

Haphephobia as Reflected by the Main Character Kim Min Kyu in Yu Hyung Joong’s “I am not a Robot” Drama Series (2017)

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze haphephobia represented in the main character of the drama series entitled I am not a Robot (2017). There are two formulations in this research. First, how are the symptoms of haphephobia reflected in Kim Min Kyu in “I am not a Robot” drama series (2017) and how does Kim Min Kyu overcome as the sufferer of haphephobia. The researchers use qualitative methods to describe and explain the data. The researchers collect data by watching movies and reading subtitles from the drama I am not a Robot. In this study the researcher used theory of Sigmund Freud. The results of the study that the researcher found many symptoms related to haphephobia such as being fear of human touch, and panic attack, body shaking or tremors, dizzy, nauseous, heartbeat pounding, fast or short breathing, and crying. The main character has three ways to overcome haphephobia reflected in the movie such as psychotherapy, administration drugs, relaxation technique.

Keywords: *haphephobia, symptoms*

Introduction

Marsal Esten (1978) stated that literature is an expression of fact artistic and imaginative as manifestation of human life and society, through language as a medium and has positive effect on human life. Therefore, literary works are still related to human life. Meanwhile according to Pradopo (1994), the literary work is a picture of the world and human life, the main criteria that are put on the literary work is truth, or everything that wants to be a picture by the author. There are lots of literary works that carry the theme of mental health, there are some people who experience mental health due to trauma that occurred in the past, which causes the person to experience mental health and anxiety disorders which

lead to mental disorders happened in the character of Kim Min Kyu in “*I am Not a Robot*”(2017).

Mental disorder affects a person’s way of thinking and acting. People with mental disorders will be difficult to focus on something, therefore mental health is important for people who possess health consciousness. Haphephobia is a fear and anxiety of being touched which can influence the attitude of the sufferer. This phobia includes a specific phobia class, which makes a person being afraid of a certain object or situation.

I am not a Robot is drama talking about haphephobia. The drama was directed by Jang Dae Yoon and released in 2017. It tells the story of a rich handsome man named Kim Min Kyu. Kim Min Kyu is a director at the financial company, who is very lonely, because he suffers from a rare disease called haphephobia.

In this research, the researchers choose Kim Min Kyu as the main character who suffers from haphephobia by applying Freud’s theory and the theory related to haphephobia.

Literary Review

Psychology of Literature

Psychology of literature is a branch of literature study that sees literature as an activity and psychological reflection. Literary works have the meaning of copyrighted works that contain problems which exist in the social life or problems experienced by the author. It means to find out a person’s mental condition is by expressing feelings or messengers to other. In interacting or socializing with other people, they can express feeling through literary works in the form of poetry, song lyrics, novels, etc. Literary works discuss a lot about personality in a character in a movie or other literary work. Literary works present a lot of psychological problems in the character. Therefore, literary works can be analysed with a psychological approach.

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud (1856 to 1939) was the founding father of psychoanalysis, a method for treating mental illness and a theory explaining human behaviour. Freud believed that events in our childhood have a great influence on our adult lives and shaped our personality, for instance, anxiety originating from traumatic experiences in a person's past is hidden from unconsciousness and may cause problems during adulthood (neuroses).

Haphephobia

Haphephobia is a rare specific phobia that involves the fear of touching or of being touched. Haphephobia is one of anxiety kinds. The sufferer will be afraid of receiving touch from unknown people or known people, such as hugging, shaking hands or holding hands.

Symptoms of Haphephobia

The main symptom of haphephobia is the fear of human touch, panic attack (anxiety) when someone is about to touch or has been touched though they are friends, family, or partner. Apart from that, people with haphephobia can also experience the following symptoms as being touched:

- a. A cold sweat
- b. Body shaking or tremors
- c. Dizzy
- d. Nauseous
- e. Heartbeat pounding
- f. Breathing becomes fast or short of breath
- g. Crying

The symptoms that appear are various and depend on the person's severity phobia of one's experience. The symptoms of haphephobia can appear at any age, but occur more common in adolescence and adulthood. In children, this phobia often goes undetected.

Causes of Haphephobia

Haphephobia does not have one clear cause. Some people may never know the exact cause of haphephobia. Some people have a higher risk of developing a phobia. For example, women are twice as likely as men to develop a situational phobia. Situational phobias are fears of specific situations or interactions. You may also be more likely to develop haphephobia if you have:

- a. Family history of anxiety disorders.
- b. Other phobias or mental health conditions.
- c. Personal history of negative experience with being touched.
- d. Personality type that tends to feel inhibited.

Overcoming of Haphephobia

Excessive fear of touch can affect a person's quality of life. Haphephobia can make the sufferers become closed individuals and tend to avoid social relationships. In addition, they can experience anxiety, loneliness, or maybe depression. To deal with haphephobia, there are several treatment methods that can be done, namely, Psychotherapy, administration drugs, relaxation technique.

Research Methodology

This research used qualitative descriptive method, Sugiyono (2005). The descriptive method is a method which is used to describe or analyse research results in narrative sentences. Lambert (2012) stated that goal of descriptive qualitative is to summarize specific event experienced by individual or group. The object of this research is movie entitled *I am not a Robot* (2017) by Jung Dae Yoon. The movie was published by MBC in November in 2017 with the running time of 35 minutes. The data collection methods in this research are watching movie and reading subtitles on movie. The data analysis methods in this research are displaying, explaining, and interpreting.

Finding and Discussion

The Haphephobia Symptoms Reflected in Kim Min Kyu in *I am not a Robot* (2017)

Kim Min Kyu lived in a big house alone because his parents died when he was about 15 years old. After the death of his parents, he suffered from a rare phobia called haphephobia. It is a disease where a person is allergic to human touch. It has been stated that Kim Min Kyu's haphephobia occurred with reason. It happened after his parents died. At the time of Kim Min Kyu's family car accident, he saw his parents covered in blood, he was the only one who survived the incident. The incident was a premeditated accident planned by his father's business partner because of a fight over sharing deal. Kim Min Kyu experienced trauma and he was also shunned and bullied by his school friends. He experienced bad things and a phobia happened in Kim Min Kyu. Furthermore, Kim Min Kyu does not trust anyone.

As a haphephobia sufferer, Kim Min Kyu has to experience many symptoms related to his mental disorder such as being fear of human touch, and panic attack. Every time someone touches him, he has a cold sweat, body shaking or tremors, dizzy, nauseous, heartbeat pounding, fast or short breathing, and crying.

Being Fear of Human Touch

It was told in the movie that as a young man of Korean citizen, Kim Min Kyu has to join military service, but due to his mental condition, he asked for recommendation not to join the program. The following quotation describes how the military doctor examines Kim Min Kyu's health condition to make sure that Kim Min Kyu's does not lie:

[Kim took mask and used gloves]

[take the medicine]

[Kim out of the car]

[gather in room]

Doctor 1 : "this is the third arrest. Is that correct, Mr. Kim Min Kyu? Take of the hat and the mask. Don't make me repeat. Take off the hat and the mask.

[Kim takes the hat and the mask]

Doctor 2 : "He's seriously allergic to human contact. That's interesting. Does such an allergy exist?"

Doctor 3 : “The name of the disease isn’t written on the diagnosis. As a dermatologist, I’ve never heard of it. I saw diagnoses for mental illness for military service exemption. But I never saw this before. Mr. Kim, do you not want to serve in the military? Don’t you take Korean military seriously?”

Doctor 3 : “don’t you feel bad for others who serve? Kim, I required to serve in the military.
[Kim takes off his clothes]

Doctor 4 : “What are you doing? Why are you taking off your clothes?
[Kim walks so close to 3 Doctors]

Doctor 1 : “Go back to your seat. Go back to your seat now!
[Kim touch Doctor’s hand] [breathing so fast and her skin change to red color]

Doctor 1 : “ha” [doctor was shock]

Kim : “Is it possible for me to enlist in the marines?”

Doctors : “I don’t think so”

Kim : “Huh. huh. huh this appears only when I have physical contact. The symptoms get worse the longer the contact. It can’t be prevented; symptoms can be relieved with a shot of medication.”

Doctors : “Oh, my goodness, why did you do that?”
(*I am not a Robot*, 2017, Episode 1: 00:03:00)

The conversation above occurred in the first episode, between Kim Min Kyu and the three military doctors. In the conversation above, no doctor believed that Kim Min Kyu’s phobia existed. They thought Kim was just trivializing military service in Korea. To prove that he was not lying, Kim showed the phobia he was experiencing by taking off his clothes, removing his mask, then walking towards the 3 doctors and holding one of the doctors' hands. Kim spontaneously experienced shortness of breath, red eyes and then discolored skin. The doctor was shocked to see the symptoms Kim experienced when touching humans. Finally, the doctor believed there was a phobia of human touch.

From the dialogue, “This appears only when I have physical contact. The symptoms get worse the longer the contact. It cannot be prevented; symptoms can be relieved with a shot of medication.” Kim explained the symptoms he experienced when he touched humans to prove how serious his phobia was. Eventually Kim was not allowed to join military service.

Panic Attack

Panic attack is one of symptoms which is experienced by Kim Min Kyu due to his phobia. The following dialogue describes how panic attack occurs in Kim's life:

[Ji Ah awake and look at to Kim]
[they look at each other]
Ji Ah : "Hey, where you think going?"
[Ji Ah touch Kim's trouser]
Kim : "Go away! Go away! Hey, let go of me. I said, let go of me! I'm going to kill you, let go of me! Stop touching me!
[Kim kicked Ji Ah]
[Kim enters to car]
(*I am not a Robot*, 2017, Episode :, 14.56)

Panic attacks are one of the symptoms of haphephobia. The above dialogue describes the situation when Kim bought robot from a woman named Jo Jiah. Because of Kim's cold behavior, Jo Jiah faints because of being hit by Kim's car. Kim tried to check Jo Jiah by touching her with his stick. Suddenly, Jo Jiah woke up from her fainting and held Kim's leg. Kim spontaneously screamed in surprise and tried to run away but Ji Ah kept hold Kim's leg. Kim got panic and because of that, he kicked Ji Ah until she fell down.

Cold Sweating

Panic attack for haphephobia sufferers will bring some psychological and physical reaction such as cold sweating. It was told in some scenes how Kim Min Kyu as a haphephobia sufferer experiences some other reactions because of his panic attack. In the episode I, minute 00:15:11, when Kim accepted his robot which he ordered from a robot specialist, there was an incidence, a misunderstanding situation that lead him incidentally touched by Jo Jiah that made him experience panic attack. Because of his panic attack, Kim went through a terrible condition where he underwent a cold sweating. He entered his car, trembling with his body full of cold sweat.

Breath becomes fast or short of breath

In the episode 1, in minute 00:14:45, the symptom of a phobia occurs after being touched by a human, namely experiencing irregular breathing. Kim accidentally touched by Ji Ah who was trying to ask Kim for money. Because Ji Ah did not know if Kim had this phobia, Ji Ah accidentally touched Kim's skin. Furthermore, Kim experienced was irregular breathing.

Causes of Haphephobia

Kim Min Kyu haphephobia occurred with no reason. It happened after his parents died. At the time of Kim Min Kyu's family's car accident, he saw his parents covered in blood, he was the only one who survived the incidence, the incidence was a premeditated accident planned by his father's business partner because of a fight over sharing deal. Kim Min Kyu experienced trauma and he was also shunned and bullied by his school friends. Starting from the moment, he experienced bad things and a phobia shows into Kim Min Kyu's life. After that Kim Min Kyu did not trust anyone.

Kim Min Kyu's Struggle in Overcoming His Phobia

The researchers found the ways for Kim Min Kyu to overcome haphephobia, such as seeking professional help, consumption medicine, trying to make something that will be close with human.

Psychotherapy

The first struggle was did by Kim in overcoming his phobia is psychotherapy. He regularly visits a psychotherapy to get cure. The following dialogue, describes it:

[phone ringing]

Kim : "Hello, Dr. Oh"

[meet in Kim's house]

Dr. Oh : "Your broke out at the Military Administration and then today? You should've been careful, I found you a smart medical device, it was developed in Sweden and is being beta-tested.

[give the box to kim]

(*I am not a Robot*, 2017, Episode 1: 00:16:7)

In the dialogue above, Kim talks to someone, namely Dr. Oh. Dr. Oh is Kim's personal physician who helps Kim deal with haphephobia. In the dialog above, Kim consults about the phobia he is experiencing, because his phobia is recurring. Dr. Oh gives me a medical device developed in Sweden. It can measure Kim's heart rate and temperature, and can show Kim's condition as a color.

Regular Medication

The second ways that Kim tried to overcome his phobia is by taking medication regularly as described in the following dialogue:

[after meet with Ri Ei]
[Ri EI touch Kim's hand]
[breath so fast and heart beat pounding]
Ri Ei : "Are you okay?"
Kim : "Sorry, you have to go"
[Kim run so fast]
[open drawer]
[take the drugs]
[breath so fast]
(*I am not a Robot*, 2017, Episode 6: 00:25:13)

One of ways to overcome haphephobia is taking drugs. Kim was given a drug by injection. The symptoms of a phobia such as irregular breathing, cold sweat, tremors arise, he immediately injected the drug into his body in order to minimalize his phobia symptoms to be worse. In the dialog Kim was touched by ri Ei, then the symptoms appear. Afterwards he ran quickly and took his drugs in drawer.

[Ri Ei asks Kim to shack hand]
[breath so fast]
[Ri Ei go from Kim]
[[breath so faspunch punch]
[heart beat so fast]
[take drugs from pocket]
(*I am not a Robot*, 2017, Episode 9, 00:11:15)

From the episode 9 in the minute of 00:11:15 after Kim shook hands with Ri Ei, his phobia symptoms appeared. After the moment, Kim took his medicine from his pocket and injected him.

Relaxation Techniques

In the episode 14 in the minute of 00:18:45, Kim does relaxing by lying on the mat and occasionally closing his eyes, controlling his breathing, and clearing his mind. The technique makes him better and he can control himself.

Conclusion

In this study, there are two symptoms of haphophobia that occur in the Kim Min Kyu character, namely fear to human touch and panic attack or anxiety. The symptoms of haphophobia presented in the main character are having a cold sweat, breathing fast or short, crying, body shaking or tremor, and heartbeat pounding.

The main character overcomes his haphophobia by taking drugs. Kim always brings the drugs everywhere. Anytime he gets symptoms of haphophobia he quickly takes the drugs. Kim also overcomes haphophobia by consulting with professionals. It is presented in the action of Kim as he calls Dr. Oh and talks about the phobia. Kim also does relaxation technique by lying on the mat and occasionally closing his eyes, controlling his breathing, and clearing his mind.

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