

PAST TRAUMA IN CHARLIE FINEMAN
THE MAJOR CHARACTER OF 'REIGN OVER ME' MOVIE :
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH



RESEARCH PAPER

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by:

YAYUK SETYOWATI
A.320 050 191

SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Psychoanalysis as a form of therapy is based on the assumption that the ways to cure neurosis is to allow patients to gain access to their repressed ideas. Beside that conflicts from the fixated stage encourage them to face up whatever emerges from the unconscious. Freud uses the term insight to refer to these processes. Moreover the ultimate goal of psychoanalytic therapy is to provide the patient with insight. However, this is difficult to achieve because the emergence of extremely painful ideas and memories into consciousness produces a very high level of anxiety, especially in past trauma.

According to Allen, (2005: 2) “trauma refers to persistent negative effects of experiencing extremely stressful events”. These negative effects may include psychiatric disorders, such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder, as well as psychological and interpersonal problems more generally (e.g. distrust and resentment). Beside that every person is extremely complex and every self concept is potentially based on a complex mixture of good, bad, and different characteristics. A person who is traumatized and depressed often focuses on the negative as if this negates all the positive. (Keyes, 2003: 6).

The characteristic of literature lies in the fact there are two aspects in it, imaginative and reality aspects. In general, literature combines imaginative and

realistic representation of life. Literature can be seen as a mirror of life, so some emotion will also be presented in the literary works such as love, hate, joy, sorrow and even confusion. These emotions also inspire the author in producing the literary work.

Literature in comprehensive anthology of fiction, poetry, and drama is designed to introduce students to the formal study of literature (Pickering, 1997: xix). In order to appreciate them, there are some approaches of analysis and they can be categorized as follows: structural approaches, psychological approach, sociological approach, psychoanalytical approach and so forth. Here the writer is not going to talk about them. She is only going to concentrate on the psychoanalytic approach in analyzing one of the literary works that is movie.

The writer chooses to analyze the past trauma on *Reign Over Me* movie of the major character in Charlie Fineman and it is a therapy drama. Drama is a story in dialogue performed by actors, on stage before an audience. In a more general sense it refers to the literary genre that encompasses all written plays and to the profession of writing, producing, and performing plays. It combines the use of language with representational arts involving, costuming, and actors' physical appearance. Thus a drama only becomes a complete work of art when it is seen on the stage, and the written text of a play is only its skeletal frame-lacking flesh blood, and a life of its own (Pickering, 1997: 1113).

Reign Over Me is a 2007 drama film written on March 23 and directed by Mike Binder; it was produced by Jack Binder. The film stars Adam Sandler as

Charlie Fineman, Don Cheadle as Dr. Alan Johnson, Jada Pinkett Smith as Janeane Johnson, Liv Tyler as Dr. Angela Oakhurst, Donald Sutherland as Judge Raines, and Mike Binder himself as Bryan Sugarman. Beside that *Reign Over Me* is one of the first films to use September 11th as a catalyst for a fictional story. Charlie Fineman is a dentist who lost his wife and daughters in the World Trade Center. Since the tragedy, Fineman has shut himself off from the world. Then, he is taken control by his past trauma.

What the writer's going to do is analyzing the behaviors of certain character, especially the major character in Charlie Fineman of *Reign Over Me* movie. The approach being implemented is a 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. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_trauma).

The theory that is going to be applied in this analysis is past trauma in a psychoanalytic perspective. Past trauma is an event in which an individual experiences, or witness, an actual or threatened serious injury or death. When an individual experiences trauma, there will be some reactions followed, emotional and physical reactions. So, the writer would like conduct a research paper entitled

PAST TRAUMA IN CHARLIE FINEMAN, THE MAJOR CHARACTER OF ‘REIGN OVER ME’: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH.

B. Literature Review

The study related to this research is conducted by Joko Saputro (UMS, 1998) entitled **Traumatic Experience of the Major Character in Chekov’s ‘The Brute’: a Psychoanalytic Approach.**

From the researches, the writer would like to analyze **Past Trauma in Charlie Fineman, the Major Character of *Reign Over Me*: a Psychoanalytic Approach.**

C. Problem Statement

Based on the research background, the writer formulates the problem “How does past trauma of Charlie Fineman influence his personality as reflected in *Reign Over Me* movie?”

D. Limitation of the Study

In conducting the research, the writer focuses this research on the major character’s past trauma in *Reign over Me* movie based on a psychoanalytic approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie.
2. To analyze the movie based on a psychoanalytic approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

The writer hopes that this research will have some benefits for the readers. After reading this research, the reader can have some advantages as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

- a. To give some information which can be used by the other researchers who are interesting in analyzing this movie.
- b. To give contribution to other literary research, especially in the study of past trauma.

2. Practical Benefit

The readers can understand the effect of '*trauma*', so they can control and overcome their feeling.

G. Research Method

1. Object of the Study

The object of the research is past trauma of the major character in Charlie Fineman's *Reign Over Me* movie.

2. Type of the Study

The type of this study is qualitative research. It is qualitative research because it describes the past trauma of the major character in Charlie Fineman's *Reign Over Me* movie.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

This study uses library data, which are classified into two categories:

a. Primary Data Source

Primary data source is the dialogue in the major character in Charlie Fineman's *Reign Over Me* movie.

b. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data source is taken from other source and website about the movie and another data related to this research.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

In writing this research paper, the writer uses certain procedures as follows: watching the film repeatedly and deciding the important words, phrases, sentences, and dialogues.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique of the data analysis is descriptive. It means that the researcher interprets the text and content to get the needed data. This data then, are used to analyze the past trauma of the major character in Charlie Fineman's *Reign Over Me* movie by implementing theory of past trauma in a psychoanalytic view.

H. Paper Organization

This research paper consists of five chapters. Chapter I is introduction, it deals with background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method and paper organization. Chapter II contains underlying theory psychoanalytic used to analyze *Reign Over Me* movie. Chapter III presents structural element and discussion of the movie. Chapter IV deals with analysis of psychoanalytic toward the past trauma and discussion. Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion of the research.