

## CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE PROTAGONIST'S WORRY IN DANIELLE STEEL'S NOVEL *FAMILY TIES*

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### Abstract

This research analyses the causes and effects of the protagonist's worry in Danielle Steel's novel *Family Ties*, a story of woman, Annie Ferguson, who must become a mother in her bachelorette. She always worries about the future of her sister's children. This research applied the theory of worry proposed by Graham (2006), who said that worry is "prominent feature of most anxiety-based disorders including generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobias obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder". The research is completed by using descriptive qualitative method in which the finding is presented in the form of description. The data of this study is obtained from the novel *Family Ties* by Danielle Steel. The analysis finds that the dominant causes of the protagonist's worry come from her nephews' life which affects her life negatively. The effects of her worry will be a lesson for human life because every human being certainly has worry feeling in their life in certain situations.

**Keywords:** Cause, Effect, Protagonist, Worry

### 1. Introduction

Danielle Steel is an active person which is loved her career as an author in writing world. Her novel has been translated into 29 languages and can be found in 47 countries. In 1989, she was listed in *Guinness Book of World Records* for the most consecutive weeks of any author-381 consecutive weeks at the time. It is proven by her achievement in writing a novel and other work as an American novelist, currently the bestselling author alive and the fourth bestselling fiction author of all time, with over 800 million copies sold. One of her best selling novel is *Family Ties*.

*Family Ties* a novel by Danielle Steel was published by Delacorte Press in June 2010. It is Steel's eighty first novel, talking about Annie Ferguson, a bright young Manhattan architect, talented, and beautiful. Unfortunately, she should become a mother of three orphaned children. They are her sister's children. Because of the plane accident, her sister and husband died in the accident. Since that, she focuses her attention on those children, even she does not care of her own life. Her life is spent for those children. She worries too much about the children's future. Indeed, the fact is that women are more likely to worry more than men, this is supported by Robichaud, et. al (2003) found women to score higher than men on two widely-used worry measures.

Every parent has concerns about the development of their children's life and future. The worry of the protagonist as a reflection of every parent's worry in real life. It makes me

interested to make further analysis. Therefore, this is the reason why I choose 'worry' to be the subject matter in my analysis. It is an important topic because it may help us to achieve the lesson of worry in human life.

## **2. Literature Review**

According to Baldick (2001), protagonist is the main character either in a plot or play, or story and it becomes a limelight of the audiences.

Meanwhile, worry is prominent feature of most anxiety-based disorders including generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobias obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, Graham (2006). This definition is supported by Davey (1992) said that worry has emerged as more specific construct that cannot only be distinguished from a larger subset of cognitive aspects of anxiety, but also studied in its own right.

Matthews (1994) suggest that there are at least three factors or causes that contribute to worry. They are as follows:

1. Negative mood, before, during, and/or after threatening situations.
2. Predominant problem-solving and coping strategies.
3. No good control over the uncertain threats or negative appraisal over bad situation (Papageorgiou and Wells, 2004).

It implies that worry is caused by threatening situation. Then someone who faces the situation will try to make a coping strategies to solve any problems appearing from the situation. Then, when he or she has no good control or positive appraisal towards the situation, he or she will worry in his or her life too much.

Worry affects the process of recovery from stressful and anxiety-provoking events. In addition to these effects, worry has been found to predict both anxious and depressive symptomatology in individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (Ehlers., et. al 1998). Lyubomirsky and Tkach (2004) list the following key consequences associated with worry.

1. Negative affect and depressive symptoms.
2. Negatively biased thinking.
3. Poor problem-solving.
4. Impaired motivation and inhibition of instrumental behaviour.
5. Impaired concentration and cognition.
6. Impaired stress and specific problems (e.g., threats to physical health, impaired social relationships, stress and emotional adjustments).

Insomnia is also associated with worry. Harvey (2000) compared the pre-sleep cognitions of good sleepers to those diagnosed with sleep-onset insomnia. She found that the pre-sleep cognitions of individuals with insomnia were more focused on worries and problems than those without insomnia.

## **3. Research Method**

This research was supported with descriptive qualitative one because the analysis and the finding are accomplished in a descriptive form. As Creswell (2007) states that descriptive qualitative research describes the problem being studied, conditions or relationship that exist, processes that are going on or effects that being felt. The data were taken from the novel.

### **3.1 Technique of Data Analysis**

The data collection in this analysis is conducted with some steps. They are as follows:

1. Finding some theories related to the subject matter that will be the focus in this research.
2. Reading the novel to find the data related to subject matter of this research.
3. Classifying the collected data into respective categories related to the research problem in this research.
4. Collecting the data based on the theories adopted in this research.

## **4. Result and Discussion**

The Protagonist's worry in the novel is seen since her three orphaned children are growing up. During the growth of children is identical with the problem of love in their personal life. Her three orphaned children are Lizzie, Ted, and Katie. The first worry in the novel is come from her eldest niece, Liz. Lizzie is the eldest, 28 years old, working as an editor of jewelry articles on Vogue magazine and having a love relation with a chaotic man. She always works hard for her carrier and has not time to eat. It makes her thin and causes Annie worried, it is seen in the following quotation:

“How was Milan?” Annie asked her, happy to hear her voice. She worried about her. Liz worked so hard, and she was always so stressed. She never had time to eat and had been much too thin for the past three years. It was the look everyone aspired to at Vogue. (Steel. 2010 : 20)

The above quotation shows that the protagonist feels worried about her niece, Liz. Liz gets stressed because of her work and has no time to eat that makes her body get thinner. The protagonist also feel worried because of Liz's relationship with Jean-Louiz, a photographer and work for Vogue magazine too. Jean-Louis has ever meet Annie before, but Annie does not like his style that is dull and messy. Annie's worry about Liz's relationship with Jean-Louiz that is seen in the following quotation:

“He's a lucky guy,” Annie said, and meant it, and not just because Liz was helping him with his work. Liz always gave better than she got. The men she got involved with were always selfish and spoiled, and Annie worried that she sold herself short. She was a beautiful, talented, intelligent young woman. It shocked Annie sometimes when she realized that at twenty-eight, Liz was two years older than she had been when she inherited all of them. And in some ways Liz seemed so young. And she never seemed to think about marriage or settling down. Annie realized that she hadn't set them much of an example on that score, since all she did herself was work, and take care of them when they were young. They had rarely if ever seen her with a date.”  
(Steel. 2010: 21-22)

“In Paris, Jean-Louis and Liz were planning to pick up his son Damien to spend the day and night with him. They had had dinner with friends of Jean-Louis the night before. Lizzie had been having a wonderful time since she arrived. He had a beautiful little apartment on the Left Bank on the quais, with a terrace overlooking the Seine. She loved watching the boats drift by and looking across the city.” (Steel. 2010. 117)

The other cause of the protagonist's worry comes from Ted. Ted who is studying in law major of a university in New York, live in a respective apartment. She worries about his health or his attitude. What makes the protagonist feel worried is that Ted never responds her call. Whenever she calls Ted, his phone always go to voice mail. It is seen in the following quotation:

Annie called Ted several times over the weekend, but his phone always went to voice mail. She finally called Liz and Kate, who was out with friends. "Have you heard from your brother?" she asked them both the same question. He usually checked in with her every few days, and this week he hadn't, and she thought it was strange. "I hope he's okay." Maybe he was sick. But he was never too busy to call her, and she hadn't heard a word from him since the Sunday after Thanksgiving when he'd left. Kate said he hadn't called her, and Liz said the same and that she'd had a busy week herself. They all had, and things were going to be even busier before Christmas and over the holidays. (Steel. 2010: 58-59)

The quotation shows that the protagonist feels worried when she does not know the condition of her nephew, Ted for a long time. On Thanksgiving day, Annie asks his condition and feels suspicious that he has a problem. She knows he is involved with a woman but she does not force Ted to be honest about his relationship. She also thinks about Liz's relationship with her boyfriend again, these make the protagonist feel worried. It is seen in the following quotation:

And as Annie lay in bed, she thought about Ted too, and wondered about the mystery woman who was distracting him. He had seemed dazed through all of Christmas and had disappeared on Christmas night. She had never seen him like that. And she was convinced that Liz was wasting her time with men like Jean-Louis. Liz was having fun and enjoying her career, but guys like Jean-Louis were never going to take care of her, they were too obsessed with themselves. It was hard watching the three of them grow up. (Steel. 2010 : 95-96)

It is clearly seen from the above quotation that Annie thinks about Ted and Liz. It is form of worry. Moreover, the protagonist is worry about Ted becomes worse when she goes to farmer's market and meets Ted together with Pattie and her two children. She shakes hand with the lady and whispers Ted to see her as soon as possible. The protagonist's worry is seen in the following quotation:

Ted looked somber when he met Annie at Bread, which she knew he liked. And when Annie saw him walk toward her, her heart ached for him. He didn't have to say a word to her. She could see that he was in way, way over his head, and he knew it whether he admitted it to her or not. Annie was worried sick about him. They talked about school and her ankle for a few minutes to break the ice, and then Annie got straight to the point. (Steel. 2010 : 175-176)

The quotation shows a worry sick of an aunt to her nephew. Ted can not hide his problem anymore. He admits Pattie loves him and she threatens him if he leaves her. Annie is so shock hearing that, and she claims that the lady is a crazy woman. Ted also does not know if he really

loves Pattie. Annie assumes that is a terror, and instructs Ted to be away from Pattie. It is seen in the following quotation:

“Is this serious? Are you in love with her?” Annie looked at him intently. He didn’t look in love to her. She looked worried.

“I don’t know,” he said honestly, and then he told Annie about Pattie’s threat the night before, to kill herself if he ever left her. He hadn’t planned to tell Annie, but Pattie had shaken him badly and he trusted his aunt’s advice. She was wise, and had always been there for him. Pattie was new to him and seemed a little unstable.

That’s a terrible thing to say to you. She can’t hold on to you by terror and guilt. That’s blackmail, not love,” Annie said, looking outraged.

(Steell. 2010 : 176-177)

“Maybe that’s all she knows how to do. People like that worry me too. Try to take a little distance from her, for your own sake. Tell her you need it.”

(Steel. 2010 : 177)

The above quotations explain that Annie does not want her nephew to be a victim of terror from a lady. She is not sure Ted falls in love with a woman nearly 40 years old. In other words, she believes her nephew was trapped by the widow and she wants him to go away from that lady.

The next protagonist’s worry is come from Katie, her youngest niece. Among her nephews, she has many problems make Annie always have worries in her all time. The first, Katie have relationship with a Musim man, Paul, her boyfreind. She worries about their different religion which may become a trouble in their relationship or in their marriage. It is seen in the following quotation:

All Annie could hope for her was that this was a happy romance but not a lasting relationship that would challenge them too much. But the look in her niece’s eyes said something very different. Annie had never seen her look like this at any boy. And Paul was not a boy, he was a man. Annie could easily see everything that Katie loved about him, but that didn’t mean that a serious relationship between them at their age would be easy. And Annie knew that relationships were challenging enough without adding extreme contrasts to the mix, and backgrounds that were so culturally different in their traditions. It was hard enough to make a relationship work with someone who had grown up in all the same ways. (Steel. 2010 : 86)

Annie was still thinking about it when she went back to her room and sat staring at the plans on her desk. She didn’t know what to think-it was the first time she had ever seen her in love, and she was worried for Kate. They were both fine young people, and she didn’t want them to get hurt.

(Steel. 2010 : 87)

The above quotations show that the protagonist really feels worried about Katie’s relationship with a Muslim man because they have different religion and it is not easy to live with someone with different background.

Furthermore, the protagonist also worries about the tattoo on her niece's body. How her boyfriend's parent's opinion is when they know it? It is seen in the following quotation:

"I'm worried about that too, about his parents, I mean. What if they don't appreciate what a sweet kid she is and judge her by her looks, which I'll admit, even scare me at times? I hate her tattoos. And she is serious about this. I can feel it. I know her. I can tell. She's reading books about his culture," Annie said in a subdued voice. "That's fine with me, but not if she's doing it so she can get married." Annie was getting way ahead of herself. All she could think of now was the future and the potential difficulty of integrating their two worlds." (Steel. 2010 : 88)

The above quotation emphasizes that Annie is really worried about Katie, she imagines that her niece will get married soon and has a big trouble. It is caused by their different life background. It seems like to intergrate two different worlds.

Again, the protagonist also feels worried because of Katie. It happens when there is a letter from Katie's school informing that Katie leaves from school activities for one semester. It is seen in the following quotation:

She decided to open the mail on her desk first. The second letter she opened was from Kate's school, and she suddenly panicked, thinking she had forgotten to pay her tuition. Her accountant usually handled it, but the check could have gotten lost in the mail. Instead, her heart stopped when she saw what the letter said. It confirmed the fact that Kate had dropped out of school for a semester. And Annie's week had been so stressful so far that she was furious the minute she read it. What the hell was Kate doing? Annie forgot everything else she had to do as she dialed Katie's cell phone in a fury. (Steel. 2010 : 140)

The quotation explains that Annie as an aunt of Katie feels worried to what Katie did. Generally, every parents will be surprised and wonder why their child did not go to school. Moreover if it happened for a long time. The protagonist's worry becomes worse when she knows that Katie prefers working at tattoo parlor to completing her study. Annie feels so worried about her future. It is seen in the following quotation:

"I got offered a job that I want to do for one semester. I thought maybe I could do it as an art project or an internship, but they wouldn't let me. So I took a semester off to do it. It's not such a big deal. I'll go back to school next term." (Steel. 2010 : 141)

"I'm going to be doing designs at a tattoo parlor," Katie said quietly, and Annie stared at her in horror.

"Are you crazy? You're giving up a term at Pratt, one of the best design schools in the country, to work in a tattoo parlor? Please tell me you're kidding."

"I'm not kidding. They do some great art. I know I can do some really creative things there. There are some major emerging artists who have gotten their start in tattoo parlors."

"If I didn't love you so much, I'd kill you. Katie, you can't do this. Is it too late to sign up at school for this term?"

“I don’t know. I won’t do it. I’m going to work at the tattoo parlor. I started on Tuesday, and I love it. I’ve already given up my room at the dorm, as of this weekend.” (Steel. 2010 : 142)

The quotations explain that Annie worries about Katie’s future. She wishes her niece can finish her studies well and get a bachelor’s degree, because that will make her easy to get a job later. However, Katie assumes that tattoo as an art and loves it, while Annie disagrees with her. Annie is so worried about Katie’s school activities.

Another cause of the protagonist’s worry is when Katie decides to go with Paul to Tehran. Tehran is Paul’s hometown. What makes her worried is that Katie never goes too far without her. She thinks how if Katie gets sick or accident. Who will help her in Tehran although she knows that Paul’s family stay there. Furthermore, Katie never go to Iran. It is seen in the following quotations:

She said it was the first trip Paul had ever taken with a girl. She told Annie that she had tried to talk Paul out of it, to no avail. And she wasn’t keen on his being responsible for a young girl. What if Katie had an accident or got sick? Annie was worried about that too, although it was comforting to know that Paul had family there who would help.  
(Steel. 2010 : 221)

“I think what you’re doing is foolhardy, and I’m going to worry like crazy about you while you’re there, and Tom told you the same thing and you don’t want to listen to him either. He knows a lot more about Iran than I do, or even Paul.”  
(Steel. 2010 : 247)

The above quotations show that the protagonist feels so worried about Katie’s departure to Tehran. She is worried about katie’s health and she is afraid of something bad will happen to her.

The protagonist’s worry causes some effects on the protagonist’s life. The first is that she does not care with her own life because she feels worry too much about her nephew and niece. She has been old enough, but she has not husband, even a man to be her husband. She is always busy to think about her sister’s children. It is seen in the following quotation:

“If I’m meant to meet a guy, it’ll happen one of these days,” she said philosophically. “Besides, I’m too set in my ways now. And I want to spend holidays and vacations with the kids. A man would interfere with that. And it might upset them.”  
“Don’t you want more in your life than just being an aunt?” Whitney asked her sadly. It didn’t seem fair to Whitney that Annie had sacrificed her own life for her sister’s children, but she didn’t seem to mind, and she was happy as she was. Her own biological clock had run out of batteries years before, without a sound. She had three children she loved and didn’t want more.  
(Steel. 2010 : 15-16)

“I don’t want a guy. I’m happy the way I am. I want them to be happy, and I’m not just going to sit here with my mouth shut if they screw up their lives or make some dumb mistake.” (Steel. 2010 : 89)

The quotations above show that because of the protagonist's worry about her sister's children, she has no time to think about her own life, and she does not want a guy to come into her life, in which she must think about a marriage in her life. However, she does not have special man until she is getting old.

The other second effect of the protagonist's worry is physical pain. It is proved when she has headache when she wakes up in the morning. It happens because she thinks too much about her sister's children. She is worried too much about their life although they have been adult already. It is seen in the following quotation:

And as Annie lay in bed, she thought about Ted too, and wondered about the mystery woman who was distracting him. He had seemed dazed through all of Christmas and had disappeared on Christmas night. She had never seen him like that. And she was convinced that Liz was wasting her time with men like Jean-Louis. Liz was having fun and enjoying her career, but guys like Jean-Louis were never going to take care of her, they were too obsessed with themselves. It was hard watching the three of them grow up.

Annie had a headache when she woke up the next day. Ted and Katie were both already out, and neither had left her a note about their plans. She knew that at their age, they didn't owe her explanations about where they went, and she had no right to ask. Thinking about both of them, Annie made herself a cup of tea and went out for a walk. Whitney called on her cell phone, and she told her about the argument with Katie the night before.

(Steel. 2010 : 95-96)

The quotation shows that the effect of worry can cause a headache to someone. Annie is so worry about her three nephews, and has headache when she wakes up from her sleep. The quotation is also says that she thinks about them before she gets sleep. It means that she has a nuisance in her sleep. This thing is can be categorized as insomnia. Insomnia is the condition of someone that cannot sleep or hard to sleep and has bad effect. This condition makes the protagonist has a headache after she wakes up.

The third effect of the protagonist's worry is an incident that happens to her after visiting Katie's workplace. As descibed in the point of the causes of protagonist's worry previously that Katie works in tattoo parlor makes her aunt Annie becomes shocked. After visiting the place, Annie goes to her workplace that fully of ice. She slips and falls on the ice. It is seen in the following quotations:

Annie wanted to cry as she drove away in a cab. She couldn't get the image of those people out of her head. They had bolts and pierces everywhere. They looked like a scary lot to her. She had one more job site to visit before she went back to her office, and then home at the end of the day.

(Steel. 2010 : 148)

The construction site was another one of her trouble spots right now, and she was fiercely upset when she saw that one of the workmen had left a hose on earlier in the day, and in the freezing weather, the water had turned to ice on the ground. It was an invitation to accidents and another headache she didn't need. She pointed it out to the foreman, and the contractor who was there too, and then, still thinking about Katie and her new job, Annie stepped over the construction debris and hurried out of the site and back toward the street. It was getting late. Her mind was so full of Katie that she



didn't see the last patch of ice she had complained about, and suddenly her high-heeled boots flew into the air, and she came down hard on one foot with a sharp yelp. One of the construction workers had seen her fall and rushed to help her. He picked her up, dusted her off, and steadied her on her feet. But the moment he did, she winced, her stomach flipped over, and she thought she was going to faint from the pain. Someone got her a folding chair, and the pain in her ankle was excruciating.

(Steel. 2010 : 149)

The above quotations show the effect of Annie's worry. She gets accident at her workplace. It happens because she does not focus on her way due to her worry about her sister's children. Because she thinks too much about them, she is lack of sleep, and thin.

## 5. Conclusion

After analyzing the novel completely, it is true that the protagonist has worry as long as she becomes a mother of her three nephews. The causes and the effects of the protagonist's worry are definitely found in the novel after the story in the novel is analyzed well. From the analysis, it can be concluded as follow:

1. To worry is a form of affection.
2. The worry is important for every human being, especially for parents.
3. Worry has positive and negative sides.
4. Every child ever makes a mistake in his or her life.
5. Family ties is more important than others.

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