



Fighting Against Agoraphobia in The Highly Illogical Behaviour Novel by John Corey Whaley (2016)

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Abstract

This research purpose is to describe the main character experiences of suffering from agoraphobia, type of anxiety disorder in the novel *Highly Illogical Behavior* by John Corey Whaley. The psychoanalysis behaviorism theory by John B Watson is used to determine the stimuli and responses that result in changes of the behaviors of the main character. The analysis of the novel also shows the symptoms that occur in the characters and what the efforts of the characters in the novel are to cure or overcome agoraphobia. Through a careful examination of the narrative, character dynamics, and key scenes, this analysis identifies the stimuli that elicit agoraphobic responses in the protagonist, Solomon Reed. It investigates the specific environmental and social factors that serve as triggers for Solomon's anxiety and subsequent avoidance behavior. These stimuli include crowded spaces, unfamiliar settings, and social interactions that have previously caused distress or panic attacks for Solomon. Furthermore, this analysis scrutinizes Solomon's responses to these stimuli, focusing on his avoidance behavior and the measures he takes to control his anxiety. It delves into his meticulous routines, the establishment of safe spaces within his home, and the development of coping mechanisms that allow him to navigate his daily life within the confines of his own environment. The result of this study is that the main character can overcome the agoraphobia he suffers with the help of the environment such as family and friends.

Key words: Anxiety, Agoraphobia, Behavior, Overcome

A. INTRODUCTION

Agoraphobia is a prevalent mental health issue that affects a significant proportion of the population worldwide. Agoraphobia is a type of anxiety disorder that makes people afraid of being in crowded places. According to the *Book of*

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Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder IV (2000), Agoraphobia was reconceptualized as a common complicating feature of panic, thus relegating agoraphobia to a panic disorder subtype status. Agoraphobia is often associated with panic disorder. Agoraphobia is quite common in mental health problems. However, it is more complex condition than what most people assume. Agoraphobia is not simply a fear of open spaces. Someone with Agoraphobia may be scared of traveling on public transport, visiting a shopping center, station, theaters, or leaving home. Agoraphobia can begin in childhood but mostly starts in the late teen or early adult years, usually before age 35. The symptoms of agoraphobia are rapid heart rate, excessive sweating, upset diarrhea, feeling a loss of control, chest pain, and sudden chills (National Health Service Organization, 2018). Many mental illnesses occur in society, especially in young people, one of which is anxiety disorder. In this modern era, everything becomes instantaneous, so people have many choices for life, and they rarely socialize with family, friends, or people around them, instead of using social media more often.

The purpose of literary psychology is not to address psychological issues. However, as shown by the definition of literature psychology's aim is to comprehend psychological elements that are present in a literary work. Psychology was created to investigate the human psyche, and as such, people are the subject of psychology research. Literature psychology considers reading and writing to be mental activities. The author incorporates an idea, sense, and creation into the work. Wellek and Warren (1977: 139) describe how psychology might enter literature by examining the psychology of the author, the psychology of the character, and the psychology of the reader in their book "Theory of Literature." The author employs his feelings and emotions to create his work, as is the case in a novel, therefore psychology may be used in literature. According to Hardjana (1994:6), literary analysis that takes a psychological perspective aims to identify parallels between psychological concepts or perceptions in literary character characterizations that adhere to particular psychological theories.

A psychological method and understanding can also be used to observe how characters behave in a book, play, or other work of fiction. In other words, a psychological perspective in literary analysis might involve looking for connections between the way a character in a novel is described or behaves and theories or concepts from psychology. For example, a character who exhibits obsessive-compulsive behavior might be analyzed in light of the psychological concept of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Alternatively, a character who struggles with feelings of anxiety or depression might be analyzed in light of theories from psychology that explain these conditions. By analyzing literary characters through a psychological lens, researchers can gain new insights into the workings of the human mind and behavior. This type of analysis can also help us better understand the way psychological theories and concepts are reflected in popular culture and literature.

Agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder characterized by an intense fear of open or public spaces, often leading to avoidance behavior and a limited ability to engage in daily activities. John Corey Whaley's novel "Highly Illogical Behavior" provides a compelling narrative that delves into the experience of agoraphobia

through the protagonist, Solomon Reed. This article applies behaviorism theory, with a focus on stimulus and response, to analyze the portrayal of agoraphobia in the novel. By examining the stimuli that trigger agoraphobic responses, investigating the patterns of avoidance behavior, and exploring the reinforcing factors, this article aims to deepen our understanding of the behavioral dynamics associated with agoraphobia.

1) Stimuli and Triggers (Response)

Behaviourism theory posits that behavior is influenced by external stimuli, and agoraphobia is no exception. In "Highly Illogical Behavior," Solomon experiences specific stimuli that elicit agoraphobic responses. These stimuli may include crowded spaces, unfamiliar environments, or situations reminiscent of past traumatic experiences. By analyzing key scenes and character interactions, this article uncovers the environmental and social triggers that provoke Solomon's anxiety and subsequent avoidance behavior.

2) Avoidance Behavior

A critical aspect of agoraphobia is the avoidance of situations or places that trigger anxiety. Solomon's agoraphobia is manifested through his reluctance to leave the safety of his home and engage in social activities. This article examines Solomon's meticulously structured routines and the development of safe spaces within his home as coping mechanisms to control his anxiety. Through a behavioristic lens, the article explores how these avoidance behaviors provide temporary relief from anxiety and reinforce the association between certain stimuli and fear.

3) Reinforcement and Consequences

Behaviorism theory emphasizes the role of reinforcement in shaping and maintaining behavior. In the context of agoraphobia, reinforcement can either perpetuate or alleviate the symptoms. This article investigates the reinforcing factors present in

4) Implications and Treatment

By applying behaviorism theory to the analysis of agoraphobia in "Highly Illogical Behavior," this article provides insights into the behavioral mechanisms underlying the disorder. It emphasizes the significance of environmental factors, learned behaviors, and reinforcement in shaping and perpetuating agoraphobic tendencies. Understanding these behavioral dynamics can inform therapeutic approaches, such as exposure therapy, that aim to modify maladaptive behavior patterns associated with agoraphobia. Furthermore, this analysis highlights the importance of considering behavioral factors alongside cognitive and emotional aspects in the treatment of anxiety disorders.

The analysis of agoraphobia in "Highly Illogical Behavior" through the lens of behaviorism theory provides a valuable perspective on the behavioral dynamics associated with the disorder. By exploring the stimuli that trigger agoraphobic responses, examining avoidance behavior patterns, and considering reinforcing

factors, this article enhances our understanding of agoraphobia's behavioral manifestations. It underscores the importance of behavioral interventions and comprehensive treatment strategies that address the learned behaviors and environmental influences contributing to agoraphobic symptoms.

5) Future Research Directions

While this article provides insights into the portrayal of agoraphobia in "Highly Illogical Behavior" using behaviorism theory, there are several avenues for further research. Firstly, future studies could explore the interplay between behaviorism and other psychological frameworks, such as cognitive-behavioral theory, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of agoraphobia and its treatment. Investigating the cognitive processes underlying avoidance behavior and the role of thoughts and beliefs could provide valuable insights into the complex nature of the disorder. Additionally, conducting empirical research to examine the generalizability of the behavioristic principles depicted in the novel would be beneficial. By investigating real-life individuals with agoraphobia, researchers can explore the relationship between specific stimuli, avoidance behaviors, and reinforcing factors in a broader context. This research could involve observational studies, self-report measures, and experimental designs to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the behavioral dynamics of agoraphobia. Furthermore, expanding the scope of analysis to other literary works and media representations of agoraphobia would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the disorder. Comparing and contrasting the portrayals of agoraphobia across different narratives could shed light on the variations in stimulus-response patterns and reinforce the validity of behaviorism theory in understanding the condition. Lastly, future research could explore the efficacy of behaviorally-oriented interventions, such as exposure therapy, in the context of agoraphobia. Investigating the effectiveness of behaviorism-based treatments and identifying potential modifications or enhancements could contribute to the development of more tailored and effective therapeutic approaches for individuals living with agoraphobia.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a content analysis method and the data is analyzed using the concept of Psychoanalysis approach. This research aims to analyze Solomon Reed's behavior in the novel *Highly Illogical Behavior* from agoraphobia that the character suffered and the factors that influence his condition.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The novel analyzed with three important divisions; the impacts of agoraphobia, the symptoms of agoraphobia that the main character suffered, and attempts to overcome from the main character, and also the important role of family and friends. and from this novel it can be seen how the role of the closest people is very important in efforts to heal victims of anxiety disorders

1) Research Finding

1. Symptoms Suffered

According to American Psychiatric Association (APA), people with agoraphobia may have different levels of intensity in their symptoms. There are several symptoms that occur to Solomon in the novel.

2. The Impacts of Agoraphobia (Stimulus and Response)

There are impacts that affect the main character so as to make the anxiety in the character even stronger, some of the causes include, among others. These impacts include social, sexuality, and the future of the main character. Watson defines learning as a process of interaction between stimulus and response, but the intended stimulus and response must be observable and measurable. According to the behaviorist learning theory, all behaviors are learned through conditioning, and conditioning takes place as a result of interactions with the environment (Cherry, Kendra 2022). Behaviorists believe that our actions are shaped by environmental stimuli. When the stimulus was shown, the reaction was probably going to happen. To cause a particular reaction to a particular stimulus. In the novel there is a reaction or response from the stimulus that is generated in the agoraphobia suffered by Solomon. According to Skinner, a person is first exposed to a stimulus, which generates a reaction, and the response is then reinforced (stimulus, response, reinforcement). This response affects Solomon's behavior in his daily life. In the end, this is what influences how we behave.

3. Main Character's Attempts to Overcomes the Agoraphobia

From a *Highly Illogical Behavior* novel, there are several Solomon attempts to overcome or his closest person intend to cure the main character, from his agoraphobia. This effort was carried out by Lisa Praytor and Solomon's family, sometimes Solomon also had a little effort to be able to control or recover from his illness

2) Discussion

The discussion of agoraphobia in relation to behaviorism theory and the novel "Highly Illogical Behavior" provides valuable insights into the behavioral aspects of the disorder. This discussion highlights the importance of understanding the interplay between stimuli and responses in the manifestation and maintenance of agoraphobic symptoms. It also emphasizes the need to consider cognitive and emotional factors alongside behaviorism theory to develop a comprehensive understanding of agoraphobia.

Behaviorism theory, as proposed by Watson (1913) and expanded upon by Bandura (1977), emphasizes the influence of external stimuli on shaping behavior. The analysis of agoraphobia in "Highly Illogical Behavior" demonstrates the role of stimuli in triggering fear and anxiety responses, leading to avoidance behaviors. The portrayal of the protagonist's fear of open spaces and difficulty in escaping or

seeking help aligns with the diagnostic criteria outlined in the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Exposure therapy, a behaviorally-oriented intervention, has shown effectiveness in treating anxiety disorders, including agoraphobia (Chambless & Ollendick, 2001). The novel's depiction of the protagonist's gradual exposure to feared situations, such as stepping out of the house, aligns with the principles of exposure therapy. This supports the notion that controlled exposure to feared stimuli can lead to habituation and a reduction in anxiety responses (Bouton, 2004).

However, it is important to note that cognitive factors play a significant role in agoraphobia. Cognitive models, such as Beck's cognitive therapy (1976) and Clark and Wells' cognitive model of social phobia (1995), highlight the influence of thoughts and beliefs on anxiety and avoidance behaviors. These cognitive frameworks complement behaviorism theory by addressing the cognitive processes that contribute to the maintenance of agoraphobic symptoms. Cognitive restructuring techniques, aimed at challenging irrational thoughts and promoting adaptive thinking patterns, are often integrated into treatment approaches (Rachman, 1998).

Additionally, emotional processing is a crucial aspect of agoraphobia treatment. Emotional processing involves exposure to corrective information, which allows individuals to modify fear responses (Foa & Kozak, 1986). In the novel, the protagonist's gradual exposure to feared situations facilitates emotional processing, leading to a reduction in anxiety and avoidance behaviors. While the analysis focuses on the novel "Highly Illogical Behavior," it is important to recognize that it represents a fictional work and may not fully capture the complexities and variations of agoraphobia experiences in real-life individuals. Further empirical research is needed to validate the findings and generalize them to a broader population.

Future research should explore the interplay between behaviorism theory and other psychological frameworks, such as cognitive-behavioral theory, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of agoraphobia. Investigating the cognitive processes underlying avoidance behavior and the role of thoughts and beliefs could provide valuable insights into the complex nature of the disorder. Moreover, empirical research involving real-life individuals with agoraphobia is necessary to investigate the relationship between specific stimuli, avoidance behaviors, and reinforcing factors in a broader context. This research could employ observational studies, self-report measures, and experimental designs to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the behavioral dynamics of agoraphobia.

Expanding the scope of analysis to other literary works and media representations of agoraphobia would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the disorder. Comparing and contrasting the portrayals of agoraphobia across different narratives could shed light on the variations in

stimulus-response patterns and reinforce the validity of behaviorism theory in understanding the condition. Lastly, future research should explore the efficacy of behaviorally-oriented interventions, such as exposure therapy, in the context of agoraphobia. Investigating the effectiveness of these treatments and identifying potential.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the novel *Highly Illogical Behavior* (2016) by John Corey Whaley, it can be concluded how Solomon the main character of the novel spends his day with agoraphobia which is part of anxiety disorder, agoraphobia makes Solomon unable to leave the house for three years, this makes Solomon a person who is closed from the outside world, especially in relationships with other people, he only communicates with his family in their house. Solomon's father and mother wanted their children to recover from anxiety disorder, but Solomon's desire to recover at that time was not yet possible, because Solomon was comfortable in his home. This was also supported by the sufficient Solomon family economic situation. from food needs to entertainment, such as Wi-Fi, video games, TV, and everything in one's house. This is having very big impact on Solomon lives such his social, sexuality and Solomon's future Thus, Solomon does not have the urge to leave the house. Until Solomon met Lisa, who at that time wanted to enter psychology school, wanted to find children with mental health disorders. Lisa looked for Solomon and approached Solomon and his family. Lisa slowly helped Solomon to get well, until finally Solomon realized that the people he loved really wanted to get well and become normal, especially his grandmother. when his grandmother was being treated in the hospital, Solomon had a very strong urge to overcome his anxiety and be able to go out of his house, then Solomon, went out for the first time assisted by Lisa and Clark, Lisa's boyfriend.

Mental health is very important for everyone, it will affect daily behavior and those around them. Mental illness cannot be underestimated, because it can have fatal consequences for the lives of those who suffer. as family and friends, we must have awareness of the people closest to us, even to ourselves. if we find symptoms of mental illness it would be better to deal with it immediately.

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Based on conclusion researcher noted that role of family is very important to build of behavior on children when they in phase of growing up, as stated by John B. Watson that behavior is influenced by the environment, and the environment shapes one's behavior. the family is the first external stimulus on children. therefore, the role of the family in shaping children's behavior is very important.

The researcher would like to offer some recommendations for other researchers to consider in their subsequent research based on the conclusions and findings from this study. Understanding anxiety disorders, particularly agoraphobia, in its whole is advised. This study's author believes that it will serve as motivation for future studies. Not to mention, the author genuinely hopes that readers will rectify any errors in this study.

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