

CHAPTER III

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER EXPERIENCED BY THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S ROOM

3.1 Analysis of Narrative Elements

The narrative elements are pivotal in shaping the reader's understanding and emotional engagement with the story. Character development involves how these individuals grow and change throughout the narrative. Characterization is crucial, as the dynamic portrayal of Jack's innocent curiosity and Ma's protective resilience highlight their ordeal's emotional and psychological dimensions. Setting in literature refers to the time, place, and environment in which a story occurs. Conflict is a central element that drives the plot and develops characters.

3.1.1 Character and Characterization

Character and characterization are fundamental elements in any novel. They bring the story to life and engage readers through the development of individuals within the narrative. The main characters here are Ma and her son, Jack. Old Nick or the captivator is a minor character here.

3.1.1.1 Ma's Direct Characterization

3.1.1.1.1 Ma is A Brave Person

A line that directly characterizes Ma is when Jack reflects on her resilience and strength, stating, "Nothing makes Ma scared. Except Old Nick maybe." (Donoghue, 2010:8). This line illustrates Ma's bravery in the face of their captivity,

emphasizing her role as a protective figure for Jack while also acknowledging the fear she experiences due to Old Nick's presence

3.1.1.2 Ma's Indirect Characterization

3.1.1.2.1 Ma is A Responsible Person

Ma is a responsible and reliable person. Her determination to protect Jack and create a sense of safety and normalcy for him highlights her strength and complexity as a character. The following dialogue between Ma and the reporter from a local TV station exemplifies Ma's strength and complexity as quoted:

“Yeah, but for me, see, Jack was everything. I was alive again, I mattered. So after that I was polite.”

“Polite? Oh, you mean with--”

“It was all about keeping Jack safe.” (Donoghue, 2010:204).

The conversation conveys that Ma is responsible because whatever happens, she will always put her son first. While she acknowledges the hardships of her situation, her focus on Jack shows how love can redefine one's priorities and provide strength even in dire circumstances.

3.1.1.2.2 Ma is An Optimistic Person

Ma's desire to escape Room reflects her optimism about life beyond their captivity. She actively plans their escape, demonstrating her belief that they can reclaim their lives outside the confines of the room. “I'm telling you the truth. You're going to enjoy the world so much. Wait till you see the sun when it's going down, all pink and purple...” (Donoghue, 2010:101). Despite experiencing

moments of despair, Ma continuously strives to maintain a positive outlook for Jack's sake. She reassures him that they will eventually leave Room and emphasizes the importance of dreaming about the outside world. Her ability to instill hope in Jack is a testament to her optimistic nature.

3.1.2.1 Jack's Direct Characterization

3.1.2.1.1 Jack is A Brave Kid

Throughout the novel, Jack is portrayed as a courageous figure, particularly during their escape when he is crucial in navigating their way out of room and into the outside world. "Well, buddy, you're some kind of hero." (Donoghue, 2010: 152). Jack's ability to confront the dangers of the outside world demonstrates remarkable courage for a child of his age.

3.1.2.2 Jack's Indirect Characterization

3.1.2.2.1 Jack is An Optimistic Kid

Jack, the five-year-old, introduces himself at the beginning of the novel with the line in the very first paragraph, as he wakes up inside the wardrobe, Jack says "She's the wizard transformed into a giant squid and I'm Prince JackerJack and I escape in the end." (Donoghue, 2010:78). His resilience is evident when he embraces the idea of escaping Room, motivated by his mother's encouragement. This transition reflects his adaptability and willingness to face challenges head-on, showcasing an optimistic belief in a better future beyond the room's wall.

3.1.2.1.2 Jack is An Innocent Kid

Jack's understanding of the world is profoundly limited by his environment. Born and raised in Room, he perceives it as the entirety of existence. His descriptions of objects and routines are imbued with a sense of wonder and simplicity. "I think that was Outside I saw, Outside is real and so bright but I can't--" (Donoghue, 2010:122). Jack believes that Room is all there is, and he struggles to comprehend the idea of "outside." When he first encounters the outside world after their escape, his reactions ranging from awe to fear, underscore his innocence. He is overwhelmed by the vastness and complexity of life beyond Room, which he had only seen through a small skylight.

3.1.2 Conflict

3.1.2.1 Ma's Conflict

3.1.2.1.1 Ma's Internal Conflict

Ma's internal conflict involves her mental and emotional battle with her situation. Ma struggles to balance her instincts as a mother with the need for survival. While she is fiercely protective of Jack, she must also confront her trauma and needs, often feeling torn between nurturing him and addressing her emotional well-being. She wants to keep him safe from the realities of their situation. When Ma has a conversation with the doctor, Ma has a difficult time coping with her thoughts and suddenly cries, "There's tears all down Ma's face, now, there's one all dark on the edge of her mask." (Donoghue 143). Ma faces the conflict of accepting her situation versus resisting it. Ma deals with feelings of guilt regarding

her past decisions, particularly about Jack's upbringing in such an isolated environment. She worries whether she has done enough for him and fears that her trauma might affect him negatively.

3.1.2.1.2 Ma's External Conflict with Old Nick

The most immediate external conflict is Ma's struggle against Old Nick. Old Nick's control over their environment and his occasional abusive behavior create a constant threat to their safety and well-being. Old Nick exerts complete control over Ma and Jack, dictating their lives and isolating them from the outside world. Ma constantly fights against his manipulation, trying to protect Jack while navigating the power dynamics in their relationship. Ma's conflict with him includes negotiating for these necessities and finding ways to ensure Jack's well-being in an oppressive environment. When Old Nick comes at one night and Ma asks where is the stuff she has asked for earlier, Old Nick does not bring them and he gets upset. The dialogues below show Ma and Old Nick have arguments as quoted:

“Oh, here we go. Whine, whine, whine ...” I can see him through the slats, he's sitting on the edge of Bath.

Ma's voice gets mad. “I bet we're cheaper to keep than a dog. We don't even need shoes.”

“You have no idea about the world of today. I mean, where do you think the money's going to keep coming from?”

Nobody says anything.” (Donoghue, 2010:63)

Ma's answer reveals her frustration and desperation. By comparing their cost of living to that of a dog, she emphasizes her resourcefulness and the absurdity of their situation. It shows the conflict she has with Old Nick.

3.1.2.2 Jack's Conflict

3.1.2.2.1 Jack's Internal Conflict

Jack also faces internal conflict. Jack grapples with feelings of guilt. He feels responsible for his mother's suffering and struggles with the idea that he might have abandoned her. This internal conflict highlights Jack's sense of duty and protection for Ma, which is complicated by the reality that escaping was necessary for their survival. Jack's guilt shows when one night, he gets ready for bed, but then he feels scared that Old Nick may come and hurt both Jack and Ma as quoted:

“What if I'm in Bed with her and Old Nick comes? I don't know if it is nine yet, it is too dark for seeing Watch. What if he comes and Ma won't wake up, will he be even more madder? Will he make worse marks on her?” (Donoghue, 2010:54).

Jack's internal conflict and fear are vividly illustrated. He is grappling with anxiety about Old Nick's potential return while feeling protective of his mother, Ma. His thoughts reflect his childlike innocence mixed with a growing awareness of danger. He fears that if Old Nick finds them together, he might become even angrier, leading to more harm for Ma. This moment encapsulates Jack's struggle to comprehend the complexities of their situation. It underscores the tension between his innocence and the harsh reality they face.

3.1.2.2.2 Jack's External Conflict

Jack's external conflict is his transition from the isolated, confined space of room to the outside world. For the first five years of his life, Room is all he knows, and it represents safety and familiarity. This external conflict is fueled by his upbringing in isolation and his wariness of anyone who might pose a threat, so Jack

tends to avoid people and interactions. After Ma and Jack come to the hospital, they, especially Jack encounter many new people and situations. When Ma and Jack head down stairs to have dinner after they clean up, Jack sees the nurse but he gets scared. He hides behind his robe so the nurse cannot see him. “I put my face on Ma’s robe to be not seen.” (Donoghue, 2010:151). Jack’s instinct to hide underscores the challenges he faces in learning to trust others outside of his relationship with Ma. Jack has experienced trauma due to their captivity and Jack’s conflict includes processing this trauma. He needs to find ways to heal and adapt while dealing with the psychological effects of their ordeal and the sudden shift to a new environment. Jack’s external conflict is shown through his fears and anxiety when it comes to something new that he has not experienced yet.

3.1.3 Setting

3.1.3.1 The Room

The novel begins when Ma and Jack are in captivity. Ma has been there since she was 19 and Jack since he was born. The primary setting place is room, a small, locked garden shed located in Old Nick’s backyard as quoted:

“Yeah, it is fresher. In the summer, it smells of cut grass, because we’re in his backyard. Sometimes I get a glimpse of shrubs and hedges.”

“Whose backyard?”

“Old Nick’s. Room is made out of his shed, remember?” (Donoghue, 2010:82).

The room is a crucial element that contributes significantly to the trauma experienced by both Ma and Jack. The confined space of Room serves as a physical and psychological prison, shaping their lives in profound and distressing ways. For

Ma, Room symbolizes years of abuse and confinement. She was abducted at the age of 19, subjected to repeated sexual violence by Old Nick, and forced to raise Jack in this environment. Old Nick's domination inside room over them fosters a sense of helplessness, contributing to feelings of anxiety and fear. This isolation leads to social anxiety disorder for Jack, as he struggles to interact with others after being exposed only to his mother and Old Nick for most of his life.

The social setting of *Room* is defined by its stark contrast between two main environments, the confined space of Room and the outside world. The novel begins in a small, locked room where Ma and Jack are held captive. This environment represents extreme isolation, with limited physical space and no access to the outside world as quoted:

“Actually it was a garden shed to begin with. Just a basic twelve-by-twelve, vinyl-coated steel. But he added a soundproofed skylight, and lots of insulating foam inside the walls, plus a layer of sheet lead, because lead kills all sound. Oh, and a security door with a code. He boasts about what a neat job he made of it.” (Donoghue, 2010:68).

The details about the soundproofed skylight and insulating foam illustrate the extreme measures taken to isolate Ma and Jack. These modifications not only enhance their confinement but also emphasize their captor's intent to keep them hidden and secure from the outside world.

3.1.3.2 The Hospital

After Ma and Jack get rescued, they head to the hospital with the police. Jack sits at the back of the police car and he knows where they head to, “We’re going to a kind of hospital, but wasn’t that the old Plan A ...” (Donoghue 140). The hospital

setting is crucial for the transition from captivity to freedom. It represents a place of healing and recovery, both physically and emotionally, as Jack and Ma begin to come to terms with their new reality. It is a place where they can start to rebuild their lives and adjust to the outside world.

After their escape, Ma and Jack must navigate the complexities of the outside world. This setting is filled with new experiences, people, and challenges that starkly contrast with the controlled environment of Room. After Ma and Jack are rescued, they head to the hospital and meet many people as quoted:

“We’re in a room that’s quieter. A huge wide man says, “I do apologize about the media presence, we’ve upgraded to a trunk system but they’ve got these new tracking scanners ...” He’s sticking out his hand. Ma puts me down and does his hand up and down like persons in TV.” (Donoghue, 2010:112).

It suggests a shift from the chaotic noise of the outside world that Jack has been exposed to since their escape. It indicates a change in atmosphere, which can evoke feelings of safety or anxiety for Jack. the public interest in Ma and Jack's story following their escape. It highlights the societal fascination with their situation, contrasting the intimate, traumatic experience they endured in Room with the scrutiny of the outside world.

3.2 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) plays a significant role in depicting the psychological effects of prolonged captivity and trauma on both Ma and Jack. PTSD is a psychological condition that can occur after an individual experiences a deeply disturbing or distressing event, and it is characterized by symptoms. In *Room*, both characters experience forms of PTSD in different ways as they struggle with the aftermath of their years of captivity.

3.2.1 Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

3.2.1.1 Symptoms of Ma's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

1. Re-experiencing Symptom

Ma suffers from nightmares related to her traumatic experiences, which disrupt her sleep and contribute to feelings of anxiety and fear. "Just a bad dream," says Ma, stroking my cheek." (Donoghue, 2010:76). These nightmares often reflect her fears of being captured again or losing Jack, reinforcing her sense of vulnerability and the psychological scars left by her captivity.

Ma often has intrusive memories of her time in captivity, which can suddenly overwhelm her. These memories are triggered by various stimuli in her new environment after escaping Room, causing her to relive the trauma associated with Old Nick's abuse and confinement. The memories can be distressing and lead to feelings of helplessness and anxiety, highlighting the persistent nature of her trauma as quoted:

"Oh, you see lots of cases like this here, do you?" Ma's mad, I can hear it.

“He’s never been out of my sight and nothing happened to him, nothing like what you’re insinuating.” There’s tears all down Ma’s face, now, there’s one all dark on the edge of her mask. Why are they making her cry?” (Donoghue, 2010:143).

Ma might have vivid flashbacks where she feels as if she’s reliving a traumatic experience, such as a time when her child was threatened or in danger. This can create intense emotional responses, blurring the lines between past and present. Certain words or actions from the officers may trigger overwhelming feelings of fear or sadness, transporting her back to moments of loss or vulnerability related to her child.

2. Arousal Symptom

Ma exhibits symptoms related to hyperarousal, which is one of the critical symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hyperarousal involves heightened alertness and excessive physiological and psychological responses to stress. During Ma’s early captivity days, she has trouble falling asleep or staying asleep due to racing thoughts or a feeling of restlessness and being constantly on guard or feeling the need to be aware of her surroundings because she fears that Old Nick will come all of a sudden. “I used to be scared to go to sleep, in case he came back,” says Ma, “but when I was asleep was the only time I wasn’t crying, so I slept about sixteen hours a day.” (Donoghue, 2010:84). Ma used to be scared whenever she wanted to sleep, and she cried for a very long time. Her fear of going to sleep indicates that she feels vulnerable and anxious about the possibility of facing that trauma again. Sleeping for such long hours highlights her deep need to avoid her

reality, showing how overwhelming her emotions are. It shows the hyperarousal symptom that Ma suffers.

3. Avoidance Symptom

Ma also exhibits avoidance behaviors related to reminders of his captivity. For example, she might avoid places, objects, or situations that remind her of room or his experiences with Old Nick. After moving to the apartment, the summer's coming. Tomorrow is May Day, which means there will be a parade. Ma persuades Jack to go out tomorrow to see the parade. Jack wonders if May Day exists in Room, too. Suddenly, Jack asks Ma to go back to the room to see. Ma refuses. But Jack insists. Ma resists it, and she never wants to return to the room. It triggers Ma's trauma as quoted:

“Can we go back sometime?”

“Not to live.”

I shake my head. “Just to visit for one minute.”

Ma leans her mouth on her hand. “I don't think I can.” (Donoghue, 2010:285).

The conversation above happens when Jack asks Ma if they could go back to the room just to see it for a minute. Jack still feels that he kind of belongs there. But here, Ma refuses to go because she feels trauma when it comes to the room. Ma avoids confrontational situations whenever possible, especially those that might remind her of her trauma.

3.2.1.2 Symptoms of Jack's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

1. Re-experiencing Symptom

Although Jack is still very young, he occasionally relives moments from his time in Room. For example, he has vivid memories of specific events, objects, or interactions with Old Nick that intrude upon his present experiences. These flashbacks can cause him significant distress as he is forcibly reminded of his traumatic past. When Old Nick comes to the room, he sees Old Nick stands close to Ma. Jack is concerned about Ma's safety. He is afraid that Old Nick may hurt her again, because he has seen that Ma has some bruises in her neck before. "I don't mean to but I'm scared he's going to hurt her again the sound just bursts out of my head" (Donoghue 63). The dialogue shows how he experiences intrusive memories in the Room. Jack may be plagued by repetitive, distressing thoughts about past experiences, such as images of violence or moments when he felt powerless to help Ma. These thoughts can be overwhelming, interrupting his ability to focus on the present. Jack's anxiety and fear about Old Man Nick's abusiveness indicate that he often relives the distress associated with Nick's presence.

2. Arousal Symptom

Jack exhibits other symptoms like heightened arousal. At night when Jack is in the bed and gets ready to sleep, he is afraid that old Nick will come and Jack asks Ma, "What if he comes in the middle of the night and wakes us up?" (Donoghue, 2010:69). Jack's fear of going to bed and his concerns about potential dangers, while he sleeps and thinks that Old Nick comes again to the room, illustrate

his emotional distress and difficulty managing his anxiety. His reaction shows an arousal symptom where even routine activities become sources of heightened anxiety. This dialogue illustrates that Jack, despite his young age, exhibits symptoms consistent with hyperarousal, including heightened anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and persistent worry.

3. Avoidance Symptom

Jack tends to hide to avoid interaction with others because he is afraid and is also not used to meeting and talking with others but Ma. Jack once sits in the backseat of the police car when he escapes from Old Nick. The police try to talk to Jack on their way to the room through the rearview mirror, but Jack looks away to avoid the conversation. “His eyes are looking at me backwards in the little mirror so I look out the window instead” (Donoghue, 2010:114). He avoids interaction with the police when he is in the car. Jack does not even dare to look at people. He struggles to confront his feelings, perhaps reflecting anxiety or fear about the situation he is in.

3.2.2 Causes of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

3.2.2.1 Causes of Ma’s Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

1. Kidnapped and Imprisonment

Ma's abduction at a young age and her subsequent confinement in a small room for seven years serve as the primary catalyst for her trauma. The constant threat posed by Old Nick, her captor, creates an environment of fear and

helplessness. This prolonged captivity leads to severe psychological effects, including PTSD, as Ma grapples with the memories of her abduction and the violence she endured during her imprisonment. “Old Nick—I didn’t even know him, I was nineteen. He stole me” (Donoghue, 2010:83). Here is evidence that Ma was kidnapped when she was 19 when she headed to campus seven years ago. It happened when she walked to the school in the morning near the campus area. The violent act of kidnapping is a profound one that shatters her sense of security and drastically changes her life.

2. Sexual Violation

Throughout her captivity, Ma is subjected to ongoing sexual abuse by Old Nick. Old Nick comes to the room every night to fulfil his desire without Ma’s consent. It has happened for years, even until Jack turns 5 years old. “Old Nick squeaks Bed, I count to ninety-seven then I think I missed one so I lose count” (Donoghue, 2010:60). Old Nick comes to the room every day at nine to fulfil his sexual desire. This repeated violation not only inflicts physical harm but also leaves profound emotional and psychological scars. This abuse leads to feelings of shame, fear, and trauma.

3. Emotional and Physical Abuse

Ma also experiences another traumatic incident when Ma tries to ask for help. When Old Nick comes back to the room for the first time, Ma screams, asking for help, but then Old Nick knocks her down and ties her. “The first time he opened

the door I screamed for help and he knocked me down, I never tried that again.” (Donoghue, 2010:84). Old Nick’s violent reaction to Ma’s attempt to call for help, physically assaulting her by knocking her down, demonstrates the severe and dangerous nature of her captivity. This act of violence serves as a harsh lesson in the realities of her situation, reinforcing the urge to resist or try to escape. The violent response Ma receives underscores her powerlessness and the extreme control Old Nick has over her.

3.2.2.2 Causes of Jack's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

1. Old Nick’s Presence

Jack experiences trauma as a result of his upbringing in captivity and the confined environment of the room. Jack spends his entire early life in a small, windowless garden shed that he and Ma call "Room." Jack has minimal interaction with people outside of Ma and Old Nick. His social development is restricted, and he lacks exposure to typical social experiences and relationships, which affects his emotional and psychological growth. Jack is aware of the fear and tension in the room. Although he does not fully grasp the extent of their situation, he senses the danger and anxiety that pervades their lives. This constant atmosphere of fear contributes to his psychological stress. The traumatic experience happens when Old Nick comes to the room and falls asleep. Jack wants to show off his new toy by controlling the Jeep toy through the slats and the toy accidentally falls onto Old Nick. Old Nick is shocked and wakes up mad. He roars loudly, which makes Jack get so scared as quoted:

“I hear a tiny sound that must be Jeep’s wheels coming alive and then—”
SMASHSHSHSHSHSH
Old Nick roaring like I never heard him.” (Donoghue, 2010:41).

The accident makes Old Nick surprised and gets so mad. He roars loudly, and that makes Jack get super scared of him. Since then, Jack has felt scared and anxious whenever Old Nick enters the room. Jack is aware that Nick is capable of violence or other harmful actions, creating a constant sense of fear. The threats are both direct and implied, contributing to Jack's anxiety and fearfulness.

2. A Life-threatening Event

Another traumatic moment occurs when Jack tries to run away from Old Nick. When Jack lies in the truck’s trunk, inside the rug that wraps him, he tries to get out and run. But he falls and bumps his head. Old Nick realizes this and comes to get him. Old Nick’s face seems so scary because he is truly mad. Jack escapes from him by jumping out of the truck and falling to the ground as quoted:

“The truck is stopped again. I cannot jump, I just can’t move. I manage to stand up and I look over but— I’m slipping and crashing across the truck, my head hits on something sore, I shout by accident *arghhhhh*— Stopped again. A metal sound. Old Nick’s face. He’s out of the truck with the maddest face I ever saw and— *Jump*. The ground breaks my feet smash my knee hits me in the face but I’m running,” (Donoghue, 2010:123).

This passage describes a critical moment during Jack’s escape from Old Nick. As Jack tries to escape, he loses his balance and crashes inside the truck. This chaotic movement causes physical pain and makes him shout out in fear. His disorientation and the pain add to his sense of panic. Jack sees Old Nick coming after him, creating an intense sense of urgency and terror. His physical and

emotional limits are being tested as he struggles to find safety. The scene underscores the profound impact of Jack's traumatic experience.

3.2.3 Impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

3.2.3.1 Impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder on Ma

1. Changes in Ma's Behaviour

Ma undergoes some changes in behavior. And one of the is Ma and Jack always have dinner at around 6 pm. But that day, after Ma makes the dinner, she does not eat any, not like usual. "At 05:57 I say, "Ma, it is nearly six," so she gets up to make dinner but she does not eat any." (Donoghue, 2010:38). Lately Ma barely eats. That action shows that Ma has changing in behavior. Ma lately often does not eat her foods because she just does not have the appetite. Losing appetite is one of the significant impacts of this kind of disorder.

2. Changes in Ma's Mind

Post-traumatic stress disorder also can change several aspects, like feelings on someone. These changes in feelings are caused by things that happened in her past, which continue to have an impact on her present. Ma and Jack have a conversation after playing some games. Ma tells some old story to Jack while lying down. Ma sits up and scrubs her face with her sweater. Ma tells the story about why she becomes sad during their time inside the room as quoted:

"Totally true. You know how I used to be all sad?"
I like this one. "Then I came down from Heaven and grew in your tummy."
"Yeah, but see, why I was sad—it was *because* of Room," (Donoghue, 2010:83).

Here, it shows that Ma used to be happy when she was outside the Room. However, since she is in the room, she does not feel happy doing the same thing she used to enjoy. Besides, Ma undergoes significant changes in her feelings as a result of her traumatic experiences and the transition from freedom to captivity.

3. Changes in Ma's Feelings

Ma's emotional journey becomes more complex. Ma tends to get more emotional. She goes through some intense feelings. Ma feels intense when the doctor asks Jack to undergo a check-up as required. Ma thinks that Jack does not need any check-ups because he is okay. However, the doctor insists them to follow the protocol. However, does not agree, then Ma gets upset. "Oh, you see lots of cases like this here, do you?" Ma's mad, I can hear it." (Donoghue, 2010:271). In that quotation, Ma gets mad because she feels little pressure when she talks with the doctor. Ma gets easily irritated when it comes to something connected with how she raises Jack inside the room that the doctor thinks is inappropriate. The transition to the outside world overwhelms Ma. The vastness and complexity of the new environment, along with the attention from the media and authorities, contribute to her feelings of disorientation and anxiety.

3.2.3.2 Impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder on Jack

1. Changes in Jack's Behaviour

After escaping from the room, Jack struggles with the overwhelming interactions and the complexity of the outside world. This difficulty in adjusting to new environments and social settings reflects the disorientation and stress that often accompany PTSD. After the police officers succeed break into the Room to rescue Ma, they bring Jack and Ma to the hospital. In the car, Jack keeps crying because he is scared of everything that just happened to them. "The car starts moving and I'm crying so much I can't stop" (Donoghue, 2010:135). This encapsulates a moment of intense emotional release and distress for Jack. He is not the type of kid who cries but since he is outside, he cried a lot because of the overwhelming shift. This act signifies an overwhelming and uncontrollable emotional response. This level of distress indicates that he is experiencing a powerful surge of emotions, likely a combination of relief, fear, and anxiety.

2. Changes in Jack's Mind

The presence of Old Nick and the circumstances surrounding their captivity create a constant state of fear and anxiety for both Jack and Ma. Even after escaping, Jack's memories and fears related to Old Nick linger, affecting his mental state. One evening, before Jack goes to sleep inside the wardrobe, Jack sees Ma sitting in the bed through the slats and asks as quoted:

"Would it hurt?"

"Would what hurt?"

"If he saw me." (Donoghue, 2010:21).

Jack's question indicates his fear of physical or emotional harm. He associates Old Nick with danger, suggesting that he has an innate sense that being seen by Old Nick could lead to negative consequences for him or Ma. Jack's fear of Old Nick seeing him also reveals his emotional vulnerability, which is central to understanding Jack's character.

3. Changes in Jack's Feelings

The transition from the confined space of a room to the vastness of the outside world is jarring for Jack. He feels a strong pull towards the safety of the room despite its oppressive nature because it represents familiarity for him.

“Yeah. I’ve seen the world and I’m tired now.”

“Oh, Jack,” she says, “we’re never going back.”

The car starts moving and I’m crying so much I can’t stop.” (Donoghue, 2010:135).

Initially, Jack feels overwhelmed and confused by the vastness and newness of the outside world. However, his feelings shift to excitement and curiosity as he begins to adapt and explore his new environment. This change in feelings reflects his adjustment from being overwhelmed to finding wonder and enjoyment in his new experiences.