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TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES IN SALT MOVIE
DIRECTED BY PHILLIP NOYCE (2010):
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

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by:

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TRAIUMATIC EXPERIENCES IN SALT MOVIE DIRECTED BY PHILLIP NOYCE (2010): A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This research is proposed to analyze traumatic experiences in a film with title Salt using Psychoanalytic Approach. There are two objectives. The first is to analyze the film in term of structural analysis and the second is to analyze the film based on Psychoanalytic Approach. The research paper belongs to the qualitative research. The object of the study is the personality of Evelyn in Salt movie. There are two kinds of data sources used in this research, they are primary and secondary. The primary data is the film itself and the secondary data sources are biography of the author, books and internet. The technique of data collection in this research is summarizing, paraphrasing, and documenting the data. In analyzing the data, the writer employs descriptive qualitative analysis. Based on the structural analysis it is evident that in this movie, Phillip Noyce wants to deliver a message that an experience should be a lesson in the future. The structural elements are related to each other and form a unity. Based on the psychological analysis, it is clear that in Salt movie Phillip Noyce describes a psychological phenomenon, in which the major characters Evelyn Salt has some traumatic experiences.

Key words: Psychoanalytic, Traumatic Experiences, Salt movie.
1. Introduction

**Background of the Study:** Psychological trauma makes a person would be a very severe stress. If the trauma is sustained, it will lead to disruption of one's soul. According to Bryant and Ehlers (2003:45), psychological trauma is “a type of damage to the psyche that occurs as a result of a traumatic event.” Traumatic experience is “a sudden and acutely shocking experience that washes over the individual, rendering him or her powerless for a brief or a longer period of time. The event can lead to a post-traumatic stress reaction or even disorders” (Wolters, 1991).

There are several things that cause a person get a psychological trauma. It can be from the human error or natural disaster. The psychological trauma is caused by human error such; sexual abuse, bullying, domestic violence, indoctrination, and mechanized accidents (car, train, or plane crashes, etc.), while the psychological trauma is caused by natural disaster such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslide, flash floods and etc. This is reflected in the *Salt* movie. The writer chooses one of Phillip Noyce’s movie entitled *Salt* in his study.

*Salt* is a 2010 American action thriller film directed by Phillip Noyce, written by Kurt Wimmer. The film had a panel at the San Diego Comic-Con on July 22 and was released in North America on July 23, 2010, and in the United Kingdom on August 18, 2010.

*Salt* was a story about Evelyn Salt Life. Evelyn Salt is a CIA agent and highly respected by all, including her boss, Ted Winter. Agent Evelyn Salt interrogates a Russian defector, Orlov, who tells her about "Day X", an operation organized by a powerful Russian spymaster since the Cold War, which will lead to the destruction of the United States; he claims that for this purpose an elite group of English speaking Russian agents were trained from birth during the 1970s, with an exceptionally rigorous conditioning that makes their loyalty "unbreakable". Orlov mentions that at the funeral of the late Vice President in New York City, the visiting Russian President will be killed by Russian spy Evelyn Salt. Salt, shaken by the accusation, attempts to contact
her husband Mike, a German arachnologist, fearing for his safety. Meanwhile, Orlov escapes, prompting Salt to escape causing the CIA to think she is a spy. She flees to her apartment and finds her husband missing. With the CIA in pursuit, Evelyn grabs essentials, as well as a venomous spider, from her apartment and resumes her escape.

A series of flashbacks show Evelyn growing up in the Soviet Union where Orlov taught her and many other children to obey him and ingratiate themselves to the American government. Then, when it came to Day X, he would command them to strike from various positions in the US.

Winter explains to an astonished Evelyn that he was part of Orlov's plan all along. Winter then uses the nuclear football to start the sequence for launching nuclear missiles at Tehran and Mecca, to turn the Islamic world against the US. Evelyn asks Winter to let her in but before he opens the door, a fortuitously-timed news program reveals that the Russian President is not dead, but was only placed in a near-death state from spider venom. Winter realizes that Evelyn is not on his side but she manages to break in, and after an intense struggle, she succeeds in knocking him down. Just after she manages to abort the nuclear missile launch set up by Winter, agents break in and arrest her. Winter goes free, but later Salt uses her chains to strangle him. Evelyn is put on a helicopter with Peabody, and she explains everything to him. A skeptical Peabody eventually accepts she is telling the truth after he receives an SMS saying that Salt's fingerprints were found at the barge, confirming her betrayal of Orlov. Because there are other moles, Peabody allows her to escape so she can find and kill them. He uncuffs her and Evelyn jumps into the Potomac River, free once more.

*Salt* is interesting movie to be researched. There are some aspects that make this movie really interesting. 1) The movie is about realistic story. 2) There is education in social life. 3) There are some traumatic experiences in certain life.

The realistic story of *Salt* outlines the story of Evelyn Salt and her traumatic experiences when she was child. The story starts out when Salt
grows up in the Soviet Union where Orlov teaches her and many other children to obey him and ingratiate themselves to the American government. Then, when it comes to Day X, he would command them to strike from various positions in the US. Salt meets Orlov who congratulates her on her killing the Russian President, but he questions her unauthorized decision to marry a foreigner who can be a distraction from her mission.

Education in social life can be found in this movie by analyzing the trauma caused by a wide variety of events, but there are a few common aspects. Frequently, there a violation of the person's familiar ideas about the world and of their human rights, putting the person in a state of extreme confusion and insecurity. This is also seen when people or institutions, depended on for survival, violate or betray or disillusion the person in some unforeseen way.

Traumatic experiences can be analyzed from behaviors of certain character, especially the major character, Mrs. Evelyn, in ‘Salt’. The approach being implemented is psychoanalytic approach; it is concerned with motivations of human thought and actions. It is as a therapeutic method, originated by Sigmund Freud, for treating mental disorders by investigating the interactions of conscious and unconscious elements of one's mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into conscious mind, using technique such as dream interpretation and free association.

Based on the reasons above, the writer analyzes the traumatic experience and the reaction of the major character, Mrs. Evelyn, in ‘Salt’ by using the traumatic experience in psychoanalytic view. Furthermore, the writer entitles his study:

**Traumatic Experiences in Salt Movie Directed by Phillip Noyce (2010): A Psychoanalytic Approach**

**Problem Statement** of the research background of choosing the subject above, the problem is “How is the traumatic experience reflected on the major character in Salt?”
**Objectives**: To analyze the movie in term of its structural elements and analyze the movie based on the psychoanalytic approach.

**Literature Review**: There are several literature reviews dealing with this research. First is by Nona Herawati, a student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (2011), who writes a paper entitled “Social Construction of Powerful Women to Fight Against Criminal Acts in Phillip Noyce’s *Salt* Movie (2010)”. She uses a Feminist approach to analyze the data.

Second is by Joko Saputra (2009), also a student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, who writes a paper entitled “Traumatic Experience of The Major Character In Chekov’s *The Brute*”. He uses a Psycholoanalytic perspective to analyze the data.

Different from the previous writer, the writer has different perspective and object in analyzing the data. The writer uses psychoanalytic perspective to analyze the data and using Salt Movie as an object. The writer will analyze the Salt Movie by using psychoanalytic perspective.

2. **Research Method**

   **Data**: There are two type of data; Text and Image. Text data in this research is movie manuscript, which consists of words, phrases and sentences. Image data in this research are image capturing of an action in the movie which is related to the research.

   **Data Source**: The researcher uses two data; there are Primary Data, taken from the movie directed by Phillip Noyce entitled *Salt* (2010), and Secondary Data, which are taken from other sources that relate to the primary data, such as author’s biography, books and website relate to traumatic experience and many other data related this research.

   **Data Collection**: The technique of data collection in this study is documentation. The writer views the primary data repeatedly to reach more understanding of resource. Next, the writer takes, compares, quotes, and studies other data into some categories and develops them into unity.
Data Analysis: In this study, the technique which is used to analyze the data is descriptive analysis. This technique describes the event better than the summary. It is begun with the author and his work, the structural analysis of the movie and finally psychoanalytic analysis of the movie.

3. Psychoanalysis

a. Notion of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a theory, which was proposed by Sigmund Freud for the first time in 1896 about human being. Furthermore, it is developed and has three meanings in basic and principles. They are psychoanalysis (theory of personality and psychopathology); psychoanalysis (method of therapy for personality for disturbances); and psychoanalysis (a technique for investigating an individual's unconscious thoughts and feeling) (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992:86).

Psychoanalysis is a branch of psychological study that analyze the human being personality based on the unconscious thoughts. Psychoanalysis has the basic concept that human’s mental lives are divided into two levels, the unconscious and conscious (Feist, 1985:21). Unconscious is all the thoughts, experiences, and a feeling of which human unaware (Pervin, 1984:71) and the conscious is everything about human’s feeling and experiences in awareness (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992:86).

b. Major principles of Personality

Freud divided three aspects of personality, they are; id, ego, and superego. Although these aspects have each function, component, principle work and self dynamic, but they have relationship each other. Id, ego, and superego are the unity and human being behavior is the result of these aspects.

1) Id

According to Freud (Pervin 1984:76) id represents the biological substratum of humans, the source of all drive energy. The energy for a person's functioning originally resides in the life and
death, or sexual and aggressive instincts, which are part of the id. The id seeks the release of excitation, tension and energy. According to Freud (Pervin, 1984:76) the id cannot tolerate frustration and is free of inhibitions. It shows no regard for reality and can seek satisfaction through action or through imagining that it has gotten what it wants, the fantasy of gratification is as good as the actual gratification. It is without reason, logic, values, morals, or ethics. The id is demanding, impulsive, blind, irrational, asocial, and selfish and finally pleasure loving.

According to Freud (Burger, 1986:56), id is “the most basic system of personality where the innate instinct exists. Freud says that the Id is concerned only with satisfying personal desires, regardless of the physical or social limitations that might prevent desire, getting whatever we want. The id functions entirely in the unconscious and is closely tied to instinctual biological urges (to eat, sleep, defecate, copulate) that energize our behavior (Hjelle, 1992:88)

2) Ego

According to Freud ego evolves out of the id to enable the organism to deal with reality. According to Freud (Hall, 1985:34) ego can distinguish between things in the mind and things in the external world. The ego must continuously differentiate between things in the mind and things in the outer world of reality. The hungry person in search of food, for example must distinguish between a mental image of food and an actual perception of food if tension reduction is to occur (Hjelle, 1992:88).

The ego understands that this action can lead the problems and instead attempts to obtain good and this reduce tension, in such manner that the person does not end up in a lot of trouble (Burger, 1986:57). Freud explained that ego is able to separate wish from fantasy, can tolerate tension and compromise, and changes over time. Freud says that the function of the ego is to express and satisfy the desires of the
id in accordance with reality and the demands of the superego (Pervin 1984:77).

3) Superego

According to Freud (Pervin 1984:77) superego represents the moral branch of our functioning, containing the ideals we strive for and the punishments (guilt) we expect when we have gone against our ethical code. Superego has functions to control behavior in accordance with the rules of society, offering rewards (pride, self-love) for good behavior and punishment (guilt, feeling of inferiority, accidents) for bad behavior.

According to Freud (Hall and Lindzey: 1985:35) superego represents the ideal world rather than pleasure of the real world. It tries to reach perfection rather than pleasure. Freud divided the superego into two subsystems: the conscience and the ego-ideal. The superego, while attempting to inhibit completely any id impulse that would be condemned by society, also tries to guide the person toward absolute perfection in thought, word, and deed. In short, it tries to persuade the ego that the pursuit of perfectionist goals is better than the pursuit of realistic ones (Hjelle, 1992:91).

Freud (Feist, 1985:27) maintained that the superego is also previous the ideals, and the ego is used to determine if a behavior is virtuous, and therefore worthy of praise. Superego is a moral element branch of justice from personality system. The superego thus places more restrictions on what an individual can or cannot do (Burger, 1986:57). Superego represents the ideal world rather than pleasure, or the real world. It tries to reach perfection rather than pleasure (Hall, 1985:35).

4. Theory of Trauma
   a. Notion of Trauma

Traumatic experience is “a sudden and acutely shocking experience that washes over the individual, rendering him or her powerless for a brief
or a longer period of time. The event can lead to a post-traumatic stress reaction or even disorders” (Wolters, 1991).

There are several things that cause a person get a psychological trauma. It can be from the human error or natural disaster. The psychological trauma caused by human error such; sexual abuse, bullying, domestic violence, indoctrination, and mechanized accidents (car, train, or plane crashes, etc.), while the psychological trauma is caused by natural disaster such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslide, flash floods and etc.

b. Characteristics of Trauma

Van Der Kolk (1987) described the characteristic of trauma as follow:

1) Depression.

Unexpressed and unfelt emotion lead to flat internal world or agitated anxious depression. Anger, rage and sadness that remain unfelt or unexpected in a way that leads to no resolution.

2) Anxiety

Free floating anxiety, worries and anxieties that have no where particular to pin themselves or look for a place to project at, phobias, sleep disturbances, hyper vigilance.

3) Cycles of Reenactment

Unconscious repetition of pain-filled dynamics, the continual recreation of dysfunctional dynamics from the past.

c. Trauma in Human Experience

People who go through these types of extremely traumatic experiences often have certain symptoms and problems afterward. How severe these symptoms are depends on the person, the type of trauma involved, and the emotional support they receive from others. Reactions and symptoms of trauma can be wide and varied, and differ in severity from person to person (Briere, 2006:37). A traumatized individual may experience one or several of them.
5. Research Finding
   a. Analysis of Evelyn’s Personality
      1) Id

         Evelyn’s first id begins when she is interrogated and tortured to confess as a Russian spy. Her id wants to be free from Korean soldiers torture in prison and back home.

         Evelyn Salt : I am really not who you think I am. Please, please, I'm not a spy.
         Interrogation tech : You are a spy.
         Evelyn Salt : Please let me go home.
         (Salt, 00:00:50- 00:00:59)

         The Second id of Evelyn occurs in the day of Evelyn’s anniversary. She wants the day off from the job and spends the time together with Mike. Her id wants to celebrate the anniversary with her husband and wants it to be perfect.

         Ted Winter : Are you doing this on company time?
         Evelyn Salt : It's my anniversary. I want it to be perfect.
         Ted Winter : But... That is not sexy.
         (Salt, 00:04:59- 00:05:12)

         The last id of Evelyn occurs when Ted Winter will launch a nuclear to two major cities where most of the population are Muslims. The purpose of all is for pitting the United States with other Islamic countries. Muslims around the world will condemn the U.S. actions that have been sent a nuclear to Mecca and Tehran. Her id tries to thwart a nuclear launch that threatens millions of Muslims.

      2) Superego

         Evelyn’s first superego occurs when she is interrogated and tortured to confess as a Russian spy. Her id will hide the real identity in order to be free from Korean soldiers in prison and back home. Her superego realizes that she has to tell a lie to save herself despite the fact that she is a Russian spy.

         Evelyn : Please, let me go home. Please, I'm not who you think I am.
         Interrogation tech : You are a spy.
         Evelyn : I am not a spy, I am a businesswoman.
         (Salt, 00:00:47- 00:01:02)
The second *superego* of Evelyn occurs in the day of Evelyn’s anniversary. Her *id* wants to celebrate the anniversary with her husband and wants it to be perfect. Her *superego* realizes that besides she should be a good wife, she also must be loyal to her job.

Evelyn : Ted, Mike's gonna be waiting for me at home.
Ted Winter : Yeah, and I got a plane to catch.
            Come on Salt, no one can sort out a nut job from
            the real thing faster than you.
            I got 25 minutes.

(*Salt, 00:06:33- 00:06:46*)

The last *superego* of Evelyn occurs when Ted Winter will launch a nuclear to two major cities where most of the population are Muslims. Muslims around the world will condemn the U.S. actions that have been sent a nuclear to Mecca and Tehran. Her *id* tries to thwart a nuclear launch that threatens millions of Muslims. Her *superego* realizes that by thwart the nuclear launch she thinks all the problems will be completed. In fact, it just brings new problems to her.

3) *Ego*

The first *ego* of Evelyn occurs when she is interrogated and tortured to confess as a Russian spy. She will hide the real identity in order to be free from Korean soldiers in prison and back home. Her *superego* realizes that she has to tell a lie to save herself despite the fact that she is a Russian spy. She decides to hide her identity and go out of prison.

Her second *ego* occurs when Evelyn knows her husband is kidnapped by Orlov. She takes a phone rashly to call her husband immediately. Her *superego* realizes that her husband's safety is more important than others. Unfortunately, Mike’s phone is not active. Her *ego* decides to send a message and lets him to call her back.

Evelyn : Honey, it's me. Please call me as soon as you get this.
        Okay sweetheart? As soon as you get this.
Orlov : Gods speed, comrade Chenkov.

(*Salt, 00:15:14- 00:15:28*)
The third ego occurs when they will celebrate their anniversary with her husband. Her id wants to celebrate the anniversary with Mike and wants it to be perfect. Her superego realizes that besides she should be a good wife, she also must be loyal to her job. Her ego decides to finish her job and come home for her husband.

**b. Analysis of Evelyn’s Traumatic Experience**

Van Der Kolk (1987) describes the characteristic of trauma such Depression, Anxiety, and Cycles of Reenactment.

1) Depression

Evelyn’s first depression arises when her identity as a Russian spy is uncovered. She is anxious and confused to find a good reason. She wants to find her husband as the reason so that they are not more suspicious.

Evelyn: Ted. Call Protective Services and make sure they find my husband.
Peabody: Where are you going?
Evelyn: I need to get to the phone.
Peabody: No, no. Not after the neuro-scan.
Evelyn: Let me call my husband.
Peabody: Let me see it.

*(Salt, 00:14:39- 00:15:01)*

Her second depression of Evelyn occurs when Evelyn continuously shows her agitation. She looks bewildered by walking back and forth. Winter tries to persuade Evelyn to stay calm and no more agitated.

Ted Winter: Look Eve, try to stay calm...
Evelyn: I'm not a goddamn Russia spy.
Ted Winter: I didn't say you were. Let's go up to my office so we can sort this out.
Peabody: No, no. We gotta go to a secure location.

*(Salt, 00:15:33- 00:15:43)*

The third depression of Evelyn occurs when she has to tell the truth to Mike about her current job. Her sadness arises after she gives the real explanation, Mike will be disappointed and leave her. She cries to show her sadness.
2) Anxiety

Evelyn is afraid when she must tell the truth to Mike. She does not want anything bad happen to her husband. After Evelyn is honest about the real situation, she hopes Mike can accept the consequences that will happen to him.

Evelyn: You're good. KA-program is brilliant bull-shit, but I'm officially off-duty.

Orlov: Salt...
The name of the Russian agent is, Salt. Evelyn Salt. Then you are a Russian spy.

Evelyn: Call Protective Services and make sure they find my husband.

(Salt, 00:14:00-00:14:49)

Orlov tells her about his past in order Evelyn will go back to him and complete the mission that has been planned before Evelyn comes out of the academy and leaves Russia. Evelyn is afraid if everything will be revealed and they know that she is really a Russian spy. In addition, Evelyn also feels anxious and worried with the uncertain condition of her husband existence.

3) Cycles of Reenactment

Evelyn has an experience which is not easy to forget. In her childhood, she has experienced a severe accident which kills her parents. Evelyn survives from the deadly accident. In unstable condition, she is indoctrinated by Orlov to be included in his secret agent. She trains to become a spy which eventually will rebel to United State of America.

Orlov: The spy master was now given the go ahead, to create many more like Alec. Scores of agents. Males and females to be substituted for Americans. At an abandoned monastery, Chenkov and other boys and girls learned English long before they learned Russian. Drilled in idiom, idiosyncrasy. And ideology. And by methods of rigorous physical and psychological programming.

Evelyn: When does the good fairy come in?

Orlov: Never... It's a story without hope.

(Salt, 00:11:32-00:12:26)
Her painful experiences in the past, makes her more carefully in making decisions. Anxiety and worry on Evelyn turn to frightening when she has to lose one by one people she cares about. Both of her parents and her husband become victims. Now, Evelyn lives lonely and full of rage.

6. Conclusion

Referring to the previous chapter, the researcher finally can take some conclusions. The single problem of the research that is how the traumatic experience is reflected in the major character in Salt movie, the writer attempts to draw conclusion in order to answer the problem.

Firstly, based on the structural analysis, it is evident that in this movie. In order to reveal the message, Phillip Noyce creates Evelyn Salt as a major character. He delivers a moral message that the experience should be a lesson in the future. Phillip Noyce puts setting of place in Washington D.C, New York and setting of place mostly occurs in the afternoon. Phillip Noyce uses traditional plot or progressive plot. The beginning of the movie is when Evelyn Salt is being tortured in a prison in North Korea being accused of espionage. In the complication occurs when Evelyn continues her mission to assassinate the Russian President Boris Matveyev at the funeral of the American vice president. The climax tells about preparations to launch nuclear missiles at Mecca and Tehran and the resolution when Evelyn puts on a helicopter with Peabody and she explains everything to him. Knowing the movie throughly, the movie has combined all of those elements to have relation each other, and support the theme to make this movie be interesting.

Secondly, based on the psychological analysis, it is clear that in Salt movie Phillip Noyce describes a psychological phenomenon, in which the major characters Evelyn Salt has some traumatic experiences. By using Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalytic the researcher will analyze the major characters, Evelyn Salt. Evelyn Salt as a major character always gives priority for her id. Evelyn is ambitious person. She wants to kill Russian
President Boris Matveyev. Her *superego* serves to limit the genesis of the *id*. So to reach her ambition, she will do anything even sacrifice of life.

Thirdly, based on traumatic experience analysis. The traumatic experience of Evelyn occurs when she has to lose her family. Anxiety and worry on Evelyn turn to frightening when she has to lose one by one people she cares about. This experience makes her always imagine and remember the important events in her lives. Her painful experiences in the past, makes her more carefully in making decisions. It will make a person have incredible fear.

The *Salt* movie directed by Phillip Noyce is very interesting to study. The researcher realizes that this research paper is far from perfect because of the researcher’s limited knowledge and understanding about literature. The researcher gives a chance to the other researchers to analize *Salt* movie by using different perspective. For example by using individual psychological approach. They can analyze the striving or the struggle of. Or completely they can analyze the elements of individual psychology such as striving for superiority, inferiority feelings, creative self, fictional finalism.

The researcher realizes that this study is far from being perfect. Finally, the researcher hopes that the readers can take the lesson from this study and it can be useful to the readers as comparison to the other research in widening the knowledge of literary studies. This research paper hopefully can contribute to English teaching proses. It can be used to enrich student’s vocabulary by using the movie script as reading material. Beside Fiction and Vocabulary, this research can be useful to add other skills such as speaking and listening.
REFERENCES


VIRTUAL REFERENCES


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