

**DEFENSE MECHANISM OF JOHN BRENNAN IN PAUL
HAGGIS'S *THE NEXT THREE DAYS* MOVIE (2010):
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH**



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APPROVAL
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Surakarta, July 2012

The Writer



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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to show the defense mechanism that the major character has by using psychoanalytic approach. It is done by establishing two objectives: the first is analyzing the movie based on its structural elements and the second is analyzing the movie based on the psychological analysis.

This research is qualitative research; type of data of the study is text and image taken from two data sources; primary and secondary. The primary data source is *The Next Three Days* movie directed by Paul Haggis released in 2010. While the secondary data sources are other materials taken from books, journals, and internet related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis.

The study comes to the following conclusions. Firstly, based on the structural analysis, it is clear that in this movie, Paul Haggis conveys a message that people have defense mechanism on them to protect them from danger. Secondly, based on the psychoanalytic analysis, it is evident that in this movie, Paul Haggis expresses the psychoanalytic phenomena that each person has a defense mechanism.

Keywords : Defense Mechanism, The Next Three Days, Psychoanalytic Approach

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

The Next Three days is a 2010 American drama film that is directed and written by Paul Haggis. This movie takes place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. This film has duration one hundred and twenty two minutes, it uses English Language. Paul Haggis was born in London, Ontario, Canada, 1953. He is a USA director. He gets many awards. Paul Haggis is the award-winning filmmaker (2004). This movie gets academy awards for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay (2004). Besides as a director, he is also as a producer, a writer, such as: *In the Valley of Elah* and also *The Next Three Days*.

This film tells a story about a husband that tries to save his wife from judgment of killing woman. But he knew that his wife is innocent, that is why he wants to save his wife with all cost. It tells about John Brennan, Lara Brennan and Luke. The responses of audience about *The Next Three Days* movie are great. Many people say that this movie is great about the movie itself and the character and characterization. For the writer, the writer could say that this movie is worth to see. This film is included as a box office movie because it has a great income. The income of this movie has surpassed the budget about two times from the cost only on the opening weekend. At this rate, we could say that this movie is very succesfull movie and watched by a lots of people in the world.

This movie is nominated in IFTA Award for Best International Actor Russel Crowe. There are a lots of famous stars that are involved in this film such as; Russel Crowe as John Brennan, Elizabeth Banks as Lara Brennan, Ty Simpkins as Luke and Olivia Wilde as Nicole. They have a great contribution in box office movie that ever made. That is why the writer is interesting with this movie. After the writer watched this movie, the writer could say that the character and the characterization are really great. Because it is characterized by a lot of famous stars such as Russel Crowe. He is very talented when he played as John Brennan.

Plot of *The Next Three Days* movie is really interesting. It moves forward at the begining in the scene where the problem arises, then moves backward and finnaly is back to forward like in the beginning of the movie. It is more interesting from plot that just only move forward or backward. Because the writer could straight to understand about the problem of the story.

This movie takes place in the USA,the setting really matches for the story. There is a very peaceful area and it has a great neighborhood where John Brennan lived, and there is a slum area to outside of the town. They are very selective to choose the location of every scene. That is why this movie becomes more great to watch.

Paul Haggis is a brilliant director. He shot every scene of this movie in great angle. The visual and special effect on this movie also gives an extra points for *The Next Three Days* movie. The cameras that are used to shot the

scene are different spacial camera for outdoor and studio. That makes this movie more details in graphic.

Defense Mechanism is one of the human's way to survive. Humans need to defend theirself to stay alive. The writer has to know that every person has his own way to defend his life. Psychoanalytic is one way to understand about it. Humans need to protect something that is precious to them, to protect it they must have their way to defend them. In this case, psychoanalytic is reflected in one of the literary works, for example is movie. Movie is a kind of literature work. Nowadays, movie develops rapidly. It has equal position as the major textual studies, like plays, poetry and novel. A good movie is a movie, which is produced and directed by good qualified producer and director, based on interesting story and excellent screenplay for each revealed character.

The problem statement is essential for the researcher because it makes the study be clearer and more focus. Based on the title and background of the study, the writer would like to state the problem statement as 'How defense mechanism of John Brennan reflected in *The Next Three Days* movie?'

Object of the study is based on the Problem Statement above, the writer can propose some objectives of the study are to analyze the film based on its structural elements and to identify the defense mechanism of John Brennan in *The Next Three Days* movie based on the psychoanalytic.

The limitation of the study is after looking for several literary reviews in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, the writer has not

found the research about *The Next Three Day* film done by the other writers. The writer is quite interested in this movie and wants to observe it using Psychoanalytic. Therefore, it will be the first research of this movie. The writer applies Psychoanalytic to reveal the defense mechanism of John Brennan.

II. Research Method

In this research, the writer uses qualitative research or secondary research whose sources are based on non-human data, especially the data taken from the movie *The Next Three Days*. The primary data source is the film itself, *The Next Three days* directed by Paul Haggis. Secondary data sources are some books of literary criticism & article from internet. The data collecting method will be library research, research, released document to be observed. Meanwhile, the techniques are: Watching the film repeatedly, Taking notes of the influence information in both primary and secondary data, Arranging the data into several groups on its classifications, Selecting particular part considered important and relevant for analysis, and drawing conclusion and formulating suggestion. The technique of data collection are by analyzing the structural elements of the work and analyzing the Psychoanalytic of the work. Analyzing the data of this research is trying to clarify the obtained data by selecting the necessary ones.

III. PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

a. Notion of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a theory that is proposed by Sigmund Freud. It is the part of psychoanalytic study which has two fundamental assumptions. Systems of Personality by Freud in Newman (1983: 385) described three components of personality; the id, the ego, and the superego. These systems are interacted each other in order to organize human behavior. Id is the most basic system of personality, totally unconscious where in the beginning this all that exist. It is the biological aspect or the original system of personality. The form of id such as wish, motivation, needs occurs spontaneously. The examples are thirst, hunger, cool, sex, and the other experiences show presence a need. Ego is the second element formation personality system. Id is different with ego, id is authorized by pleasure principle, but ego is authorized by reality principles. Ego connects with real world. The superego as the principle of morality consists of some values and evaluated norms. Superego forwards to ideal world and perfection than pleasure.

The function of superego is to decide whether does is right or wrong good or bad, and moral or amoral in standard authorized by the society. Superego cannot release itself the rules, norms, and belief of the society. Id, ego, superego have a close relationship and interact one another. In other words, it is the product of the interaction among this

three systems that result in individual behavior. In very general view, in functional personality, the id tells what we want to do; the superego tells what we should do and decides what we can do. The individual feels uneasy and threatened. Then, such feelings lead the individual to anxiety.

b. Ego Defense Mechanism

According to Freud in Kusuma (2000: 383), defense mechanism is the ego uses unawareness strategy to force negative instinct, this strategy cannot change situation of stress, it only changes the way of thinking about that situation, so all of defense mechanism involves in elements of self deception. Freud (in Hall and Lindzey, 1985:45) defined an ego defense mechanism or mental strategy used by the individual to against open expression of id impulses and opposing superego pressure. Some principles of defensive strategies are reviewed below:

1. Repression

Generally, repression is the process of excluding from consciousness a thought or feeling that causes pain, shame or guilt (Ruch, 1970:468). It is explained by Sigmund Freud in Psychoanalytic theory that the ego is able to keep from consciousness those dangerous object choices, memories and ideas

that would be painful if allowed out of the unconsciousness (Lundin, 1969:318).

2. Denial

According to Freud (in Feist, 1985:65), denial is the expression of refusing to acknowledge that unpleasant events have occurred.

3. Fantasy

Fantasy is wish-fulfilling day dreaming, the use of imaginative thought as a compensation for personal inadequacy, as a substitute for failure to resolve real frustration, or as an escape from boredom.

4. Identification

Identification is a matter of imitation or modeling. According to Hall and Lindzey (1985:42), identification is “on way of reducing tension to imitate or identify with people who are more successful in gratifying their needs than we are”.

5. Regression

Regression is a mechanism to reduce the tension of frustration by never back to eth earlier in line. According to psychoanalytic theory, when more primitive ways are set aside in favor of mature activities, the ego develops on of the ego’s main functions is to allow the id’s satisfaction to achieved in the ways acceptable to the superego as well as to society in general. But

often, the acceptable ways of satisfaction are not available. As the result, the ego frequently reverted to earlier and more childlike of behaving (Lundin, 1969:324).

6. Reaction Formation

Reaction formation occurs when a person unconsciously represses his socially unacceptable desire, because the very thought of him is guilt provoking. Then he may develop conscious attitude an overt behavior patterns that contradict his unconscious wishes to guard himself against his unacceptable impulses (Ruch,1970:472). It can be explained by psychoanalytic theory that when one of the motive pressure the ego and caused threat either directly or indirectly, the ego may avert the danger by substituting the opposite motive (Lundin, 1969:334).

7. Sublimation

According to Freud (in Hall and Lindzey, 1957:106) sublimation is an ego defense that enables the person adaptively to divert impulses so that may be expressed via socially approval thoughts or actions. Sublimation is considered the only healthy, constructive object (or both) of impulses because it allows the ego to change the aim sublimating a need, which a person cannot satisfy directly, the individual accepts some alternate goals which provides a socially acceptable expression and which provides a partial satisfaction.

8. Projection

In general sense, projection occurs when an individual in accurately attributes his own personal characteristics to others. Sigmund Freud interprets it as an externalizing of conflicts or other internal condition that has given rise to conscious pain and frustration. If an individual were afraid of his id, it would be far easier to attribute the causation to some external object than to an internal threat. The ego can more effectively cope with an external danger than to an internal one (Freud in Lundin, 1969:330). When a person's thoughts and feelings are intolerable, he tends to convince himself unconsciously that other people have these thought and feeling toward him. In this case, the person is able to direct his frustration toward others rather than toward himself (Ruch, 1970:473).

9. Rationalization

Rationalization is an unconscious process of devising seemingly logical explanations for a situation that would otherwise result in losses of social approval or self esteem. In rationalization, the frustrated person looks for logical reason as an apology for thing frustrating him. Good but false reasons are substituted for real reasons. In this case, the logical reasons appear to make the person seem to have acted rationally so that his desirable motives can be approved by the people.

10. Suppression

According to Kusuma (2000:726), suppression is “a process of rising self control, to hold the impulse and uncontrolled want that probably hold them inside the personality while denies it in front of the public”. In suppression the individual avoids stressful thoughts by not thinking about them, because it is difficult no to think.

11. Undoing

According to Pervin and John (1997:108), undoing is “the defense mechanism in which one magically undoes an act or wish associated with anxiety”. It means that the individual reduces this frustration without doing one act and hope that his wish will come to the reality. It also occurs when a person acts in an inappropriate way that arise anxiety and then behaves in the opposite way in order to eliminate the anxiety.

IV. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

John is a major character that faces inner, conflicts in his like. The conflict is caused by the contradiction of his *id*, *ego* and *superego*. The defense mechanism are: denial, sublimation, projection, undoing, suppression

1. Denial

According to Freud (in Feist, 1985:65), denial is the expression of refusing to acknowledge that unpleasant events have occurred. In some faces, the ego will resort to denial rather than allow certain thoughts to reach

consciousnesses. When we use denial, we simply state that certain facts do not exist.

John : Meyer is looking for a new investigator.
Lara : Her coat snagged my purse,
and I felt that button pop,
and they're blind if they can't find it.
John : He's gonna go through
all the evidence again.
Lara : That's great,
because we're not quite bankrupt yet.
John : We're fine.
Lara : How you just lie and lie.(12:03 – 12:21)

John considers that he is not bankrupt because he uses the money to pay a lawyer. Also, he still thinks that the lawyer will find another evidence to help his wife win her case. He keeps to search more evidence till he gives up. The dialogue shows that it is as denial.

2. Sublimation

Sublimation is considered the only healthy, constructive object (or both) of impulses because it allows the ego to change the aim sublimating a need, which a person cannot satisfy directly, the individual accepts some alternate goals which provides a socially acceptable expression and which provides a partial satisfaction.

John finally realizes that he can not win in the court and proof his wife is innocent. So, he decides to manage his wife escape from prison.

John : You escaped from jail seven times.
Damon : What do you want to know?
John : How you escaped when no one else could.
Damon : Balls and a little luck.
No prison in the world is airtight.
Each one has a key. You just have to find it.
John : How do you do that?
Damon : A lot of looking.(24:25 – 24:45)

3. Projection

John needs a lot of money. But, he is bankrupt because he has to pay the lawyer to handle the case. He has to sell his house immediately because Lara will transfer into another jail in three days. It makes him frustrated because his house can not be sold in such short time. So he has to robe a drug dealer.

John : your knees! On the floor!
All right. Where's your money?
First drug dealer : Here. It's worth it to get rid of you.
John : Where's the rest?
Here.
First drug dealer : Take more.
John : Where do you keep your money?
First drug dealer : I'm gonna give my money to you. Yeah.
John : I'll shoot you.
Second drug dealer : You can't even shoot a dog.
John : I'll kill you both!
Second drug dealer : No, I'm gonna kill you both!
First drug dealer : Just give him your money!
Second drug dealer : Keep your dead bitch mouth shut!
First drug dealer : Give him your money!
Jesus!
Second drug dealer : See? You ain't gonna kill me.
This is the worst you could do? (01:08:43 –
01:09:06)

4. Undoing

According to Pervin and John (1997:108), undoing is “the defense mechanism in which one magically undoes an act or wish associated with anxiety”. It means that the individual reduces this frustration without doing one act and hope that his wish will come to the reality. It also occurs when a person acts in an inappropriate way that arise anxiety and then behaves in the opposite way in order to eliminate the anxiety.

People usually go out and do some social activity. But, John never does that. He prefers to find more evidence and organize his plan to escape his

wife from prison. He never cares about what happens outside, he just cares about his wife.

5. Suppression

According to Kusuma (2000:726), suppression is “a process of rising self control, to hold the impulse and uncontrolled want that probably hold them inside the personality while denies it in front of the public”. In suppression the individual avoids stressful thoughts by not thinking about them, because it is difficult no to think.

John : Are you okay?
Woman : What are you doing?
 You almost killed us!
John : I'm so, so sorry.
Woman : You're out of your mind.
 Get away. Get away from us! (01:00:01 –
01:00:10)

John decides to rob some bank. Because he has to get money to pay the persons that make him a fake passports and ID's. He is desperate because he can not sell his house in short time meanwhile his wife will be transferred in three days. But, he cancelled his plan to rob a bank because of a woman with her child.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Next Three Days is a drama action that is very interesting to study. It contains with problems that we usually face in real life and interest on psychology. Paul Haggis made *The Next Three Days* movie carefully. He wants this movie perfect from the sound, picture, editing, etc. *The Next Three*

Days tells about a teacher that loves his wife too much named John Brennan. His wife puts in jail because she is charged as the murder of her boss. John has to prove that his wife is innocent because that is the fact. But John does not have an evidence to prove it. When he realizes that he can not win her wife case, he plans to manage his wife escape from prison. When he does his plan, he finds many obstacles. John as a frustration person, so he pushes to do something dangerous. Based on the story of the movie, the writer decides to study about John's behavior. She found that John behavior is able to study using psychoanalytic approach. Frustration and defense mechanism are reflected on John's behavior. John Brennan's frustration is caused by three basic needs which are denied. These three basic needs are the need of his wife, the need of family and friends support, and the need of money. These three basic needs remain unfulfilled because there are some barriers arising when he tries to achieve them. The barriers come from low of money and evidence. As a frustrated person, John sends to make a reaction to reduce the pain of his frustration. In this case he uses ego defensive mechanism to reduce his frustration. After observing the story, the writer finds that Freud's defense mechanisms are reflected in John's attitude in time of frustration. Those ego defense mechanisms are Repression, Denial, Sublimation, Projection, Undoing, and Suppression.

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