



**MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER OF
THE MAIN CHARACTER IN PHILIPPA GREGORY'S
*THE LITTLE HOUSE***

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
S-1 Degree Majoring Literature in English Department,
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly states that the content of this thesis entitled “Major Depressive Disorder of the Main Character in Philippa Gregory’s *The Little House*” is compiled by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer also ascertains that she does not take any materials from other works except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, 2 November 2022



Isna Nuraeni

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

When I am frightened, I shall master my fear.

Phillip Pullman

*This thesis is dedicated to myself
for being brave and not giving up in my life.*

APPROVAL
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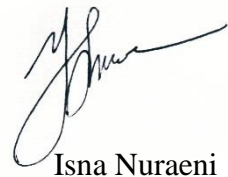
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Semarang, 2 November 2022



Isna Nuraeni

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ABSTRACT

This research thesis discusses major depressive disorder of the main character in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*. The purpose of this research is to analyse the psychological disorder represented by the main character in the novel. In writing this research thesis, the writer uses library research and contextual method. In this thesis, the writer analyses the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of this novel. In analysing intrinsic elements, the writer uses theory of character, characterization, and conflict. Meanwhile for the extrinsic elements, the writer uses the theory of major depressive disorder according to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5) by the American Psychological Association and other psychological theories which occurs and correlates with major depressive disorder. The results of this research show that the main character, Ruth Cleary, suffers from major depressive disorder based on the symptoms which she has gone through. Ruth Cleary's major depressive disorder is caused by the stressful events in her life and her childhood trauma. It also shows that major depressive disorder has negative effects in the life of the sufferer.

Keywords: childhood trauma, environmental causes, depression, Major Depressive Disorder

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is known as a work of art that is manifested from imaginative fiction or about humans' social life in a form of writing. Prose, poetry, and drama are the types of literature. Despite the difference in shapes, it shares the same function to the readers. Literature is not only used as a light reading in leisure time, but it can also be used as an object that can be analysed whether from a social or psychological point of view.

One of the modern theories used in English literature is psychoanalysis. It is a theory that guides psychoanalysis and is regarded as a theory of personality organization and personality dynamics. The academic field of literary criticism or literary theory has long used the closest connection between literature and psychoanalysis. Among critical approaches to literature, psychoanalysis has been one of the most contentious and underappreciated theories by many readers. Nonetheless, it has been regarded as one of the most intriguing and rewarding approaches in the application of interpretative analysis. This psychological interpretation has evolved into one of the mechanisms in determining a literary text's hidden meaning (Hossain, 2017:1).

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was the founder of psychoanalysis, a method for treating mental illness as well as a theory that explains human behaviour. Freud believed that childhood experience has a significant impact on adult life which

shapes one's personalities. Anxiety from traumatic experiences in a person's past, for example, is hidden from consciousness and may cause problems in adulthood.

Humans experience various emotions in their life. American Psychological Association defines emotion as a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioural, and physiological elements, by which an individual attempt to deal with a personally significant matter or event (2015:362). Those emotions adjust to the series of events that humans have experienced. It can be happy when a joyful event occurs, sad when something breaks their heart, fearful when humans are confronted with an event that scares them, and angry when something furious triggers them.

Emotion is essential for humans to express their feelings. If humans feel an emotion which does not suit their situation, for instance, sad in a happy moment to the point they want to cry which is absolutely not a tear of joy, or when their emotion is showing too much which many people think of them as an overreacting person. It shows that there is something wrong with their psychological aspect. Excessiveness or lack of emotion shows that humans perhaps have symptoms that lead them to depression.

One of the most well-known types of depression is Major Depressive Disorder. According to the book of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5), it states that the common feature of all these disorders is the presence of sad, empty, or irritable mood, accompanied by somatic and cognitive changes that significantly affect the individual's capacity to function

(APA, 2013:155). The most common time of onset is in a person's 20s, with females affected about twice as often as males. The course of the disorder varies widely, from one-episode lasting months to a lifelong disorder with recurrent major depressive episodes (Bromet & Kessler, 2013:119).

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) is not only found in real life, but it can also be found in some literary works that depict this psychological disorder. One of Philippa Gregory's novel, entitled *The Little House*, catch the writer's interest to analyse the main character and the event throughout the novel. This novel is about the main character, Ruth Cleary, who suffers from Major Depression due to several unfortunate events she has been going through. Her depression also occurs because of her childhood trauma and stress which causes her depression to get worsened and lead to another psychological disorder as mentioned in this novel which is Post-Natal Depression.

1.2 Research Problems

1. What are the symptoms of MDD by Ruth Cleary in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*?
2. What are the causes of Ruth's MDD in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*?
3. What are the effects of MDD on Ruth's life in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the symptoms of MDD by Ruth Cleary in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*
2. To analyse the causes of Ruth's MDD in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*
3. To analyse the effects of Ruth's MDD on her life in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*

1.4 Previous Studies

The writer discovers several previous studies related to the writer's current study in order to learn more about the topic of the study. The first prior study is a thesis written by Rosalina SD in 2022 entitled "Carrie's Depression in Lisa Selin Davis's *Lost Stars* Novel". The thesis discusses the same subject of study, that is, analysing the main character's depression and her family issue.

The second previous study is a thesis written by Nur Idayu in 2021 titled "Depression as Reflected on Hannah Baker in Asher's *Thirteen Reason Why*". This thesis investigates the symptoms and causes of depression as portrayed by the novel's main character.

The third previous study is a thesis titled "The Depression Experienced by Rachel Watson, the Main Character in Paula Hawkins' Novel *The Girl on the Train*", which was written by Muhamad Alfarzi in 2019. The method used to analyse the depression depicted in the novel *The Girl on the Train* is psychoanalysis.

The fourth previous study is “Major Depression Reflected in Jodie Foster's The Beaver Movie (2011): A Psychoanalytic Approach”, a journal written by Desi Veranita and published in 2013. The journal examined the main character in the film using a psychoanalytic approach, which resulted in the main character portraying Major Depression.

Esti Retno Fadlilah wrote the fifth previous study, “Esther Greenwood's Depressive Disorder as Seen in Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar as Fictional Character”, in 2021. This thesis demonstrates the use of psychoanalysis to characterize Esther Greenwood as the main character, who was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder.

The sixth previous study is a journal by Siti Maemunah titled “The Symptoms of the Main Character in Fakhrisna Amalia's novel Refresi”, which was published in December 2021. The journal is an analysis of the main character, depicting the symptoms of depression that the main character experienced.

The seventh previous study is by Sandra Muthiah Imansari titled “Mental Disorder of Mia Hall Reflected in The Film If I Stay by Gayle Forman” in 2021. This study examines Mia Hall, the main character in the film If I Stay who suffered from a mental disorder.

The eighth previous study is a book review written by Liz Cookman in 2010 for the Litromagazine website titled “Novel: The Little House by Philippa Gregory”. This review discusses about the plot of the story as well as the novel's commentary.

The ninth previous study is also a book review posted in 2018 on Sammicoxwriter's website titled "Book Review: The Little House by Philippa Gregory". The review focuses on the novel's praise, which serves as a psychological thriller story about Ruth, the novel's main character, and her relationship with her husband's parents.

The tenth previous study is a review written in 2015 by Sherna Bhumgara entitled "*The Little House: Probing Into The Darkest Corner of the Manipulative Mindset*". The review talks about the character of Elizabeth which can be seen as a manipulative person in the novel and further explanation about the mind of a manipulator.

Based on that research, the writer is unable to find any study about the novel *The Little House* by Philippa Gregory or any study that analyses Major Depressive Disorder by using this novel as the object of study. As the result, this thesis differs from previous studies, that is, the writer focuses on analysing the Major Depressive Disorder portrayed by the main character, Ruth Cleary, in the novel *The Little House* by Philippa Gregory, which covers the symptoms, causes, and effects of depression on her life.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this study, the writer mainly focuses on the character and conflict as the intrinsic elements and the Major Depressive Disorder portrayed by Ruth Cleary in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House* covering symptoms, causes, and effects of Major Depressive Disorder on her life.

1.6 Writing Organization

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter consists of six sub-chapters. They are background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

Chapter II Theory and Method of Research

In this chapter, the writer explains the theories that are used in this study. The writer will look closely at the intrinsic elements by analysing the characterization and the conflict. To analyse the extrinsic elements of the novel, the writer uses the theory of Major Depressive Disorder by DSM-5. As for the method of study, the writer uses psychological approach as a research approach and library research.

Chapter III Major Depressive Disorder of the Main Character in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*

In this chapter, the writer explains the finding as indicated in the research questions. The explanation will cover the discussion of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the study.

Chapter IV Conclusion

This chapter is the result and summary of the previous chapters.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD OF RESEARCH

2.1 Intrinsic Elements

Intrinsic element is the essential element in every genre of literature. It consists of theme, character, characterization, setting, plot, point of view, conflict, and figurative language. Every part of intrinsic elements helps to build a story. However, intrinsic elements that used in this study are character, characterization, and conflict.

2.1.1 Character and Characterization

A character is a person or an animal who contributes in the action of a literary work (Stobaugh, 2012:45). Types of characters can be divided into major characters or main characters and minor characters or secondary characters. The main characters are the most important and complex role in the story (Henkle, 1977:92). Meanwhile, secondary characters are less complex and less intense characters (Henkle, 1977:95).

Characterization is used by authors to reveal more information about the characters. Characterization can be defined as how the writer tells the readers about the physical and non-physical characteristics of the person in the story (Martin, 1994:95). There are two methods of characterization, direct and indirect characterization. Direct characterization is how the author conveys information

about the characters to the readers by telling them directly. Meanwhile, indirect characterization refers to how the author depicts the characteristics of specific characters through their actions, behaviours, and thoughts (Bacon, 2017:1).

2.1.2 Conflict

Conflict is a struggle between opposing forces; it can be internal or external (Holman, 1985:98). Conflict provides the elements of interest and suspense in any form of fiction, whether it be drama, novel, short story, or film. (Holman, 1985: 98). Conflict is divided into two types, namely internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict is a conflict between the characters with themselves. While external conflict is a conflict that occurs between two characters or more (Holman, 1985:98).

2.2 Extrinsic Elements

Extrinsic element is the outside element of literary work which indirectly involve in building the story. The outside element may come in shape as social or psychological aspect. In this research, the writer used the theory from the psychological aspect as the extrinsic element in this novel. The theory that used is Major Depressive Disorder which cover the symptoms, the causes and the effects in the individual's life.

2.2.1 Major Depressive Disorder and the Symptoms

DSM-5 defines Major Depressive Disorder or MDD as a mood disorder characterized by persistent sadness and other symptoms of a major depressive

episode, but it is without accompanying episodes of mania or hypomania or mixed episodes of depressive and manic or hypomanic symptoms (APA, 2013:618).

According to DSM-5, a diagnosis of depression necessitates the presence of at least four or five of the symptoms as listed below:

1. Depressive mood, for example, feeling sad, empty, and hopeless or it can be irritable mood such as angry outbursts even for a small thing
2. Lost interest in activities especially the ones that used to be an enjoyable time
3. Lost appetite or easily gain weight
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia
5. Easily fatigue or loss of energy
6. Feeling worthlessness or excessive inappropriate guilt
7. Hard to concentrate, indecisiveness thinking and remembering thing
8. Recurrent thoughts of death

2.2.2 The Causes of Major Depressive Disorder

DSM-5 has listed the risk factors that can trigger depression as follows:

1. Temperamental

Neuroticism (negative affectivity) is a well-known risk factor for the development of a major depressive disorder, and important levels make people more likely to develop depressive episodes in response to stressful life events.

2. Environmental

Adverse childhood experiences are a group of powerful risk factors for major depressive disorder, especially when there are numerous experiences of various types.

3. Genetic and physiological

Family members of people with a major depressive disorder are at twice or four times higher risk of developing depression than the general population.

4. Course modifiers

Major depressive episodes that start out alongside another disorder frequently take a more refractory path (APA, 2013:166).

2.2.3 The Effects of Major Depressive Disorder

1. Lead to another depression

Major depression occurs commonly with other psychiatric disorders. Some women are more vulnerable to depression after giving birth. The result of the hormonal, physical changes and the added responsibility of a new life may lead to Post-Natal Depression (Nelson, 2015:24).

2. Effect on their life and other people

MDD also has a negative effect on lowering the quality of life and interpersonal relationships. Quality of life defines as the extent to which a person obtains satisfaction from life (APA, 2015:871). It means, if the satisfaction is unfulfilled, it may develop into low quality of life. An interpersonal relationship is the connections and interactions, especially

ones that are socially and emotionally significant, between two or more people (APA, 2015:555)

2.3 Method of Research

Method of research can be defined as scientific method of gathering data for specific aims and applications. In this research, method of research consists of research approach and method of data collection.

2.3.1 Research Approach

Based on the background of the study that reveals the psychological phenomena of Major Depressive Disorder portrayed by Ruth Cleary in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, the writer uses a psychological approach. Psychological approach is one of literary approach that reflects psychological phenomena in literature (Minderop, 2010:54).

2.3.2 Method of Data Collection

The writer uses library research for the method of data collection. Library research is a method of collecting data by reviewing and researching from books, works of literature, notes and journals which are related to the problem that would like to be solved (Nazir, 1998:112).

The source of data collection can be divided into two types, there are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a source of data which directly obtained from the original work (Muhajir, 1993:5). Philippa Gregory's *The Little House* is the primary data in writing this thesis. Meanwhile, secondary data is a

collection of data obtained and used to support the existing literature (Barnabid, 1982:55). The writer uses other related sources such as books, theses, journals, internet references, etc as the secondary data to support the analysing of this study.

2.3.3 Method of Analysing Data

As for the method of analysing data, the writer uses the contextual method. Contextual method is defined as a method that needs a reference to an effect that is not provided in the text (Beard, 2001:6). The writer uses a psychological aspect which is depicted by Ruth Cleary's Major Depressive Disorder in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*.

CHAPTER III

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN PHILIPPA GREGORY'S *THE LITTLE HOUSE*

3.1 Intrinsic Elements of Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*

In this chapter, the writer analyses the intrinsic elements of Philippa Gregory's *The Little House* specifically the character and characterization of Ruth Cleary, and also the conflict which occurs in the novel.

3.1.1 Character and Characterization

In this research, Ruth Cleary is the main focus in analysing the character and characterization. It consists of the analysis of Ruth as the main character and the characterization of Ruth in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*.

3.1.1.1 Ruth Cleary as the Main Character

The writer analyses Ruth Cleary as the main character in the story. In Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, the plot and the entire story pivot on Ruth's character, where her character stands out more than the other characters. From the first page of the novel, the story starts with introducing Ruth attending Patrick's parents' lunch invitation and continues to the events that change her life, such as when Ruth loses her job, Ruth gets unplanned pregnancy, and also when Ruth has to move out from her flat in town to the little house in the countryside. Furthermore, the conflicts that arise in the novel constantly focus on Ruth's character and the relationship between Ruth with other characters in the novel. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ruth Cleary is the main character of this novel.

3.1.1.2 Direct Characterization of Ruth Cleary

The writer discovers that Ruth Cleary is directly described as a loyal wife and a pleasant person in the novel.

3.1.1.2.1 Ruth as a Loyal Wife

Ruth Cleary has been married to Patrick for four years. She is mentioned as a loyal wife to her husband which she could not easily agree to the question about not having a baby. She understands with her current circumstance, it is inevitable for her to conceive a baby eventually, as quoted below:

“... You don’t really want a baby, do you?’ Ruth was about to agree with him, but again her loyalty to Patrick silenced her.”

(Gregory, 2010:33)

Based on the quotation above, the author states directly that Ruth is loyal to Patrick which is her loyalty easily silenced herself.

3.1.1.2.2 Ruth as a Pleasant Person

At the time when Ruth Cleary has been committed to Springfield House, Patrick called the hospital to ask about the condition of Ruth. Dr Fairley, her doctor, tells him about Ruth’s progress in getting touch with her emotions, such as anger and grief. Nevertheless, Patrick takes the answer as Ruth is aggressive and he even calls her mad or insane. Dr Fairley feels pissed with Patrick’s judgmental and states that Ruth is more pleasant than him, as quoted below:

“‘And she is certainly more pleasant than you,’ he said roundly to the absent Patrick. ‘Better mannered, less selfish, more loving, and generally a nicer person to be with.’”

(Gregory, 2010:187)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Ruth is a pleasant person. The characterization of Ruth is shown directly through the dialogue from other characters in the novel, that is, Dr Fairley.

3.1.1.3 Indirect Characterization of Ruth Cleary

There are two indirect characterizations of Ruth Cleary in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*. Ruth can be described as a people pleaser and also as a caring mother.

3.1.1.3.1 Ruth as a People Pleaser

Ruth Cleary is originally an American but she has been lived in England since her parents died when she was a child. Later, she married Patrick Cleary, an Englishman from an English family. As she finally finds a family she has never had before, she feels like she has the obligation not to contradict with anything Patrick and his parents said whenever she spends a day with them.

“She felt so tired, after a day of well-meaning kindness, that she could hardly protest.”

(Gregory, 2010:20)

Based on the quotation above, it can be concluded that Ruth has a characterization as a people pleaser. The characterization of Ruth is portrayed implicitly by the author of this novel. Ruth maintains her good mannerism towards Patrick's family even though it costs her energy which makes her feel exhausted.

3.1.1.3.2 Ruth as a Caring Mother

Even though Ruth Cleary has her struggle throughout her pregnancy and childbirth, such as the alienation feeling she has with her baby, the truth is, deep

inside her heart she still cares about her baby, Thomas. It is shown when she is committed to Springfield House, she still feels connected to her baby and misses him. It is also shown when she is finally discharged from Springfield House and ready to start over again, the first thing she does is asking about Thomas's condition and declares how she really loves him.

“‘And Thomas?’ ‘Fine.’ ‘What’s he doing?’ ‘How d’you mean: “what’s he doing?’” ‘I mean, how does he look, what is he eating, how is he behaving?’ ... Ruth drank in the sight of him, as if she had been thirsty for him for months. ‘Oh, God, he’s so lovely,’ she whispered. ... ‘I love him,’ she said. ‘I really love him, Patrick, whatever it looked like when I was ill. The love was all there, just waiting to come out.’”

(Gregory, 2010:211-224)

Based on the quotation above, it can be inferred from the dialogues and actions that Ruth has a characterization as a caring mother. She is showing her love by asking about the well-being of Thomas and admitting that she loves him so much.

3.1.2 Conflict

The conflict that can be found in the novel consists of internal conflict and external conflict. The internal conflict in the novel is a conflict between Ruth Cleary and herself. Meanwhile, the external conflicts in the novel are the conflict of Ruth with Patrick and Elizabeth.

3.1.2.1 Conflict between Ruth Cleary and Herself

The internal conflict between Ruth Cleary and herself is shown when she is attending their Sunday lunch with her husband at her in-laws' house. At the moment when her in-laws come to the topic about meals and Patrick's job, they are looking

at Ruth as if they are asking for her opinion. Ruth is hesitantly thinking what is the best answer she has to say, as quoted below:

“They both looked at Ruth, and she managed a small uncomfortable smile. She did not know whether to agree that he would get fat, which would imply an unwifely lack of admiration, or agree that he lived on his nerves, which would indicate that she was not protecting him from stress.”

(Gregory, 2010:7-8)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Ruth is weighing her answers, whether she must agree with the statement that Patrick will get fat which will make her feel like a wife who has lost the admiration of her husband or she must agree with the latter statement, implied that she is careless by not protecting her husband from his stressful work.

3.1.2.2 Conflict between Ruth Cleary and Patrick

The conflict between Ruth Cleary and Patrick, her husband, occurs when there is a crisis with their baby, Thomas. Patrick is annoyed hearing from her mother about the incidents. Ruth is furious because her baby is taken from her and she is told that she does not fit for taking care of her baby, as quoted below:

“‘How dare you!’ Ruth cried. ‘He is my son as much as yours, he is my son, and I love him, and I care for him, and I would never hurt a hair of his head, and you may not say such a thing! Ever! Ever! Ever!’”

(Gregory, 2010:295)

Both Patrick and Ruth are quarrelling about the safety of Thomas. Ruth tries to explain to Patrick what actually happens on that day. However, Patrick refuses to understand her carefully and chooses to side with her mother. Thus, Patrick and

his parents decide to take the charge in taking care of Thomas and leave Ruth in devastation for knowing that she has lost her baby again.

3.1.2.3 Conflict between Ruth Cleary and Elizabeth

The conflict between Ruth and Elizabeth, her mother-in-law, develops more apparent after Ruth gets angry with Elizabeth for taking her baby without her knowing. Ruth also understands her position that she will not have her freedom to take care of her baby as she has wanted and she must follow the rule that her in-laws made for her instead. Ruth's irritation is getting stronger when Elizabeth ignores Ruth's request to stop interfering and doing whatever she likes in Ruth's little house, as quoted below:

“One time Ruth ran downstairs and flung open the kitchen door as Elizabeth turned to the house. ‘I’ve asked you a thousand times to leave the pram alone!’ she snapped.”

(Gregory, 2010:350)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Ruth gets angry with Elizabeth when she comes to the little house and directly checks up on the pram where Thomas is asleep. Ruth gets irritated by the way Elizabeth ignores her request to take the front door when she comes to visit. In Ruth's perception, that action crosses the boundaries of her household's privacy, so Ruth does not like it.

3.2 Extrinsic Elements of Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*

The extrinsic elements in this research mainly analyses the symptoms, the causes, and the effects of Major Depressive Disorder which depicted by Ruth Cleary in the novel.

3.2.1 The Symptoms of MDD Depicted by Ruth Cleary

According to DSM-5, it requires four or five symptoms for someone to be diagnosed as suffering from Major Depressive Disorder. In this research, the writer discovers that in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, Ruth Cleary as the main character in the novel has the same symptoms as listed by DSM-5, there are loss of appetite, overly tiredness, depressive mood, hypersomnia, and the feeling of worthlessness and excessive guilt.

3.2.1.1 Ruth Loses Her Appetite When She is with Her In-laws

One of the symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder is the loss of appetite. The occurrence of the symptom may be caused by the dysfunctional of the brain, where the individual feels the activity of eating is too much for them, or it may be caused due to the individual's anxiety.

In Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, the symptom is shown when Ruth is visiting her Sunday lunch in her in-laws' house with Patrick. It does not matter how extraordinary the foods are, Ruth is unable to push herself to enjoy the food and only eats less, as quoted below:

“Elizabeth served roast pork with crackling, apple sauce, roast potatoes, boiled potatoes, peas and carrots. Ruth wanted only a little. In Bristol in the canteen of the radio station where she worked as a journalist, she was always hungry. But there was something about the dining room at the farmhouse that made her throat close up... she could not make herself eat.”

(Gregory, 2010:7)

Based on the quotation above, it shows Ruth's feeling when she is eating lunch at her in-laws' house. Elizabeth serves a delicious meal course for Ruth and Patrick. However, Ruth only eats a little. Contrarily, she is always hungry when she

is eating at her job's canteen. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ruth has lost her appetite due to her uneasiness or anxiety in her in-laws' house.

3.2.1.2 Ruth's Overly Tiredness

The next symptom is the feeling of tiredness. This symptom is one of the most common symptoms of MDD. Overtiredness can manifest itself physically and mentally. The individual of MDD may feel tired even though they have spent more time in sleeping and doing nothing. It may also be associated with other symptoms, such as loss of appetite, which is harmful to their physical health, as well as a lack of motivation or interest.

In Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, the writer finds that Ruth Cleary also shows some signs of this symptom. The first sign is mentioned when Ruth attends their in-laws' Sunday Lunch. Ruth feels exhausted as soon as she walks through the door and speaks to Elizabeth.

Another sign which shows Ruth has this symptom is stated by herself after she had Thomas. Ruth keeps saying that she is exhausted and she needs more sleep when the topic about managing Thomas arose, as quoted below:

“‘I was so tired I just slept and slept ...’ ...Ruth felt her face quiver. ‘I’m fine,’ she said stubbornly. ‘Tired.’ ...‘I am so tired all the time, and it’s so lonely. ...’ ...‘It’s just that I’m so tired, and everything seems such an effort, and the least thing makes me cry.’”

(Gregory, 2010: 100-120)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Ruth constantly says that she is tired all the time when she is asked about how it is going with her and Thomas. It looks as if Ruth does not particularly enjoy the moments with Thomas and she

sees the task of taking care of Thomas such as an extremely challenging task. Hence, the condition of Ruth's tiredness in the novel fits with the symptom of MDD.

3.2.1.3 Ruth's Depressive Mood

The depressive mood in MDD can come in forms as an unhappy mood and irritability. An unhappy mood can be caused by an event that occurs against the individual's will. It also can be caused if the individual finds the situation is unbearable for them. The persistence of this unhappy mood is what can lead to depression.

Additionally, a person with MDD shows signs of irritability when they discover that nobody can relate to the situation they are going through. Irritability can occur even over minor issues. It can be caused by the individual's sensitive mood which is easily triggered.

Ruth Cleary shows these signs of symptoms in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House* novel. She feels unhappy with the events she has been going through. It starts with the loss of her job at Radio Westerly, then with her unplanned pregnancy, and continues with their moving to the little house, leaving the flat and the life she loves so much, as quoted below:

“Ruth had been unhappy from the moment the pregnancy had been confirmed, from the moment she gave up her job. She had been unhappy at the move to the little house, she had been unhappy at living so close to his parents. And now she was unhappy with being left alone all day, every day, with a new restless baby.”

(Gregory, 2010:90)

The quotation above explains that Ruth has been unhappy with everything in her life. She feels unhappy when she gets the news that she has been made redundant from her office because her boss cannot afford to pay all of the workers. She feels unhappy when she discovers she is pregnant against her will, forcing her to abandon her dream of traveling back to her hometown in America. She also feels unhappy when she has to move to the little house and live near Patrick's parents' house despite her uneasiness and her fear of them interfering with her own family life.

After Thomas is born, Ruth finds it hard by adapting to her maternal life. She feels something is missing from her baby the moment she realizes she could not have her natural childbirth as she has planned and she could not breastfeed him at the first state. Her struggle continues when Thomas keeps waking up her at night. It makes her anxiety arises because it forces her to stay alert. There is nothing she can do besides waiting for the sound of Thomas's crying. Moreover, once Thomas has fallen asleep, she will not dare to make any noise that will wake him up. Thus, she feels so irritated when she heard a sound that Patrick made in the morning, as quoted below:

“‘Be quiet!’ Ruth spat at him. She was near to tears. ‘He’s only just gone off to sleep. For Christ’s sake, Patrick, do you have to make so much noise?’”

(Gregory, 2010:86)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Ruth is so irritated with Patrick. She spats at him which she has never done before. It can also be seen that the small action causes her to feel annoyed to the point she is almost crying. Hence,

the accumulation of her unhappiness and the irritability actions of her show that she has the symptom of a depressive mood.

3.2.1.4 Ruth's Hypersomnia

The inability to stay awake and alert during the day despite having had more than an adequate amount of sleep refers to hypersomnia. The individuals of MDD may develop this symptom when the condition is getting worse. The lack of interest or desire to do any activities in their life makes them use the sleep as a way of escape. This oversleeping symptom is also driven by their overly feeling of tiredness. Nonetheless, the individuals of MDD may still feel tired and drowsy despite having slept too much.

This condition also happens to Ruth Cleary. When she is committed to Springfield House, she spends most of her activities by sleeping for the days. In the group therapy session, she refuses to participate in the conversation and even makes an excuse for not speaking, claiming that she is exhausted and she needs to sleep, when someone is questioning her why she always remains silent, as quoted below:

“‘I’m overtired,’ Ruth said. ‘I need to sleep ...’ ‘You’ve been sleeping ever since you got here!’ Agnes exclaimed. Other people nodded.”

(Gregory, 2010:170)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen how Ruth’s reaction is when someone asks her condition. Agnes, another patient in the group therapy session, asks Ruth why she never speaks and isolates herself from the group. Ruth answers her by saying that she is overtired and needs to sleep. Her answers perplex Agnes. It is because she knows that Ruth has been staying asleep since the day she arrives

at the Springfield House. This fact is also supported by other patients. Thus, it can be concluded that Ruth also develops other symptoms of MDD, namely hypersomnia.

3.2.1.5 Ruth's Feeling of Worthlessness and Excessive Guilt

Feeling worthless means that the individuals see themselves as a person with no value. Meanwhile, excessive guilt occurs when an individual believes that everything that goes wrong in their life is solely their fault, which is not always the case. They may become hopeless and isolate themselves from those around them as a result of their overwhelming and worthless sense of worth.

After delivering her baby and waking up from her anaesthetic, Ruth tries to breastfeed her baby. However, no matter how many times she tries, her baby will not suck to her breasts. At that moment, Ruth thinks that her breasts are disgusting and her baby is rejecting her, as quoted below:

“She felt her breasts were disgusting, that the baby was making a wise choice in his rejection.”

(Gregory, 2010:73)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen how the feeling of worthlessness is depicted by Ruth. The failed attempt to breastfeed her baby makes Ruth devalue herself by thinking that part of her body is disgusting. Especially, since Ruth believes that breastfeeding her newborn baby is the best way to bond with him.

As for the excessive guilt, it is shown after Ruth has a conversation with the general practitioner about her condition and her hardship of being a mother. Once

she goes out of the office, Ruth sees how Thomas is sleeping soundly in his cot and she has a thought that every problem is her fault. Ruth believes that the struggle between her and Thomas is because of her incompetency as a mother and blames herself, as quoted below:

“Ruth thought it was obvious to any casual observer that this was an easy baby to manage. Anything that was going wrong between her and Thomas must be her fault.”

(Gregory, 2010:105)

Therefore, it can be concluded that Ruth’s condition in Philippa Gregory’s *The Little House* suits with the symptoms of feeling worthlessness and excessive guilt.

3.2.2 The Causes of Ruth Cleary’s MDD in the Novel

The occurrence of Major Depressive Disorder is caused by the risk factors which triggers the depression. In this research, the writer discovers that Ruth’s MDD is caused by the stressful life events that are losing job, unplanned pregnancy, alteration of life, interferences by other party, and it is also caused by her childhood trauma.

3.2.2.1 Ruth Loses Her Job

According to DSM-5, one of the causes of MDD is a stressful life event. Stressful life events can be defined as undesirable, unplanned, or uncontrollable separation that typically signal significant life changes in an individual's life. Stressful life events also have a significant negative effect on both physical and psychological conditions.

Ruth is described as a career woman who loves her job and loves to live in town. She works as a journalist at a radio station in Bristol named Radio Westerly. Ruth is the only female news producer on the station and she is proud of it. Therefore, she is astounded when she hears that her office is making a cutback on the radio station's employees and, unfortunately, she is one of the employees that is made redundant.

The news makes her feel pitiful. Especially, when she knows that Patrick and his parents are planning to buy the little house near their farmhouse so Ruth and Patrick can move out of their flat. When Ruth tells Patrick about the news, he immediately says that everything works out for both of them, which makes Ruth feel bitter as quoted below:

“‘Not exactly,’ Ruth said rather tartly, ‘I wanted to keep my job; and if I left it I wanted to go somewhere better. I didn’t want to get the sack and have a baby as second best.’”

(Gregory, 2010:36)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen how determined Ruth to stay working and keep her life as a career woman is. She does not want to lose her job especially if her unemployment means that she has no reasons to keep living in Bristol.

3.2.2.2 Ruth's Unplanned Pregnancy

After being dismissed, Ruth has no other choices than working freelance at Radio Westerly. Ruth thinks that working as a freelance will keep her busy. Moreover, she is afraid that any inaction on her part may result in Patrick's eagerness to pursue her to move to the little house.

One day, one of her colleagues asks about how pale and sick she is. Ruth immediately recalls the times she makes love with Patrick without contraception despite her protest. Later, Ruth buys the pregnancy test kit to ensure that she is not pregnant. She is afraid of becoming pregnant at that moment. It is because she hardly sees herself as a pregnant woman and she is not ready for a woman's task of pregnancy.

However, what she has feared becomes real. The result of her pregnancy test kit tells her that she is pregnant and it devastates her. Ruth does not feel happy about her pregnancy. She also thinks that her pregnancy is a mistake and she is unwilling to celebrate it as quoted below:

“The baby was a mistake, but it was her private mistake. She would not have it converted into a Cleary celebration. ... ‘I didn’t particularly want a baby,’ she said. ‘I didn’t plan to get pregnant. It’s an accident. So I don’t feel like celebrating.’”

(Gregory, 2010:44-45)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Ruth is unhappy with her pregnancy because she does not want to get pregnant at that moment. Moreover, the fact that she is being pregnant means that she has to give up her life in Bristol and unwillingly move to the little house just as Patrick and his parents want.

3.2.2.3 The Alteration of Ruth's Life from a Career Woman into Motherhood

After the latest events, it is unavoidable for Ruth to change her life from being a career woman to a mother. Ruth has to give up the way of life she loves. The unemployment and pregnancy give her no options besides leaving Bristol and moving to the little house.

As soon as Ruth tells Patrick about her pregnancy, Patrick immediately feels delighted. Patrick also has the urge to call his parents about the wonderful news and he says to Ruth it will be better if she tells him sooner, so they could celebrate it with a real party. However, Ruth does not want any kind of celebration as she finds her pregnancy is a mistake. Patrick, then, tries to console Ruth by saying that everything that happens has come right for them and she should not be upset by herself. Ruth finds no solace in Patrick's remarks; instead, she becomes irritated, as quoted below:

“Of course he would be happy – it would not be Patrick whose life would totally change. It would not be Patrick who would leave the work he loved, and who would now never travel, and never see his childhood home.”

(Gregory, 2010:46)

The quotation above shows how Ruth's true feeling about her pregnancy is. It is not only about having a baby and becoming a mother, but she also has to sacrifice her dreams of having her freedom to work the job she loves and to travel to find her childhood home in America. Ruth has to sacrifice that because she knows that being a mother is a demanding job and living next to her in-laws means that she needs to put up a role as a good housewife and mother which increase her uneasiness. Therefore, it can be concluded that the alteration of her life into motherhood is one of the causes of her unhappiness which leads to her depression because she must let go of her desired life and live the life she has never chosen before.

3.2.2.4 Elizabeth's Interferences

The following days since Ruth tells Patrick about her pregnancy, both finally sell and move out from their flat in Bristol. However, the renovation of the little house is not finished yet, so Ruth and Patrick have to stay at Patrick's parents' house for a while.

There are a lot of things to do during the renovation of the little house. Ruth, accompanied by Elizabeth, must supervise the work of the renovation and furnish the little house with furniture and other necessities. Every time Ruth proposes what she would like for the decoration of the house, Elizabeth will interfere her with her own suggestion. Although what Elizabeth said seems better and more efficient than Ruth's choice, Elizabeth is still interfering too much to the point the little house feels more like Elizabeth's house rather than Ruth's.

The interferences of Elizabeth continue when Ruth has delivered her baby. As an inexperienced mother, Ruth prefers following the instruction written in the book from her pregnancy class. However, Elizabeth has her own way to manage a baby which sometimes makes Ruth frustrated. For instance, Ruth prefers to diligently take Thomas to the clinic to be weighed every week. On the other hand, Elizabeth thinks that weighing Thomas every week is unnecessary because it clearly can be seen that Thomas is perfectly fit. Moreover, Elizabeth's competence in taking care of Thomas only increases Ruth's suffering because she thinks that she fails to play the role of a mother even though in general it is common for a first-time mother to make mistakes and learn the hard way.

From another perspective, it looks like that Elizabeth is a kind and helpful mother-in-law. However, in Ruth's perspective, Elizabeth is overly doing it to the point she decorates the little house as if it is her own house when it is supposed to be Ruth and Patrick's house and takes Thomas away from Ruth when she said that she is doing it to help Ruth to rest.

Ruth comes to her realization when one of the patients in the Springfield House points out that what Elizabeth has done is not a pure act to help Ruth, but actually it is a subtle way to put Ruth away from Elizabeth's organized family life as quoted below:

“... and there was the birth, and being really tired, and all the hormones jumbled up as well, and Thomas not sleeping – but yes, living next door to them has driven me completely insane, and now they are trying to put it right.”

(Gregory, 2010:198)

The quotation above shows how it is difficult for Ruth to live near her in-laws' house, especially with Elizabeth's constant interferences.

3.2.2.5 Ruth's Childhood Trauma

Another cause of Ruth's MDD is her childhood trauma. Ruth, who is originally an American, does not remember her childhood too well. She only remembers that her father is a pianist from Boston and her mother is an Englishwoman. Both of her parents died on a road accident when they visited England when Ruth was seven years old. Later, Ruth is being taken care of by her mother's family, since then, she never goes back to America ever again.

Ruth never has the chance to grieve about her parents' death. Every time Ruth is about to cry when she was a child, her aunt and uncle will encourage her not to cry. Thus, Ruth never acknowledges her sadness and, in the end, she decides to erase her childhood memory and her American accent. Ruth, then, grows up as a decent English woman until she finally met Patrick and his parents.

Ruth, who never learns about her pain properly, feels so happy when Patrick and his parents take her in as a member of their family. Ruth thinks that she finally finds a replacement to fill the gap in her wounded heart. However, no matter how hard she tries to fit in, she realizes that she is merely an additional family member just because Patrick gets married with her and she is the mother of Thomas. Therefore, when someone confronts Ruth about her relationship with her in-laws, Ruth immediately feels triggered and realizes how lonely she is. Ruth also admits how she misses her mother as quoted below:

“‘I miss my mother!’ in a voice that was not her own but a child’s voice ringing with grief. ‘I miss my mummy! She’s dead and I can’t bear it! And I don’t know what will happen to me! And I miss her! And I miss her! And I miss her!’”

(Gregory, 2010:171)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen how deeply wounded Ruth is when she was a child. She loses her parents at an early age and she cannot even grieve for them. It explains why she always feels obliged not to contradict Patrick and his family. That is because she does not want to lose the tie with them as Ruth regards them as her only family. It also explains why she feels restless when Elizabeth constantly interferes her and takes Thomas away from her because it triggers her childhood trauma when she has to lose her family.

3.2.3 The Effects of Ruth Cleary's MDD on Her Life

According to DSM-5, Major Depressive Disorder has effects in individual's life which can be leading to another depression, lowering the quality of life and influencing the individual's interpersonal relationship with others. In this novel, as Ruth's MDD is getting worse, it also significantly shows the negative effects in her life.

3.2.3.1 Ruth Develops Another Depression

One of the effects of MDD is that it can lead to another depression. Ruth also develops another depression namely Post-Natal Depression. She fails to bond with her baby after giving birth to him. She also does not feel the pleasure and joy towards her baby. She only does the task of taking care of him because that is written in her book, which explains her obsession with following the guides in her book.

“I expect you resent having to care for him?’ Ruth nodded. ‘Sometimes,’ she whispered.”

(Gregory, 2010:103)

Based on the quotation above, Ruth admits that sometimes she hates to have to take care of her baby. There are also times when Ruth feels so tired of caring for her baby to the point she has a thought that it would be better if her baby just vanished. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Ruth also develops Post-Natal Depression.

3.2.3.2 Ruth is Being Addicted to Drugs

Another effect of MDD in Ruth is the changes of the quality of her life. Previously, Ruth is seen as a confident and smart woman in her work. However, after she has a baby, she changes into a miserable woman who is always look exhausted and unhappy. The confident and smart look on her face has disappeared and replaced with the look of a tired young mother.

At the time when Ruth's condition is getting worse, Dr MacFadden, a general practitioner at the clinic in Bath, asks her to visit him, so he can have a proper conversation with her. Afterwards, Dr Macfadden prescribes her with Amitriptyline to ease her up. Amitriptyline is a type of antidepressants that works to increase the number of chemical substances in the brain which is essential for maintaining mental balance.

The Amitriptyline gives a surprising effect to Ruth. She feels the sensation of calm and relief from the medicine in a moment. Unfortunately, the medicine also gives her an addictive sensation. Ruth is no longer following the prescription from Dr MacFadden, but she is subconsciously abusing it.

One day, Ruth wakes up late from her sleep and takes two of her medicine even though the prescription says she only needs to take one in the morning. Furthermore, Ruth takes one in the afternoon after her morning sleep, one before she goes out to meet her friend, and the worst is, she also takes another one while she is drunk, as quoted below:

“She had two gins, and I know she took at least one Amitriptyline. I think she’d had some before she came out. I’m afraid she’s ill. Perhaps you should call a doctor.”

(Gregory, 2010:149)

It can be seen from the quotation above that Ruth has been abusing her Amitriptyline and even mixing it with alcohol, which causes her to get knocked out. Besides that, it is also confirmed that her depression has become severe, resulting in her addiction to drugs.

3.2.3.3 Ruth’s Relationship with Patrick and Her In-Laws

Ruth’s MDD also affects her relationship with Patrick and his parents. By the time Ruth’s condition is getting worse which causes her being unconscious from mixing her drugs with alcohol, Patrick’s parents decide that it is better to send Ruth away to a mental health care centre house in Sussex. It seems that Patrick’s parents do the right thing, but the truth is, they think that it is better to get rid of Ruth from her family as they cannot trust Ruth as a capable and functional mother. Even though they are the one who proposes the idea for Ruth to go to a mental health care centre house, they hide it by saying that Ruth is having her holiday in a health farm. It is because they do not really care about Ruth’s mental health, they only care for Thomas and Patrick.

Ruth spends a fortnight at the Springfield House. She attends the group therapy session where she finally deals with her grief and childhood trauma. Ruth also starts to understand her condition and situation and she has decided on what is she going to do once she gets out from there.

Ruth thinks that once she gets discharged from Springfield House, she can make up her relationship with Patrick and her in-laws. Unfortunately, it is not that easy for Ruth once she comes back home. They still see her as a sick person and cannot easily trust her when she is with Thomas, as quoted below:

“‘You go,’ Elizabeth said in an undertone to Frederick. ‘You can read the newspaper in our bedroom and just keep an ear open. Just in case.’ ... ‘She’s bound to notice after a while,’ Patrick said to his mother. ... ‘I think we can be tactful,’ she said. ‘There are three of us; we can take it in turns. I think we can always have someone within earshot.’”

(Gregory, 2010:231)

It can be seen from the quotation above that Patrick and his parents still have their distrust with Ruth. They are plotting to keep secretly supervising Ruth and hold her back not to go back to the little house. They think it is best for Thomas and Patrick to stay under their roof, so Ruth will not harm them.

3.2.3.4 Ruth’s Action in Killing Elizabeth

The individuals of MDD generally have the tendency to do suicide to stop their suffering. However, in Ruth’s case, instead of killing herself, she chooses to get rid of her stressor.

After Ruth’s in-laws leave her with no options besides following their rule for taking care of Thomas, Ruth thinks that no matter how obedient she is obeying their terms and conditions, her situation will not ever change. Ruth knows she will not have a private and an intimate time with Thomas. Her baby will not feel like her baby at all when they keep interfering her. Therefore, Ruth plans that she needs to force her situation to change and the only way to do it is to get rid of Elizabeth, the one who controls everything.

Hence, at the time when Elizabeth supposed to come, Ruth prepares to electrocute her by using Thomas' pram which Elizabeth likes to touch once she arrives at the little house, as quoted below:

“Through the window Ruth saw Elizabeth walk in the garden gate without invitation, as she always did, looking around her with pleasure, as she always did, at her garden and her little house. She strolled up to the pram, put both hands on the pram handle, and leaned in, as she had been asked – so many times – not to do. ‘There you are, then,’ Ruth remarked inconsequentially, and switched on. ... Elizabeth gazed up at Ruth, her eyes open. Elizabeth's open eyes were sightless. The woman was dead.”

(Gregory, 2010:355-357)

The quotation above shows how severe her depression is. She shows no remorse while killing Elizabeth. Being around Elizabeth and living under her supervision surely make her feel uneasy and anxious. Therefore, she chooses to get rid of Elizabeth, so she can have her peace of mind.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Major Depressive Disorder is a psychological disorder which is marked by persistent sadness and other symptoms of major depressive episode. Major Depressive Disorder cannot only be found in real life but it can also be learned from literature works. In Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, the Major Depressive Disorder is depicted by the main character named Ruth Cleary.

Major Depressive Disorder depicted by Ruth Cleary can be analysed through the intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. The characterization of Ruth Cleary shows that she is a loyal wife. It can be seen from the way she easily silences herself not to betray her loyalty for her husband, Patrick. Ruth can also be seen as a pleasant person. It is proven through the dialogue between Patrick with Dr Fairley. Another characterization of Ruth Cleary is that she can be described as a people pleaser where she always maintains her good mannerism towards Patrick's family and tries not to confront them. Besides that, Ruth is a caring mother. It can be seen through the way how caring she is to her baby, Thomas, even though she has gone through lots of suffering.

The conflicts in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House* are divided into two types, there are: internal conflict and external conflict. The internal conflict in this novel is portrayed between Ruth with herself. Ruth has an internal conflict whether she must agree with Patrick's statement or not. Meanwhile, the external conflict is portrayed between Ruth with Patrick where both are quarrelling about the safety of

Thomas and Ruth with Elizabeth where Ruth shows her dislike every time Elizabeth ignores her request by interfering too much and doing whatever she likes.

As for the extrinsic element, Ruth Cleary shows five symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder. Ruth loses her appetite whenever she must eat at Patrick's parents' house because of her uneasiness and anxiety around them. Ruth feels overly tired when she must take care of Thomas. Ruth's depressive mood which consists of her unhappiness and irritability after Thomas is born. Ruth has hypersomnia. Ruth feels she is worthless because Thomas does not want to suckle from her and Ruth's excessive guilt because she thinks that everything happens is her fault.

Ruth Cleary's Major Depressive Disorder caused by several reasons. For instances, stressful events in Ruth's life that are the losing of her job, the unplanned pregnancy, and the alteration of her life into motherhood. Furthermore, her Major Depressive Disorder is also caused by Elizabeth excessive interference that makes Ruth feel anxious and Ruth's childhood trauma which trigger her.

In Philippa Gregory's *The Little House*, Major Depressive Disorder has its effects on Ruth's life. It causes Ruth to develop another depression namely Post-Natal Depression, lowering her quality of life that she becomes addicted and abused her pills and worsening her relationship with others.

This thesis shows that the character of Ruth Cleary in Philippa Gregory's *The Little House* depicts the Major Depressive Disorder through its symptoms, causes, and how it affects the life of the sufferer.

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