CHILD ABUSE REFLECTED IN THE ENDER’S GAME NOVEL BY ORSON SCOTT CARD (1985): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Arranged as one of the conditions for completing the Strata I Study Program at Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA
2019
APPROVAL

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PUBLICATION ARTICLE

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Approved to be Examined by the Consultant
School of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
2019

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The writer

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Abstract

This study aims: to find indicators of child abuse in the novel The Ender’s Game, find a picture of child abuse in the novel The Ender’s Game and find the reason Orson Scott Card raised the issue of child abuse in the novel The Ender’s Game. This research is qualitative by using descriptive methods. This study was analyzed using the sociological theory of literature. The analysis is used for; describe and analyze descriptions and indicators of child abuse in the novel The Ender’s Game and discover the reasons why Orson Scott Card raised the issue of child abuse. Based on the results of data analysis, the findings of this study are; (1) child abuse occurs in the novel The Ender’s Game with 2 indicators; physical indicators and psychological indicators (2) child abuse is described in 3 forms; physical abuse, psychological persecution, neglect (3) Orson Scott Card raised the issue of child abuse because it was inspired by his childhood and at this time.

Keywords: child abuse, The Ender’s Game, sociological theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children can be called as our future. They will continue to live in our world as a new individual person. They also will be our heirs in every aspect. That is why, children are very important to us. We must look after them carefully. But time after time, we can see many people and cases about child abuse. The researcher will observe the Ender’s Game novel as the object of research to analyze. The researcher will analyze the novel using the sociological approach, considering it is the most suitable approach to analyze the sociological condition of the two major characters in the novel.
Public had responded really well at *Ender’s Game* novel. It was in the first place of Bestselling Science Fiction Novels of 2012, Publisher Weekly US version. Marvel Comics adopted this work in 2008. It was also in the fifth place of Top 10 Sci-Fi Books of All Time in 2013, Science Channel US version. The novel was later adopted in the movie with the same title “*Ender’s Game*” in 2013. Unfortunately, the movie of *Ender’s Game* was not really had good response from public. They said that the movie was not really reflected the main issue in the novel.

There are several reasons why the researcher decides to analyze the novel. First, the novel had military and children background in it. The researcher believes that the combination of those topics is very extraordinary. Second, the novel is very controversial for its content. The story itself has several issues in it such child abuse, lack of trust, rebellion act, manipulative act, etc. The researcher wants to find out the reason why the author addressed child abuse issue in the novel. Third, the conflict in the novel, including the child abuse is worth paying for. The researcher will discuss child abuse depicted in the novel that it may attract the society’s attention.

Based on Laurenson and Swingewood opinion, 1972, p.14, Sociology of literature is basically aimed to analyze literature work in terms of the author’s social status, the availability of markets, the stipulation of type’s publication, and the structure of the leaders. Concerning the variety of approaches to literary works, Wellek and Warren (1956: 84, 1990: 111) classify sociological studies into three; they are sociology of the author, sociology of literary works and the sociology of literature that concerns the reader and the social impact of literary works. And this research is suitable to analyze with the type sociology of the author and sociology of literary works.

2. METHOD

This study is a descriptive qualitative research. There are two objects in this research, the first is discussing issue child abuse by using sociological theory and the second is *The Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card that published by in 1985. Type of the data of this research consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data derive from the texts of the novel *The Ender’s Game*, focusing on child abuse. The secondary data covers some data that support the analysis. It can be criticism of *The Ender’s Game* novel, Journals of the novel and previous research about child abuse. In the technique of analyzing data, the researcher use following steps: (1) reading the novel, (2) sorting the text that related to child abuse, (3) describing the novel using sociological of literature that focus on child abuse issue in *The Ender’s Game* novel written by Orson Scott Card, (4) the text and important parts that related to child abuse will be analyzed in detail with sociological approach, (5) and the last, drawing the conclusion based on analysis. In analyzing data, the researcher uses qualitative data analysis.
3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Indicators of Child Abuse in The “Ender’s Game”

In joyfulheartfoundation.org, the writer stated that children who get abuse by their surrounding often show some indicators. These indicators can be seen physically and psychologically (Child abuse and neglect, know the sign, n.d.). Down below, the researcher will show the indicators’ prove found in the novel:

3.1.1 Physical Indicators

As we know human body has its own miraculous system. If a virus was entering the system, our body will show certain reaction to the virus. Either we got sick or we got healthier. It is the same analogy as if a child body got abuse from outside. They can get bruises, sprain, broken arm, bleeding in certain area, pain, and or itching in certain area (Child abuse and neglect, know the sign, n.d.).

In Ender’s Game novel, our main character and his friends often get physical abuse in the school. There are bruises in their body, one of the characters got broken arm, and the other one is dead.

3.1.2 Psychological Indicators

Children are usually bad at managing their anger, stress, and problems in their development. When they got exposed to these things, they seem to show clear reaction. The reaction can be seen in the form of behavioral change, mood swing, and repetition of certain things (Child abuse and neglect, know the sign, n.d.).

Ender is a little boy who comes as a third (read: the unwanted child) in the family. He gets to handle his brother’s hate, his friend’s jealousy, his sister’s love within him. It is so much that he felt confused, afraid, and angry. He does not know how to make himself better, so he shows the evidence of mood swing and behavioral change.

3.2 Depiction of Child Abuse in The “Ender's Game”

The researcher has found many evidence of Child Abuse in the Ender’s Game novel such as physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect act. Here is the analysis result:

3.2.1 Physical Abuse

In the Ender’s Game novel, the researcher has found some evidence of child abuse in the form of Physical Abuse. Physical Abuse in Psychologymania.com (“Bentuk-bentuk kekerasan terhadap anak”, 2012) defines as the maltreatment acts that could hurt someone physically such as hitting, slapping, and forcing their body to work without resting.
There are three evidences that show physical abuse got by the main character, Ender. First, it is when the government put a device to the back of the children’s body for several time. It turns out to be really dangerous to the children’s brain. It can make a great damage such as brain bleed, paralyzed, and death. Second, it happens to Ender when his brother Peter knew that the government has taken Ender’s monitor. He is so mad yet sorry that Ender is failed. He asked Ender to do a duel. Then he knocked him out and almost killed him by blocking his airway. Third, it happens when Ender was beaten up by his leader, Bonzo, for disobeying his command.

Based on the evidences, there are similar to the cases found by the researcher in the real world. Many parents often hit their child if the child cannot behave properly. The parents called hitting their children as disciplinary acts.

3.2.2 Psychological Abuse

Psychological Abuse in Psychologymania.com (“Bentuk-bentuk kekerasan terhadap anak”, 2012), also often called emotional abuse defines as all kinds of maltreatment to the children that can hurt children’s feeling. For example, telling that the children are stupid, blaming them for not being as great as they expected, and calling them by the bad name.

There are several evidences that show psychological abuse got by the main character, Ender. First, Ender Wiggin is a third child from an ordinary family. What makes his brother hate him is that their family favors Ender better than Peter. They think that Peter is not good enough for them, so they replace him by Ender. Due to his jealousy, Peter tries to hurt Ender physically and emotionally. He threatens Ender with murdering him. He does not care whether Ender is his family or not. Peter also ignores that Ender is just a child.

In chapter 7, page 68, Ender gets threaten by his new leader, Bonzo. Bonzo does not like Ender because of his lack of skills. Bonzo had planned to get rid of Ender as soon as possible by giving him an order to not being a smart, so Ender can get kicked out from school. Ender does not want to go home yet then he asked Bonzo to speak to him privately. Instead of an explanation, Ender gets threaten.

Those evidences are similar to the real world cases. It is common for parents when they thought that their children are naughty just for not listening to what they said, some parents will threaten the children. They say they will hit them if the children do not stop crying or playing or running around the house. It happens almost always in our society.
3.2.3 Neglect Acts

In Psychologymania.com neglect act means all kinds of maltreatment that resulting in actual or potential harm to children (“Bentuk-bentukkekerasanterhadapak”, 2012). It can be in the form of adult bullying, child abandonment, and child exploitation.

There are evidences that show neglect act got by the main character, Ender. First, it is when Colonel Graff, one of our main characters is comparing one child to others. He also cruelly said that no one is as smart as Ender. It hurts other children feelings and makes them feel jealous of Ender.

Second evidence is shown in the beginning of first chapters; there is conversation between Colonel Graff (who has responsibility to take care of the children) and the government. They are talking about isolating Ender in a far place away from his family. They also want to surround Ender with enemy so he can be independent and trust no one. The isolation can be considered as child abandonment because children in the early age should get as much care as parents can give.

3.3 Reason of Orson Scott Card Concern on Child Abuse

Orson Scott Card confesses that The Ender’s Game was inspired by Isaac Asimov’s Foundation trilogy. He stated that he was fascinated by the idea of military strategy and the importance of a leader in an army in his teen age. He also said that one of his goals is to make people see child abuse through children’s point of view.

In this era not many people are aware of what happens to their children. They just do whatever they think it is best to make their children look smart. They do not try to see child abuse from their children point of view. Then most of the children have to change their dream, their way of thinking, and their behavior. They become more and more passive or cold to the world. They are afraid to express their feelings. Eventually, the children will do the same as their parents did when they were grown up. It was been the external inspiration to the author of Ender’s Game that the most important things is to see child abuse from the children point of view.

3.4 Discussion

Child Abuse becomes a current issues in 21st century because society still not aware of the indicators and the kinds of it. Many people also unconsciously abusing children in their surroundings. It is the same as reflected in The Ender’s Game, there has slightly resemblance about child abuse in this era and the novels. As the example Ender Wiggin, has the following indicators of child abuse: bruises, behavioral change, mood swing, anger, and unconsciously hurting others.
Ender Wiggin has to get through physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect act too. As well as child abuse in *The Ender’s Game* has the following indicators and kinds: bruises, broken arms, bleeding, death, behavioral change, mood swing, repetition of certain acts, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect act. Child Abuse based on sociological context means any kind of unacceptable actions, such as physical or emotional injury and abuse, maltreatment or exploitation, and adult bullying (UNICEF, 2006). It is just like what they did to Ender who always gets abuse intentionally and unintentionally by his surroundings.

All the analysis of this research is suitable with sociology of literature theory by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1990) stated that the sociology of literature has linked a literature to a particular situation, or with certain political, economic and social systems (p.110). Concerning the variety of approaches to literary works, Wellek and Warren (1956: 84, 1990: 111) classify sociological studies into three, they are: Sociology of the author, sociology of literary works, the sociology of literature that concerns the reader and the social impact of literary works.

Based on the analysis above, child abuse is suitable to analyze with sociological theory focusing on sociology of literary work. Actually that literary works cannot be separated from the social realities that exist in society.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, there are three conclusions as the answer of the problem statement.

Firstly, there are two indicators of child abuse that depicted in The Ender’s Game novel: physical indicators and psychological indicators. The physical indicator refers to any visible scars, bruises, fractures, and bleeding. The psychological indicator refers to the inability of controlling the emotion, mood swing, and behavioral changes.

Secondly, child abuse divided into physical abuse, psychological abuse and neglect acts. Physical abuse described as maltreatment that can hurt somebody physically such as slapping, hitting, and cutting. Psychological abuse described as maltreatment to the children that can hurt children’s feeling such as mocking, telling the children that they are stupid, blaming them for not behave accordingly, and calling them by bad name. Neglect acts described as maltreatment that resulting in actual or potential harm to children such as adult bullying, child abandonment, and child exploitation.
Thirdly, Orson Scott Card gives concern on child abuse because the story of Ender and also military aspects in his childhood are inspired him. At the same time the phenomena of child abuses were widely spread, it may give the influence to his novel.

REFERENCE


