

**BETWEEN LOVE AND DUTY REFLECTED IN LASSE HALLSTROM'S
DEAR JOHN MOVIE (2010): A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM**



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RATIH SIYAM SRI HARTANTI

A320080158

SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN
Jl. A. Yani Tromol Pos I-Pabelan Kartasura Telp. (0271) 717417 Surakarta 57102

Surat Persetujuan Artikel Publikasi Ilmiah

Yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini pembimbing skripsi/tugas akhir:

Nama : Drs. M. Thoyibi, M.S (Pembimbing I)

NIP/NIK : 410

Nama : Titis Setyabudi, S.S, M.Hum (Pembimbing II)

NIP/NIK : 948

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Nama : RATIH SIYAM SRI HARTANTI

Nim : A320080158

Program studi : Bahasa Inggris

Judul Skripsi : BETWEEN LOVE AND DUTY REFLECTED IN LASSE
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Pembimbing I

Pembimbing II

Drs. M. Thoyibi, M.S

NIP/NIK 410

Titis Setyabudi, S.S, M.Hum

NIP/NIK 948

**BETWEEN LOVE AND DUTY REFLECTED IN LASSE HALLSTROM'S
DEAR JOHN MOVIE (2010): A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM**

Ratih Siyam Sri Hartanti

A320080158

English Department, FKIP-UMS

Jl. A. Yani Pabelan Kartasura Tromol Pos 1 Surakarta 57102

Telp.(0271) 717417 Fax.(0271) 715488

The major issue of this study is how the tension between love and duty is reflected in Lasse Hallstrom's Dear John movie (2010). The objective of this study is to describe John's feeling when confronted between love and duty in Dear John movie. The research is qualitative study. The primary data source of the study is Dear John movie directed by Lasse Hallstrom. The technique of the data analysis is descriptive analysis. The results of the study shows based on the psychoanalytic analysis, the director illustrates a psychological phenomenon in which the major character is confronted between his love and his duty as army. It is apparent that the director wants to say that an army should sacrifice to be responsibility for the duty.

Keywords: Dear John Movie, Love and Duty, Psychoanalytic.

A. Introduction

Dear John is an American romantic drama movie. It was released theatrically in North America on February 5, 2010. It is written by Jamie Linden, and adapted from Nicholas Sparks's novel of the same name. It is produced by Marty Bowen, Wyck Godfrey, and Ryan Kavanaugh. This movie is played by famous actors and actresses whose acting capabilities are undoubtedly awesome. They are Amanda Seyfried, Channing Tatum, Henry Thomas, Richard Jenkins and Scott Porter. The music is managed by Deborah Lurie. The Cinematography is managed by Terry Stacey. This movie is edited by Kristina Boden. The movie is made in Studio Relativity Media. It is distributed by Screen Gems. The running time of this movie is 107 minutes. The country of the film is United States. This movie uses English Language. This movie spent \$ 25,000,00.

Dear John movie is directed by Lasse Hallstrom, a Swedish film director. *Dear John* is his twenty-three movie. He was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Director and writer for *My Life as a Dog (Mitt liv som hund)* (1985). His first notable American success was *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (1993). He gotten up to his greatest level of prominence when he was nominated for an Academic Award for best director for *the critically acclaimed* movie *The Cider Rules* (1999) and then later directed the well-received film *Chocolate* (2000), both which were nominated for the academic Award for Best Picture.

There are many feeling of the major character when confronted between love and duty. As human responsibility of duty and love are very

important. *Dear John* movie shows the important love and duty. The director illustrates a psychological phenomenon in which an individual is torn between dedicating his life and the women he loves. *Dear John* movie shows an army that must leave his beloved women for his duty. This study will be analyzed by using psychological analysis. According to Freud (Hall and Lindzey, 1954:32) “psychoanalysis is nearly always the product of an interaction among these three systems, rarely does one system operate to the exclusion of the other two”.

Freud (Hall and Lindzey, 1957:32) state that *id* is “the original system of the personality; it is the matrix within which the ego and the superego become differentiated. The *id* consists of everything psychological that is inherited and that is present at birth, including the instincts”. Freud (Feist, 1959: 28) states that “the *id* is illogical can simultaneously entertain incompatible ideas”. It attempts to discharge tension by forming an image of an object that will remove the tension.

Freud (Hall and Lindzey, 1957: 34) states that the *ego* is the result of the creation of spiritual inner systems as the result of reciprocal relationship between an individual and his world. Freud declares that the *ego* is actions based on the reality principle. According to Freud (Hall and Lindzey, 1957: 33) “the *ego* comes into existence because the need of the organism requires appropriate transactions with the objective world of reality”.

Superego is the internal representative of the traditional values and evaluative norms. Freud (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 35) states that the *superego* represents societies and is particularly the parents as values and standards. *Superego* is the principle of morality consists of some values and evaluated norms.

The *superego* doesn't merely punish the individual for moral violations. According to Freud (Hall and Lindzey, 1957: 35), "The main functions of superego are (1) to inhibit the impulses of the id, particularly those of a sexual or aggressive nature, since these are the impulses whose expression is most highly condemned by society,(2) to persuade the ego to substitute moralistic goals for realistic ones, and (3) to strive for perfection". Here the person can suffer from relentless moral anxiety an ever present feeling of shame and guilt for failing to reach standards no human can meet.

B. Research Method

In this study the writer uses Lasse Hallstrom's *Dear John* movie that was released on February 5, 2010 as the object of the research. The primary data sources in this study is the movie entitled *Dear John* directed by Lasse Hallstrom and the script. Then the secondary data sources are psychoanalytic theory, reviews of the movie, comments, critics, homepages, previous study and other relevance source.

The writer uses note taking technique of collection data and image capturing. The techniques of collecting data are watching the *Dear John* movie, searching the movie script from internet, taking notes of important

information from the movie, capturing important image, marking point in the script in order to make it easy to analyze by classifying the data into some relevant categories, analyzing the data, and making a conclusion based on the analyzed data. The technique of data description in this study started from studying material of psychological theory.

C. RESEARCH FINDING

The analyzing of psychoanalytic approach shows that the story in the movie illustrates a phenomenon of psychology. The psychoanalytic principles consist of three major principles of Psychoanalytic. They are *id*, *ego*, and *superego*.

1. Id

The *id* is an important part of our personality because as newborns, it allows us to get our basic needs met. In other words, the *id* wants whatever feels good at the time (pleasure), with no consideration for the reality of the situation.

The director shows the character of John appears in a form of love needs, cares, being afraid, nervous, angry etc. The first *id* of John appears when at the first time he meets with a beautiful girl named Savannah. It seems John falls in love with her. At the first time, John feels nervous when he wants to ask Savannah to meet again, he feels awkward and bloomer. Nervousness and awkwardness are kind human characteristics which are included into the *id*, and human is never far from that situation.

SAVANNAH

Well...thank you. For what you did.

JOHN

You're welcome.

Takes a few steps... then turns around.

JOHN

Any chance you'd wanna do this again tomorrow night?

Savannah smiles wider.

SAVANNAH

Tomorrow night is chicken. You're not gonna want to try the chicken.

JOHN

Yeah, I was thinking we could let someone else cook this time.

SAVANNAH

Are you asking me out on a date?

JOHN

I guess I am.

(re: half-eaten hot dog)

One good deed deserves another, right?

(09:31/disc 1)

John feels nervous and awkward when he asks Savannah to meet again on the next day. He thinks that Savannah will refuse him and be angry to him.

The next *Id* of John appears when he was hurt by Savannah. He feels angry and disappointed on the first time, since they were together. Every one has been through this situation, where they will be angry if they are hurting, it can be seen at this below capture and dialogue.

JOHN

Whoa whoa. Autism? You think he's like Alan?

SAVANNAH

Alan is severely autistic, but there are milder cases, too, functional cases that go undiagnosed all the time. There's something called Asperger's Syndrome, and I think your Dad

JOHN

You don't know shit about my Dad, okay? You've met him twice.

John stands up. Glares down at her.

JOHN

You let him show you his coins for
a half hour and all of a sudden
you're his doctor and his
psychiatrist? All of a sudden
you've got a couple PhD's and
you're an expert on my father?

SAVANNAH

No. No, I'm not saying
She grabs his hand, but he rips it away.

(28: 20/disc 1)

The above dialogue shows that John is very angry and disappointed with Savannah, because she says that his father is autism. John really loves his father, even he loves him in a different way, but he does not want if people mock his father.

2. *Ego*

The ego is the buffer between the *id* and the world's realities. The *ego* operates on the reality principle. In this principle, instinctual energy is restrained in order to maintain the safety of the individual and help to integrate the person into society. The *ego* is sometimes called "the executive" of an individual's personality. The *ego* makes the decisions, controls actions and allows for a higher capability of problem solving.

The *ego* of John appears after he has been angry with Savannah for the first time. The situation is that Savannah tells everything about autism, and she involves John's father when she categorizes John's father as an autism.

JOHN

Whoa whoa. Autism? You think he's like Alan?

SAVANNAH

Alan is severely autistic, but there are milder cases, too, functional cases that go undiagnosed all the time. There's something called Asperger's Syndrome, and I think your Dad--

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SAVANNAH

No. No, I'm not saying--

She grabs his hand, but he rips it away.

JOHN

I've lived with him my whole life, okay? I've put up with him my whole life. I know he's not normal. You think I need you to tell me he's not normal?

She tries to grab his hand again, but John yanks it away again, then turns and starts to walk away.

(28:38/disc 1)

The above dialogue shows the *ego* of John, where he does not want to hear Savannah explanation related with the autism that she talks about.

John is yelling at Savannah and go away from her with angry.

The next *ego* of John appears when the feeling of love of John appears and getting stronger everyday. He makes decision to choose between love and his duty as an army. It can be seen on dialogue.

JOHN

I just-- I don't know what happened.
I have no idea what happened. I woke
up one day and skyscrapers were
suddenly falling down and people
were suddenly dying and a war
suddenly popped up at the exact
moment that my Dad's heart suddenly
stopped working right and I don't
know what to do, I have no clue what
to do, I just know that I want it
all to go away so I can stay here

with you, right here with you for as long as I possibly can.

Savannah stares at John. He looks like he's six years old all of a sudden, anxious and scared and vulnerable. Her anger quickly melts away. She puts her hand on his face, trying to calm him down.

JOHN

I'm just trying to do the right
thing here, but I'll tell you what,
I'm so turned around I don't have a
friggin idea what that is anymore.
So you tell me. Tell me what to
do, Savannah. Tell me what you want me
to do and I'll do it.

(57:16/disc 1)

The dialogue situation above is the situation of John where he chooses to continue his duty as an army. But, his decision makes Savannah disappointed; she wants to stay together with John. Then she gives him two choices between love and his work. John feels that it is difficult then he asks her to give him what she really wants. John pushes her because it is too hard for him.

3. *Superego*

The *superego* is the final element of Freud's model of personality. It is similar to the *id* that it is somewhat unrealistic. The *superego* represents right and wrong of the society as handed down to an individual over their lifetime. The *superego* has two subparts: the conscience and the *ego-ideal*. The conscience prevents us from doing morally bad things. The *ego-ideal* motivates us to do what is morally proper. The *superego* helps to control the *id*'s impulses, making them less selfish and more morally.

The *superego* of John appears when he realizes that all of his *ego* is wrong. He admits it and he feels sorry with that. It can be seen on below dialogue.

SAVANNAH

At first, I just wanted to help. I started coming by as much as I could to give him a hand with Alan. To give him a shoulder to cry on. John stands in the kitchen silently. Doesn't interrupt. Lets her say whatever she needs to say.

SAVANNAH

We didn't plan it. I don't even know how it happened, really. She starts to become emotional. Tries to push through it.

SAVANNAH

I kept writing you letters, though. Every seven days. I felt terrible about it, but I couldn't stop. I couldn't stop writing to you. I couldn't stop trying to tell you.

She turns away from him. John doesn't move.

(28:10/disc 2)

The dialogue above shows the situation where John asks the reason why Savannah did not reply the letter and suddenly she tells him that she had married with other person. John is really disappointed with that and little bit angry with Savannah decision for breaking them up. Then Savannah tells everything about the reason why she takes that decision. She feels that she can not stay any longer without John, and on that time, there is someone who needs her as a mother. The person is Tim, he wants to save his son because he is sick. John finally realizes that this is all his mistake for leaving her for a long time.

D. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the psychoanalytic approach, it is obvious for researcher to state that the structure of John's personality appears on every situation and condition of John and Savannah relationship. The *Dear John* movie gives everything about the *id*, *ego* and *superego* of John when confronted between love and duty in *Dear John* movie.

The *Id* of John appears in a form of love needs, cares, being afraid nervous, angry etc. John falls in love with Savannah. At the first time, John feels nervous when he wants to ask Savannah to meet again, he feels awkwardness and bloomer. Nervousness and awkwardness is one of human characteristic which become the *id*, and human never far from that situation.

The *ego* of John appears after he feels angry with Savannah for the first time. Savannah tells everything about autism, and she involves John's father when she categorizes John's father as an autism. John does not want to hear Savannah explanations related with the autism that she talks about. John just yells at Savannah and go away from her angry.

The *superego* of John appears when he realizes that his *ego* is wrong. He admits it and he feels sorry with that. John asks the reason why Savannah did not reply the letter and suddenly she tells him that she had married with other person. John really disappointed with that and little bit angry with Savannah decision for breaks up them. Then Savannah tells everything, about the reason why she takes that decision. She feels that, she cannot stay any longer without John, and on that time, there is someone who needs her as a mother.

From the analysis above is apparent that creating a literary work the director shows how the tension between love and duty of the major character is John as army. So that in watching this movie, the audience gets understood about responsibility. This movie also represents the accident when an army must leave the women he loves for his duty.

Based on the analysis the writer would like to draw some conclusion as follows. There is close relationship between the movie and psychological analysis. The responsibility of duty is very important. There is desire that people do responsibility of his duty. How the responsibility

of duty is important reflected in this movie. The movie consists as human responsibility of duty and love are important.

The writer hopes this study can give benefits for the readers especially pedagogical benefit. There are elements in this movie that give positive effect for education. This movie teaches for having responsibility for duty. The last, we have to understand and appreciate to other as social human. The writer realizes this study is far from being perfect as result of the limitation of the writer's ability, but the writer hopes that the study can be useful for the readers or the researcher in widening the knowledge of literary studies.

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