Bullying Effect as Reflected in Palacio’s Wonder: A Psychological Approach

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Abstract— This research is entitled “Bullying Effect as Reflected in Palacio’s Wonder: A Psychological Approach.” The objectives of the research are: 1) to describe the plot of the novel, 2) to describe the bullying effect experienced by the main character, and 3) to describe the moral value of the novel. The subject of this research is the novel Wonder by R.J Palacio and the object is bullying effect experienced by the main character. This research is categorized into library research and to analyse the data it applies descriptive qualitative method. The theories used in this research are namely (1) theory of bullying effect by Daniels et al (2009), Thijs & Verkuyten (2008), Domenech et al (2009), and Lee (2004:16); (2) psychological approach theory by Subhan (2017), Albertine (2010), Wellek and Werren (1956), James (1947) and Dennis (1986); (3) the theory of plot by Abram (2009) and Klarer (2004: 15); (4) the theory of moral value by Rosyadi (2013) and Bertens (2000). The findings of the research are: First, the plot of the novel is progressive that consist of exposition (when the characters involved in the novel are introduced), inciting incident (when Auggie was accepted at formal school), rising action (when Auggie gets bad words and acts from Julian and his friends almost everyday), climax (when the problem occurs between Auggie and his friends), falling action (when Julian forced Jack to stay away from Auggie), resolution (when all the problems between Jack and Julian have ended well) and denouement (when all people around Auggie relay thankful for what Auggie did). Second, the bullying effect experienced by the main character are: (1) short-term effect: giving up of his condition and blaming himself because he must be born with a disability, (2) long-term effect: keeping struggles, showing that he can be accept in his environment, becoming a brave, kind, friendly person and spreading positive vibes to other people. Third, the moral values can be taken from the novel are: (1) family member should support each other 2) we should not judge someone from his/her physical (3) be brave to surrender bullying.

Keywords—bullying, bullying effect, wonder, psychological approach

I. INTRODUCTION

Cases of violence against children still occur in the world of education, especially Indonesia. Based on Indonesian child protection commission/KPAI (http://nasional.tempo.co/) in direct complaints, investigations and monitoring of cases in the field, the trend of child violations in education has experienced ups and downs. The agency recorded the number of cases of violence against children in the education sector until May 30, 2018 as many as 161 cases. From these data we can conclude that cases of bullying still occur frequently in Indonesian education. Sometimes we feel bad when someone hurts and all that will disturb the mentality especially when someone hurts us repeatedly especially bullying. Bullying can affect everyone those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying.

According to the case, the researcher interested to scrutinize bullying effect written by Palacio with a title Wonder. The choice of the novel Wonder by R.J Palacio as the topic of the research is based on the following reason. First, the novel tells about a ten-year-old kid who has a trouble with his face and tries to adapt with his environment which cannot easily receive his deficiency. The main conflict of this novel is bullying which occur on elementary school. Auggie can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues because he always got bad word, rude attitude from his friend. Second, the novel Wonder is written by R.J Palacio. Her debut novel, Wonder, has been on the New York Times bestseller list since March, 2012, and has sold over 5 million copies worldwide. Third, her novel Wonder has become a favourite of teachers and educators all over the country.

Fourth, Wonder tells about bullying which is become a rare topic in literary work. Bullying is a case that is closely related to psychology. The effects of bullying have an impact on the psychology of the victim. Like what happened to Auggie, he experienced psychological problems that became rebellious to his parents and stubborn because of bullying. But bullying makes Auggie get better because he can psychologically fight his emotional.

And the researcher tried to relate the conflict with the psychological approach. Such as Auggie’s struggle to be accepted in their environment, the effort of the family to give the best for Auggie, and the bullying received by Auggie from the surrounding people especially children in school. The researcher takes the bullying conflict by linking it to psychology because nowadays there are a lot of bullying cases that has an effect for the psychological victim especially depressed. And bullying is a problem that cannot be underestimated. Because if it happens continuously can make bad impact.

The objectives of the research are: to describe the plot of the novel Wonder by R.J Palacio, to describe the bullying effect experienced by the main character in the novel observed psychologically and to describe the moral values from the novel.

II. METHOD

This research belongs to library research. A library research is one of the qualitative researches which is done
Based on library collections. George (2008:3) states library research is interaction of idea from the researcher with sources also about the basis and invention of those sources. Library research is combination ideas between researcher and personal/expert opinion. Where the researcher ideas are amplified with personal/expert opinion. Library research take actual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question and required part. Library method conduct by reading the sources such as books, articles, etc.

Generally, type of this research consists of two kinds, namely the subject of research and the object of the research. The subject of this research is a novel entitled Wonder by R.J Palacio. 2. The object of the research is the bullying effect by August Pullman as the main character as seen in R.J Palacio’s Wonder. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method because the main character does not have calculation or statistical procedure. Using descriptive qualitative also more appropriate than the quantitative one to get a deep understanding of the content.

In collecting data, the researcher does some steps to collect as follows: The first step is reading the novel carefully several times to understand the content of the novel, to catch the idea and find out the intrinsic elements of the novel.

In this section, it is explained the results of research and at the same time is given the comprehensive discussion. Results can be presented in figures, graphs, tables and others that make the reader understand easily. The discussion can be made in several sub-chapters. The second step is gaining some information. The researcher visits the libraries to find sources that relate to the study, then reads the sources and make some notes, categories the data and the researcher also explores the internet to get more information and data observation to support the research. The third step is selecting data. All of the data related to the topic were used as references to support the research such as books, journal and internet sources are selected and analyzed to answer the problem formulation.

After the data are collected, they are analyzed through a deep analysis. Data analysis that used by the researcher is qualitative description. The reason of using qualitative descriptive description is giving description accurately, factually and systematically to take conclusion and relationship of the phenomenon and the object which will be analyzed.

III. DISCUSSION

A. The plot is one of the important elements in literary work, because the plot is the sequence of events in which a story is arranged.

1) Exposition

Palacio describes it from the main character who thinks that he is a normal child with common habits like other children do. On the other hand, other people assume that Auggie is not an ordinary child because after he came to the playground the other children around him screamed in fear and ran away.

From that the reader can conclude that Auggie is not an ordinary kid. Palacio also introduced the characters involved in her novel. For the first is Via. Via is Auggie’s sister. In this novel, Via is demure and loving character especially to his younger siblings. On the other hand, Via must be willing not to get the full attention of their parents because their parents are too focused on Auggie's condition. That is why Via jealous and sad, but she prefers to hide those feelings and give the best for her brother.

2) Inciting Incident

Palacio introduced the initial problem when Auggie was accepted at formal school. After having discussions with his parents, Auggie finally wants to study formal school. However, he must also be mentally prepared to adapt to his friends. Auggie's parents were afraid that their child would be mistreated by a friend because of Auggie's condition. However, Mr. Thushman, one of Auggie’s teacher, make sure that Auggie will get good friends and he will be fine here. On the first day, Mr. Thushman introduces several students to Auggie namely Julian, Charlotte, and Jack.

They got a job from Mr. Thushman to help Auggie know about his school. They introducing the rooms and facilities that available in the school, and Mr. Thushman hopes they can become good friends of Auggie and help Auggie study in formal school.

But in reality, Julian cannot accept Auggie's condition completely. While in the science room, Julian asked Auggie about the condition of his disfigured face. Charlotte has forbidden Julian to ask that question, because the question can hurt Auggie. But Julian still ask on the grounds that Mr. Thushman allows them to ask Auggie anything and get to know Auggie more closely. Because of this problem all conflicts occur.

3) Rising Action

Almost every day Auggie gets bad words and acts from Julian and his friends. They often bully Auggie without guilt. But Auggie prefers to be quiet to respond to their attitude. However, Auggie was unable to hold back his anger when Julian said about his hair.

Auggie really likes Star Wars and galaxies. For those reasons he likes science lessons and dreams of becoming an astronaut. Auggie has a tiny braid in the back of his hair like Padawan on Star Wars. However, it was ridiculed by Julian, he assumed that the tiny braid was perfect for Auggie's face condition. He talked in class and was heard by all students so that Auggie was embarrassed and felt very bad.

After school, Auggie immediately cut his tiny braid. He thought that the tiny braid makes his appearance worse. Via, Auggie's sister, tried to calm Auggie by advising him, but it did not relieve Auggie pain. Auggie became very insecure and chose to be alone in his room. Auggie's parents begin to worry about Auggie psychic conditions and try to make Auggie comfort in various ways. They are afraid if Auggie is traumatized. After trying various ways, they finally succeeded in convincing Auggie that he could be an outstanding student at school. With the trust of his parents, Auggie is getting stronger and ignoring their bad words. From this incident, Palacio told her readers that Auggie had experienced bullying problems in his class.

4) Climax

Mr. Thushman asked him to be friends with Auggie at the beginning of the semester, and he was also sure that he had been placed to sit together with Auggie by the teachers. Jack is one of the students who get a scholarship at the school, and
Auggie got into a fight with Eddie's gang. But he did not run away and tried to fight. Suddenly Amos and his gang came to help Auggie and Jack. After struggling, Amos and his gang finally become Auggie's friends because they are impressed with his courage. They didn't expect Auggie would be brave like that despite all his shortcomings. After the end of the semester, Auggie finally began to enjoy his school life and became popular. Eddie was distributed around the school. Auggie was finally accepted by people because they thought.

b) Social bullying

We know that in his first day of school Auggie got bully by some people at his school, but he did not even overreact by revenging to them or doing other bad things because Auggie did not want to do something like that. He just ignores and walking act like everything is fine.

a) Verbal bullying

One of the students who used a mummy costume said that Auggie face is like a skull. And Julian also said that if he had a face like that, he would hide for the rest of his life. Then they laugh together. Auggie felt angry and very disappointed to know that students who used the mummy costume is his best friends, Jack. Auggie does not believe that Jack can do something like that. Auggie then left the class and cried behind the mask he used, holding back his disappointment and anger to his friend.

a) Psychological bullying

Auggie was very frustrated when he got pressure from his friend. Auggie is a Star Wars lover and he has small braids in his hair. Julian said that Auggie was like a Padawan (a character in a Star Wars movie) and that hurt him a lot. Supposedly, he was able to adapt well at the beginning of school, but the frustration made Auggie not confident and made him do bad treatment every day from his friend in the school.

3) Bullying effects experienced by the main character

Bullying is a serious threat to our youth today. Being bullied can affect everything about a child such as how they see themselves, their friends, school, and their future. Bullying also have negative short and long-term consequences for both the victim and the bully. Based on Domenech et al (2009) theory in chapter two, on his book that there are a variety of ways to find out if our child is experiencing bullying from the following effects:

a) Short-term effects

Short-term effects experienced when the victim begins to adapt to his environment but he gets insults from people around him. At that moment, he began to give up and lost his dream, Auggie felt give up and did not want to study again. He gets bad treatment from his friend almost every day. He blamed himself and regretted being born ugly. However, Auggie’s mother is always there for Auggie and tries to help...
Auggie in every condition. Auggie has a great family. They always support Auggie regardless of her condition.

b) Long-term effect

It happens when he has to face even more difficult problems, where he must choose to surrender or fight to overcome the problem. Likes Auggie, he still struggles and show that he can be accept in his environment. we can understand that Auggie finally could adapt positively to the entire situation about the school, friends, and other things. He made it through all of the adversity. After all of the struggle, he came to the end of the semester and on graduation day he received Henry Ward Beecher medal from his school which signified he had become a brave, kind, friendly, and great kid.

C. The Moral Values

In this part, the researcher wants to explain several moral values that can be taken from the novel. They are:

1) Family member should support each other

Auggie’s family always supports each other no matter what. It becomes the strong point that they have and also became one of the support systems to make Auggie stronger to deal with his adversity. Auggie’s family always shows their affection, love, and care through their daily. This is what family should do when they going through the adversity, they have to accept what they are without any hesitation, they have to give them support, and they have to always help each other.

2) We should not judge someone from his/her physical

Auggie may be born with an unusual face, but behind it all, he has a good personality. First time people see him, they will look at him with a strange look or even they will say something rude to him. But his friends soon realize that Auggie is a fun, kind, brave, and smart kid. His appearance has absolutely nothing to do with his personality. The novel reveals the unnatural nature of the terrible bullying that must be retained by Auggie.

3) Be brave and not easy to surrender to bully

Although Auggie gets disappointed by people’s comments and also with all the bad acts that he received, Auggie finally can stand up boldly, defiantly, and not giving up. His attitude expresses his courage. Knowing that he has to deal with the bully every day at his school. But in the end, he managed to overcome it, he also managed to achieve a reward from his school, become popular and gains a lot of friends.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings in chapter four, the research can be concluded as follows: The plot from this novel is progressive. In the beginning, Auggie was bullied because of his physical disability, even many of his friends moved away and provoked to leave Auggie alone. There was a moment where auggie gave up, but with the support from his family and good friend, he dared to fight them with courage and achievement.

In the novel, Auggie as the main character experienced psychological problems that become rebellious to his parents and stubborn because of bullying. He got effect from bullying especially on his mental. Sometimes he felt give up and disappointed to his life. But, he keep struggles and against bullying. So, bullying makes Auggie get better because he can psychologically fight his emotional and get support from his family.

Moral value involved in novel Wonder are positive values is including: Family should support each other, do not judge someone from the appearance, be brave and not easy to surrender to bully.

REFERENCES


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