
SUBLIMATION AS AN OVERCOMING MECHANISM OF ANXIETY ON BRUCE WAYNE CHARACTER IN THE DARK KNIGHT TRILOGY SCRIPTS

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Abstrak: The research focused on analyzing anxiety and sublimation as a defense mechanism on the main character in The Dark Knight Trilogy scripts. The Psychoanalysis proposed by Sigmund Freud will be used as the main theory, especially the discussion of anxiety and sublimation. The purposes of this research are to depict the sublimation as a defense mechanism that Bruce Wayne used and to analyze how Bruce Wayne overcomes his anxiety through sublimation. This research is qualitative research where the data is taken from scripts The Dark Knight Trilogy, journals, and other resources which are appropriate in conducting the analysis. This study finds that Bruce Wayne's sublimation defenses are associated with his bad experiences in childhood. The incident of him fell in the old well and the death of his parents lead him to several anxieties, and to cope the anxieties, sublimation is used to overcome his anxieties. From the process of making batarangs and his equipment, acting as a vigilante, and also practicing martial arts, these things can be categorized as Bruce Wayne's sublimation as Batman. Batman is a form of his sublimation mechanism, it is not only the way that he does to cope his anxieties but also a symbol that he created to inspire citizens in Gotham City.

Keywords: *Anxiet; Defense Mechanis;; Sublimation.*

INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalysis theory is a theory that seeks to explain the nature and development of human personality (Syawal, H., & Helaluddin, H., 2018). It is the theory that learns about human behavior. Through personality development, childhood experience is the main determining factor in forming human behavior. Several childhood experiences could be potential as one of the sources that trigger conflict structure of personality. The background behind the experience is depending on each individual. Some individuals face bad experiences and lead them into trauma, and some people face similar situations but relatively unscathed. Many factors may lead to trauma in individuals. For instance, child abuse, neglect, urban violence, and other traumatic events, are examples of repetitive trauma. This one-time event could be very impactful if occurs in childhood. Therefore, through childhood trauma, anxiety will develop as well as chronic pain and it is considered to be its risk factor (Kascakova, 2020:1).

Anxiety is so influential that it becomes a problem as one of the psychological phenomena which continue to be faced by every human being. Based on 'Our World in Data' website (2018), anxiety disorder occupied the first position as the largest mental health disorder, estimated at around 4 percent of the population (NIMH, 2017). The high number of cases related to anxiety disorder shows that people still struggling to face it. People could

manage it by using psychological strategies, but not all of them could handle it well. To decrease the number of cases, people should be able to manage their anxiety before become psychological problems in their life. The cases related to anxiety disorder may be caused by trauma, sexual abuse, and stress due to illness, genetics, or other factors. In dealing with anxiety, people tend to use defense mechanisms to relieve it.

Sublimation is one of the defense mechanisms that can also overcome anxiety. It is the channeling of unacceptable feelings, desires, and impulses—often of a sexual or aggressive nature—into positive, socially approved activity (Cohen, 2020). The unacceptable impulses can be sourced from the effect of anxiety. By turning it into positive action or socially approved activity, sublimation resulting a beneficial effect on the employer even the people around him. According to Cohen (2020:5275-8), Sublimation is considered one of the most mature defense mechanisms, and Freud believed that only a minority of people were capable of regularly making use of it. It means less mature defenses are used by people rather than mature defenses. This is logical as a human was born with the id to come first then the ego and superego which will develop over time. The id seeks pleasure and it influenced the maturity choice of the type of defense that people will be used. By applying mature defenses, the researcher believes that most people will benefit from implementing this positive mechanism. Thus, the researcher

wants to discover sublimation as one of the defense mechanisms and provide awareness to the readers with mature defenses such as sublimation and other defenses.

Bruce Wayne as the character in the story has the most significant role throughout the story. He is brave, psychically strong, obsessive passion, wealthy, and intelligent. Although he has many advantages from his traits, it does not make him become invulnerable to psychological conflicts in his psyche. Wayne suffered from his childhood events by witnessing his parents' deaths, even trying to seek revenge in order to please his urge. Anxiety often arises in his life because of the impact of events in his childhood. Through all of that, Bruce Wayne is able to become a decent man.

In The Dark Knight Trilogy film scripts, it is shown the development of Bruce Wayne's character. It began with the traumatic events that he had experienced from early childhood, the way he handled his urge from anxiety, and his purpose to create an Alternative Persona, called Batman. There are several activities that show Bruce Wayne doing sublimation as his defense mechanism.

From the explanation above, The Dark Knight Trilogy film scripts attract researchers as there are a lot of psychological issues within it. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the psychological aspects which are anxiety and defense mechanism; sublimation on Bruce Wayne in The Dark Knight Trilogy script.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The approach of this study was descriptive approach. By using descriptive approach, the researcher analyzed the psychological aspects within the data extensively. The goal of qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals (Lambert, 2012:255). Therefore, descriptive approach was the appropriate approach to analyze this research. In addition, psychoanalysis theory was used to analyze this research formulations. Nevertheless, it was focused on the main character's anxiety and sublimation as defense mechanism which was used by Bruce Wayne.

The Source of the Data of this research were The Dark Knight Trilogy movie scripts including Batman Begins, The Dark Knight, and The Dark Knight Rises scripts. Batman Begins was written by David Goyer, and the rest of the scripts (The Dark Knight and The Dark Knight Rises) are written by Jonathan Nolan and Christopher Nolan. Moreover, the subject of the research was Bruce Wayne which is the main character in the story.

In collecting data, the researcher followed five steps as the process in conducting the research. In the first step, the researcher read The Dark Knight Trilogy movie scripts repeatedly. In the second step, the researchers collected the data from Wayne's anxiety in the scripts. In the third step, the researcher organized and divided the data into 3 types of anxiety which are reality anxiety,

neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. In the fourth step, the researcher attributed the anxieties that had been found with sublimation. In the last step, the researcher found the findings from the description of anxiety and sublimation that had been analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Reality Anxiety

In his childhood, he had bad experience with bats. His unpleasant feeling around bats started to appear since the moment Bruce fell in the old well. The symptoms often appear whenever bats around him.

INT. GOTHAM OPERA HOUSE - LATER

A gilded house packed to the rafters for Boito's Mefistofle. Young Bruce seated between his parents, On stage: WITCHLIKE CREATURES cavort. DARK BIRDS on wires descend, FLAPPING. Young Bruce STARES, uneasy, at their VIOLENT motions. INSERT CUT: BATS EXPLODE FROM A DARK CREVICE. Young Bruce starts breathing faster, STARES fixedly. SCREECHING, FLAPPING BLACK BATS SWARM ALL AROUND... Young Bruce, gulping PANIC breaths, looks around for an exit they're in the middle of a row. He GRABS his Dad's arm.

YOUNG BRUCE

(Desperate whisper) Can we go?!
(Goyer, 2005:12-13)
Freud (1936) equated objective anxiety with fear, which he considered to be an emotional reaction that was

proportional in its intensity to a real danger in the external world. In Young Bruce Wayne case, after the events in the old well, he considered the bats are real dangers. Hence, he feels discomfort and the symptoms arise whenever he sees bats.

Neurotic Anxiety

After many years since the death of Bruce Wayne's parents, Bruce Wayne who was on age 17, he heard the news that Joe Chill, the killer of his parents would be released from prison. Bruce Wayne seemed not agree with the decision. As he was still teen, he still hold the burden of the death of his parents. He still can't forget the memory of the night that his parents was murdered. Instead forgiving Joe's past action, he planned to kill Joe Chill in his trial.

This one catches Chill's eye- blonde, local t.v. type.

Bruce's hand DROPS to his side as he MOVES... he's BREATHING HARD... THINKING... DECIDING...

BLONDE FEMALE REPORTER (CONT'D)

Falcone says hi!!

She THRUSTS a gun at Chill's chest and FIRES. Chill DROPS-Bruce STOPS in his tracks. Reporters DIVE for cover- COPS jump on the Blonde Reporter, pinning her...

Bruce. Fifteen feet away. Loaded gun up his sleeve. Face as uncomprehending as the night Chill killed his parents. Rachel moves to

Bruce, pulling him away from the chaos.

(Goyer, 2005:26)

As in the case of neurotic anxiety, Bruce Wayne seemed struggling to act. This act later failed as someone managed to kill Joe Chill first before Bruce Wayne acted. By the looks of his act, Bruce Wayne seemed to think that his act was not right and possibly created more troubles. He still thinking, deciding the next decision he will make. Freud defined neurotic anxiety as the unconscious worry that we will unable to control of the id's impulses, out coming in punishment for bad behavior. There are signs of neurotic anxiety in Bruce Wayne when he still struggling decides as he was worrying about the consequences.

Moral Anxiety

Several days after the death of his parents, young Bruce Wayne saw the crowd leaving after the funeral of his parents. As near from the windows, he was depicting the moment of his parents lying without soul through his eyes. He was feeling guilty as he can't do anything on that tragedy.

YOUNG BRUCE

It was my fault, Alfred. Alfred's mouth opens.

YOUNG BRUCE (CONT'D)

I made them leave the theater

ALFRED

Oh, no, no, no

Alfred moves to Young Bruce, taking the boy in his arms.

YOUNG BRUCE

If I hadn't got scared

ALFRED

No, no, Master Bruce. Nothing you did. Nothing anyone ever did can excuse that man. (Goyer, 2005:16)

On the conversation with Alfred, young Bruce Wayne thought that he was the reason his parents death. He blamed himself because the decision he made by leaving the theater earlier. He was afraid of performers who wore costume looks like bats during the performance in the opera. Driven by the guilt, young Bruce Wayne suffered with feelings that carry over into his adulthood.

Bruce Wayne's Sublimation Defense

In this section, the process of sublimation as Bruce Wayne's defense mechanism will be explained by the researcher. Based on the defense mechanism definition, defense mechanism gives protection from the conflict among the structure of psyche which are the id, ego, and superego. In order to know the process of defense mechanism sublimation, the researcher will explain and divide part of theory which included in the work of Bruce Wayne's defense mechanism.

While growing up as a teenager, Bruce Wayne plotted his revenge against the killer of his parents. At that time, Joe Chill who was imprisoned for the Wayne family murders will be released from the prison. He thought Joe Chill's release was a conspiracy against the corruption that exists in Gotham City.

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruce puts his bag on the bed. Looks around the room.

At the mantel, Bruce stares at a framed photograph: Young Bruce on his Dad's shoulders, arms raised in triumph. Bruce wipes dust from the photograph. Smiles at it.

INSERT CUT: Young Bruce on Thomas's shoulders- Thomas TIPS back, threatening to drop Young Bruce who LAUGHS and LAUGHS.

Bruce moves to the bed. Opens his case. Inside it is a GUN.
(Goyer, 2005:23)

Bruce Wayne, who still remembered the event of his past, he felt justice in Gotham City has been polluted. He simply won't forgive Joe Chill's past action which took the lives of his parents. Driven by hatred, Bruce Wayne planned to have revenge on Joe Chill by shoot him after his trial. Bruce Wayne acts is an aggression of the result on his past. He plotted revenge to release his unpleasant feeling he carried on.

Sublimation is one of defense mechanism, in which socially unacceptable impulses are changed into socially acceptable actions, which possibly generating outcome in a long term conversion from the initial urges. Bruce Wayne's unacceptable impulse was from his id which took control of him to seek for revenge on Joe Chill's past action. As he understood that his

action was wrong and socially unacceptable, he began to manage his impulse and become a persona that he believed people will accept. The role of sublimation is important part in defining the alternate persona he created which is The Batman. He became a fighter who fight criminal by using tactical combat and martial arts. A few months later, he faces his nemesis, The Joker. The conflict between them was very chaotic, resulting Bruce losing the person he loved, Rachel. After Rachel's death, he blames himself for causing the Gotham criminals becoming uncontrollable. Even though overwhelmed by anxiety, he is still trying to catch the Joker as an act of his defense mechanism. Instead of sadness, he chose to keep do his actions and helping people, saving from The Joker.

At the end of the line in The Dark Knight script, The Joker successes corrupting Harvey Dent who is Gotham's hero. Unlike Bruce, Harvey who also losing someone he loved, barely handle his emotion. He begins blaming Gordon's people. He is looking for them, interrogate them, and then decides their life with a coin-toss. Gordon is his final target, by taking Gordon's family as hostages, Harvey successfully lured Gordon to the kidnapping area. Afterwards, Batman succeeded save Gordon's family but it costed Harvey's life.

Batman stands. Faces Gordon.

BATMAN

You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the

villain. I can do those things because I'm not a hero, like Dent. I killed those people. That's what I can be.

GORDON

(angry)

No, you can't! You're not!

Batman hands Gordon his police radio.

BATMAN

I'm whatever Gotham needs me to be.
(Christopher Nolan, 2008:138)

Harvey Dent is known as White Knight or Gotham's hero in people's eyes. The death of Harvey Dent surely will attract the attention of all citizens of Gotham. If in the last moment Gotham's citizens knew what Harvey Dent had done to Gordon's family, they will lose hope and lose their faith to him. Therefore, Batman chose to cover it with lies. He wanted Gordon to say otherwise that he was the one who killed Harvey. Batman knows that Harvey is a truly heroic figure for Gotham. The purpose is to make people in Gotham still believe on their hero, instead knowing a good person like Harvey could turn into a villain.

Batman still chooses to help the people of Gotham from the Joker's influence. He is willing to sacrifice his true identity, Batman, for their belief in their hero, Harvey Dent. He prefers to choose which one is best for his city. It's Bruce's maturity in making a choice, and it could be the effects of the sublimation as his defense mechanism. Harvey's death made Bruce stopped being The Batman for a long time. Bruce Wayne knows that Gotham citizens no longer trust Batman as

people in Gotham knows that he was the killer of Harvey Dent. Bruce thinks Batman is no longer socially acceptable and majority of people in Gotham would like to blame him Harvey Dent's death.

After 8 years of The Batman disappearance, a new criminal motive who wants to rule Gotham arises, Bane. Police officers get difficulty to handle this villain. Gordon got shot while investigating their nest in the sewers. A detective who works for the police officer, Blake, he felt that his team will get difficulty to fight against the new villain. He began to be curious about the identity of Batman, as he is one of people who still believe on Batman's actions. His suspicions were directed at Bruce Wayne, he didn't think long and went straight to Bruce Wayne's house, immediately asked him about The Batman

BLAKE

I did. One of them asked if he saw any giant alligators down there. He needs you. He needs the Batman.

WAYNE

If Commissioner Gordon thinks I'm the Batman he must be in a bad way
(Jonathan Nolan and Christopher Nolan, 2012:31)

Blake's statement shows that some people still believe in Batman, though not all of them. This changed Bruce Wayne's view, now he thinks Batman is still needed, and with Blake's words, he knows that some people are still accepting of The Batman's actions. Bruce realized some people still

believed in him as Batman. An important part of sublimation is being socially accepted, so this is a testament why Bruce Wayne returns as The Batman. Later, Bruce Wayne is still convincing himself by looking for one person that is Commissioner Gordon. Batman's return after 8 years shows his determination to improve Gotham City and his responsibility from the start that he stated that he will become a symbol to the Gotham city. Having conversation with Blake, Bruce lays out his goal of becoming Batman. He wants to be a symbol and inspires everyone in his city to prevent them from having the same tragedy as himself.

Bruce became batman for at least one year, he have been stopped for 8 years but intends to return after that time. The time duration of Bruce Wayne's sublimation mechanism is quite long. Bruce Wayne's sublimation mechanism results in long-term conversion for himself. Starting from an impulse that is not accepted by trying to kill the murderer of his parents, then it becomes positive actions that helps people from Gotham's criminals.

Bruce Wayne Overcomes Anxiety through Sublimation

Derived from his anxiety, Bruce Wayne managed to overcome his anxiety by transforming himself into Batman. The idea of being a bat stems from Bruce Wayne's past when he fell into an old well, creating a reality anxiety and fear of bats. Bruce Wayne who was originally afraid of bats has now turned into a hero by using a bat

costume to punish criminals to fulfill his needs.

Alfred indicates the steel carved into a BAT'S WING.

WAYNE

A man, however strong, however skilled, is just flesh and blood. I need to be more than a man. I need to be a symbol.

ALFRED

And why the symbol of the bat?

WAYNE

Bats frighten me. (Slight smile)

And it's time my enemies shared my dread.

Wayne tilts the crude BATARANG, watching light dance across the brushed steel. He THROWS it WHISTLING into darkness...

(Goyer, 2005:63)

The bats were a source of anxiety for Bruce Wayne as a child. Young Bruce Wayne thought bats were something dangerous, so it created anxiety whenever it nears him. By creating batarangs, bat costumes, and bat symbols, Bruce was able to overcome his anxiety towards bats. He created something that he fears to overcome his own anxiety towards it. Those are creativity on the sublimation side. This dialogue with Alfred shows that the excitement of Bruce Wayne to create tools for his future actions. He planned to become a symbol and inspiration for Gotham city.

This neurotic anxiety arises because Bruce Wayne has a strong drive

related to his desire for revenge, which he later turns into action by punishing criminals. As Bruce Wayne stated in his early utterance that "Gotham's laws have been tainted" this gave him the idea of becoming a vigilante.

Rachel pulls out into the street.

BRUCE

Well, your system of justice is broken

RACHEL

Don't you tell me the system's broken, Bruce! I'm out here every day trying to fix it while you mope around using your grief as an excuse to do nothing. You care about justice..?

Rachel YANKS the wheel- (Goyer, 2005:27-28)

As someone who takes the law into his own hands, Bruce feels what he's doing is right because the assumptions about law in Gotham are broken. This relieves his neurotic anxiety which is being controlled by revenge, and he turns it into something he considers positive by punishing criminals.

Bruce Wayne's moral anxiety arises when he can't do anything when his parents die. It's a feeling of guilt as he's the reason it happened. Bruce's father had told him that "not to be afraid, it was bats that were afraid of us", but Young Bruce Wayne was afraid at the time at the opera. This provoked Bruce to question his actions which he considered wrong.

INT. SMOKE-FILLED BACKROOM, SHANGHAI -- NIGHT

At a table with a CHINESE BOSS and SEVEN CRIMINALS drinking, laughing,

showing each other their spoils (watches, phones).

WAYNE (V.O.)

I thought I would learn what I needed to do with my skills and my anger... (Goyer, 2005:35)

Due to harboring feelings of guilt, as an adult he feels he has more power to do whatever he wants; this can be a reason to his guilt turning into anger. As in Bruce's statement that he would learn what skills he is capable of. Later he joined the League of Shadows and trained to learn martial arts. This moral anxiety is also transformed into a force to fight criminals using the martial arts that he has learned.

Discussion

Bruce Wayne overcomes his anxiety by taking positive action. On reality anxiety, Bruce Wayne who was originally afraid of bats since childhood became inspired by bats on adulthood. He overcomes his unpleasant feelings by making batarangs, bat symbols, bat costumes, and other tools. That anxiety gave him the idea to become a bat himself and his feelings against fear of bats being applied to criminals and becoming a weapon for him to fight criminals. As for neurotic anxiety, the negative impulse of revenge is transformed into punishing criminals and acting as vigilante. This desire was triggered

after the release of Joe Chill from prison who was the killer of his parents. He feels the laws in Gotham city are unfair, that's why Bruce Wayne acts vigilante to justify justice in a tainted Gotham. Moral anxiety arose after the murder of his parents; he couldn't do anything to save his parents. This lead arises of an unpleasant feeling in the form of guilt. This feeling later turned it into positive action by learning martial arts. He started learning martial arts, which he could later use to fight criminals as to protect people.

CONCLUSION

In the analysis, it can be concluded that Bruce Wayne experienced kind of anxiety on his journey caused by his childhood life events. The experience generated Bruce Wayne's anxiety stemming from his childhood. As Freud suggested the importance of childhood age becomes evidence of his theory in these scripts. The childhood memories which he fell in the old well and the death of his parents are the strong influencers of the development of his anxiety. Those memories impacted his psychological state and cause anxiety.

In the progress of developing his personality, Bruce Wayne sometimes facing anxiety and overcome it by using a defense mechanism. Batman is a form of sublimation defense on Bruce Wayne which is formed from a negative impulse that he had been buried for years and unleashed-turned into positive actions. By transforming into Batman, Bruce unconsciously applied

sublimation to overcome his anxiety. The Alternate persona influences Bruce Wayne to do positive actions in overcoming his anxiety. This form influences Bruce Wayne to be a decent man and gives him power, responsibility, and wisdom to fight against criminals in Gotham City as well as his anxiety.

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