JISH: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora
Vol. 1, No. 1, Maret 2025
Available Online at https://journal.umgo.ac.id/index.php/jish
E-ISSN:
DOI:

ANALYSIS OF THE EMOTION OF AN IMMIGRANT AS THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL "MAAME" BY JESSICA GEORGE

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Submited :
Revised :
Published :

Kata Kunci :
Emosi, Imigran, Psikologi Sastra, David Krech, Maame

Keywords:
Emotion, Immigrant, Literary Psychology, David Krech, Maame

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the emotional dynamics of the main character in the novel Maame by Jessica George using David Krech's theory of basic emotions. Maddie, as a second-generation Ghanaian immigrant living in England, faces emotional pressures such as sadness, fear, anger, and momentary joy. The study applies a descriptive qualitative method through a literary psychology approach. Findings show that sadness is the most dominant emotion, driven by loss, alienation, and identity crisis. Self-evaluative emotions like guilt, shame, pride, and regret, as well as interpersonal emotions like love and hatred, enrich the character's emotional depth. These findings reveal that Maddie's emotional experience is not only personal but also reflects broader social and cultural conflicts commonly faced by immigrants.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dinamika emosional tokoh utama dalam novel Maame karya Jessica George menggunakan teori emosi dasar David Krech. Maddie, sebagai generasi kedua dari keluarga imigran Ghana di Inggris, menghadapi tekanan emosional seperti kesedihan, ketakutan, kemarahan, serta kegembiraan yang bersifat sementara. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan psikologi sastra. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesedihan menjadi emosi paling dominan, disebabkan oleh kehilangan, keterasingan, dan krisis identitas. Emosi evaluatif seperti rasa bersalah, malu, bangga, dan penyesalan serta emosi interpersonal seperti cinta dan kebencian turut memperkaya dimensi psikologis tokoh. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa emosi Maddie tidak hanya bersifat personal, tetapi juga mencerminkan konflik sosial dan budaya yang umum dialami oleh para imigran.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of immigration is a global issue that not only impacts economic and political aspects, but also has profound implications for the psychological and emotional state of the individuals involved. The process of moving to a new social and cultural environment often creates significant emotional distress, especially for those who leave their cultural roots behind. In this context, immigrants often experience alienation, loss of identity, adaptation difficulties, and discrimination, which have a direct impact on their mental well-being (Iqbal et al., 2025; Andronic, 2024).

Recent research suggests that the emotional conflict experienced by immigrants arises from the pressure of adapting to a new environment that has dominant cultural values that differ from those of the culture of origin (Hasnain et al., 2024). This results in complex emotions such as guilt, sadness, alienation and even anger, especially among women and second-generation immigrants (Contini & Carrera, 2022). Therefore, understanding the emotional dimensions of the migration experience is crucial for designing effective social and psychological interventions. Contemporary literature also represents the emotional upheaval of immigrants through fictional characters. One work that stands out in this context is Jessica George's novel Maame.

The novel highlights the emotional dynamics of the main character, Maddie, a young woman of Ghanaian descent living in London. Maddie is described as experiencing complex emotional distress, such as alienation, loss, guilt, and self-discovery amidst contradictory cultural demands. This research utilizes David Krech's theory of basic emotions, which divides emotions into four main categories: basic emotions (such as sadness, anger, fear, joy), sensory, evaluative, and interpersonal emotions. This approach is considered relevant because it is able to reveal the emotional complexity experienced by Maddie, not only in the personal realm but also in the social and cultural context. Through this theoretical framework, this research seeks to analyze the emotional dynamics of the main character as a reflection of the identity conflict faced by immigrant children. By using a literary psychology approach, this study aims to identify and analyze the types of emotions experienced by Maddie in Maame's novel. This research also seeks to make an academic contribution to the study of migration literature and the psychological dynamics of characters, as well as provide social insight into the importance of emotional support for immigrants in the process of cultural adaptation.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a literary psychology approach. This method was chosen to analyze the emotional experience of the main character in Jessica George's Maame, especially in the context of psychological struggle as a second-generation immigrant living in a tug-of-war between two cultures. The descriptive qualitative approach is considered appropriate for interpreting complex emotional narratives and understanding character development in literary works.

The main data source in this study is the novel Maame (2023) by Jessica George. The novel follows the life of Maddie, a young woman of Ghanaian descent who lives in London and experiences emotional distress due to conflicts of culture, family, and

identity. Narrative quotes describing the main character's emotional expressions are used as the unit of analysis.

Data collection was conducted using close reading technique. The researcher thoroughly read the novel and identified quotes that represented the main character's emotional state. Each quote was then categorized based on the classification of emotions according to David Krech's (1969) theory, which includes basic emotions (joy, anger, fear, and sadness), evaluative emotions (such as guilt, shame, pride, and regret), sensory emotions (such as pain, pleasure, and disgust), and interpersonal emotions (such as love and hatred).

Data analysis was conducted through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, referring to the qualitative analysis model of Miles and Huberman (1994). The first stage is data reduction, which is the selection of quotes that best represent the emotional state of the main character. The second stage is data presentation, which is the classification of quotes based on emotion categories according to Krech's theory. The third stage is interpretation and conclusion, which is the interpretation of the emotional meaning experienced by the characters in the framework of literary psychology.

The interpretation of emotions in this study also considers the social and cultural dimensions that influence the emotional development of the characters, so as to provide a deeper understanding of the emotional experiences of immigrant characters in the context of contemporary literature.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the representation of emotions in the main character Maddie Wright in the novel Maame by Jessica George using David Krech's theory of basic emotions. The results of the analysis show that Maddie experiences various types of emotions classified into four main categories according to Krech: (1) basic emotions (joy, anger, fear, sadness), (2) sensory emotions (pain, disgust, pleasure), (3) evaluative emotions (pride, shame, guilt, regret), and (4) interpersonal emotions (love, hate). Researchers identified a total of 13 types of emotions, with varying intensity.

1. Basic Emotion

Emotions are an important component in shaping psychological dynamics and character development in literary works. In Jessica George's Maame, the main character, Maddie, experiences various forms of emotional distress that reflect the complexity of life as a young black immigrant woman in England. To analyze these emotions, David Krech's theory of basic emotions is used, which divides emotions into primary categories such as joy, anger, fear, and sadness. Krech's theory rests on the idea that emotions are responses to stimulus conditions that relate to human biological or psychological needs.

The emotion of joy in Maame arises when Maddie feels in control of her own life, even if only for a moment. In, *"I think I may have found the perfect flat"* (Chapter 4, p. 50), Maddie shows joy that stems from her success in finding a personal space, a symbol of independence and autonomy. This joy is not simply about housing, but reflects emotional freedom from family pressures, especially the responsibility of caring for her ailing father. The protagonist expresses feelings of joy and hope after struggling to find a suitable place to live. The cognitive appraisal of the situation is positive as she judges that the place is suitable and answers her needs. Her emotional reaction is evident in

the hopeful tone of the sentence, and physiologically, this moment is likely to be accompanied by a feeling of lightness, a smile, or a sigh of relief. Behaviorally, the character states this finding openly, showing openness to a more stable life change. The social function of this emotion is to strengthen motivation and demonstrate the character's readiness to be independent. The results of the analysis show that this happy emotion is a response to personal achievement that increases the protagonist's self-confidence. The character feels great happiness from personal achievement, both in the context of valuable personal relationships and in the search for an ideal place to live.

In contrast, anger dominates in the form of accumulated frustration, injustice, and resistance to unfair burdens, particularly in the context of family and work. Krech explains that anger arises as a reaction to goal obstructions or unfair treatment, and in this case Maddie shows verbal and nonverbal expressions such as yelling, blaming, and throwing objects as a form of resistance to expectations that suppress her. Indicators of anger are evident in explosive body language, intense verbal expression, and harsh criticism of a system that does not allow for validation. This shows that anger becomes the main emotional channel in maintaining Maddie's self-esteem and self-boundaries in an environment that demands a lot without giving emotional reciprocity.

The emotion of anger appears in the novel as a form of reaction to injustice, gender burdens, and family demands. *"That's not true!" I shout... the mug ends up shattering against the wall* (Chapter 18, p. 168), showing how Maddie's anger explodes in physical form. Krech interprets anger as an emotion triggered by an obstacle or frustration to fulfillment. Maddie feels trapped in family expectations as "Maame" - a role given to her since childhood, especially by her mother who mostly lives in Ghana.

The emotion of fear is an important layer that surrounds almost all of the main character's life experiences. In Krech's theory, fear can arise from a sense of threat, loss of control, or an unexpected situation. Indicators of this emotion come in the form of chronic anxiety, sudden panic, and physical symptoms such as palpitations, trembling hands, and difficulty breathing. Maddie lives in limbo between cultural demands, loss of parents, job insecurity, and unhealed past trauma. Fear is not only about the future, but also appears as anxiety about others' judgment, guilt about her father's death, and existential fears about the meaning of life. This shows that the emotion of fear becomes a permanent backdrop that overshadows all of Maddie's choices and feelings, signifying a constant inner tension.

Fear in Maame reflects not only conventional fear, but also existential anxiety and psychological trauma. Maddie states, *"I can't comprehend living to work, but then I'm afraid of working just to live"* (Chapter 2, p. 19), signifying the fear of a future without meaning. According to Krech, fear is a reaction to a perceived threat, whether real or imagined. In this case, Maddie's fear comes from uncertain living conditions and confusing social demands. The character's cognitive appraisal of these living conditions indicates the presence of anxiety. existential fears stemming from life stresses and future uncertainties.

Meanwhile, sadness is the most profound and reflective dimension. According to Krech, sadness arises from loss, disappointment, and loneliness. In the analyzed quotes, it is seen that Maddie's sadness is not only due to the physical loss of her father, but also the loss of support, recognition, and identity. Indicators of these emotions appear through self-isolation, the urge to cry, loss of zest for life, and feelings of inadequacy. Maddie felt invisible at work, unappreciated in the family, and disconnected from

herself. The silent crying in private and the grief-filled internal dialog show that grief is not just a temporary feeling, but an emotional state that continues to grow and take root. This grief is also often mingled with guilt, forming a complex emotion that is difficult to unravel.

Sadness is the most dominant emotion that Maddie experiences, mainly as a result of losing her father, isolation, and lack of self-validation. *"I just really don't want my dad to be dead. That's all."* (Chapter 19, p. 179) is a direct expression of deep grief. According to Krech, sadness arises when there is a loss or failure to achieve expectations. Maddie loses not only a father figure, but also the emotional stability attached to that figure. The cognitive appraisal of this event highlights that the protagonist feels a loss that cannot be replaced, while the simple verbal expression indicates a deep sense of grief. In a physiological context, although not explicitly described, these feelings must have been accompanied by bodily responses such as decreased energy and a feeling of emptiness. Social functioning, on the other hand, reveals the need for recognition and emotional support from others who understand the grief. Krech explains that the loss of a significant figure can destabilize an individual's emotional state, creating a sense of emptiness and identity destruction.

Overall, the four basic emotions according to David Krech appear in different intensities, with anger, fear and sadness dominating, while joy appears sporadically. This shows that the main character in Maame experiences a very human emotional journey, characterized by inner struggles, trauma, and efforts to find identity and freedom. Krech's theory allows us to understand the character's emotional structure systematically, showing that each emotion has distinctive behavioral and cognitive indicators, which collectively form the protagonist's emotional narrative.

2. Sensory-Related Emotion

The sensory emotions analyzed include pain, disgust, and pleasure. These three types of emotions are part of an individual's physiological response to stimuli directly related to the body and the surrounding environment. This analysis is linked to the experiences of the main character, Maddie, as a second-generation immigrant woman in the UK.

In Maddie's case, the back pain is not simply the result of lifting her father's body, but also a response to the psychological tensions arising from restrictive gender roles and identity conflicts as a black woman from an immigrant family. Thus, the pain becomes a manifestation of an invisible social burden that is deeply felt by the body. Maddie experienced childhood trauma that resurfaced in the form of memories of physical violence, which shows that the body stores and relives old emotions in a new context. In this approach, the body becomes an archive of emotional experiences that are continuously negotiated through current memories and feelings.

According to Krech, the emotion of disgust arises as a reaction to something that is perceived as dirty or harmful to the body. This reaction is reflexive and closely related to the instinct of self-protection. In Maddie's experience, disgust arose when she realized that her partner was having unprotected sex. This moment evoked emotions of disgust not only because of the physical aspect (bodily fluids), but also because of the violation of her own bodily beliefs and boundaries of control.

In Krech's theory of emotions, pleasure is a positive emotion that arises when the body receives pleasant stimuli, such as pleasure, relief, or warmth. For Maddie, moments of pleasure arise from everyday activities such as enjoying a meal, a relaxing

bath, or a gentle kiss. Although seemingly simple, these moments have deep emotional meaning, as they provide a respite from a stressful life. In Maddie's context, pleasure helped to open a space for self-reflection, increase emotional resilience and strengthen interpersonal relationships. For example, when Maddie imagines taking a bath with candles and foam, she is creating a safe and comfortable personal space as a form of self-care.

Maddie's sensory experiences form an intimate and honest narrative space about the lives of young women from immigrant families amidst layered cultural and social demands. Maddie's body becomes an arena of conflict, resistance and recovery. By understanding these sensory emotions, the researcher not only understands the character's suffering and pleasure, but also the socio-cultural context behind the whole experience, as well as how the body becomes a battleground for identity and the right to self.

3. Self-Evaluation Emotion

In the novel Maame, the main character Maddie as a woman of Ghanaian descent who grew up in England experiences a complexity of emotions that are closely related to self-evaluation emotions as described by David Krech. These emotions-pride, shame, guilt, and regret-emerge as a result of the process of self-evaluation of personal actions, values, and achievements in the context of cultural pressure, family, and social identity as an immigrant. Maddie experiences intense emotional dynamics of self-evaluation, which are closely related to her identity as a child of immigrants. These emotions do not stand alone, but rather influence each other and become part of the formation of Maddie's identity.

First, the emotion of pride arises when Maddie is able to reflect on her personal achievements. She is proud to have been educated to be independent and able to complete higher education in English literature. This pride is reinforced when she makes career plans, establishes social relationships, and finds new meaning in her life. In the context of David Krech's theory, pride is a form of positive self-evaluation that leads to satisfaction and self-esteem. This is particularly significant for Maddie, who is under cultural pressure to “make it” so as not to disappoint her parents' sacrifices as first-generation immigrants.

But on the other hand, Maddie is also often overwhelmed by shame. In the data As an adult woman who is not fully economically independent and still lives in her parents' house, Maddie feels ashamed of social views. Shame according to Krech is an emotion that arises from a negative evaluation of oneself based on external views. Maddie feels that she has failed to meet white British society's expectations of adult independence. This shame is exacerbated by her immigrant background which makes her constantly compare herself to the dominant standards of the majority culture.

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Meanwhile, regret is also an important part of Maddie's emotional journey as she reflects on past decisions, such as delaying quitting a job she disliked or not visiting

her father before he died. This regret comes not only from the failure to make the right decision, but also from the realization that time and opportunity have passed. regret according to Krech is a form of retrospective negative evaluation of past actions. This regret shows Maddie's character growth, because through this emotion she realizes the importance of time, emotional relationships, and the courage to make decisions in life. In her position as an immigrant, Maddie is under pressure to always make the "right" choice so as not to waste the sacrifices of previous generations. Regret, then, is evidence of a retrospective evaluation that shows Maddie's emotional growth and sense of identity as part of an immigrant family.

These four types of emotions form the narrative of Maddie's emotional experience as a young immigrant. Maddie not only grapples with personal inner conflicts, but also with social constructs stemming from two different cultures. She grew up in a Ghanaian value system that emphasizes family responsibility and sacrifice, yet at the same time she was raised in a British culture that upholds independence and individual freedom. The emotions of self-evaluation that Maddie experiences show how immigrant identity is shaped through the process of internalizing these values. Emotions of pride signify success in navigating two cultural worlds; emotions of shame and guilt indicate a clash of values; while regret becomes a point of reflection on her personal journey. Maddie is a representation of a second generation immigrant who is caught between loyalty to her ancestral heritage and the need for autonomy in modern society.

4. Interpersonal Emotion

According to David Krech, interpersonal emotions such as love and hate are forms of affective expression that arise in social interactions and play an important role in shaping relationships, identity, and individual responses to their social environment. In Jessica George's Maame, these emotions are explicitly present in the form of family relationships, friendships, and social conflicts, which show the complexity of Maddie's experiences as the main character.

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Maddie shows affection to those closest to her through verbal expressions such as "Love you" and "I love you too, Maame." According to Krech, these are positive interpersonal emotions that strengthen social bonds and reduce interpersonal anxiety.

In contrast, hate indicates inner conflict and strong social rejection. According to Krech, hate is a negative emotion in the interpersonal domain that is usually born from experiences of injustice, rejection, or betrayal. Shu's anger towards the work system and Steve's character is not only a reflection of disgust, but also a manifestation of social inequality and lack of empathy in a capitalistic system.

In , Maddie's inner conflict of feeling hated by her housemates leads to the development of hatred towards the personal space that was once a safe haven. Maddie as an immigrant character experiences a similar dilemma, where her hatred of certain spaces and people reflects the pressure to adapt while holding on to personal and cultural identity.

Analysis based on David Krech's theory, shows that the emotions of love and hate in Maame's novel are not just a response to the situation, but a reflection of the dynamics of identity, social pressure, and emotion regulation in the context of immigrant life. Maddie experiences love as the glue of relationships and a source of strength, while resentment emerges as a defense mechanism against social injustice and alienation. The balance between these two poles of emotion shows the complexity of the main character's psychological development that continues to transform throughout the story.

CONCLUSION

This study shows the complexity of emotions experienced by the main character, Maddie, in the novel Maame by Jessica George through David Krech's basic emotion theory approach. The analysis shows that the most dominant emotion is sadness, which arises from the loss of parents, social alienation, and identity crisis. Anger and fear are also significant, in response to structural pressures and past trauma, while joy is only occasional and temporary.

In addition to the basic emotions, Maddie also experiences evaluative emotions such as guilt, shame, pride, and regret, as well as interpersonal emotions such as love and hate. All of these types of emotions depict inner turmoil that is not only personal, but also a reflection of the social and cultural conflicts typical of second-generation immigrants.

By applying Krech's classification theory of emotions, this research contributes to the study of literary psychology and strengthens the relevance of the interdisciplinary approach between psychology and literature. The emotions presented in this novel play an important role in shaping the main character's identity and represent the inner struggle of immigrants in the face of complex cultural pressures.

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