



Original Article

Working-Through: Reconciliation Efforts of Trauma in Novel *A Monster Calls*, By Patrick Ness

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Abstract:

Literary works with psychological themes related to trauma are scattered and are targeting many readers, including one among them teenagers. This research tries to see how traumatic events can occur, what things can be triggers, and how individuals can be freed from trauma through youth literature, namely *A Monster Calls*. The theory used in this research is the theory from La Capra about Acting-out and Working-through. These two concepts are concepts that are closely related to individuals and collectives who repress trauma or who try to be free from traumatic events that occurred in their past. The results of this study found that there are many aspects that can cause a teenager to experience a traumatic event. In *A Monster Calls*, aspects that can be the cause of an individual experiencing trauma namely, the absence of the caregiver, physical abuse, psychological violence, neglect or abandonment, witness of domestic violence, as well as victims of divorce. Meanwhile, the symptoms of trauma that arise are irritability, inability to control emotions, distrust, other blaming, feeling isolated, deep guilt and sadness, anxiety and sleep disturbances, as well as nightmares and hallucinations that keep recurring. In dealing with and being free from trauma, individuals need to reconstruct their memories so that they can get a complete picture to be able to accept events that occurred in their past. Reconstructing trauma in *A Monster Calls* is done through written media, information exchange and the creation of imaginary characters.

Keywords: *A Monster Calls*, Trauma Reconstruction, Trauma, Acting-out, Working-through

Introduction

The contact with the presence of the subject in social interactions does not always present the fulfillment of something that is lacking in oneself. Indeed, like the concept zoon politicon put forward by Aristotle, humans naturally need other humans to fulfill the interaction process. However, in the process of social interaction, a subject is not

only able to fulfill his social desires, sometimes he is also presented with unpleasant circumstances due to his failure to adapt. Failure of an individual to meet the norms in the interaction can lead to trauma. Traumatic situations can be caused by the presence and / or absence of other subjects, as well as sudden and "intense" circumstances that make a person shaken. Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, defines trauma as an extraordinary experience of an event that suddenly occurs or a catastrophic disaster, where the response to the event occurs in events of hallucinations and recurring phenomena that are uncontrollable (Caruth, 1999). Trauma was exemplified by Caruth at the soldier's experience of facing sudden and massive death on the battlefield. The subject may experience numbness, experience complete unconsciousness, be shocked, or be very shaken and come back to life with recurring nightmares in his life (Caruth, 1999). This traumatic state, which occurs in the subject will not disappear from memory in a fast period of time, but requires a process of remembering and reconstructing an event so that the subject is at peace with what has happened. The reconstruction will continue until a complete picture is obtained and then we come to terms with what happened in the past. However, in many cases the subject can also repress the trauma to the post-traumatic state.

Post trauma is a condition in which an individual experiences stress because of the trauma they have experienced in the past. Post trauma can occur in the form of stress on an individual. According to Stamm (1999), traumatic stress is a natural reaction faced by an individual. These events can be the result of trauma from violence (such as group violence, rape of someone, accidents, and memories of natural disasters that shake the psychological aspects) as well as dire conditions in life (such as poverty, deprivation and loss). This condition is also known as post-traumatic stress (or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

According to data from PTSD UK, a charity organization based in the UK, one in two people is vulnerable to experiencing a traumatic event in their lifetime. Meanwhile, 20 percent of individuals who have experienced traumatic events are prone to heading to the post-traumatic level or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Post-traumatic stress disorder can range from painful past memories, intense emotions, anger, anxiety, nightmares, fatigue, amnesia, to deep fear and sadness (ptsduk.org, n.d.). Post-traumatic stress disorder is one of the mental health issues that continues to experience an increase in the percentage of sufferers. According to the guardian news page (the guardian, 2018) the increase in individuals experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the UK increased from 4% to 6% in 2016 which occurred in war veterans. While quoting from research conducted by Lewis (2019) in *The epidemiology of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in a representative cohort of young people in England and Wales* Post-traumatic stress disorder is, said to be very vulnerable to one in thirteen adolescents in England and Wales. . One-third of the 2000 adolescents sampled in the study tended to experience post-traumatic stress disorder such as sleep disturbances, sadness, guilt, and feelings of isolation from the social world. Post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by adolescents is a form of investment in the trauma they experienced as children.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is identified to arise when an individual experiences only one trauma in his life (Cook, 2017). However, the post-traumatic experience experienced by individuals is sometimes not just a simple cause and effect, but is a complicated and ugly trauma. Post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by an individual may not be the result of a single trauma, but an accumulation of multiple traumas. According to Alexandra Cook et al (2017), this condition is named as Complex

Trauma. The concept of complex trauma describes two or more problems that accumulate to be trauma for an individual. Cook (2017) provides further evidence of the complexity of post-trauma that may haunt an individual. In their research, PTSD cannot cover the complex traumatic situations experienced by individuals, because the events in human life are diverse, so there are also various sources of trauma that can be triggers. The sources of trauma mentioned include, environmental conditions that do not provide comfort and security for individuals, physical violence, emotional violence, witnesses of domestic violence, and also neglect (not getting attention).

Trauma and post-trauma as well as complex trauma that cause stress require a process of recalling and reconstructing past events by the individual so that the trauma can be healed. Dominick La Capra, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (La Capra, 2001) proposes two arguments related to the form in which an individual remembers traumatic events in the historical context of his past. The first is to consciously remember traumatic events in a series of processes of making peace with the past, in the form of working-through, and also in the form of denial which can lead to an process act-out. This phase occurs in subjects who have experienced traumatic events in the past, and both consciously and unconsciously try to be free from these painful experiences.

Traumatic and post-traumatic issues have been present in literary works for a long time, even before the term was used in 1918. Many literary themes raise nightmares about traumatic events in the past, to deep sadness over loss. Meanwhile in the 21st century, literary works with the theme of trauma and post-trauma have received quite a lot of attention from the public. Even literary works with these themes received quite a fresh response so that many ended up in screen adaptations, both film and television series and became popular literature. Like the literary work of *A Monster Calls*, which received rave reviews for both the book and the film television adaptation. *A Monster Calls* raises the issue of loss, trauma, post-trauma and the search for identity.

In *A Monster Calls*, an English literary work written by Patrick Ness, depicts the concept of losing someone who is loved by the main character. This novel tells the story of a boy, Conor O'Malley who finds his mother suffering from terminal cancer. In his time of struggling to cure his mother's cancer, O'Malley experienced many hallucinations and psychological burdens. Every 12 o'clock 7 minutes, O'Malley experienced hallucinations and seemed to find himself being summoned by a tree monster figure. Every night the monster will come, pick up O'Malley to go around and bring O'Malley into a fantasy world. Together with the presence of the monster, O'Malley found many stories of loss and traumatic things.

By looking at the reasons that one in two individuals are prone to experiencing trauma to the point of post-trauma or even complex trauma, and also seeing literary works with this theme starting to receive special attention from the public, this research uses a material object, namely the novel *A Monster Calls*. These material objects are chosen with consideration of their relevance to the trauma theme, and how the characters are reconciled (working-through) with their past. From these literary works, concept will be used working-through Dominick La Capra's in observing the character's struggles in dealing with the trauma they face.

Methods

This research uses qualitative methods, where this method is used in research in conditions of natural objects, data collection techniques are carried out in combination, data analysis is inductive and the results of this study emphasize meaning rather than

generalization (Sugiyono, 2018). The material object to be used is *A Monster Calls*. While the formal object will be used the concept from Dominick La Capra about Working-through and Acting-out. The data collected in this study came from the novel *A Monster Calls*. Meanwhile, the data collected is in the form of units of phrases, sentences and paragraphs that represent traumatic events from the main character and other supporting characters. From the main data source, careful recording, observation and repeated reading were then carried out so that relevant data were obtained related to the concept of Dominick La Capra. The independent variable data is collected from external texts in the form of research texts, journals, books or videos related to the object of research. After the data was collected, the analysis was carried out by relating it to existing theories. This research uses descriptive analysis method. According to Hadari Nawawi, descriptive methods are methods that focus on phenomena and facts that occur in real life. Research subjects are based on visible facts. The analysis was carried out by presenting a description without the influence of the researcher. All data is a source for generating plausible arguments in analyzing literary works. All data will be collected and analyzed to provide plausible and strong arguments to support the analysis.

Literature Review

Since the early 1990s, trauma theory has grown on an academic basis. Several texts have become (innovative) embryos that have fostered an interest in trauma in humanity. The term "trauma theory" first appears in "Unclaimed Experience. Caruth Cathy's" Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, defines trauma as an extraordinary experience of a sudden event or a terrible disaster, where the response to the event occurs in events of hallucinations and uncontrollable recurring phenomena (Caruth, 1996). Trauma refers to the physical and psychological state of being injured. The psychological state that was injured due to emotional shock and the shock was repressed and still has not been healed. Traumatic experiences are sometimes too devastating and extraordinary, so that it is difficult to present in the awareness aspect and it is difficult for the individual consciously to remember the traumatic event. (Robson, 2004: 11). Trauma was originally defined in Latin as wound, or injury. Wounds that are only physical in nature, when a person has an accident that results in physical injury. The concept of trauma is then directed to memory wounds, through the opinion of Sigmund Freud in *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*.

Trauma requires a process of recalling, maintaining critical distance and reconstructing memories so that the subject can think more clearly and be able to be free from the traumatic series of the past. According to many discourses on trauma in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, trauma experiences that are unable to be expressed can be transformed into a narrative form. A narrative in which traumatic events can be imprisoned and have occurred in the past where a survivor (a person who is dealing with trauma) begins to re-create an identity that was torn apart by trauma (Robson, 2004: 11). Traumatic memories are fragments of past devastating events and need to be integrated with current mental conditions and transformed into a narrative form. When this happens, stories about past traumas can be retold, individuals can also look back on their past, rethink what has happened and make past events only part of history (Robson, 2004: 12).

Dominick La Capra, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (La Capra, 2001) proposes two arguments related to the form in which a subject remembers trauma in the historical context of his past. The first is to consciously remember trauma events in a

series of reconciliation processes in the form of working-through, and also in remembering trauma in the realm of impulsiveness which can lead to a process acting-out. The concept of acting-out and working-through was originally put forward by Sigmund Freud which was later developed by La Capra in a historical context related to the Holocaust. Acting-out is a Freudian psychoanalytic concept which is part of Freud's primitive defense mechanism. Acting-out is what may unconsciously occur during the psychoanalytic process which is sometimes irrational and always unrecognizable. According to [Rowan \(2000\)](#) quoting from Freud, sometimes traumatic patients do not remember anything, but they produce certain repetitive movements in response to traumatic events in the past.

La Capra explained that acting out occurs when a person who experiences a traumatic event, is trapped in his past life, and lives life constantly experiencing fear of the trauma that has occurred, and at the same time also yearns for a situation full of security. According to La Capra, -out is acting associated with actions where the subject experiences repeated repetitive pressure, feels repeated trauma events, and reinserts old wounds to reappear. Acting-out occurs when the subject performs actions that can be said as something negative. Acting-out is something that cannot be avoided by a subject from entering the healing phase of trauma. Clarifying the concept proposed by La Capra, [Kate Schick \(2011\)](#) wrote that acting-out is a psychological concept that occurs when the subject performs behavior (action) to calm and handle and come to terms with the emotional conflicts that are raging within him. Acting-out usually occurs without the awareness of the individual. Acting-out is done without the awareness of the individual who has faced trauma. [Kate Schick \(2011\)](#) in her research, namely Acting-out and working-through: Trauma and (in) security provides an overview of acting-out. Acting-out can be in the form of self-harm. This can be interpreted as behavior in which a subject tries to relieve inner conflicts and emotional conflicts that are present in him. For example, victims of sexual violence who want to say that they are victims, but they are unable to speak out, as a distraction from that condition (inability to speak) the subject may injure himself, such as cutting a wrist. This action is done to divert their minds and give them a moment of emotional peace.

Meanwhile, the concept of working-through is considered a conscious action taken by the subject to be free from trauma experienced in the past. Although it cannot really be separated into two different processes in overcoming trauma, La Capra in his interview ([Golberg, 1998](#)) implies that working-through is considered a different process but still overlaps with acting-out. These two processes sometimes cannot exist independently, but are still in touch with one another. La Capra explained that a working-through will occur when the subject starts to think critically by being able to keep a distance and try to remember what happened when a traumatic event in the past took place. According to La Capra, critical thinking is when the subject is able to maintain his own distance objectively (critical distance), so that he can clearly see the picture of events that have happened to him in the past. The traumatized subject must be able to see events that haunt him in the past, and describe them in an objective way.

According to La Capra, subjects are required to be able to try to reconstruct so that they can return to life without the burden of trauma from their past. According to La Capra, the subject can identify that traumatic events did occur in the past, and the subject consciously accepts events that cause stress, anxiety and terrible feelings so that he can return to live in the present and in the future. Recognizing that something traumatic happened to him is an important condition for overcoming the trauma that

occurred and moving towards a phase of peace with the past.

Results

The state of trauma causes a person to experience a lot of helplessness in controlling his psychological aspects. Some of the symptoms can indicate that the individual has experienced trauma, namely recurring nightmares, hallucinations, unpleasant feelings about an event related to past events, while from a cognitive aspect, memories of traumatic events can trigger feelings of anxiety, excessive fear, and feelings of depression, and so on (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Lewis (2019) in The epidemiology of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in a representative cohort of young people in England and Wales, provides a more detailed description of trauma. Trauma according to Lewis (2019) can take the form of sleep disturbances, sadness, guilt, anger and feelings of isolation from the world of social interactions.

In *A Monster Calls*, a thick and real psychological theme is present in every storytelling. Starting from the main character to the storytelling of the psychic complexities of the other supporting characters. The psychic complexity of the characters in *A Monster Calls* can be said to be related to one another. Conner O'Malley is described as a teenager who just turned thirteen years old. At that age, O'Malley began to experience mental tension when he began to be faced with many unusual life problems. These life problems started from the divorce of her parents to the fact that her mother had terminal cancer. O'Malley's psychological condition was shaken by the many events he had to face. The shock of the psychological condition is irritability, anarchy, physical and emotional violence against others, blaming other (shifting all mistakes to others), distrust (not trusting everyone), feeling isolated from the social world, blaming yourself and feeling guilty about himself, deep sadness, experiencing anxiety, having sleep disturbances, having nightmares and hallucinating.

"When this is all over," Conor said, fury in his voice, "you'll leave and we'll be fine." (Ness, 2011: 36)

In *A Monster Calls*, the main character, Conor O'Malley is narrated as an individual who is easily provoked by anger, even for small things. Anger appeared every time O'Malley spoke to someone else. Feelings of anger sticking out in yourself to everyone who is involved in interactions with him. Starting from his mother, school friends, his father to be angry with himself. Quoting from Greenberg and Watson (2006) anger cannot be classified as something positive or negative at a reasonable level. However, at excessive intensity like that of O'Malley, it can be very destructive and dangerous. Angry emotions are an inborn response associated with frustration and violence. Judging from this opinion, the angry response from Conner O'Malley can be said to be an angry response that is not in a reasonable level.

The forgetting of emotions through anger also sometimes ends in anarchic behavior. O'Malley's actions are not only stuck in the verbal realm, but lead to forgetting emotions that lead to physical actions. This physical act was in the form of beatings another person, namely friends who bully O'Malley; destruction and destruction of public facilities, such as the one done in his grandmother's room without any rational reasons

considered clear by ordinary people; destruction and vandalism such as cafeteria tables and also the destruction of goods in schools also took place uncontrollably. O'Malley's anger is described as mingling with frustrations he cannot control, grief and other feelings that he is unable to convey in verbal form. The anger and mixed feelings made O'Malley want to destroy everything around him.

"Tear The Whole Thing Down!" Conor roared, and the monster roared in return and pounded at the remaining walls... (Ness, 2011: 85)

Trauma Trigger Events

According to Cook (2017) et al, events that trigger trauma in the past are very diverse. These incidents can be in the form of conditions arising from psychological violence (Psychological Abuse), physical violence (Physical Abuse), emotional violence (Emotional Abuse), sexual violence (Sexual Abuse), neglect / not getting affection (Neglect) and even being a witness for domestic violence (Witnessing Domestic Violence). Meanwhile, Adverse Childhood Experience adds a little diversity of things that can cause traumatic events. The dimensions of trauma according to Adverse Childhood Experience can be divided into 8, which include physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, emotional abuse, parental Separation, Alcohol misuse, drug misuse, mental illness. In this section, we will describe what triggers the trauma experienced by both the main character and the supporting characters in *A Monster Calls*. The main character of *A Monster Calls* gets many pictures, both express and implied, of everything that causes his psychic shock. The main character's psychic shock arises due to of caregiver's absenteeism (absence of people who provide moral or moral support in their infancy), emotional abuse (psychological violence), physical abuse (physical violence), neglect (ignored or not getting attention), witnessing domestic violence (being a witness to violence in the family and environment), as well as parental separation (divorce or separation of both parents).

"It had been the one thing his mum had insisted on in the divorce, that it was theirs free and clear and they wouldn't have to move after his dad had left for America with Stephanie, ..." (Ness, 2011: 24- 25).

Narrative as a Way of Healing Trauma

Trauma comes from past events or events that leave trails of wounds for individuals and collectively. Not much different from the series of traumatic events illustrated in the novel by Patrick Ness, *A Monster Calls*. The trauma in *A Monster Calls* is a scratch for the characters, especially the main characters. A series of traumatic events such as the absence of parents in their infancy, divorce, physical violence, emotional violence, and unpreparedness for loss become a series of triggers that make the characters in *A Monster Calls* have to be willing to find their psychic side infiltrated with unpleasant memories.

"The monster showed up just after midnight. As they do. Conor was awake when it came. He'd had a nightmare. Well, not a nightmare. The nightmare. The one he'd been having a lot lately. The one with the darkness and the wind and the screaming. The one with the hands slipping from his grasp, no matter how hard he tried to hold on. The one

that always ends with– “Go away,” Conor whispered” (Ness, 2011: 9)

An unpleasant and painful state of infiltrating memory can have an impact on the character's condition in their social and personal life. The impact is present in many emotional abnormalities, such as excessive and easily aroused anger, frustration struggling with depression, deep sadness, sudden anxiety, and disruption of the character's sleep cycle in *A Monster Calls*. In a psychic status that has experienced unpleasant things in the past, the characters in *A Monster Calls* try to do a lot of resistance to do a little release of the feelings of depression, sadness and anxiety they experience. The release of these emotions needs to be done to get peace of mind in each character in *A Monster Calls*. According to La Capra (1998), individuals and collectives who find themselves in contact with painful or unpleasant conditions in the past are prone to experiencing a process which he calls acting-out. Acting-out is a process that occurs when a person or collective comes into contact with a traumatic event in the past and is trapped in their past life so that they always live their life in constant fear of the trauma that has occurred. At the same time, where the individual or collective is trapped in their past, they also crave a state of security (stress relieve).

Acting-out is related to behavior when individuals or collectively experience pressure from their past which continuously repeats itself and recapillates old wounds to appear. Old seeping wounds then manifest when they engage in behaviors that can be categorized as negative actions. Acting-out can take the form of self-harm as part of releasing anxiety and depression, as well as other symptoms of trauma. This, namely self-harm can be interpreted as behavior in which a subject tries to relieve inner conflicts and emotional conflicts that are present in him. Emotions and depression were also released by the main character *A Monster Calls* inform acting-out. The acting-out that appears in the novel *A Monster Calls* is in the form of nightmares, hallucinations and actions that are carried out without the awareness of the main character.

Dreams or dreaming for most individuals will only be said to be a flower of sleep or meaningless events experienced when the eyes are closed. Dreams are only limited to dreams that occur when the brain tries to rest the body that is experiencing fatigue. However, dreams and dreaming are not just called regular occurrences in psychology. Psychology refers to dreams as something different. It has a meaning in its presence in the world of sleep. Dream theory in psychology has long been the subject of discussion, because dreams are considered not only without reason to appear, but dreams are said to be representations of certain events.

"Conor could also see the great yew tree that rose from the center of the graveyard, a tree so ancient it almost seemed to be made of the same stone as the church." (Ness, 2011: 11)

Sigmund Freud (1900) said in his argument that dreams can be a symbol of everything that is buried in memory, including the immersion of traumatic events experienced by individuals and collectively in their lifetime. Although this repression is in the subconscious of the individual, the repression of any event in memory can also seep into individual behavior. This pervasive repression can take the form of actions, thoughts, and dreams. The human subconscious mind is like water that is being boiled in a pot, sometimes, when it boils, a hot steam will appear trying to escape through the edge

of the pot, just like a dream that Freud analogized as a repression of memories.

The dream in *A Monster Calls* is an event that is not only said to be a dream, but a dream that has meaning. The dream in *A Monster Calls* can be said to be part of a series of causes and effects related to the trauma experienced by the characters. Dreams appear in the main character *A Monster Calls* after a series of narratives depicting that the main character is experiencing events that disturb his psyche. The dream presented by Conor O'Malley (the main character) is more likely to be a nightmare or nightmare. This nightmare is illustrated every night before O'Malley closes his eyes to fall asleep. The words dream (dream) and / or nightmare (nightmare) along the 152 story pages of the novel *A Monster Calls*, appear more than sixty times, either through dialogue, monologue or narration as well as descriptions of the author. This can be an indication that the words dream and nightmare are the most common occurrences and become an important pressure point in the novel *A Monster Calls*.

In addition to the acting-out, process the process working-through is also an inherent concept when an individual comes into contact with a traumatic event. Working-through occurs when an individual tries to do acritical distance, the distance where he can clearly see the events that have occurred and is intact in his past. When individuals take a critical distance, the integrity of past events can be arranged into pieces of the puzzle that can become a story that approaches the truth. Meanwhile, in *A Monster Calls*, several actions, working-through O'Malley did both consciously and unconsciously. This action was taken by O'Malley to be free from the trauma and all the emotional turmoil he was experiencing. Action working-through in *A Monster Calls* O'Malley's character's is in the form of reconstruction of events through writing mediation and exchanging information with other characters in the novel. Actions working-through Other undertaken O'Malley also include actions that overlap with process, acting-out namely the creation of imaginary characters (monster tree). All of actions working though O'Malley's, whether through writing, through storytelling and creating imaginary characters, cannot stand alone as a separate unit. All these actions are related to one another, until O'Malley's final achievement process is obtained, namely the status of peace in him.

The work-through was quite complex because of the many piles of trauma that dragged on and were buried in O'Malley's subconscious. However, looking at the whole novel that describes O'Malley's psychological condition, as well as seeing the triggering events and relating them to the acting-out that appears, there are several traumatic events that can be said to be the main root causes that caused O'Malley to experience traumatic events. The root cause or the triggering event is loss of caregiver and parental separation. Both causes of trauma had devastating consequences for O'Malley. The two causes of trauma even provided opportunities for other minor traumas to contribute to O'Malley's psychological burden, such as physical and psychological violence that he received, to neglect by his environment.

"Stories, he thought again. "Your stories," Mrs. Marl had said in their English lesson. "Don't think you haven't lived long enough to have a story to tell." Life writing, she'd called it,..." (Ness, 2011: 22)

Apart from being a trigger for trauma that weighed heavily on O'Malley, namely the absence of a caregiver and the divorce of his parents, the two traumatic events were also heavy enough to get healing. O'Malley had to struggle with a lot of pain and

disappointment when he began to reconstruct the events of his past. Hurt has been abandoned by one caregiver, fear of losing caregiver others that his mother weighed heavily on figures O'Malley. According much discourse about trauma in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, trauma experience that cannot afford to be disclosed can be converted into narrative form. A narrative in which traumatic events can be recited and have occurred in the past where a survivor (person who is dealing with trauma) begins to re-create an identity that was torn apart by trauma. (Robson, 2004: 11). Traumatic memories are fragments of past devastating events and need to be integrated with current mental conditions and transformed into a narrative form. When this happens, stories about past traumas can be retold so that the individual can also look back on his past and revisit what has happened and make his past events only part of history. (Robson, 2004: 12). Trauma is difficult to put into words for several reasons. It appears "unspeakable trauma" because it exceeds the capacity of the mind to assimilate or understand it as it arises and seems beyond the reach of human language. Often, traumatic experiences remain unspoken mainly because they are rejected in a particular social context and therefore no template is available, no formulation for voicing this traumatic experience (Robson, 2004: 12). The absence of a template in transforming trauma makes it difficult for individuals to transform trauma into a narrative form.

The narrative through writing in the novel by Patrick Ness becomes a separate sub-chapter, namely a sub-chapter entitled Life Writing. Writing activities in the novel *A Monster Calls* were originally only a school assignment accepted by the main character, Conor O'Malley. O'Malley and her classmates got assignments to write about her life from their English class. In this assignment, all students are expected to describe all the events that occur in their lives. Trivial events, unforgettable events, painful events, joyful stories, so that students have to write down what kind of relationships they have with other family members.

Apart from writing, remembering is also an important process for someone to know clearly what events have happened in their life. Remembering is closely related to opening up memories that were once stored in human memory. Memory becomes an inseparable part of the characteristics of living things related to the process of remembering. Memories store events that may or may not be forgotten and have an effect on current and future actions. Remembering requires a process called recall, recognition and relearning (Walgito, 2004).

In *A Monster Calls*, O'Malley, who experienced a complex trauma, always refused to remember the events of his past. The rejection was made both consciously and emotionally by O'Malley. O'Malley is reluctant to discuss his problems with anyone. Not only because of his limited social circle, O'Malley also feared being judged and ridiculed by others. He felt that his problem was something embarrassing and trivial to talk about. From his worries, silence is a more rational choice so that his anxiety of getting judgment and banter from others does not occur. The actions that O'Malley did, by holding back and enriching himself with problems actually worsened his psychological condition.

Apart from writing and exchanging information, *A Monster Calls* also describes working-through through the creation of imaginary characters. In the memory reconstruction phase through the imaginary character that O'Malley created in the form of a monster, O'Malley is actually in two psychological processes, namely the absorption of depressed memory (acting-out) and the self-healing process (working-through). Acting-out in the form of monster hallucinations that appear every night after he is awake is not only part of the trauma that arises due to the repression process, this acting-

out is a way of working-through for O'Malley. The process of acting-out becomes a way of working-through. This occurs when the monster from the hallucinations of the main character becomes a reflection of itself. The tree monster created by O'Malley's subconscious becomes a reflection for O'Malley to do a lot of self-reflection. This reflection is obtained from the results of the interaction with the monster, both from the dialogue between the two of them, and from the one-sided stories of the two.

"Every time the monster moved, Conor could hear the creak of wood, groaning and yawning in the monster's huge body." What are you? " Conor asked, pulling his arms closer around himself. I am not a "what," frowned the monster. I am a "who." "Who are you, then?" Conor said. The monster's eyes widened. Who am I? it said, its voice getting louder. Who am I? " (Ness, 2011: .28)

The monster can be said to be a metaphor for the process acting-out that became the way for working-through O'Malley's. Finding that his psychic side was already in a tired situation with all the symptoms of trauma that emerged, such as anger, anxiety, sadness, fear and so on, O'Malley's self-defense began to create hallucinations that tried to help him free from these messy emotions. This analogy will be exactly the same as the biological processes that exist in the human body, when a person experiences an open wound in the form of blood that appears on the skin, the white blood cells will immediately move to repel all harmful external particles in the formation of infection. The self-defense process also occurs when a virus or bacteria enters the body, immune cells will try to weaken and even fight these unwanted foreign particles. Likewise, what happened to O'Malley with the fictional monster. The psychological side is trying to heal from harmful particles, one of which is a traumatic event.

Overlapping Acting-Out And Working-Through In Releasing Self From Trauma

La Capra provides an understanding of acting-out and working-through in his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (La Capra, 2001) and also in his interview with [Shoah Resource Center \(1998\)](#). Acting-out refers to the concept of an individual's unconscious behavior in dealing with traumatic events, while working-through is how the individual can rationalize all events in his past so that the individual is not trapped in a traumatic circle. Acting-out correlates with action repetitive and repetition compulsion compulsive, which refers to repetition of the action. This is very natural for individuals and collectives who are experiencing or have experienced traumatic events. Individually or collectively tend intended to let go of or relief(relieve)the events of his past, and they tend to get stuck in the past without ever clear distance between himself and the events of trauma. Their past trauma has a tendency to occur in the present in the form of flashbacks, nightmares, and sometimes unconsciously repeated words. The incident seemed to have no meaning at all, because it happened at a different time, place and situation.

Acting out according to the description of La Capra is also found in the novel *A Monster Calls*. The characters in *A Monster Calls*, often have nightmares which are a manifestation of the pain of their trauma in the past. Nightmares that occur also always have repetitions every night. The nightmare becomes a recurrence of events that he never realized and without control. The main character is also unable to discern the events he is really going through, as if he is living in constant pain. For example, his father, who has been away from the main character's life for a long time, seems to have

only happened in a matter of months, making the main character trapped in an artificial time between the past and the present. Other unconscious repetitions also appear in the form of hallucinations that are prolonged to the point of exhaustion. All forms of dreams, hallucinations and involuntary actions are a form of trauma repression from an incident where the main character experiences a vacuum from the caregiver, experiences or becomes a victim of separation from both parents, experiences physical, emotional violence, experiences neglect from the surrounding environment, and becomes a witness of domestic violence. While working-through in La Capra, individuals or collectively try to do acritical distance, which is the distance where they can clearly see the events that have occurred and are intact in their past. Individuals who do critical distance will also be able to distinguish between the past, present and future without any mix of time. For trauma sufferers, critical distance means that they can admit that the trauma really happened to them, they believe that trauma is very emotional and stressful, makes emotions chaotic, but they have the confidence to be able to escape the trauma. They are also able to distinguish the time they are in, they feel they are living in the present, a different time from the past.

The main character A Monster Calls also does a process working-through, where he tries to get a critical distance to clearly see the traumatic incident. He can see this critical distance through recalling what really happened. By remembering, the individual gets the pieces of the puzzle that are scattered together, even though in the process of remembering he will find back pain for himself. Critical distance to determine what really happened in the past is also done by sharing memories with other people. One person's memory tends to be incomplete in providing an understanding of an event in the past, but it takes another person's memory to complete it. This is what the main character in the novel does, sharing information with other people to compile a complete series of events that have a tendency for the real truth to occur.

La Capra also provides an understanding that the two processes, both acting-out and working-through, cannot be separated from one another. Acting-out and working-through are not two mutually contradictory binary concepts. However, acting-out and working-through are different processes that occur when an individual or collectively tries to remember traumatic events in the past. One process may not be inversely proportional to another process, but sometimes processes from one another have implications for one another. The concept of working-through is not a very different concept from the concept of acting-out, the two complement each other.

A Monster Calls is an illustration where the acting-out process becomes a process that overlaps with the working-through. Acting-out that cannot be controlled and tends to occur compulsively is part of the working-through. This happens when the character experiences acting out when he a hallucination meets a tree monster. Hallucinations are a form of acting-out, but in the hallucinations, he also does a working-through. The working-through is to make the monster of his imagination as a friend to chat, argue and reflect on traumatic events in the past. With this working-through, the main character is at a critical distance and is able to distinguish between past and present events.

Conclusion

Trauma is a series of events that occur suddenly and shock a person experiencing it until they feel pain and numb. Trauma can be a collection of many events which later drags an exposed person into the concept of complex trauma. Complex trauma is a collection of more than one event that causes an individual to experience pain and a

condition that is not wearing. In *A Monster Calls* the main character is found to have traumatic symptoms. Symptoms that indicate that a character is traumatized are a tendency to indulge in anger only because of small things, inability to control emotions, distrust, other blaming, feeling isolated from the world of interaction, guilt and deep sadness, anxiety, sleep disorders, and recurring nightmares and hallucinations. Trauma can be triggered by many events in the past that shake a person's soul or psychic side. In *A Monster Calls*, the trigger that makes the main character experience a traumatic event is the absence of a caregiver (absent of caregiver), (physical abuse), (emotional abuse), neglect, (witnessing domestic violence), and (parental separation).

Acting done by the main character is like experiencing hallucinations meeting the figure of a monster, experiencing hallucinations seeing things that are not real, such as the big wind and the creeping plants in the room. acting-out Another that happened was a nightmare that kept repeating itself throughout the night and the nights after. Acting-out also permeates in the form of unconscious actions such as walking aimlessly, destroying things without control, and shaking. Meanwhile the working-through was carried out through the media, completing pieces of memory by exchanging information with other supporting figures, as well as creating imaginary characters.

The main character in *A Monster Calls* is finally able to do a critical distance, with the media remembering, exchanging memories, and making confessions and accepting the trauma from his past. The main character has been able to describe all events in full on the traumatic series that occurred, believes that these events actually only happened in the past, accepts that these events exist and is painful, and believes that he is living in the present (different times), and fully believe that he has diverse potential in the future. This is an indication that an individual can be said to be one step ahead of getting self-healing. The main character in the ending of the story *A Monster Calls* has confessed all the pain in his past and is ready to get a new life

Suggestion

Future studies could expand this research by examining trauma representation in other young adult novels to create comparative analysis of healing processes across different literary works. Researchers might also explore how cultural contexts influence trauma portrayal and recovery methods in literature from various countries.

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