

Max Morden's Grief In John Banville's *The Sea*

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Abstract

The objectives of the study are to find out Max Morden's grief in John Banville's *The Sea*, to analyze the causal factor of Max Morden's grief and to find out the effect of Max Morden's grief on himself and on his mother in John Banville's *The Sea*. The theory used is the theory of grief counseling and grief therapy stated by Worden. The thesis writer used intrinsic and extrinsic approaches and conducted the qualitative research to analyze the problems. The results of this study show that Max Morden undergoes two grief. They are Feeling, and Behaviors. The feeling experienced by Max Morden consists of sadness, anger, guilt and self-reproach, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue, helplessness, shock, and yearning. The behaviors experienced by Max Morden consist of disturbance, social withdrawal, avoiding reminders, searching and calling out, and crying. The causal factors of Max Morden's grief are memories. Max Morden's grief bring effects on Max Morden and on her Mother.

A. INTRODUCTION

Grieving is a feeling experienced by every living person. Grief can be experienced by everyone when the person loses a close person due to death. The death of the loved ones is also part of a deep loss that could not be avoided by anyone because death can occur in any age; old, young and infancy. Generally, humans die because of the disease they experience, grief is a natural human response as a reaction to the loss of a loved one.

As experienced by Vinsensius Keke who was desperate of committing suicide behind his house (Nusa Tenggara Timur). He is stressful because his parents died. Since the death of his parents, Vinsen has always been gloomy and alone in his room. He was overly stressed thinking about the burden he would bear after the death of his parents. (kompas.com, 2013). As stated by Buglass (2010: 15) that grief is a human response to separation and the loss of a loved one. It could come to stress to human beings.

According to the University of Rochester, grief can also be caused by the followings: loss of a job, loss of a beloved pet, loss of a friendship, loss of a personal dream, and loss

of a romantic relationship. Although it is not known in detail the causes of prolonged or complicated grief, the most common causes of grief are those associated with the death of a loved one.

Everyone has hope and aspirations in life such as studying, having the luxury car, a house, getting married, having a company, and a good future. But, not everyone could reach that kind of hope of reality. Death is one of the factors that can hinder the desire of it all, whether they die of illness, natural disasters, or accidents. Accident is one of the leading causes of death. Accidents cause many deaths, which means many cases of grief occur among people. However, the experience of facing death due to an accident or losing someone who is dying due to this accident will be a heavy moment for those who are affected by the grief.

Among the phenomena above, grief has been becoming the psychological problem experienced by people today. Unfortunately, grief has led some people to commit suicide. A married couple named Mohamad Santoso and Mariyati from Malang, East Java, committed suicide in the presumed gorge of depression following the accidental death of their child. Mohamad Santoso had trying to kill himself but failed (Fajar.co, 2018). Sadness is not an easy thing to pass, it is very influential in human life. The impact can make life a serious crime if it could not be handled properly, as Wright states in his book *Experiencing the Loss of a Family Member* that;

Waves of grief also bring memories. Grief will expose who you really are inside. The more you stand and fight and rail against the wave, the more exhausted you become. It's exercise in futility. But the more you accept it, hold out your arms to it and even embrace it, the more you will recover. (Wright, 2014: 14).

Sumardjo and Saini (1997:3) argue that literature is an expression of the human person which are experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, enthusiasm, belief in some form of concrete images that evoke fascination with language tools. Regarding to that opinion, the thesis writer believes that literature is one of the human creations that reveal aspects of real-life for humans. That is why the thesis writer believes that traumatic experiences are also expressed in literary works. Therefore, the thesis writer considers literature as an appropriate

source for analyzing a topic. Literature can be divided into two groups, namely imaginative literary and non-imaginative literature. The use of imaginative literary language emphasizes the use of many meanings of connotative language compared to non-imaginative literature which puts more emphasis on the usage of denotative language through singular meaning (Sumardjo and Saini, 1988 :17). Based on the variety of genre, literature can be differentiated into three forms, namely prose, poetry, and drama. Fiction refers to narrative prose, in this case, novels, short stories, and even fiction itself is often referred to as a novel.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers conducted qualitative research where this study did not prioritize numbers. The data source is from the novel entitled *The Sea* written by John Banville.

C. ANALYSIS

1. The Portrayal of Max Morden's grief

The first portrayal Max Morden experiences grief when his wife "Anna" died in hospital. Anna died before dawn. To tell the truth, I was not there when it happened. I had walked out on to the steps of the nursing home to breathe deep the black and lustrous air of morning. And in that moment, so calm and drear, I recalled another moment, long ago, in the sea that summer at Ballyless.

From the quotation above shows that what the main character is experiencing is because he reflects back on the happiness that has happened in the past. Especially when someone he loves dies and he is not by his side. It was that past happiness that made him always sad when he tried to remember it.

The second Max Morden as the main character also feels his anger and also felt by miss Grace as his child.

Let me alone, I cried at her in my mind, let me creep past the traduced old Cedars, past the vanished Strand Café, past the *Lupins* and the Field that was, past all this past, for if I stop I shall surely dissolve in a shaming puddle of tears. Max Morden gets angry at his daughter

for always fighting him and Max Morden wants to show that he needs to be obeyed. Besides that Max Morden is angry with the reality that he is living, as if he does not want to accept the loss. That fact made him furious, as if God is scenario was always wrong in his life.

The third portrayal is when Max Morden feels alone when the good times are gone from him so quickly.

I could think of nothing to say. All the deviant euphoria of a moment past was gone now and I felt over-fleshed and incommensurate with the moment, standing there smiling and weakly nodding, the last of the air leaking out of me.

From the quotation above that the main character is not knowing what to do after everything becomes empty due to the separation due to death. His passing leaves me speechless, only tears will bear witness to all our happiness, our memories and everything about us. Let me write and remember you until this step of life ends in death.

2. The Causal Factors of Max Morden Grief

The first reason of Max Morden's sadness is because of the experiences he has with his wife. The place they had visited became one on the objects that could disturb Max Morden's mind every time he returns there. Here despite the glacial air a muted hint of past carousing lingered.

From the above quotation Max is visiting the beach which used to be their favorite place when he was on his honeymoon with his wife. When he revisits these places he feels the atmosphere he has experienced in the past so he does not directly want the dead. Let me alone, I cried at her in my mind, let me creep past the traduced old Cedars, past the vanished Strand Café, past the Lupins and the Field that was, past all this past, for it I stop I shall surely dissolve in a shaming puddle of tears. From the above statement when Max Morden revisits the place that used to be his wife's favorite place for vacation, now he only has tears in his eyes as a form of sincerity for the departure of his loved one. Whatever the form of the story between those places used to be now he can only reflect back even though he could not reach out and hug him again.

I do not want to be alone like this. Why have you not come back to haunt me? It is the least I would have expected of you. Why this silence day after day, night after inter-minable night? It is like a fog, his silence of yours.

From the above statement Max hoped that his dead wife could come back to haunt him, even hug him in warmth. But it is all in the past and gone. I always look forward to your arrival in the ripples of longing that disturb me in silence.

The second reason for Max Morden to experience grief is the death of a loved one. When his wife died, Max Morden was not by her side. That is moment that makes him always sad. Anna died before dawn. To tell the truth, I was not there when it happened. I had walked out on the steps of the nursing home to breathe deep the black and lustrous air of morning. And in the moment, so calm and drear, I recalled another moment, long ago, in the sea that summer at Ballyless.

From the quotation above, the thesis writer finds that there are two causes for Max Morden to experience sadness, namely because he is disturbed by his past experiences, and because his wife died.

From the results of the analysis above, the thesis writer concludes that the most abundant evidence of the factors that cause Max Morden's sadness is seen in the evidence of the past or memories that make him long to come back.

3. The Effects of Max Morden's Grief

a. The Effects of Grief on Max Morden

These effects can be divided into three namely; social, personal, and physical effects. The first effect he experienced is the social effect where Max Morden feels jealous of someone's partner who is happy with his partner. Morden wants to beat a man full of chest hair and falls in love with the man's wife.

Seen from the changing of Morden's attitude. The thesis writer concludes that morden belongs to round character because there is a change or development. Firstly, in the beginning the story Morden love his wife but after his wife died Morden characters changes

into person who likes someone else wife. This idea can be found in the following quote: His look is one of arousal, amusement and faint contempt; he seems to want to see her fall down in the sand and hurt herself; I imagine hitting him, punching him in the exact center of his hairy chest as Chloe had punched her brother. Already I know these people, am one of them. And I have fallen in love with Mrs. Grace. From the above quotation Max experiencing changes after his wife died, Max became jealous of someone's partner who was knitting happiness. Max likes his wife and wants to hit her husband. His desire resurfaced to like her and he could not help it.

The second effect is the personal effect. Max Morden changes when he experiences sadness. The consumption of sedatives is his newest habit and the embarrassment he experiences when he is with other people. Morden does not used drug but end the end the story Morden becomes sedative to forget the past memories. It can be found in the following quotation:

I drink like one recently widowed-widowed? a person of scant talent and scater ambition, greyed o'er by the years, uncertain and astray and in need of consolation and the brief respite of drink induced oblivion.

From the above statement Max Morden changes when he experiences sadness. The consumption of sedatives is his newest habit and the embarrassment he experiences when he is with other people. This was really a new thing that happened to his life and this new thing was the most relevant way for him to get through this difficult time.

Among the more or less harrowing consequences of bereavement is the sheepish sense I have of being an impostor. After Anna died I was everywhere attended upon, deferred to, made an object of special consideration.

From the above quotation Max feels that the reality he is going through is something that other people care about because they always talk Max's life after his wife died. Max thinks that this is a form of their dislike towards my little family, of course he feels ashamed and frustrated about it.

The third proof is physical effects. Max Morden feels his life is like in the past so he does not want to eat every time his daughter offers him to eat. Morden likes to mingle with his family but at the end of the story he does not like to be with his daughter. All the

same, she should not have shouted at me like that in the car. I do not merit being shouted at like that. "Daddy," she said again, with a note of testiness now, "do you want dinner or not?" I did not answer, and she went away. Live in the past, do I.

From the above statement Max feels sad when his daughter is disrespectful towards him. He was disappointed with his daughter's behavior towards him. He showed that disappointment to his daughter when his daughter asked him to eat and he did not answer.

b. The Effects of Max Morden's Grief on Max Morden's Mother

Grief effect can be experienced by the people around him and not only experienced by mourners. Parents, as the closest people among the mourners, will also get the effects of this sadness. In the novel, Max Morden's parents get the sad effect when their son is closer to Miss Grace's family. This idea can be seen in the following quotation:

To me she wondered why I did not petition the Graces to adopt me. "I won't mind," she said. "Get you out from under my feet." And she gave me a level look, harsh and unblinking, the same look she would often turn on me after my father had gone, as if to say, I suppose you will be the next to betray me. As I suppose I was.

From the above quotation, Max Morden's mother feels sad and angry when her son, Max, is closer to Grace's family than to his own family. In here her mother felt that she failed to be a good mother so she tried to ask Miss Grace's family to adopt Max Morden as their family.

The second effect when Morden's mother dislikes Max's wife. Indirectly, she does not want to say that she does not like the woman.

She could show her anger just by her way of sitting, skewed sideways on the chair, stiff-backed, her hands clamped on the handbag in her lap, her hat, shaped like a brioche and with a bit of black netting around the crown, askew on her unkempt grey curls. There was a little grey fuzz on her chin, too. She glanced contemptuously about her. "Huh," she said, "this place. I suppose you'd like to leave me here, put me in with the monkeys and let them feed me bananas." Anna came back with the scone. Ma looked at it scornfully. "I don't want that," she said. "I didn't ask for that."

From the above quotation Max Morden's mother expresses her distaste for his wife Max Morden. Thus he was disrespectful towards Max Morden's and his wife and dislike the food that Max Morden's wife prepared. But Max Morden's wife tries to ignore or accept all of Max Morden's mother's attitude.

From the results of the analysis above, the thesis writer concludes that Max Morden's mother showed her anger just by sitting, leaning sideways on the chair, leaning stiffly, her hands clasped in a bag on her lap, her hat, shaped like a brioche and with a little black net around the crown, and slanted in her unkempt gray curls.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted in chapter four, the thesis writer finds there are two general categories of grief experienced by Max Morden in the novel namely: feelings and behavior. The first activity is feeling. There are nine feelings that Max Morden experiences in the novel, namely, sadness, anger, guilt and self-reproach, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue, helplessness, and yearning.

The second activity experienced by grieving people can be seen from their behavior. The thesis writer finds five behaviors indicate that Max Morden is grieving, namely: disturbance, social withdrawal, avoiding reminders, searching and calling out, and crying.

The thesis writer finds two causes of Max Morden's grief. The thesis writer uses a Fairview book or journal entitled *Patient Education* to find these two causes. The causes are because Max Morden is disturbed by his past experiences and the death of someone close to him, his wife.

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