

Room by emma donoghue. hermeneutic interpretation

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Exegesis: Signification Processes in Room

The “ other” co-creates our physiological life which, in result, is used through signified practices. From the material discussed in class, signifiers are known as any gesture, word, or various image that give significance to a deeper meaning if we so choose take them into consideration. Signifiers play a role in shaping how we interpret different events that happen within our lifetime. Writing is mediated, which means we must interpret it to have a better understanding.

The ability to discover significance through the signified content is know as hermeneutic interpretation. Hermeneutic interpretation involves removing your own ideology out of the way so that there is a sense of selflessness. The definition of hermeneutics can also be better understood as the ability to cross over between self and other through the use of interpretation, translation, and inseparable.

Jack’s identity inside the room can be said as curious, abstract, and rather outside the box in many ways because it is a difference of norms. When analyzing who self is in relation to other, it’s clear that Jack uses hermeneutics with Ma because she is all he has known since birth. This occurs when Ma and Jack are inseparable in room. Ma has to take it upon herself to teach Jack how to speak and learn basic functions when she uses hermeneutics to understand Jack- he sees the world from a different viewpoint than she does. In the book, Jack is in harmony with the room in regards to having the questioning to distinguish the real from the fake in his

mind along with what Ma tells him. With the above observations in mind, it can be determined that the point of view of the book *Room* is “inside the boy’s head”. (Intrapersonal: occurring within the individual mind or self) from the signified content of Jack.

Jack views his bed to be a trampoline throughout the text. This understanding shows that Jack is pragmatic and shows how he uses the room and all the elements that make up the room to learn various phenomena. Ma is the only person who provides Jack with a sense of comfort and this is significant because they begin to make objects in the room have signified content beyond the structural meanings. A signifier of this is “Melted spoon”, and can be interpreted multiple ways in the sense that it is an interrogation of ourselves. “Ma doesn’t like Melted Spoon but he’s my favorite because he’s not the same” (Donoghue) “Melted spoon” is also significant when Jack is no longer in the room because he feels like he’s not the same as everyone else outside of Room. Ma allows Jack to watch television while in the room but she teaches Jack that some things are real and some are just tv. “Vegetables are real but ice cream is on TV” (Donoghue). This signified content is significant because it shows how Jack’s life as he was growing up has been about what is actually available to him. This signifier shows survival and abuse because Jack has never been able to have ice cream. This play of signifiers is also of significance because Jack is not sure whether he is real or the people on TV are real. Jack only knows the eleven feet by eleven feet space that Ma and him live in twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Jack also questions other things that seem to be

common sense outside of the room. For example, in the beginning of the book it's Jack's birthday, " Today I'm five. I was four last night going to sleep in Wardrobe, but when I wake up in Bed in the dark I'm changed to five, abracadabra. Before that I was three, then two, then one, then zero. ' Was I minus numbers?'" (Donoghue).

Ma is really in a tough situation with all of the elements and restraints that she is forced to abide by with Jack in the room. She has done an incredible job with how she adapts from struggling through a tough life to the transition of meeting Old Nick and raising Jack in such a remote and secluded space. Ma is forced to become someone else than she had previously been. The woman that she became outside of the room is radically different. Not only that, but once when she gets out of the room she makes a suicide attempt. While in the room Ma looks to religion to bless Jack and herself with freedom from the confinement they are currently dealing with. The confinement of living was so difficult to raise Jack in, so she decided that she was going to push the idea of prayer into Jack's life. Ma ultimately wanted to give Jack a sense of hope as well as have him recognize and be grateful for what he does have.

On page 36 of the book the dialogue states " OK OK can I have a slice?" The boy recognizes sarcasm based on " twisty Old Nick's voice." Ma's relationship with old Nick is threatening because she has been raped and abused in the past and that's how Jack came to be. On page 103, the term " rug" is put under erasure in the passage that talks about the giant bulldozer.

The rug itself is beyond just the rug just like the trampoline. Ma does it to protect Jack's physical and mental health.

On page 128, when Ma is trying to explain to Jack that they need to escape. Ma says, "'No Jack please.' Jack says, ' I'm too scared... I won't do it... not ever and I hate you.' Ma's breathing funny, she sits down on the Floor. ' That's all right' Ma responds and Jack thinks to himself how can it be alright if I hate her.'" (Donoghue). This shows the attachment and the struggle of the idea of dividing with Ma. This is different than other cases because he can hate but still love because of the connection he has with Ma. Ma uses him as he lacks the ability to fathom reality. On page 138 Jack says, " I'm not in room am I still me." This example shows how Jack is not psychologically formed and off to see why he needs to escape. These are all developmental problems that he had developed over time because of being in the room.

Jack has a tendency when he is outside the room to experience night terrors that involve the teeth. When he was inside the room he gets a look at Ma's tooth breaking in front of him. After looking further into this matter, and comparing my opinions with others' (<http://roomdounghuepotvin.weebly.com/personal-reflection.html>, February, 24, 2015) the idea of having bad dreams about teeth portray Jack to be rather in a struggle with his life. Jack keeps the broken tooth of his Ma that he stored in his socks during his escape so that he always has a piece of her. This piece of signified content is significant in her personally in the relationship with one another because when they were inside of the room, they did not have access to a dentist office. The event of actually watching Ma's tooth break right in front of him

and the struggle that he is having coping without her outside of the room symbolizes the connection the two share between one another and the difficulty Jack is experiencing learning new things without her.

Jack spends time in his grandma's neighborhood while Ma is at the clinic. Jack is overwhelmed by all of the chaos that the outside world has to offer and feels like he cannot help Ma while she is spending her time at the clinic. Ma's tooth is also one of the only sentimental items that he took back with him in the escape so having it outside the room while she is gone is even more important to him after she tries to commit suicide. The tooth is a signifier of the signified content that people would normally just see to be used for chewing and smiling. Jack's intrapersonal relation towards this signified content has a lot of significance for his life as well as having a part of Ma with him because of the close bond that they share with the self/other relationship. When he accidentally swallowed the tooth, Jack wonders if that means he will always have with him a part of Ma inside of him (Schmid, P. F. 2001).

After Jack spends time apart from Ma, she is unable to breastfeed him. But the time spent apart also makes Jack realize that he doesn't need to be breastfed anymore. There is a strong presence of a sacred divine between self and other when recognizing fidelity and or authenticity. This is a good example of the term we discussed in class this term known as essential freedoms. Essential freedoms are senses of freedom that are both horrific and liberating. Jack is going through this "freedom" because he is without Ma when he is outside of the room.

Jack recognizes that he has a responsibility and lacks authenticity to fully understand that responsibility on a structural basis. Jack says to Ma, " Let's just stay," when she was plotting their escape because he is worried about losing her and everything not being normal (Donoghue). I-thou in reference to the notes cover in Martin Buber's studies are moments when ego fades away and allows a person to be or feel past any personal needs and wants. This is dialogical in the sense that it is from self to either and it is a genuine dialogue. On page 131 Jackson is " who's anybody" and this is because Jack does not understand there are other people. His relationship with mom shows the inseparability between self and other in relation to Martin Buber's I/thou.

Absence within room signifier is put under erasure differing from outside of the room to ultimately protect. Playfulness is Ma's game in regards to looking after jack's well being and helping him to thrive. Experimental lifestyles give jack' identity and overall shaping because of the difficulty to objectify things causing him to be rather inchoate. On page 145 of the text, I found the differing/deferring with how Ma had a full presence in the room with the events with Officer Oh. Throughout this exegesis of the text, the emotional roller coaster from the perspective of Jack and to think about how hard that would be to live like they did. This book was a perfect book to do an exegesis based off the material we covered in class. As a business student the course is not the easiest but the book has had me keeping a close eye about the play of signifiers in my everyday interactions and the signified content I have with various people in and outside my kinship..