

# Character Emotions in the Novel Please Look After Mom by Kyung-Sook Shin (Literary Analysis from The Perspective of Krech & Krutchfield's Psychology)

Original Article

**Irawati Mohamad<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohamad Karmin Baruadi<sup>2</sup>, Herman Didipu<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1-3</sup>Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Faculty of Literature and Culture, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia

Email: <sup>1)</sup> [irawatomohamad24@gmail.com](mailto:irawatomohamad24@gmail.com), <sup>2)</sup> [karminbaruadi11@gmail.com](mailto:karminbaruadi11@gmail.com), <sup>3)</sup> [hermandidipu@ung.ac.id](mailto:hermandidipu@ung.ac.id)

**Received : 11 December - 2025**

**Accepted : 30 December - 2025**

**Published online : 13 January - 2026**

## Abstract

The novel Please Look After Mom by Kyung-Sook Shin is a novel that describes the regret felt by each character due to the loss of their mother. Each emotion felt by the characters describes a psychological condition related to Krech & Crutchfield's psychology. This study aims to classify the forms of emotion experienced by the characters and describe the factors that cause the emotions felt by the characters in Kyung-Sook Shin's novel Please Look After Mom. This study uses a qualitative descriptive analysis approach. This study employs Krech & Crutchfield's psychological theory of emotions, utilizing a six-classification framework. Data collection techniques are carried out by reading and noting down things related to the study, then presenting the data by compiling important points. Based on the analysis, emotions are classified into six categories: (1) basic emotions; (2) emotions related to sensory stimulation; (3) emotions related to self-assessment; (4) emotions related to other people; (5) appreciative emotions; and (6) moods. The conclusion shows that there are 86 data points related to emotions based on this classification. The study's findings have implications for the development of literary psychology studies, particularly in understanding emotions. This research can also be utilized as literary learning material to enhance emotional awareness and deepen students' or readers' understanding of characters and human life. Therefore, this study is expected to broaden knowledge in the field of literary psychology and contribute to a deeper understanding of various types of emotions experienced by characters as representations of human emotional experiences.

**Keywords:** Character Emotions, Emotion Classification, Krech & Crutchfield Psychology, Literary Psychology, Please Look After Mom Novel.

## 1. Introduction

Emotions are an important aspect of human life because they play a role in shaping attitudes, behaviour, and the way individuals interpret their life experiences. Therefore, analysing the emotions of characters is an important part of uncovering the psychological meaning of literary works, especially novels. Literary psychology is a branch of literary studies that connects psychology and literature, particularly in the study of the psychology of characters, authors, and readers. According to Endraswara (2012), literary psychology, especially in the creation of characters, plays a significant role in understanding character traits, providing feedback on character issues, exploring the emotional aspects of characters, and revealing internal and external conflicts.

Personality psychology is included in literary psychology, which is related to the personalities or emotions of the characters in a novel. Characters in novels cannot be separated from their personalities and mentalities. According to Serafina (2022), the main characters in



a literary work are created by the author to highlight strong personalities so that they are able to drive the intrinsic elements in a story, including in a novel. As expressed by Krech and Crutchfield (1958), basic emotions such as joy, anger, fear, and sadness often arise in a person, triggered by certain situations that can increase tension levels. The classification of emotions includes feelings such as joy, anger, fear, sadness, pain, disgust, pleasure, success and failure, pride and shame, guilt and regret, love, and hate. All of these emotions exist in the human soul, including the characters in a novel (Enus et al., 2023).

Several previous studies have examined the emotions of characters in literary works using various psychological approaches, such as Freud's psychoanalysis (Niaz et al., 2019), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Ronie & Hellystia, 2019), and humanistic psychology (Lestari et al., 2019). However, studies that specifically use Krech & Crutchfield's emotion theory are still relatively limited, and some are incomplete in their systematic application of this theory to the categories of basic emotions, emotions related to sensory stimulation, emotions related to self-assessment, emotions related to other people, appreciative emotions, and moods. Kyung-Sook Shin's novel *Please Look After Mom* represents a wide range of emotions after the disappearance of the character Mother. There is still little research that specifically examines the emotions of the characters and the causes of these emotions in this novel. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by classifying and describing the emotions and their causes. This study will focus on the classification of characters' emotions and the factors that cause the emotions of the characters in the novel *Please Look After Mom* using a literary study based on the psychological perspective of David Krech & Richard Crutchfield.

## 2. Literature Review

Emotions are feelings that refer to a person's response to a situation or to themselves. Emotions are not only spontaneous but are also influenced by life experiences. The classification of emotions based on the perspective of David Krech & Richard Crutchfield is divided into basic emotions (happiness, fear, anger, sadness), emotions related to sensory stimulation (pain, disgust, pleasure), emotions related to self-assessment (shame, pride, guilt and regret), emotions related to other people (love, hate, pity), appreciative emotions (humour and laughter, beauty, wonder and admiration, and mood (anxiety) (Mubarok & Nurindah, 2023). Literary psychology is closely related to one another because it studies the psychological elements of characters in literary works, including the behaviour and actions of characters in literary works, including novels.

### 2.1. Theory of Emotions

Emotions are psychological reactions that arise when a person faces a particular situation. Al Baqi (2015) describes human feelings based on their modality, which can be divided into three categories, namely moods that reflect general emotional states, feelings that refer to responses or reactions to situations, and emotions as intense and temporary active responses to specific events.

### 2.2. Literary Psychology

Literary psychology is an approach that examines the behaviour, thoughts, and emotions of characters in literary works. Minderop (2010) also highlights that the appeal of literary psychology lies in its ability to explore human issues that provide an insight into the human soul. This involves the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of individuals. Meanwhile, Ratna (2011) notes that there are three approaches that can be taken to understand the relation among psychology and literature, namely, understanding the

psychological elements of the author as a writer, understanding the psychological elements of fictional characters in literary works, and understanding the psychological elements of readers.

### 2.3. The Concept of Emotion According to Krech & Crutchfield

According to Krech and Crutchfield (1958), there are six classifications of emotions, namely basic emotions, emotions related to sensory stimulation, emotions related to self-assessment, emotions related to other people, appreciative emotions, and moods.

- a. Basic emotions are feelings that arise in certain situations. Examples include joy, fear, anger, and sadness.
- b. Emotions related to sensory stimulation are emotions related to the senses. Examples include pain, disgust, and pleasure.
- c. Emotions related to self-assessment are feelings that must be done with a person's perception of their own behaviour. Examples include shame, pride, guilt, and regret.
- d. Emotions related to other people are emotions based on empathy to understand and feel the feelings of others. Examples include love, hate, and pity.
- e. Appreciative emotions are emotions that arise when a person feels appreciation for something. Examples include humour and laughter, a sense of beauty, and feelings of wonder and admiration.
- f. Mood is a feeling experienced by a person that arises at a particular time because moods can change at any time depending on the situation. An example is anxiety.

### 2.4. Previous Research

Research on the emotions of characters in literary works has been conducted by several researchers previously. Research conducted by Septiana et al. (2020) classified the emotions of the character Nathan in the novel *Dear Nathan* by Erisca Febriani: a study from David Krech's perspective. The findings of this study detail seven types of emotions that can be identified in the character Nathan. Furthermore, research by Popatoâ et al. (2022) examined the emotions of the main character in Kiera Cass's novel *The Siren: a literary psychology analysis*. The findings of this study show that the emotions of the main character in the novel cover the entire spectrum of emotional classifications, including basic emotions such as happiness, anger, fear, and sadness. Emotions related to sensory stimulation, such as pain, disgust, and happiness, were also identified. In addition, emotions related to self-assessment, such as feelings of success and failure, pride and shame, as well as guilt and regret, were also observed. Finally, emotions towards other people, such as love and hatred, were also part of this analysis. Another study by Yuliana (2018) classified the emotions of characters in the novel *Maryam* by Okky Madasari. The results of the study show that there are seven classifications of emotions found in the characters Maryam, Maryam's parents, Alam, Umar, and Fatimah. These classifications of emotions are sadness, guilt, hatred, pent-up guilt, love, self-punishment, and shame. While emotions in literature are widely studied, Krech & Crutchfield's theory has rarely been applied, specifically to the novel *Please Look After Mom*. This study aims to fill this gap by categorising the emotions of the characters into the six classifications of emotions according to Krech & Crutchfield.

## 3. Methods

This study utilises a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis research type, as it aims to describe the forms, classifications, and causes of the characters' emotions in the novel *Please Look After Mom* based on Krech & Crutchfield's psychological theory. According to Sugiyono (2011), qualitative research methods are often referred to as naturalistic research

methods because the research is conducted under natural conditions. Qualitative methods are used to obtain in-depth data and data that contains real meaning. According to Ratna (2022), descriptive analysis is a method used to describe facts that are then compiled into an analysis.

### 3.1. Data Sources

The source of data for this study is a translated novel entitled *Please Look After Mom*, written by Kyung-Sook Shin and translated by Tanti Lesmana. The data consists of descriptions of the characters' emotions in the form of narrative quotations, dialogues, and other text passages that reveal the characters' emotional expressions.

### 3.2. Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected by carefully reading the novel *Please Look After Mom*, marking dialogues, narratives, or characters' actions related to emotions and causes of emotions, coding the data, and analysing the data obtained according to the instrument table.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The steps of data analysis in this study are as follows: first, reading the novel *Please Look After Mom*; classifying various emotions based on the perspective of Krech & Crutchfield; examining all characters who experience various emotions; examining the causes of the emotions felt by the characters; and concluding the classification and causes of the emotions felt by the characters.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are (1) the emotional forms of the characters in the novel *Please Look After Mom*, and (2) the causes of the characters' emotions in the novel *Please Look After Mom*. From the analysis, 86 data points were found that indicate the emotional forms and causes of the characters' emotions.

### 4.1. The Emotional Form of Characters

#### 4.1.1. Basic Emotions

The basic emotions in this novel appear in the form of joy, sadness, anger, and fear. The most dominant emotion is the sadness felt by the character of the Father.

*“Your eyes are sore from crying. How can your wife resist boasting about her daughter to this young woman?” (Shin, 2020).*

The intense sadness felt by the father because he had just found out that his wife had never boasted about their son, who was a writer, to other people because she felt uncomfortable admitting that she was the mother of a famous writer. The pain of tears illustrates the deep sadness felt by the father because he had just found out that his wife was like that outside the home. The father even asked himself how his wife had been able to refrain from boasting about her children all this time.

#### 4.1.2. Emotions associated with sensory stimulation

These sensory stimulation emotions arise from pain, disgust, and pleasure.

*“Although Mother could cope with the excruciating pain, she could not escape her headache, and she was unable to smile even a little, let alone cry. She did not even*

*understand your suggestion to take her to the hospital. When you helped her into the house, she walked haltingly, trying to endure the pain.” (Shin, 2020).*

Park So-nyo felt pain, but she still tried to endure it. However, the sentence ‘She couldn't escape the pain in her head’ shows that the suffering she experienced did not go away, causing her to continue to be tormented until she was unable to smile or cry. This illustrates that the overwhelming pain prevents one from thinking clearly, so much so that Park So-nyo did not even understand when her child wanted to take her to the hospital. It also illustrates a person's inability to express their pain.

#### **4.1.3. Emotions related to self-assessment**

These emotions of self-assessment arise from feelings of shame, pride, guilt and regret. The most dominant emotions are guilt and regret, which are felt by the character Chi-hon.

*“Where were you? You remained silent. You only found out about Mother's disappearance after four days had passed. You all blamed each other for Mother's disappearance.” (Shin, 2020).*

Chi-hon felt very guilty for realising too late that his mother had disappeared. Chi-hon also felt guilty for not immediately knowing that his mother had disappeared; he only found out after four days had passed. This shows that his indifference caused a lasting sense of guilt in his heart. His brother's words made Chi-hon fall silent because previously they had all blamed each other for their mother's disappearance.

#### **4.1.4. Emotions related to other people**

These emotions related to other people arise from feelings of love and compassion. The most dominant emotion is the love experienced by the character Park So-nyo.

*“Mother's love for Hyong-chol was so great that she would make a special bowl of noodles for him when he came home late from school.” (Shin, 2020).*

Park So-nyo shows her love as a mother to her son through simple actions, such as making special noodles for him when Hyong-chol comes home late from school. A mother's love is boundless; a mother always prioritises her children's needs without expecting anything in return. Park So-nyo's love is proven through her actions, without the need for words.

#### **4.1.5. Appreciative emotions**

This appreciative emotion arises from a sense of humour and laughter, a sense of beauty, and a sense of wonder and awe.

*“You pass under a magnificent painted ceiling and statues that line the walls as far as the eye can see. There must be a gift shop inside this museum, and perhaps they sell red wooden rosaries. You quickly slip through the crowd in search of this red wooden rosary, but you pause for a moment at the entrance to the Sistine Chapel” (Shin, 2020).*

Chi-hon was amazed by the grandeur of the museum he visited. The phrase ‘magnificent painted ceilings’ evokes a sense of beauty that captivates anyone who sees it. The character paused for a moment to show that he was truly amazed by the beauty he saw.

#### 4.1.6. Mood

This mood stems from the anxiety felt by the character Chi-hon.

*“Since hearing the news of Mother's disappearance, your mind has been in turmoil and unable to focus. You are besieged by memories that had long been forgotten but have now resurfaced unexpectedly” (Shin, 2020).*

The anxiety Chi-hon felt after hearing about his mother's disappearance left him distraught. His distraught state of mind shows that Chi-hon was shaken and unable to focus on controlling his emotions. The loss of a loved one, especially a mother, leaves the bereaved feeling anxious, with memories of that person constantly running through their mind.

#### 4.2. Causes of Emotions

Emotions are caused by various factors that can be influenced by internal and external factors.

a. Basic emotions

The father feels sad because he has lost his wife. He feels sad because his wife had always refrained from boasting about their daughter, the author, to other people because she was ashamed of her inability to read. The father often cries at home since losing his wife. His wife used to always be at home and cook for him, but for a long time now, he has not been able to see that scene again.

b. Emotions related to sensory stimulation

The physical pain felt by the character Park So-nyo is a headache so severe that she is unable to feel anything other than pain. Park So-nyo is also unable to respond to anything her child says because of the pain.

c. Emotions related to self-assessment

The character Chi-hon feels very guilty because he only realised his mother had disappeared after four days had passed. Chi-hon also feels regretful because she did not fulfil her mother's wish to wear the dress she had suggested when her mother was still alive and healthy.

d. Emotions related to other people

Park So-nyo's great love for all her children means she will do everything she can to make them happy. Park So-nyo always cooked for her whole family because that was all she could give as a wife and mother. Park So-nyo also showed her love for her children by stroking their heads. Park So-nyo also allowed herself to go hungry as long as all her children could eat.

e. Appreciative emotions

The character Chi-hon is amazed by the sight that greets him when he enters the museum. The magnificent paintings amaze him, and when Chi-hon enters the Sistine Chapel, he pauses for a moment to admire its beauty. The character does not just see, but is able to feel this emotion emotionally by stopping and paying attention to appreciate the atmosphere of the Sistine Chapel.

f. Mood

Chi-hon felt anxious when he heard that his mother was missing and feared that something bad had happened to her, causing his mind to become confused and unfocused. Chi-hon also felt anxious when he was the main character in a ceremony to present a book he had written to the blind because he was afraid of being late.

### 4.3. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it appears that the emotions of the characters in the novel *Please Look After Mom* are predominantly influenced by family relationships. The characters experience various internal conflicts after Park So-nyo disappears. This study provides a new perspective in literary psychology through the application of Krech & Crutchfield's psychological theory, which emphasises six structured classifications of emotions. This differs from other approaches to literary psychology, such as Freud's psychoanalysis, which focuses on unconscious conflicts, or Maslow's hierarchy theory, which focuses on the fulfilment of human needs. The Krech & Crutchfield approach allows for a more specific analysis of characters' emotions through the classification of emotions, namely basic emotions, emotions related to sensory stimulation, emotions related to self-assessment, emotions related to other people, appreciative emotions, and moods. Through this approach, the emotions of the characters are not only understood as psychological responses but also as responses that can arise from sensory stimuli, other people, social relationships, and the surrounding situation. The results of the study show that the emotions of the characters in the novel *Please Look After Mom* do not stand alone but are interconnected, forming a more complex emotional dynamic, especially after the loss of the mother character.

The dominant emotion in basic emotions is sadness because sadness arises not only from loss but also from concern. This sadness arises because a person is unable to fulfil the expectations of others or themselves. This emotion is a sincere emotion because it expresses love, regret, and longing that cannot be expressed. Emotional bonds with family, friends, and loved ones make loss painful, especially if there is no opportunity to correct the mistakes that have been made.

The dominant emotion in emotions related to sensory stimulation is the physical pain felt by the character Park So-nyo. Pain is not only related to the physical, but also to the loss of function, consciousness, and the body's ability to respond to something. Apart from the physical, pain is also related to emotional conditions such as stress and inner pressure that affect loss of appetite and sleep disorders.

Guilt and regret are the dominant emotions in self-assessment. In general, humans often underestimate the little things around them, including the attention or presence of someone beside them. So, when that person leaves, they realise that they have been neglecting something valuable in their life. Guilt makes people tend to improve themselves, while regret becomes a turning point that they have been making mistakes all this time.

Love in emotions related to other people is not only through words but also through real actions in the form of attention, care, and sacrifice that show how much love one has. Love appears in various relationships, such as family, friendship, and romantic partners, to fulfil the emotional needs of others without feeling burdened.

The beauty of appreciative emotions leads humans to reflect or pause for a moment to absorb the warmth, peace, longing, and even sadness of a particular object. Beauty calms the mind, reduces mental burdens, and heals emotional wounds. Beauty can be a connection between humans and the world.

Anxiety greatly affects one's mood, causing it to become chaotic. Anxiety is not only about feelings that fill the mind but can also affect the body, such as an increased heart rate, shortness of breath, and cold sweats. In everyday life, anxiety often arises in situations involving social judgement because humans fear not being accepted.

Through Krech & Crutchfield's approach, it can be seen how emotions such as sadness, physical pain, guilt, love, beauty, and anxiety can develop from basic emotions into more complex moods. These findings enrich the study of literary psychology by offering a deeper

understanding of the emotional processes of characters as representations of human emotional experiences in real life.

## 5. Conclusion

This study shows that Kyung-Sook Shin's novel *Please Look After Mom* contains a variety of emotions based on Krech & Crutchfield's psychological theory. From the analysis based on two research focuses, there were 86 data points from six emotional classifications. Of the 17 emotions according to Krech & Cruthfield, only 16 emotions were found. The emotion of hatred was not found because the characters did not show hatred towards each other but rather emphasised regret, sadness, and love. Based on Krech & Crutchfield's theory of emotions, the emotions of the characters in this novel can be classified into six categories, namely basic emotions, emotions related to sensory stimulation, emotions related to self-assessment, emotions related to other people, appreciative emotions, and moods. This study shows that the loss of a mother figure can cause various conflicts and emotions in other characters related to the mother figure. The most dominant emotions are sadness, pain, guilt and regret, love, beauty, and anxiety. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the application of Krech & Crutchfield's psychological approach can effectively reveal the dynamics of the characters' emotional experiences in literary works and contribute to the development of literary psychology studies, especially in the analysis of novel characters' emotions. The novel *Please Look After Mom* not only depicts a story of loss, but also an emotional journey full of joy, sorrow, love, pain, and regret. This novel also successfully depicts the emotional dynamics of the characters well.

## 6. References

- Al Baqi, S. (2015). Ekspresi emosi marah. *Buletin Psikologi*, 23(1), 22–30.
- Endraswara, S. (2012). *Filsafat sastra: Hakikat, metodologi, dan teori*. Yogyakarta: Layar Kata.
- Enus, A. A., Haerussaleh, & Huda, N. (2023). Emotional Dynamics of the Main Character in the Novel *London Love Story* by Tisa TS: (Study of Literature Psychology). *TRANSFORMATIONAL LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW IN LEARNING*, 1(3), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.55047/transtool.v1i3.539>
- Krech, D., & Crutchfield, R. S. (1958). *Elements of psychology*. Knopf.
- Lestari, S., Waluyo, H. J., & Wardani, N. E. (2019). Humanistic Psychology Study of Abraham Maslow on the Main Character in *Tiba Sebelum Berangkat* Novel by Faisal Oddang. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 2(1), 110–118.
- Minderop, A. (2010). *Psikologi sastra: karya, metode, teori, dan contoh kasus*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Mubarok, A. F., & Nurindah, S. (2023). Overcoming Affective Factors in Language Learning: The Role of Motivation, Anxiety, and Self-Confidence. *TRANSFORMATIONAL LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW IN LEARNING*, 2(2), 16–23. <https://doi.org/10.55047/transtool.v2i2.1353>
- Niaz, A., Stanikzai, S. M., & Sahibzada, J. (2019). Review of Freud's psychoanalysis approach to literary studies. *American International Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(2), 35–44.
- Popatoâ, C. Y., Sigarlaki, S. J., & Ranuntu, G. C. (2022). Emosi Tokoh Utama Dalam Novel the *Siren* Karya Kiera Cass: Analisis Psikologi Sastra. *Jurnal Elektronik Fakultas Sastra Universitas Sam Ratulangi*, 36.

- Ratna, N. K. (2011). *Teori, metode, dan teknik penelitian sastra* (8th ed.). Pustaka Pelajar.
- Ronie, F. I. M., & Hellystia, D. (2019). Hierarchy of needs analysis of the main character of a novel entitled flawed by cecelia ahern. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(2), 146–154.
- Septiana, A., Murahim, M., & Marii, M. (2020). Klasifikasi Emosi Tokoh Nathan Dalam Novel Dear Nathan Karya Erisca Febriani: Kajian Perspektif David Krech: Nathan's Emotion Classification in the Novel Dear Nathan by Erisca Febriani: Study of David Krech's Perspective. *Jurnal Bastrindo*, 1(1), 333620.
- Serafina, S. P. (2022). *Kepribadian Tokoh Utama dalam Novel My Lecturer My Husband karya Gitlicious (Pendekatan Psikologi Sastra)*. IKIP PGRI PONTIANAK.
- Shin, K. (2020). *Please Look After Mom*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Sugiyono. (2024). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (2nd ed.). Alfabeta.
- Yuliana, S. R. (2018). *Klasifikasi Emosi Tokoh dalam Novel Maryam Karya Okky Madasari Kajian Psikologi Sastra David Krech*. Universitas Negeri Makassar.