

## An Adlerian Reading of Masculine Protest in Donoghue's Room

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### **Abstract:**

*The aim of the current paper is to unveil how masculine protest, courage and lifestyle for individuation process encouraged the characters to develop their personality through the novel and the way the characters resolve the personality problems in Donoghue's Room which respectively are elaborated. The main focus of this study is on Adler Psychoanalysis. It's a dynamic challenge to know human behavior needs valuable insight. Thus, it's not surprising that the subject of personality and related human aspects has been explored by several theorists. Adler is among the authors who shared their perspectives on personality. Emma Donoghue uses Jack, a five years old boy, because the narrator within the novel Room. The novel also expounds the conflicts experienced by main character Ma. The novel elaborates when she leaves Room and meets new people, she progressively changes her personality. Ma begins to possess difficulty managing her emotions and is definitely enraged by others who treat her as if she is ill. She subsequently becomes despondent which causes her to become unpleasant, making her son the target of her wrath. Therefore, the novel explores Ma's internal conflicts. Ma, the feminine protagonist, is at the middle of the story's internal conflict. The struggle between Ma and Ma's sense of oppression is that the female protagonist's internal conflict.*

### **Keywords:**

*Reading; masculine protest; donoghue's room*

## I. Introduction

A novel entitled Room by Emma Donoghue published in 2010. Emma Donoghue's Room explores issues surrounding children's identity and growth. Emma Donoghue is a Canadian novelist who specializes in historical and contemporary fiction as well as short stories and plays. She has released over twenty works. Her work is heavily influenced by sexuality especially lesbian and bisexual relationships as well as historical murder mysteries. Her other works include historical fiction novels such as The Wonder and Slammerkin, as well as contemporary novels Hood and Room. Room (2010) by Emma Donoghue is a fascinating story presented through the eyes of a five-year-old boy held captive by his mother. Jack, the young narrator, has never been outside of his prison and has never seen the world so he asks his mother everything. In the novel which takes place both in captivity and afterward, Jack learns about a world that is vastly different from his own and fights to apply what he has learned. While Jack has spent his entire five-year-long life in the shed he calls Room, his mother has lived in it for seven years. Despite the fact that the novel only covers a few months of their lives, it is crucial to know what happens to Jack when he escapes Room. Jack learns a lot about life and himself after being released from captivity, even if he only spends a month outside. He goes through a lot of significant changes that entirely affect his life.

Alfred Adler (1870-1937) is a historically influential psychiatrist, Alfred Adler began focusing the philosophical world's attention on new ideas in the early 20th century. Adler wrote on organic inferiority which were quite compatible with Freud's view, his first writing concerning aggression instinct which Freud did not approve of and the paper on child's feeling be taken more metaphorically than literally. Adler with nine other members of the organization (Viennese Analytic Society) resigned to form the society for free psychoanalysis in 1911. This organization became the society for individual psychology. Adler died in Aberdeen Scotland during a lecture tour in UK. Adler maintains that human psychology is psychodynamic in nature. Like Freud's instincts Adler's fiction goals are largely unconscious, his goals have teleological function.

The researcher is going to work on Adlerian reading of Masculine Protest in Donoghue's in Emma Donoghue's Room. The present research is a close consideration of Adler's most influential concept that is social interest. It is considered as an individual's interest in furthering the welfare of others. It is needed to understand individuals within their social context. Collaborating and cooperating as individuals and communities can progress to benefit society as a whole.

## II. Review of Literature

Women's struggle is an effort undertaken by women to get their goals. Can aim to gain equal rights, not discrimination and to gain his freedom as a woman living on earth. According Ratnasari, women's struggles is a way to get the equality with men, feminism beliefs become the major weapon to get the equality of the human rights. The principles of feminism analyze the position of women and men in the social life with intend to build up the understanding for the accomplishment of women's better life. The principles of feminism develop thoughts and efforts to create appropriate ways to overcome intolerance and exploitation to women. (Ratnasari, 2014). Tong (2013: 7) declares that the real meaning of feminism is the state where women are free from oppression, power, hegemony, injustice, and violence. Kaptein also writes that struggle, the object of value is not yet realized or guaranteed. What is valued has not been secured yet—it is something which people want to realize or save due to its future reality is not certain. So there is a possibility of losing or not realizing something valuable. (Kaptein, 2017).

## III. Research Method

Style of life refers to the unique pattern of traits, behavior and habits which when taken together, define the particular route we have charted for ourselves in order to reach our life goal. It is Adler's belief that lifestyle factor develops in a child between 3 to 5 years of age. The development of these life-style results in the child's giving meaning to experiences. The life-styles are so important for the individual that it helps him to compensate or make-up for different inferiorities he may possess (Carlson 13). There is a lack of social activity, interest. The ruling, gaining, and avoiding lifestyles are the three categories. The three sorts of lifestyles with minimal social activity and interest have all felt inferior while growing up. As a result, these people have developed an inferiority complex which they try to hide by looking superior to others (Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* 222).

According to Adlerian philosophy Humans, are proactive rather than reactive when it comes to the evolution of their way of life. The Adlerian concept known as the creative power of the self or the self-creating power. Self-expression People function as authors as a result of their creative power. They write their own scripts, direct their own acts and create their own characters. Humans co-construct the realities to which they respond (Watts & Shulman 10).

Adler defined lifestyle as a person's reaction to other people and social situations. A cunning youngster who did evil things as a child and then tried to talk himself or herself out of trouble as an adult would most likely keep that attitude. Lifestyles can also be beneficial. Some kids are consistently pleasant and helpful. As a result of this social reinforcement in childhood, individuals are more likely to keep that social orientation in maturity (Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* 222).

Courage refers to the willingness to engage in risk-taking behavior when one does not know the consequences or when the consequences might be adverse. Life is bigger than we are and is constantly providing challenges. (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 245).

Men can exhibit feminine traits such as timidity and submissiveness, while women adopt masculine roles (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 47). In relation to the topic, it is stated that:

These situations can make male children feel less manly because, as Adler pointed out, society generally identifies strength, power, aggression, and even health, as being manly, whereas weakness, illness, powerlessness, or inhibition of aggression are considered as typically female traits. (Oberst and Stewart 8)

Thus, a guy in his childhood may think himself less macho than he needs to be in one type of masculine protest. As a result of this sensation, "the boy moves in a feminine and masculine direction at different times" (Oberst and Stewart 9). Male protest might serve as a form of compensation for 'feeling unmanly. The labels masculine and feminine, in fact, are metaphors for being weak and strong, respectively (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 45). "Inferior =below = feminine versus powerful =above = masculine," according to Adler's classification of power (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 45). The treatment of females and boys differently by family and society is the second source of inferiority.

Patient's desire every woman with neurosis aspires to be a guy (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*49). The to be a man reveals her desire to transform from a woman to a man or his need to conceal his unmanliness (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 250). As though this type of lady is saying, "No, I will not submit; I will not be a woman" (Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* 129). They wish to be a male instead of a lady (Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* 111). This inclination, however, manifests itself in a variety of ways. In general, two categories of women who oppose the feminine role can be recognized. The first is the girl who has been raised in an active, male environment (Adler, *Understanding Human Nature* 134). A "woman who goes through life with a surrender attitude, who demonstrates an almost incredible degree of adjustment, obedience, and humbleness" is the second type (Adler, *Understanding Human Nature* 35). She portrays an entity that can adapt to any environment while simultaneously displaying 'a great degree of awkwardness and helplessness,' as though she is incapable of accomplishing anything. The majority of these women 'exhibit anxious symptoms.' This feature will assist them in attracting the attention of others (Adler, *Understanding Human Nature* 35). This type of woman does not rebel against the womanly position, but she is constantly harmed by the idea of being a lesser being. In addition, she is submissive woman.

Other forms of masculine protest are directed at men. The guiding fiction of one type of man is "I want to be a real man" (Adler 108). To be more specific, when a boy matures, his manhood becomes his responsibility. He must be ambitious and possess a "thirst for power and greatness." They must constantly assess their 'masculine characteristics' (Adler Understanding Human Nature 127). This becomes the neurotic's goal as well as the result of compensating for the underlying feeling of inferiority associated with femininity (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 250).

Personal power is highly important these days in the division of labour. As a result, the significance of man is heavily highlighted. Men, in fact, are a privileged group that enjoy a number of benefits. As a result of "their domination over women in the division of labour," males have everything. From the time they wish to 'ensure their superiority everywhere,' little boys start acting like men. Later in life, the father becomes the family's emblem of power (Adler, Understanding Human Nature 122-124). However, "It is very difficult to make it clear to a child that a mother who is engaged in household duties is as valuable as a father" (Adler, Understanding Human Nature 125). "Since every human being is measured by the standard of the privileged male, it is no surprise that one always holds this standard before a boy," writes Adler (Adler, Understanding Human Nature 128).

## IV. Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Masculine Protest

Donoghue places her main characters, a mother and a child, within the historical and chronological surroundings of current society processes. The story explores the disadvantages and enslavement of girls in male-dominated society, also because the discourses that surrounds them. In line with Mandell (1995), women are subordinated by a singular way of life called patriarchy, within which men hold all superior social functions while women remain subservient and exploited. There are more women in society who are viewed as second-class citizens by men (dead). The masculine protest that's added to the equation is striving, whether of boys or girls, the search of fulfillment, the stirring of urges and passions" (Adler, *The Collected Clinical Works* 87). Per Adler, when the concept of man and woman involves consciousness, masculine protest emerges as man is powerful and woman is weak. When Ma was within the best position in her tiny family, it absolutely was reflected. Despite the actual fact that Ma was a girl, she was capable of achieving an equal position within the social sector (Adler, *The Collected Clinical Works* 88). Ma doesn't appear melancholy within the first chapter of the novel where she is trapped within the Room and he or she appears to be a daily mother to her child and a lady who is very obedient to man. Ma is likewise a caring and protective figure For Jack. She is going to not allow anyone to require him aloof from her for even a second. She isn't the kind of one that gives up easy. She has shown incredible bravery in confronting her kidnapper and surviving in Room. She may be a responsible mother who dedicates her life to her son. She still plays together with her son, educates him and breastfeeds him in Room. That was a person capable of leading her family at a time when she remained within the room, believing Old Nick to be a kidnapper instead of her husband. It meant that her child, Jack, did not have a legal father like other children. As a result, Ma decided to command her child to try to and achieve what she had kicked off to try and do so as to achieve independence. She hoped that Satan would completely trust Jack, who was posing as an unwell child, which Jack would be transported to the hospital as quickly as possible to be examined out. Ma also hoped that her escape would blast off without a hitch when Lucifer carried Jack out of the area. Because if Jack was successful in his escape, everything would go smoothly and he or she would be ready to accomplish her goal (Singh, "Beyond the Tragic" 19). It is often seen from the text below:

*“Oh, the doctors won’t do anything to you for real, because you won’t actually have anything wrong with you, remember?” She strokes my shoulder. “It’s just a trick for our Great Escape. Old Nick will carry you into the hospital, and the first doctor you see—or nurse, whatever—you shout, ‘Help!’” (Room 133)*

Ma was one of those women who could do everything. That was how it appeared when Ma was still in the room with Jack. She did not only have a job as a mother, but she also had a role as a father, with the responsibility of protecting, maintaining, and treating Jack. It was triggered by the fact that she played an equal role in the social sector to the guy in her family in order to maintain the family's stability. It began when Old Nick entered the room. On the mattress, he was sleeping with Ma. Jack made a blunder by playing with his toy. He was playing in the closet that was utilized as a bedroom, which startled Old Nick and worried him. Then Old Nick searched around the room for something to indicate that there was something awful that bothered him. Ma had seen what Old Nick had done. As a result, Ma spoke with Old Nick assumed the noise was coming from Jack's toy. Ma did this to keep Old Nick from doing anything else to Jack. As a result, Old Nick's threat did not materialize, and Jack was not threatened. Ma concluded that Jack had made a mistake, and she advised him not to make the same error again. Then Jack did as he was told and accepted it. After all, Ma believed Jack would be spared from the perilous situation in the future (Singh, “Beyond the Tragic” 20). It is described in the following text:

*“Listen,” says Ma, “I couldn’t care less about the jeep.” I blink at her. “He was my present.” “What I’m mad about”—her voice is getting bigger and scratchier—“is that you woke him up.” “Jeep?” “Old Nick.” It makes me jump that she says him out loud. “You scared him.” “He got scared at me?” “He didn’t know it was you,” says Ma. “He thought I was attacking him, dropping something heavy on his head.” (Room 65-66)*

Adler believes that when an individual feels weak and believes there are no thanks to overcome his deficiency, he will try and 'overcompensate' for it. "The desire for power and control can become pathological when it becomes overdone and inflamed" (Adler, *Understanding attribute* 76). To explain, humans build some rules about the planet throughout time of life so as to beat emotions of inadequacy. Consistent with Alfred Adler, people overcome feelings of inferiority through compensatory mechanisms that are meant to spice up self-esteem (Adler, *Understanding attribute* 75). Dillu Mary in her article entitled “Rereading Lacan: Towards another semiotics in Emma Donoghue’s Room” (2013) says, Satan didn't provide vitamins to Ma after they were within the room. Ma as a lady desired to urge something she had anticipated. Devil had refused to grant her something crucial that Ma had wanted to be used that night, so she was daring to invite it. She absolutely required those vitamins for Jack's growth because he was still within the process of getting bigger. Ma was against men since the Devil had treated her unfairly. It had been a kind of female defiance against the person. It also revealed that girls were frequently treated less favorably than men. Women weren't given the identical rights as men. Even women lost theirs because it had been widely considered within the milieu that ladies had no authority. Ma, on the opposite hand, wasn't just like the rest. Ma had the foresight to mention what she wanted from Lucifer. It was a manifestation of her equal right in the fight for her family's health, particularly in the health sector (30). It is demonstrated in the following text:

I didn't think I was switched off but then Old Nick's here all loud. "But vitamins—" Ma is saying. "Highway robbery." "You want us getting sick?" "It's a giant rip-off," says Old Nick. "I saw this exposé one time; they all end up in the toilet." Who ends up in Toilet? "It's just that, if we had a better diet—" (Room 89)

Ma tried to present some realistic examples, such as gardening, exercise, and news, as well as some fictional examples, such as the werewolf movie and the woman who burst like a balloon. It was a way for Ma to position her as a basic education educator in her family, particularly in the education sector. It was done by her to demonstrate that a woman could participate in education, social life, politics, and the economy in the same way that a male could. Correlating in education in her family, in particular, could offer her additional clout (Dillu Mary31). It can be seen in the paragraph below:

*I don't watch the cartoon planet this morning, I choose a bit of a gardening and a fitness and a news, and everything I see I say, "Ma, is that real?" and she says yeah, except one bit about a movie with werewolves and a woman bursting like a balloon is just special effects, that's drawing on computers (Room 82)*

They were both abducted by Old Nick over the course of more than seven years. Ma lost a lot of her positions, rights, duties, and participations whether she was in this room or not. As a result, Ma pondered the necessity of doing something in order to obtain freedom. Ma included an outspoken character as one of the main characters. With her boldness, she struggled to get anything. It appeared that when Jack noticed a mouse in the room, he fed it the waffle he had retrieved from the floor. Jack believed he had done something wonderful, but he had made a mistake (Mary31).

They move exaggeratedly towards their 'extravagant objective of supremacy' to achieve this purpose. They also have a burning ambition to conquer everyone at whatever cost (Adler, *Understanding Human Nature* 75). Birth order, organ inferiority, pampered children, abandoned children, masculine protest, and social interest are some of Adler's ways for diagnosing inferiority and superiority complex. According to Adler, many neurotic people exhibit physical and psychological characteristics associated with the opposite sex which are seen as organ inferiority. This condition affects children for a variety of reasons. For starters, their physical limitations make them more reliant on others (Oberst and Stewart 8). Men can exhibit feminine traits such as timidity and submissiveness, while women adopt masculine roles (Adler, *The Individual Psychology* 47). It is stated that: These situations can make male children feel less manly because, as Adler pointed out, society generally identifies strength, power, aggression, and even health as manly traits, whereas weakness, illness, powerlessness, or aggression inhibition are considered to be typically female traits (Oberst and Stewart 8). Therefore, a guy in his childhood may think himself less strong than he needs to be in one type of masculine protest. As a result of this sensation, "the boy moves in a feminine and masculine direction at different times" (Oberst and Stewart 9). Masculine protest might serve as a form of compensation for 'feeling unmanly. The labels masculine and feminine, in fact, are metaphors for being weak and strong, respectively (Adler, *The Individual Psychology* 45).

Chmelinova in his book *Emma Donoghue Room* (2012) represents that Ma had learned of her child's deeds and went to Jack. She stated that it was a risky thing to do and that she would not do it again, but even Jack tried to persuade Ma to let it. Then Ma's cooperation showed as a sort of assertiveness when she told Jack "No" and that she had no tolerance for it. Ma did so

because she wanted to make her point with her assertiveness in order for it to be accomplished (44). It can be seen in the paragraph below.

*She drags Stove out, there's a little crack at the bottom of Door Wall, she gets the bundle of aluminum foil and starts pushing balls of it into the crack. "Don't. Please." "I'm sorry. But where there's one there's ten." That's crazy math. Ma puts down the foil and holds me hard by my shoulders. "If we let him stay, we'd soon be overrun with his babies. Stealing our food, bringing in germs on their filthy paws . . ." (Room 40)*

Then there was the time when Ma was discussing about a television show that Jack was watching. That was about gaining an understanding of a woman's situation. Ma also made sure to clarify new features to Jack that he hadn't previously been aware of. In the middle of the explanation, Ma abruptly stated that the time for watching TV was ended, despite her child's desire to continue watching his show. After that, Jack approached Ma and requested five more minutes to watch a favorite television show. Ma, on the other hand, was not allowed to know what Jack meant. Ma asserted herself by using the compliance act to say that there would be no more time to watch TV at that time (Chmelinova 45). It was demonstrated when she shook her head as if to say:

"No," says Ma, "she's so happy it's making her cry." That's weird. "Is she happy sad, like you get when there's lovely music on TV?" "No, she's just an idiot. Let's switch the TV off now." "Five more minutes? Please?" She shakes her head. (Room 53)

Ma had been kidnapped and held captive. Old Nick's act had been carried out. She was then taken to the concealed room. Ma almost lost several of her positions, duties, rights, and participations while in the room. She was also subjected to some harsh treatment by Old Nick. Ma, on the other hand, was the courageous woman who expressed her feelings after Jack was born. After Ma had managed to get her out of the room, she also shown her aggressiveness in dealing with some interruptions from others. Ma was finally able to get all of hers that she expected all this time. Ma must explain to Jack her tough connection with her own father, who is repulsed by Jack's very presence, when they escape from Room (Chmelinova 47). Ma says to Jack:

*"He thinks we're things that belong to him," Ma explains to Jack. "He thinks we're things that belong to him, because Room does "(80). "We're like characters in a book, and he won't let anyone read it". (90)*

Ma was against men since Old Nick had treated her unfairly. It also demonstrated that women were frequently treated less favorably than men. Woman did not receive the equal rights that she should have received. It was considered that women had no authority. Ma was brave to say what she did. As Adler writes there is striving for independence and competence in Ma. Adler created the term masculine protest to describe the behavior of women who reject traditional feminine roles in favor of more masculine ones. Ma is powered by feelings of inferiority, or the sense of being of secondary or lower status. Ma wants to be an independent woman from the beginning of the story up to the end of it her attempts for being an independent woman is observed vividly. This is what 'Old Nick' has done by kidnapping Ma and Jack and then dominating all of their life together so that they are afraid of him. In seven years, Old Nick's dominance and coercion had made their life difficult and made them feel imprisoned. They will have to obey anything Old Nick says and orders.

The next source of inferiority is the disparity in treatment of girls and boys by family and society. Girls are viewed as if they are incapable of achieving anything, whilst boys are overvalued. Most "girls grow up always hesitating" and assume that only men can do everything (Adler, *The Science of Living* 45). In comparison to a girl child, a boy is always treated better and has a better social condition since he is a boy (Adler, *Understanding Human Nature* 126). Every neurotic woman aspires to be a boy (Adler, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* 49). Overall, Ma suffers from masculine protest which is a good proof of the presence of inferiority and superiority complex in her character based on the definition that Adler has given on masculine protest. Ma struggled to get something with her confidence. It is showed on the text:

*"Listen," says Ma, "I couldn't care less about the jeep." I blink at her. "He was my present." "What I'm mad about"—her voice is getting bigger and scratchier—"is that you woke him up." "Jeep?" "Old Nick." It makes me jump that she says him out loud. "You scared him." "He got scared at me?" "He didn't know it was you," says Ma. "He thought I was attacking him, dropping something heavy on his head." (Room 65-66)*

It indicates that women have duties such as wife, mother, housewife, assistant, and others, but in the modern period, they can have various functions. The majority of the Women have been abandoned by their husbands. Ma is one of the amazing women. when Ma is still in the room with Jack. She does not only play the part of mother, but she also plays the role of father, with the job of protecting, maintaining, and treating Jack because woman has an equal function in the social sector to the boy on her family in order to keep the family stable. in Adler's ideas on masculine protest everything is related to the power and the freedom a man possesses in the society. Thus, Ma's masculine Protest is quit observable. She cannot accomplish anything. Ma initially attempts to avoid being a woman and being weak. Ma knows how to disappear and avoid being seen which can be regarded as a feminine role based on Adler's description of the features of femininity in society in his article "Psychological Hermaphroditism and the Masculine Protest - A Cardinal Problem of Nervous Diseases" (2003) on the features of femininity in the society can be regarded as feminine role (83-89).

After a while, the only purpose in her life is being with Jack. In seven years, Old Nick's dominance and coercion had made their life difficult and made them feel imprisoned. They will have to obey anything Old Nick says and orders. They will be punished if they breach or do not obey the regulations that he has established. This statement shows that:

*Ma's staring at thermostat. "Power cut." "What's that?" "There's no power in anything just now. "It's a strange kind of day. We have our cereal and brush teeth and get dressed and water plant. We try and fill Bath but after the first bit the water comes out all ice so we just wash with cloths. (Room 85-86)*

The discussion between Jack and Ma explains the circumstances when Ma shouts and pushes and beats Old Nick away from Jack's face. As a result, Old Nick is furious and refuses to feed them for a week and switches off the electricity in the room. They are frigid because the room's temperature control equipment is turned off. when Jack accidentally does something that leads Old Nick to believe Ma intends to harm him It undoubtedly makes Old Nick angry because of Jack's behavior. Ma, on the other hand, always defends his son; for her, whatever Jack does is her responsibility. According to Adler, "I have never found a male neurotic who did not make the point, and also try to establish that women are inferior" (Adler, *The Science of Living* 64). In other words, Adler believes masculine protest manifests itself when the concepts of man and

woman are considered, as man is powerful and woman is weak. This demonstrates that the individual is distressed with male protest and has a neurotic personality. Finally, Old Nick 's feeling is like Masculine feeling which is a type of self-love that provides an individual a sense of superiority and power over others.

## V. Conclusion

To conclude, the *Room* is a novel of Emma Donoghue that deals with personality development in light of Adler theory. Adler's views on the development of personality, the level of emphasis on human sexuality, the motivation factor between past experiences and future expectations and the overall basis of mental power are really obvious in the *Room*. Adler saw personality and life style as something established quite early in life. Adler also believed in the importance of social connections, seeing childhood development emerging through social development. It refers to Ma's consciousness. Memories of infancy and childhood, whether correct or not, provide significant clues regarding one's style of life since they are impacted by self-selected goals. Therefore, the personality development of Ma and Jack relates to how he suppresses traumatic thoughts. Social pressure on the individual was strong, i.e., people lived with a strong superego. This made them lack self-knowledge and restraint, two very important qualities for surviving in an unfamiliar environment. Characters try to get over these pressures and problems. Consequently, Ma has made the decision not to live with her mother. She prefers to start a new life in independent living with Jack. She tries to forget about her fragility and pain in the past by focusing on her son. Ma demonstrates her strength as a woman by standing up to the patriarchal system and tyranny.

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