Room – Character Questions – Old Nick

**Q: Old Nick is described as a “monster” and an “ogre”. What aspects of his behaviour do you consider to be the most monstrous? Explain your answer with reference to the text.**

Based on my reading of the novel “Room” by Emma Donoghue I think Old Nick was monstrous in many ways. He can be described as an evil and violent man. He kidnaps Ma, locks her in Room and repeatedly rapes her. Before Jack was born, Old Nick broke Ma’s wrist when she tried to escape and told her that he would abandon her to starve to death if she ever tried to do it again. Ma became pregnant and Old Nick refused her any medical treatment. He “just stood there” and watched while Ma begged for help and gave birth to a stillborn baby girl. Old Nick is monstrous as he knows exactly what he is doing when he kidnaps Ma, and he has gone to great trouble to make sure Ma can never escape. He is willing to let his captives die rather than get them any medical help. it is his undeniable cruelty that makes Old Nick so monstrous; as he knows exactly what he is doing and continues to make Ma and Jack suffer.

Another reason why Old Nick can be describes is monstrous is because, in my opinion, he is deluded. Even when he believes Jack is very ill, Old Nick refuses to take him to hospital, saying he will get him some medicine the next day. Old Nick tells Ma that she doesn’t appreciate how fortunate she is. He says that “Plenty girls would thank their lucky stars for a setup like this, safe as houses.” He says that Jack has no reason to be afraid of him and seems to think he is kind for buying Jack a jeep. He says “I know boys, I was one once.” I think Old Nick thinks he is the most caring person in the world and he complains that he has to do so much for Ma and expects her to be grateful. Therefore, I think Old Nick is correctly described when he is called a “monster” and an “ogre”.