

**THE EFFECT OF WAR TO ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP
IN *DEAR JOHN* MOVIE: SOCIOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor
Degree in Department of English Education**

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MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA
2020**

APPROVAL

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PUBLICATION ARTICLE

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Examiners.

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DEAR JOHN MOVIE: SOSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Accepted by the Board of Examiner School of Teacher and Training Education
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On 22 December 2020
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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bahwa perang dapat mempengaruhi hubungan percintaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Dalam pengumpulan data, penulis menggunakan analisis dokumen yang terdiri dari menemukan, menentukan, memahami dan menggabungkan data. Penelitian ini mendapatkan tiga hasil, yaitu yang pertama perang dapat memberi dampak secara fisik dan sosial. Kedua, dampak perang terhadap hubungan percintaan yang digambarkan dalam film dibagi menjadi peristiwa, karakter, gaya bahasa, dan latar. Terakhir, Lasse Hallström mengangkat issue perang dilandasi pada kejadian yang terjadi di Amerika di era itu. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini memperlihatkan dampak dari perang terhadap hubungan percintaan secara fisik dan sosial beserta penggambaran dari dampak perang dalam film *Dear John*.

Kata Kunci: perang, hubungan percintaan, film *Dear John*.

Abstract

This study aims to determine the impact of war on romantic relationship in *Dear John* movie. This study uses a qualitative method. In collecting data, the writer uses document analysis which the steps are finding, determining, understanding, and combining data. This research found three results. First, a war can impact physical and social. Second, the impact of war on romantic relationship depicted in the film divided into events, characters, style, and setting. Last, Lasse Hallström raised the issue of war based on the situation in the United State at that time. The conclusion of this study is to show the impact of war on romantic relationship physically and socially also the depiction of the effects of war in *Dear John* movie.

Keywords: war, romantic relationship, *Dear John* movie

1. INTRODUCTION

War is action both physically and non-physical between two or more human groups to dominate in some places where be opposed by using violence. It happens a long time ago even until now still can find it. Each country which attack and get attacked will get good impact and bad impact of war. The bad impacts of war damage to the infrastructures and caused casualties. Therefore, a lot of films raise war as their theme. One of them is *Dear John* movie. This movie was directed by Lasse Hallström and released in 2010. Actually, this is an adapted movie from a novel with the same title written by Nicholas Sparks. The researcher chose *Dear*

John movie because the movie shows that war can give an effect on a relationship.

Dear John movie itself has been the object of several previous studies. There were some studies that use *Dear John* movie as the object. The previous researchers also used various perspective to examined their research such as psychological perspective used by ASIH (2017) and SIWI P (2012); psychoanalytic perspective Ali (2015), Hartanti (2013), KARTINI (2017), and Putri (2017); structuralism perspective DARSONO (2015); objective approach by Sabrina (2012), formalistic approach by SUPUTRA (2012), and reader response used by YANUDIASTI (2015). From the previous studies that the researcher has mentioned before, still no one used sociological approach as the basic approach to reflecting the effect of war on romantic relationship. The issue distinguished this study from the previous studies. The researcher chose Sociological approach according to Alan Swingewood. Sociological approach is an approach that studies the relation between literature work and society. A literature work usually creates do to a phenomenon that happened in society. Therefore, this research will reflect *Dear John* movie in the real situation of America during Iraq War to find out the effect of war on romantic relationship.

Therefore, this research will contain the impact of war in *Dear John*, depict how war influence relationship in *Dear John* movie and the reason of Lasse Hallström raised war on romantic relationship. Those materials will be studied using sociological perspective. There is no study that raised an issue about war to relationship and this research aims to complement the previous studies.

According to Alan Swingewood, Sociology is a scientific which the object are men in a society that studies about social processes and social institutions (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1972). Laurenson and Swingewood (1972) defined sociology as a basic way of learning humans in society, studies of social institutions, and processes of social. Wellek and Warren (1986) had classified sociology of literature into three, they are sociology of authors, sociology of society, and sociology of the readers.

2. METHOD

The type of this study is literature study. This research used Qualitative to analyze the data. For collecting the data, the researcher used document analysis which the steps are watched *Dear John*, identify the issue, find out some articles or journals that related to war and romantic relationship on the internet, and take some notes.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Finding

3.1.1 The Impact of War

The researcher divided the impact of war into two, namely physical impact and social impact.

1) Physical Impact

a) Infrastructure

The used of weapons while war could affect the infrastructures around the war area. In the film, John saw a building that got a bomb in a news channel which is also known as the tragedy 9/11. Due to that tragedy, John and his team re-enlist their duty.

The other scene where shows damaged infrastructure is when John extended his duty after break up with Savannah. The building behind John exploded right after he gave instructions to his team.

b) Casualties

John's job was categorized as high risk since his duty was in a dangerous place related to weapons, opponents, and the battlefield. His job was too risky because it sacrifices his life. The used of weapons in a war not only give damage to the infrastructures but also caused casualties. When John and his team were patrolling around, John and Noodle came inside the building. Suddenly, his opponent shot Noodle, but luckily the bullet hit his bulletproof vest. When John was taking out the bullet from Noodle's bulletproof, their opponent fired again three times and hit John

right into his shoulder on the left side. The situation became chaos. Noodle tried to inform their team in the outside to call the medic. At the same time, he tried to keep John conscious until the medic arrived.

2) Social Impact

a) Relationship

The social impact of war is giving damage to a relationship. Soldiers who served their country also have privacy. They have families, friends, spouse, or lover. If they served their country means they ready to leave their parents and lovers. Live far from them, lack of communication. In this case, John left his father and his lover, Savannah. First, the relationship between John and Bill, their relationship was not close since John turned into a teenager. He did not know that his father had autism disorder and he thought that his father was crazy over his hobby. Then, John joined soldier. It made their relationship seems so far. Even though John thought that their relationship with Bill was not that close, but Bill still cares with John. It showed in every time John back to his duty, his father always accompanies him to the airport or bus station.

Besides giving impact on the father-son relationship, the war also gives the impact on John and Savannah's romantic relationship. Usually, people who are in relationships spend their time with their lovers even if they are in a long-distance, they could communicate easily. Meanwhile, in this case, John is a soldier who had duty in another place that makes them difficult to meet and communicate due to lack of signal. The effect of long-distance and communication only by letter made Savannah found someone new and she broke her relationship with John by letter.

3.1.2 Depiction of the Effect of War in *Dear John* Movie

The effect of war depicted in *Dear John* movie classified into Setting, Character, Style, and Event.

1) Character

a) Character Leaving

John Tyree is a United States Army special operations soldier from Charleston, South Carolina. He is the only child of Bill Tyree. He is not close to Bill, because he thought his father was too obsessed with coins. When John was a teenager, he got mad with his father because Bill always talks about his coin collections. From that time, they rarely talk to each other. Later on, John joined to army's special operations and makes them rarely meet due to John's duty.

John was in a relationship with Savannah. Their first meeting was in a beach when John was off from his duty and Savannah was on holiday. After two weeks, they back to their duty and school. Later on, John saw news of a building got a bomb. John and his team decided to extend their duty. Their leader gave them free on weekend and John decided to go back to his hometown to meet Savannah and Bill.

b) Characters being Left

(1) Savannah Lynn Curtis

Savannah Lynn Curtis is a college student from Charleston, South Carolina, United State. Her first meeting with John was because John saved Savannah's bag. Their relationship began after three times meeting but after two weeks, they were in long-distance relationship and made a promise to meet again next year.

After a year, Savannah met John again. They went to Savannah parent's party. At the party, Savannah found out that John will re-enlist again. It made Savannah made with him but then John explained to Savannah and they made up. The next day, Savannah drove John to the Airport.

(2) Bill Tyree

Bill Tyree is John's father. He had autism disorder and the one who

notice it was Savannah. He had an interest in coins. It started since John was a kid, John found a deformed coin and Bill started to collecting coins. Everything changed when John turned into teenager. John lost his interest in coins and made them have no topic to discuss. Then, John joined to the army. It made them more rarely talked to each other, but Bill always accompanies John when he back to his duty.

3.1.2 The Reason of Lasse Hallström Addressing the Issue of War

Lasse Hallström as the director of *Dear John* raised the issue of war because he reflected events that the United State had experienced several wars. He had concerned about it. In *Dear John* movie, there was a scene where John saw news of a building bombed which reflected the 9/11 tragedy. This tragedy happened in 2001, WTC tower which attacked by Terrorists. It caused Iraq War. This tragedy was not the first time of United State against Iraq. The first war that happened in the 1990 era President Bush Senior is the Gulf War, it was caused by Iraq invade Kuwait on August 2nd. This war resulted in 278 UN coalition parties being killed and 1000 wounded while on Iraq side 25.000 were killed and 75.000 injured.

The incident between Iraq and United State did not stop there. In Bill Clinton era, precisely on December 16th, 1998 ordered air strikes against Iraq for refusing cooperation with the UN arms watchdog. According to Iraq prime minister, the action caused 62 died, 160 injured.

In President George W. Bush-era, there was a tragedy called 9/11. This tragedy happened because of terrorist Al-Qaeda hijacked commercial planes then attacked the WTC tower. Due to that tragedy, George W. Bush as the president in that era declared war through Iraq which also known as Gulf War 3 or Iraq War on March 18th, 2003 until December 15th, 2011. This war caused casualties around 3.817 people from the coalition's die, 26.886 people from the coalition injured, and around 392.979-942.636 people of Iraq died.

Due to those incidents, especially the 9/11 tragedy which being portrait in the movie becomes the reason why the director raised the issue of war. Besides it gave effect to the government, it also gave effect to the soldiers who were involved in the war. Even though it already their duty, but soldiers also have their private life. Especially for those who are in relationships or already married can get the effect of war.

3.2 Discussion

According to sociological theory by Laurenson and Swingewood, *Dear John* movie is related to the situation in United States in early 2000. *Dear John* is reflecting the tragedy of 9/11 and Iraq War that occurred between United States and Iraq at that time. *Dear John* movie is a romance movie that uses war as the background of the main character. This research focuses on the effect of war in romantic relationship because the main character was breaking up with his girlfriend when he was on a battlefield.

According to the results that the researcher found, a war gives an impact on social and physical. The physical impacts of war are giving damage to infrastructure and casualties. The physical impacts are occurred because of the use of weapons during the war. Besides the physical impact, a war also has a social impact, especially someone's psychology. When a war occurs, those who have a relationship with someone who participates in the battlefield will be separated temporarily.

In this case, the main character, John who is a soldier special force will re-enlist his duty because there is a tragedy 9/11 which will become the root of war. He goes back to his hometown to meet Bill and Savannah. Savannah gets angry because she does not know John will go to the battlefield. They are fighting for the first time but John tries to explain to Savannah about the situation and they are making up. All go well when John on the battlefield. Until one day, he receives a letter from Savannah that she finds another man. He burns all the letters and extends his duty. When John is in Qatar, he gets

information that his father gets cancer. He goes back to his hometown to take care of Bill. Unfortunately, Bill passed away not long after that. After John is attending Bill's funeral, he back home. On his way, John sees Savannah's campsite. It becomes their first meeting after break up. In her house, John finds out who marries her. Savannah's husband is Tim, her neighbor who has a son with autism. Savannah brings him to the hospital where Tim was treated. On that day, John gets an explanation from both of them, Savannah and Tim. From that time, John tries to let her go.

In this study, the researcher found out the reason of Lasse Hallström as the director of this film addresses war in a relationship because of his concern toward the situation that United States faced in early 2000.

This research aim is to complement the previous studies which use *Dear John* movie as the object. There is a previous study which similar to this research but it uses a different approach. The title of the research is *Between Love and Duty Reflected in Lasse Hallstrom's Dear John Movie (2010): A Psychoanalytic Criticism* by Hartanti (2013). The difference between this research and Hartanti's reseach is on the approach. This research uses Sociological approach meanwhile Hartati's research uses Psychoanalytic Criticism as the approach.

4. CLOSING

The conclusion of this research is consists of three problem statements. They are: the impacts of war in *Dear John*, the effect of war to relationship depicted in *Dear John*, and the reason of Lasse Hallström raised the issue of war.

First, the impacts of war in *Dear John* movie are divided into two, physical and social. The physical impacts of war are caused by damage to infrastructures and casualties. Meanwhile, the social impact of war is giving impact to relationship for the soldier who is involved in the war.

Second, the impacts of war depicted in *Dear John* movie are divided into

physical impact and social impact. Depiction of character include the character leaving and character being left, setting, plot/event reveal the storyline briefly, and styles explain the meaning of tone and back sound that be used in the film.

Third, Lasse Hallström raised the issue of the effect of war on romantic relationship to reflect events where United State had experience war several times, especially against Iraq in 1990, 1998, and 2003. The war not only gives an impact on the government but also gives impact on the private life of the soldiers who involves in the war. Especially about the soldier's love life.

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