

ABSTRACT

MAHARANI, VALENTINA PASCALIA. (2024). **Defense Mechanism Affected by The Core Issues Seen in Lester Burnham and Colonel Fitts in Sam Mendes' *American Beauty***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

This study is conducted to analyze Lester Burnham and Colonel Fitts from *American Beauty*. Their choices of actions influence a major narrative development in the film. It is important to get a better understanding of their motivation through the lens of psychoanalytic.

The three objectives of this study are to identify the characteristics of Lester Burnham and Colonel Fitts, to find out the core issues that are reflected in the characteristics of Lester Burnham and Colonel Fitts, and to explain how the core issues of Lester Burnham and Colonel Fitts affect their defense mechanism as a way to cope in the movie *American Beauty* as the object of the study.

The psychoanalytic approach and theory of core issues and defense mechanisms are used to conduct the study. This study was library research and the data studied are from the primary to the secondary data. The primary data of this research is the movie *American Beauty*. The secondary sources of this research are books, journals, and some reliable articles.

In the analysis, it is revealed that Lester Burnham from *American Beauty* is characterized by his lack of confidence, immaturity, and irresponsible behavior. Colonel Fitts is characterized by his controlling behavior, hypocrisy, and insecurity. Each characters have core issues that are reflected in their characteristics. Lester Burnham's core issues are low self-esteem and an unstable sense of self. Colonel Fitts' core issues are fear of betrayal and fear of abandonment. Their core issues affect their defense mechanism. Lester Burnham's defense mechanisms are denial and regression. Colonel Fitts' defense mechanisms are repression and projection. The study concluded that two different characters with different characteristics, core issues, and defense mechanisms are burdened with the same expectations from society.

Keywords: *Cinematography, core issues, defense mechanism, mise-en-scène, psychoanalytic approach*

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Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis karakter Lester Burnham dan Colonel Fitts dari *American Beauty*. Pilihan aksi dari suatu karakter mempengaruhi perkembangan narasi dalam film. Maka dari itu, penting untuk memahami dengan baik motivasi karakter melalui sudut pandang psikoanalisis.

Tiga tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah pertama untuk mengidentifikasi karakteristik Lester Burnham dan Colonel Fitts, kedua mengetahui *core issues* yang tercermin dari karakteristik Lester Burnham dan Kolonel Fitts, dan ketiga menjelaskan bagaimana *core issues* dari Lester Burnham dan Colonel Fitts memengaruhi *defense mechanism* mereka sebagai cara dalam menghadapi masalah di dalam film *American Beauty*.

Pendekatan psikoanalisis dan teori *core issues* dan *defense mechanisms* digunakan untuk melakukan penelitian ini. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan dan data yang diteliti menggunakan data primer dan sekunder. Data primer dari penelitian ini adalah film *American Beauty*. Sedangkan data sekunder dari penelitian ini adalah buku-buku, jurnal, dan beberapa artikel terpercaya.

Di bagian analisis, terungkap bahwa Lester Burnham dari *American Beauty* ditandai oleh kurangnya kepercayaan diri, ketidakdewasaan, dan perilaku yang tidak bertanggung jawab. Colonel Fitts digambarkan dengan perilakunya yang suka mengontrol, hipokrit, dan tidak percaya diri. Setiap karakter memiliki *core issues* yang tercermin dalam karakteristik mereka. *Core issues* Lester Burnham adalah *low self-esteem* dan *unstable sense of self*. *Core issues* Colonel Fitts adalah *fear of betrayal* dan *fear of abandonment*. *Core issues* karakter-karakter tersebut memengaruhi *defense mechanism* mereka. *Defense mechanisms* Lester Burnham adalah *denial* dan *regression*. *Defense mechanisms* Colonel Fitts adalah *repression* dan *projection*. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa dua karakter yang berbeda dengan karakteristik, *core issues*, dan *defense mechanisms* yang berbeda terbebani oleh ekspektasi yang sama dari masyarakat.

Kata kunci: *Cinematography, core issues, defense mechanism, mise-en-scène, psychoanalytic approach*