

**DEFENSE MECHANISM OF CLARICE STARLING
IN *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* MOVIE (2007)**

**DIRECTED BY JONATHAN DEMME:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In reality, human beings cannot avoid their needs, there are many kinds of necessities of life that must be fulfilled to survive their life because human beings as an individual creature are able to fulfill their needs by themselves and to create what they want. When they fulfill their need, they face the problems which come from themselves. Those problems can derive from both internal factors and external factors. Some individuals may see problems as a challenge and drive them to solve them. Meanwhile some individuals give different views, they may see those problems as a burden and have no clues to solve them. To meet his or her needs, an individual has to adapt him or herself to the surrounding environment.

When someone is in danger situations, hence from the people self arise the Defense mechanism. The list of particular defense mechanisms is huge and there is no theoretical consensus on the number of defense mechanisms. Classifying defense mechanisms according to some of their properties (i.e. underlying mechanisms, similarities or connections with personality) has been attempted. Different theorists have different categorizations and conceptualizations of defense mechanisms the term "defense mechanism" is often thought to refer to a definitive singular term for personality traits which arise due to loss or traumatic experiences.

The Silence of the Lambs is one of the most suspenseful psychological thriller movie ever produced. The screenplay of this film is adapted from the novel with the same title written by Thomas Harris. Thomas Harris is an American author of crime novels who was born on April 11, 1940. At 1981, Thomas Harris began to write a novel with

Hannibal Lecter as the main character. Hannibal Lecter is a brilliant forensic psychiatrist turning to be cannibalistic psychopath, sometimes well-known as Hannibal the Cannibal. As of 2008, Thomas Harris had published four novels featuring Hannibal Lecter, *Red Dragon* in 1981, *The Silence of the Lambs* in 1988, *Hannibal* in 1999, and *Hannibal Rising* in 2004. Besides *The Silence of the Lambs*, all the three novels had been filmed also and being succeeds.

The Silence of the Lambs is directed by Jonathan Demme, a Hollywood films director who is better known as a maverick film director for B – films such as *Melvin and Howard* (1980) and *Married to the Mob* (1988). *The Silence of the Lambs* is starring by Sir Anthony Hopkins as Hannibal Lecter, Jodie Foster as Clarice Starling, Scott Glenn as Jack Crawford, Ted Levine as James Gumb or Buffalo Bill, Anthony Heald as Dr. Frederick Chilton, and Brooke Smith as Catherine Martin.

The Silence of the Lambs is a movie that tells about a young and talented FBI trainee named Clarice Starling who is asked by her instructor, Jack Crawford to make psychological behavioral profile of Hannibal Lecter. Hannibal Lecter is the cannibalistic psychotic psychiatrist who is imprisoned in Baltimore Hospital which is run by Dr. Frederick Chilton. In Baltimore Hospital, Lecter placed in a windowless, glassed-in, dungeon-like cell, decorated with his own charcoal or crayon drawings of European cityscapes. Clarice Starling does not allow touching and approaching the glass, she could pass nothing but soft paper without pencils or pens. There must be no staples or paperclips in Lecters' paper. She has to use the sliding food carrier, no exceptions and when Lecter attempts to pass her anything, she forbids accepting it.

When Clarice Starling comes in Lecter's cell, Lecter is standing, ironically still and at attention in his cell, watching her with twinkling, chillingly-dead, blue eyes. His hair is closely-cropped and his head is tilted slightly in her direction. Hannibal Lecter is a

dangerous yet charming cannibalistic murder. In spite of making psychological profile, Starling actually needs Lecter to help her in catching a serial murder named Buffalo Bill. This serial murder chooses big women as his victims and always skins them. Buffalo Bill also places a cocoon on his victims' throat as a symbol of changes or transformation. According to Lecter analysis, Buffalo Bill is a transsexual but he is too disturbed to qualify to sex reassignment surgery. In the middle of investigation, the new victim of Buffalo Bill found on the river bank in West Virginia, she is Frederica Bimmel. At the same time Buffalo Bill is also hostage Catherine Martin, the daughter of Senator Ruth Martin. The case of Buffalo Bill becomes more unsolvable for FBI. Clarice Starling tries vigorously to get much information to catch that serial murder. She is eager to bargain her worst childhood memory in quid pro quo games that is done by Hannibal Lecter. At this game, Starling has to tell Lecter about her worst memory and later Lecter will give the psychological profile of Buffalo Bill to Starling. At the end of the films, Clarice Starling is successfully saved Catherine Martin and she kills Buffalo Bill. She becomes a special agent and on her graduation day, Hannibal Lecter calls her from the narrow street in Caribbean.

The Silence of the Lambs is a major critical success. In United States it is played in 34 weeks with total performance on 8,276 screens from its first release on February, 14 1991. The successful of *The Silence of the Lambs* also happens in United Kingdom, Argentina, Australia, and Germany. In United Kingdom, this thriller film is played in 2,867 screens or 30 weeks. Argentina plays this film in 40 weeks, and Germany plays this film in 16 weeks. *The Silence of the Lambs* is played in 85 screens only in a week in Australia. That good response from public makes *The Silence of the Lambs* which only has \$20,000,000 for its budget; finally gains \$275,726,716 for its worldwide gross.

The good acceptances does not only come from the market, but also from the film expert. They said that this film is generally regarded as a landmark and a modern masterpiece because there are visualizations of both repulsion and psychological acts shown to the audience. It also portrays a distinctive relationship between two very significant characters named Clarice Starling and Hannibal Lecter. *The Silence of the Lambs* was a five-time major Academy Award winner, sweeping Best Picture, Best Actor by Sir Anthony Hopkins as Hannibal Lecter, Best Actress for Jodie Foster as Clarice Starling, Best Director for Jonathan Demme, and Best Adapted Screenplay by Ted Tally. In the Academy's History, that remarkable feat has only been duplicated twice before by *It Happened One Night* (1934), and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975). *The Silence of the Lambs* which get 7 nominations for Oscar is in the second place of most Oscar nominations for a horror film after *The Exorcist* which gains 10 nominations in the first position. Still in 1991, *The Silence of the Lambs* also gets the best picture awards from CHI Awards and the best film from National Board of Review. Jonathan Demme was also nominated for a Golden Globe Award for best director in that year.

In 1992, Ted Tally received an Edgar Award for Best Motion Picture Screenplay. In 1998, *The Silence of the Lambs* was listed as one of the 100 greatest movies in the past 100 years by the American Film Institute. The success of *The Silence of the Lambs* is not only at the film and the cast, but also the original poster for *The Silence of the Lambs* was named best film poster "of the past 35 years" at the Key Art Awards in 2006. The American Film Institute named Hannibal Lecter as portrayed by Anthony Hopkins the number one film villain of all time and Clarice Starling as portrayed by Jodie Foster the seventh greatest film hero of all time.

Besides the good responses, *The Silence of the Lambs* also gains some protest. *The Silence of the Lambs* was criticized by members of the gay community for being what

they perceived as another in a long line of negative on-screen portrayals of the characters in the absence of any positive portrayals. Following the announcement of the film's many nominations, rumors began circulating almost immediately that gay rights groups like Queer Nation were planning to disrupt the live Oscar telecast should the film win any awards. While ultimately no such protests materialized, the rumors did lead to media discussion of Hollywood's attitudes toward sexual minorities and an overview linking the rumored protests to other Academy Awards controversies, in media outlets ranging from the CBS Evening News to *The National Enquirer*. In the years following *The Silence of the Lambs* an increased number of gay-themed films and gay characters were created.

The Silence of the Lambs is an interesting movie; there are four aspects that make this movie really interesting. The first aspect is *The Silence of the Lambs* has an uncommon story. Thomas Harris has written bizarre relationship between Clarice Starling and Hannibal Lecter. Thomas Harris makes amaze when the brilliant psychopathic psychiatrist is willing to help a FBI trainee and how Hannibal Lecter always makes a good behavioral analysis about Buffalo Bill. Thomas Harris very success is in building the character of Hannibal Lecter.

The second aspect is the visualization and the cast of the movie. Jonathan Demme makes the audience feel enthusiastic with this thriller movie, even when the movie shows about the process of autopsy of the Frederica Bimmel, the last victim of Buffalo Bill. The casts of this film also have a valuable part in this film. Sir Anthony Hopkins who plays as Hannibal Lecter is very wonderful actor. He makes the character of Hannibal Lecter be really life. That is why Sir Anthony Hopkins is played in the three films of Hannibal Lecter tetralogy; *Red Dragon*, *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*. So when people talk about Hannibal Lecter, they will also talk about Sir Anthony Hopkins because Hannibal Lecter and Anthony Hopkins had already liked one person. Jodie Foster also

played Clarice Starling very well. Her acting is successfully representing the young FBI trainee who is smart, ambitious, and fearless.

The third there are many good messages which can be found in this movie. One of these messages is about in importance someone life. The last is the way how Clarice Starling tries to deal with her emotional traumatic childhood memory by doing quid pro quo games with Hannibal Lecter in order to get the psychological behavioral profile of Buffalo Bill. In that situation she deals with the dilemma because it means that she has to remember her father's death and other painful experiences, and it can be a good chance too for Hannibal Lecter if he wants to spoil her. In other way, if she does not go along with Lecter's game, Starling will not be able to save Catherine Martin. In that position, she does a lot of way to face her anxiety and makes everything runs perfectly; one of the ways is defense mechanism.

Based on that reason the writer will observe *The Silence of the Lambs* film by using defense mechanism theory by Sigmund Freud. So the writer constructs the title **“Defense Mechanism of Clarice Starling in *The Silence of the Lambs* Movie (2007) Directed by Jonathan Demme: A Psychoanalytic Approach”**.

B. Literary Review

The writer is not the first person who analyzes this movie. To prove the originality of the research the writer fined several previous researches. As far as the writer knows, the researches on the movie *The Silence of The Lambs* have been conducted by students in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and STAIN Salatiga.

The first research is Nur Laila (2005), she has conducted a research entitled “*A descriptive study on the use of American-English address terms in the movie entitled The Silence of The Lambs, a psychoanalytic approach*”. This research is a kind of research

that takes account on the discussion of address term by taking the data from the movie manuscript. The data are all of the dialogue which contains address terms used by characters of the movie. The analyses are limited to the main character, Clarice Starling and the other supporting characters. This research paper elaborates about script conversation and studying about mistake in script conversation in *The Silence of The Lambs*. The present writer wants to focus on analyzing the anxiety reflected in the movie using psychoanalytic approach. Nur Laila finds the structural elements of Clarice Starling's in *The Silence of The Lambs* and also he finds the anxiety reflected in *The Silence of The Lambs* movie is the personality reaction.

Furthermore, it is Yunita Widayawati (2006) in her research entitled “A *Anxiety of Clarice Starling Directed by Jonathan Demme in The Silence of the Lambs Movie (2007): A Psychoanalytic Approach.*” The data of this study are taken from the expression in Thrillers movie. The movie is *The Silence of the Lambs*, this movie tells about a young and talented FBI trainee named Clarice Starling who is asked by her instructor, Jack Crawford to make psychological behavioral profile of Hannibal Lecter. In collecting the data, the writer uses two techniques of collecting data, they are observation and library research. She analyzes the anxiety of the main character's using psychoanalytic approach. She finds the structural elements of Clarice Starling's in *The Silence of the Lambs* and also she finds the anxiety reflected in *The Silence of the Lambs* movie is the personality reaction.

Based on the previous research above, the positioning of this research is to try extending previous studies on psychoanalysis. This study focuses on defense mechanism of Clarice Starling, one of the major characters in the movie by psychoanalytic approach. In the study the researcher gives title “*Defense Mechanism of Clarice Starling in The*

Silence of the Lambs Movie (2007) Directed by Jonathan Demme: A Psychoanalytic Approach.”

C. Problem Statement

According to the background of this study, the writer creates the problem statement into:

“How is defense mechanism reflected in the Clarice Starling character in *The Silence of the Lambs Movie*?”

D. Limitation of the Study

In this study the writer focuses on defense mechanism done by Clarice Starling in *The Silence of the Lambs* movie using psychoanalytic approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie.
2. To analyze the character of Clarice Starling based on psychoanalytic approach

F. Benefits of the Study

The benefits of the study are:

1. Theoretical benefit

To give additional contribution to the other literary research, especially the study of both *The Silence of the Lambs* movie and novel.

2. Practical benefit

The study is hoped to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data sources are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the movie using psychoanalytic perspective. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *The Silence of the Lambs* movie directed by Jonathan Demme and publishing by Orion Pictures in 1991. It is analyzed by using psychoanalytic approach.

3. Data and Data Source

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research.

a. Primary Data Source

The primary data source of the study is *The Silence of the Lambs* movie directed by Jonathan Demme from Orion Pictures.

b. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data sources are books and other sources that support the analysis.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The technique of data collection is library research, the steps are:

- a. Watching the movie several times.
- b. Reading the movie script.

- c. Determining the character that will be analyzed.
- d. Taking notes of important parts in both primary and secondary data.
- e. Classifying and determining the relevant data.
- f. Taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the movie.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with the structural elements of the movie and psychoanalytic approach.

H. Paper Organization

The research organization of “*Defense Mechanism of Clarice Starling in the Silence of the Lambs*” movie: Psychoanalytic Approach” is as follows:

Chapter I is Introduction; it consists of Background of the Study, Literature Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Benefits of the Study, Research Method, and Paper Organization. Chapter II is Theoretical Approach; it consists of Notion of Psychoanalytic, System of Personality, Definition of Anxiety, Definition of Defense Mechanism, Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Structural Elements of Movie, and Theoretical Application. Chapter III is Structural Analysis of *The Silence of the Lambs*; (1) The Structural Elements of the Movie; it consists of Character and Characterization, Casting, Plot, Technical Elements of the Movie, Point of View, Style, and Theme; (2) Discussion. Chapter IV is Analysis of *The Silence of the Lambs* according to Psychoanalytic Approach. Chapter V is Conclusion and Suggestion; it consists of (1) Conclusion; and (2) Suggestion.