauma in voicing their voices. Under the foundation of love, authoritarian parents treat their children horribly (Sasikumar, N, and Vijayalakshmi 2021, 17691).

Indirect Parental Pressure

Indirect parental pressure is a responsibility that develops in children's minds, making them feel sinful if they avoid their parents' demands or do not meet their expectations (Herdindha and Riyanto 2014, 10).

Since she was a baby, Nora's parents were very critical. They were not only critical of Nora's academic performance but also her physical appearance, especially Nora's mother. Nora's mother was disturbed by Nora's physical imperfections and always intrigued to hide them.

"For instance, when she was a baby her mother had been so worried Nora's left ear stuck out more than her right that she'd used sticky tape to address the situation, then distinguished it beneath woollen bonnet." (1).

From the citation above, the narration clearly shows that Nora's parents never treat her as a complete human being that is capable of doing her life right. They were very critical of almost every aspect of Nora's life. Nora's parents could not give Nora the trust needed to live her life alone. She is always asked for perfection by her parents, even for minor things. Nora was even criticized about her physical appearance by her mother. Mothers have a critical role in influencing how daughters perceive and define their self-identity (Hrehor 2021, 270).

The Reasons Why Nora Seed's Parents Become Authoritarian Parents

At Nora's parents' younger age, they faced failures. For example, Nora's father is an ex-rugby player who was forced to retire due to a ligament injury. He demanded Nora keep swimming because it was very close to the realization of his dream as a professional rugby player. "Ever since the ligament injury that thwarted his rugby career, he'd had a sincere conviction that the universe was against him." (77).

On the other side, Donna, Nora's mother, had grown up inside a disharmonious family. Her parents continually argued. Because of her parents, Donna believed that marriage might only become sadness.

"Donna grew up with her parents arguing almost continually, and had consequently believed marriage was something that was not only inevitable but also inevitably miserable.

There was an invisible baton of failure her mother had passed down, and Nora had held it for a long time. May be that was why she had given up on so many things." (121).

The quotations above show that Nora's parents hinged their hopes on her shoulders. These experiences might be the starting point for why Nora Seed's parents have an authoritarian parenting style. Authoritarian parents come from people who see themselves as failures (Ewaidat 2021, 327). They seek compensation in the form of perfect children (Ewaidat 2021, 327).

The Forms of Nora Seed's Instinct

Sigmund Freud has categorized instincts into two main forms, which are the life instinct (Eros) and the death instinct (Thanatos). This paper will breakdown each of the Nora Seed's instinct.

a. Life Instinct (*Eros*)

Every individual always has both life instinct (eros) and death instinct (thanatos). The life instinct relates to the drive that encourages individuals to preserve their life. It deals with basic survival needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, and sex and reproduction.

Desire for love

According to Sigmund Freud, life instinct could be reflected through many things, one of the examples is desire. Freud has defined desire as the subject's yearning for a fundamentally lost object (Freud 1900). One of life instincts that can be clearly seen in Nora Seed is desire for love. This is shown by her attitude towards Ash, her surgeon neighbor who seems to have a crush with her. Nora constantly thinks about Ash (Haig 2020, 153). She gets the missing warmth she did not get from everyone. Ash constantly shows his attraction towards Nora. He also did many things to approach her, such as asked her out for a coffee, and kept buying guitar books from String Theory only to see Nora. Nora never had someone who genuinely wants her and someone who will do anything just to see her. It is a new thing for Nora. Because of this, the existence of Ash's attention has made her excited. Unfortunately, Nora never properly showed her interest towards Ash because during that time she was still with Dan, instead she secretly always thought about Ash's affection without everyone knowing.

In Freudian psychoanalysis criticism, the id always demands the ego to fulfill biological needs. Freud recognized that the existence of love in within humans' relationship is part of human nature (Bernard 2016). As part of biological needs, Nora tried to fulfill her desire for

love by interacting with Ash. She could not get the same affection from her parents and her fiancée so she sought from another person.

In this case, superego takes a part as the moral police for Nora. While the id's desire kept pushing Nora to have an affair with Ash, the superego protected Nora by telling that she was still in relationship with Dan. In this situation, the ego of Nora Seed created defense mechanisms, which are avoidance and denial. Nora denied the fact that she was not happy with Dan and she needed Ash's attention, and she avoided Ash by rejecting his invitation for a coffee.

Death Instinct (*Thanatos*)

After facing a series of unfortunate events, Nora's desire for death started to emerge. She saw death as an escape for all the problems happen in her life. Nora thought that death would bring peace to her chaotic life. As her cat died, Nora envied the peaceful emotion of Voltaire (Haig 2020, 17).

The death instinct could be reflected through many forms. Some of them are reflected through aggression, gloomy view, and suicide tendency. Death instinct is directed against the organism itself and thus is a self – destructive drive or it is directed outward (Freud in Fromm 1973, 50). In Nora's case, her death instinct tends to destroy her own self. She keeps every emotion to herself and tends to carry all burdens alone. The basic concept of death instinct is that the human being is under the sway of an impulse to destroy themselves (Lemek 2008, 41). It is difficult for a person to escape the tragedy or to find a logic solution to solve their problem (Lemek 2008, 41).

In many occasions, Nora shows a situation where she is not happy with her life. She feels that she is being left by everyone. Everyone is better without her. Nora loses her purpose of life and thinks that her life is meaningless (Haig 2020, 16).

Through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis, the id will always demand ego to fulfill the biological needs. One of the biological needs is the need of being loved by everyone. The desire of being loved could not be fulfilled it means that the id could not gain its goal. In this case, the moral police or superego, always tries to find a rational solution to solve the inner grief, but unfortunately it could not find any. So she punishes herself by choosing suicide. Her ego could not be the bridge that prevents Nora to do suicide. The id becomes dominant and leads Nora into depression which later becomes emotional void.

In this case, Nora thinks that she cannot be free from her problem. Her pain and grief that are resulted by guilt contributes to create her death instinct (*Thanatos*).

Nora Seed's Defense Mechanisms

Defenses are the process of the ego's struggle against painful or unendurable ideas or effects (Freud 1937, 37). We unconsciously use our defenses as psychological strategies to "protect" us from anxiety or unacceptable situations.

a. Avoidance

Avoidance is staying away from people or situations that make us anxious to refuse to encounter the "dangerous" external and internal conditions. (Freud 1937, 69). Nine and a half hours before Nora decided to commit suicide, she arrived late for her afternoon shift at String Theory. Neil, her boss, called her to come to his office when she was about to start working. Neil asked many questions about her impression of working in String Theory. In the middle of the conversation, Neil suddenly changed his tone and made the conversation more serious. He wanted to fire Nora but tried to be as subtle as possible.

"And I know you've got mental-health stuff."

'Everyone's got mental-health stuff.'

'You know what I mean.'

'I'm feeling much better, generally.' She lied. 'It's not clinical. The doctor says it's situational depression. It's just that I keep on having new... situations. But I haven't taken a day off sick for it all. Apart from when my mum... Yeah. Apart from that.' (7).

Nora tried to change the topic by keeping answering Neil. Nora was uncomfortable with Neil's question, especially his question related to her dead mother. If Neil continues asking, Nora will remember and talk about her mother. The topic will bring her pent-up guilt to the surface. This condition will create an emotional meltdown. An emotional breakdown is a result of severe, overwhelming emotional distress.

b. Denial

Denial is believing that the problem does not exist, or the unpleasant incident never happened (Tyson 2015, 32).

When Nora was in a relationship with Dan, she experienced many uncomfortable things. Dan was annoying, yet Nora tried to deal with it. She did not want to lose Dan because he could give her "the missing love" she did not get from her parents. Even though Nora was irritated by some of Dan's habits and personalities, she tried not to take it into her heart.

"When they'd been together she had tried not to dwell on this aspect of his personality. He'd had so many aspects – he had been so lovely to her mum when she was ill, and he could talk at ease about anything, he was so full of dreams about the future, he was attractive and easy to be around, and he was passionate about art and always stopped to chat to the homeless. He cared about the world." (43)

The narration above shows that Nora refused to acknowledge that Dan was not the best for her. She always followed others' orders rather than following herself. Nora was uncomfortable with Dan without admitting it to herself, but Nora was very used to orders. She never believed in herself, so she thought Dan was right. People tend to refuse to acknowledge something wrong (Fadillah 2018). It helps them to cope with emotional conflict and painful thoughts.

Childhood Trauma that Affects Nora Seed's Current Personality

Childhood trauma is an emotionally distressing event experienced by children and sometimes will be lasting. Individuals who experience trauma would be unable to meet an overpowering emotional experience (Freud 1920, 216).

a. Low Self-esteem

Self-esteem is an individual's subjective evaluation of their worth (Orth and Robins 2013, 381). People with low self-esteem believe they are less worthy than others (Tyson 2015, 16).

After a series of unfortunate events happened, Nora thought she was not good at doing life. All of her works will become miserable in the future. Maybe they are not a series of unfortunate events. Perhaps it was just her life full of unluckiness.

"Maybe she was just really crap at it. At life." (17).

“After the wine a realisation hit her with total clarity. She wasn’t made for this life.”
(20).

The citation above clearly shows that Nora thinks her life lacks many things. In her eyes, she has nothing but tons of bad luck. Nora could not define success because Nora had not experienced it herself. Because Nora’s parents were so critical, she grew up as someone who could not see her worth. Her life has nothing to be proud of. Parents’ unreasonable expectations on their children’s shoulders interrelate with the way children perceive themselves (Ewaidat 2021, 329).

b. Fear of Abandonment

According to Tyson (2015), people who are afraid of abandonment have an unshakable belief that their friends and loved ones are going to desert them (physical abandonment) or do not care about them (emotional abandonment).

Abandonment issues could occur after the sufferer experienced trauma during childhood. When parents or caregivers could not provide children with warmth and attentive interaction, it would leave them with chronic stress and fear. Parents who are unable to express themselves emotionally to their children, treat their children as peers, place unreasonably high expectations on their children's shoulders, and expect their children to be perfect will create children who have abandonment issues (Brennan 2020).

Because Nora is afraid of being left by everyone, she slowly becomes a people pleaser. It is evident by Nora’s dialogue with her student’s mother:

“We waited outside your flat for an hour.”

‘I can still do Leo’s lesson when I get back. I’ll be five minutes.’

‘Too late. He’s with his dad now for three days.’

‘Oh, I’m sorry. I’m sorry.’

She was a waterfall of apologies. She was drowning in herself.” (18)

Individuals with abandonment issues might experience some problems in building a relationship. They are constantly afraid of being left by others. As a result, children going through both emotional and physical abandonment will suffer the fear of loneliness, clinginess, low self-esteem, and struggle to maintain excellent social skills with their peers in the future (Damayanti 2021). Because of this feeling, some people afraid of abandonment could become people pleasers. People pleasers usually behave as they are “supposed” to do according to others, such as teachers, parents, and friends, partly out of a desire for approval (Williams 2020). The survivors are typically helpful and kind. They will also treat themselves like a doormat to please everyone.

The Relationship between Childhood Trauma and Emotional Void

In *The Midnight Library*, the parents' pressure Nora Seed got when she was a kid has turned into childhood trauma. Great despair has brought her into a mudhole of depression. In the meantime, the intense amount of depression has become an emotional void.

a. Depression

Depression is an extreme sadness that can make the survivors think their life is meaningless. It is characterized by excessive sadness, emptiness, discouragement, loneliness, and feeling worthless (Widyawati 2014, 114).

In Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*, the childhood trauma that Nora Seed has encountered since she was a kid has impacted her adult life. The traumatic memory has turned into a bloated feeling of sadness. She is diagnosed with depression.

Twenty-seven hours before Nora Seed decided to commit suicide, Nora sat on her dilapidated sofa scrolling her social media. She thought that everybody was happy, except her. Suddenly someone rang her doorbell. It was Ash, her neighbor who is a surgeon. Even though she was excited that there was someone who rang her doorbell on purpose to meet her, she could not help that she felt lonely. "But she'd been feeling lonely." (Haig 2020, 4).

b. Emotional Void

Emotional void, or the feeling of emptiness, is a conscious feeling of inner hollowness, of having nothing inside (Lutenberg 2009, 87). Individuals with emotional void experience "missing something" that cannot be described. It refers to emotions, sensations, effects, and everything derived from these feelings (Lutenberg 2009, 87). A lot of factors influence the creation of an emotional void. One of the examples is a lack of meaning in life. When people lack purpose in their life, they will face a feeling of emptiness (Melton and Schulenberg 2007, 1016).

The great depression might cause the survivors to think that their lives are useless. People with depression usually have feelings of neverending sadness and emptiness; they are hopeless and pessimistic and lose interest in many things (Widyawati 2014, 115). Feelings of hopelessness will create an emotional detachment that becomes an emotional void.

In Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*, Nora's great depression has become an emotional void. She feels like she is trapped inside a dark tunnel with no escape. When Nora's cat died, Nora felt there was a greater feeling than the grief of losing her loved ones. She felt like darkness tucked herself in it. She was envious of Voltaire's peaceful expression.

"She knew she should be experiencing pity and despair for her feline friend – and she was – but she had to acknowledge something else. As she started at Voltaire's still and peaceful expression – that total absence of pain – there was an inescapable feeling brewing in the darkness. Envy." (6).

CONCLUSIONS

This study focuses on Nora Seed, the main character of the novel. The data collected were analyzed by using Freudian Psychoanalysis criticism. In accordance with the novel, Nora Seed was raised by authoritarian parents. The parental pressure she experienced as a kid has created a childhood trauma that influenced Nora Seed's adult life, including her behavior and emotion.

Based on the analysis, there are two kinds of parental pressure such as direct parental pressure and indirect parental pressure. During Nora's childhood, because of her superior intelligence, Nora was always expected to do more than others. Because of this, Nora grows up as someone who has low self-esteem and abandonment issues. She consistently belittles herself and her capabilities and constantly seeks people's approval. Her core issues have unconsciously created destructive behavior called defense mechanisms to protect herself from encountering the trigger that will cause secondary pain.

Defense mechanisms are used to help Nora to cope with her emotional wound. There are two defense mechanisms that Nora unconsciously uses, which are avoidance and denial.

Nora Seed, the main character of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*, undergoes a childhood trauma. Therefore, her childhood trauma has formed a psychological disorder. Nora is diagnosed with depression. The great pain of depression she could not handle eventually became an emotional void.

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