

SACRIFICE IN THE HACKSAW RIDGE MOVIE

Oleh:

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(Corresponding Email: nurisrafyan.sofian@uho.ac.id)**Abstract**

This research intendeds to describe the sacrificial acts committed by the main character of *Hacksaw Ridge* movie by Mel Gibson and released in 2016. *Hacksaw Ridge* movie talks about a story of a medical soldier named Desmond Doss who has the high integrity so serve his nation. This story is adapted from the true story of a same name combat medic in the US who devoted himself to the country. The sacrifice of the main character in this movie will be elaborated and analysed by using the altruism perspective. In the perspective of altruism, sacrifice is carried out based on three kinds of motives, namely desire, prudential motive and reason. The data of this research is taken from the scene and utterances in the movie and then analysed from the qualitative-descriptive method. This research finds out that the main character's commits to sacrifice as his devotion to his nation and country as well as the people. His intention to join in the army during the war not to kill but to safe the people.

Keywords: *altruism, movie, sacrifice*

1. INTRODUCTION

In a human life is a social being who cannot live alone in society, nation, and state. This is in line with the statement from Ahuja (2015), which says that human life is basically interrelated with society, because individuals form and are formed by the social structure around them. In line with that, Hossain (2014) also conveyed that the relationship between individuals and society is very complex, since the society serves individuals while individuals contribute to the functioning of society. Besides that, humans as the part of society, also have a helping nature towards others, where someone helps without asking for anything in return (Nagel :1979).

In society, helping without expecting rewards or benefits for oneself is referred to as a sacrifice for others. Michael (1987) defines sacrifice as a special form of helping that is related to the interests of others, usually related to oneself, and usually motivated specifically by the desire to improve welfare or help others become better without expecting anything in return. Meanwhile, according to Vyntal (1990), sacrifice is selfless help given by one person to another, which emphasizes volunteerism and selflessness. If all that is done for others is the pleasure of making others happy, one can say that a person is altruistic (Cigno 2000). According to Vesci (2008) an act of sacrifice is an intentional and freely chosen behavior that is done for the benefit of others without regard to personal gain or reward.

Sacrifice has been conceptualized as part of a individual value structure or overall guiding principle that motivates individuals to contribute to the well-being of others or society as a whole (Schwartz, 2012). In addition, sacrifice refers to feelings or concern for others in relation to the

environment, (John 2006). Sacrifice is part of the assessment for people's behavior and very important to shape individual's behavior towards the environment as the part of community.

Individuals who have a higher level of orientation towards altruistics are usually more concerned about environmental issues and are more motivated to participate in the surrounding behavior (Nair 2002). Sacrifice encourages the growth of individual awareness among the community which is reflected in their efforts to overcome society problems through cooperation. Sacrifice is not only seen in actions but also in the depiction of a movie. Movies that depict sacrifice can encourage positive emotional responses from the audience, which can generate empathy and respect for others.

Movies is a tool to convey various messages to the audience through the medium of stories to convey positive and negative messages by eliciting emotional responses as well as influencing the audience's cognitive processes (Benini, 2017). Representations of sacrifice in movies often align with the audience's innate need to empathize with and connect with characters. When audiences see characters acting out altruism, they tend to empathize and feel a range of emotions, including compassion, admiration, and sometimes even sadness or fear, Chick (2013). The depiction of sacrifice in movie can also serve as a motivational tool. It can encourage viewers to reflect on their own values and consider whether they are living those values. This can lead to a sense of inspiration and a desire to act in ways that match the values portrayed in the movie. Oliver (2012, p. 1). Through this, movies can feature characters who actively perform actions for the good of others without considering personal imbalances or benefits. This research will examine how the act of sacrifice in *Hacksaw Ridge* movie affects the main character, Desmond Doss, from the perspective of altruism.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research as defined by Hancock (2009), which states that qualitative research develops explanations for social phenomena. Therefore, this research allows people to understand the social world in which people live and why things are the way they are. The researcher uses a qualitative approach because the data and the research question model are descriptive. The data focuses on information in the form of images and conversational text related to the characteristics of the research in describing the use of sacrifice in the *Hacksaw Ridge* movie from the altruism perspective in terms of desire, prudential motives, and reason based (Nagel, 1979).

3. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this section is to present the findings and discussion from the *Hacksaw Ridge* movie by Mel Gibson. *Hacksaw Ridge*, released in 2016, is a war movie based on a true story about Desmond Doss, a US army who serves as a combat medic. The story of this movie sets in World War II, telling the story of Desmond Doss, a religious young man who wants to serve his country in the war but does not want to take up arms in the name of his religion. Desmond upholds the rules of his religion, one of which prohibits killing. The character of Desmond Doss in this movie is adapted based on how Doss life as well as the setting of place and time (Rasiah, etl. Al: 2024) with the intention to demonstrate how his good manner can influence the audience of this movie.

This research finds out that the main character of this movie, Desmond Doss, behaved and act as good as possible in serving as a combat medic. What showed by his action and behaviour indicated as the practice of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a moral concept and human behavior related to

acts of voluntary service, which involve helping others or defending the interests of others without expecting personal reward or gain. In the concept altruism (Nagel, 1979), the sacrifice expressed by the main character can be distributed into three categories namely desire, prudential motives, and reason. People who sacrifice tend to do good and help others without considering the benefits for themselves, as seen in the following data findings.

3.1 Desire

Desire refers to the desire to help others or do good that stems from motivation and good intentions. Nagel (1979) stated that desires are subjective that reflect people needs and preferences. They arise from various experiences in lives, including physical experiences, concern, and empathy.

Data 1



Picture 1 (0:22:28-0:22:57)

Desmond told Dorothy that he was going to be a medical soldier.

Dorothy	: What?
Desmond	: I have to enlist. I can't stay here while all of them go fight for me.
Dorothy	: Yes, you can. You can stay here.
Desmond	: Dorothy, I have to. I want to be a medic. I figure I'll saving people, not killing Them

In this scene, Desmond drives his girlfriend Dorothy to the hospital before Dorothy gets out of the car. Desmond says to Dorothy that he wants to enlist as a soldier because Desmond can't just stand by and see people fighting for him, and Desmond is motivated to enlist as a soldier because Desmond's father is also a former World War One soldier, so Desmond's desire to enlist is getting bigger. However, this was not approved by Dorothy because of how the war was. Dorothy told Desmond to stay and not enlist as a soldier, but Desmond's decision was unanimous: he would become a medical soldier and he would save people, not kill them.

Data 2



Picture 2 (0:34:05-0:36:44)

Captain clover meets Desmond to talk about his problem

Captain Clover : What exactly is the problem?

Desmond : No problem, just a mistake, sir.

I told the army i joined up.

Captain Clover: That not possible.

Do you know why it's not possible, private.

Because the United States Army does not make mistake.

So if there's a problem, you must be that problem.

Desmond : I was just never supposed to be sent to a rifle company

Soldier : He's a C.O.,sir.

Captain Clover : You're conscientious objector, and you joined the army?

The scene above how Desmond finished his daily training. Soon after, he and a soldier went to Captain Clover because of the problem Desmond had during his daily training. Captain Clover asked Desmond about the problem he made, but Desmond said that there was no problem; he just wanted to join the army. But it became a problem for Desmond because Desmond did not want to hold a gun during shooting practice, so Captain Clover called Desmond and explained the problem, but Desmond said that he should be sent to the medical army, not as a shooter. Hearing that made Captain Clover upset because Desmond was an opponent of war.

From the explanation, it can be seen that Captain Clover questioned Desmond's problem, but Desmond said there was no problem, only Desmond's desire to join the army. This argument indicates that Desmond's decision to remain in the army is not only a means to fulfill his own desires but also a form of commitment to the task at hand and a willingness to accept the challenges that lie ahead. In this case, sacrifice is rooted in the ability to share and utilize each other's strengths, thereby reducing stress and anxiety.

Data 3



Picture 3 (0:41:21-0:42:01)

The colonel meets Desmond to hear about his problems.

Desmond : Well, yes, sir. I know all you really want to do is give me a section 8, drum me out of the army, but im not off up above.

I just simply believe what i believe.

Colonel: Well, I'm trying to understand, all right?

From the dialog, after Desmond meets Captain Clover regarding the problems he is experiencing. Desmond is summoned by the colonel regarding Desmond's growing problems. At the meeting, the colonel asks about Desmond's problems. Desmond also knows the desire of the colonel's words where the colonel wants to remove Desmond from the army because of the problems he is experiencing but Desmond has a reason that why he can have problems because Desmond believes what he believes.

Based on the narrative above, it can be seen that Desmond gets into trouble and wants to be expelled from the army because Desmond believes in what he believes in, which is not holding a gun. Desmond's remarks reflect his personal views and beliefs, which may be related to the context of desire. Although Desmond's statement does not directly imply sacrifice or selflessness, it underscores his commitment to live up to his principles.

Data 4



Picture 4 (1:15:51-1:16:26)
Ralph begged Desmond not to leave him.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Ralph | : Please. Please, Doss, help me. Don't leave me.
God, please don't leave me. I've got kids!
Please Don't leave me, don't leave me |
| Desmond | : I'am ain't going to anywhere. I'm going to get you home
I got you, Ralph. Okay? |

The scene above shows that after the problems experienced by Desmond occurred in the military camp were over, Desmond was taken to fight as a medical soldier to fight the Japanese army in the Hacksaw Valley. During a shootout between the American army and the Japanese army, one of Desmond's friends, "Ralph," was shot in the leg, which made him injured, so Desmond immediately went to him and provided first aid to treat his leg, but Ralph, who could not walk, asked Desmond not to leave him. Desmond also said that he would not leave him and would even take him home alive.

Based on the narration above, it can be seen that Desmond is trying to be able to heal his friend Ralph, and even Desmond does not leave him even on the battlefield. The data above displays a desire for sacrifice, where Desmond shows his determination not to abandon his comrades or fellow soldiers but rather to ensure they are all safe, even if it means sacrificing his personal safety or comfort. The preceding conclusion reflects Desmond's desire, motivated by a sense of solidarity and concern for others.

3.2 Prudential Motives

Prudential motives driven by the desire to maximize happiness or personal gain. For instance, someone may decide to volunteer or assist others since they can think that by doing good deeds for others, society will be more encouraging and supportive. It will improve quality of life overall. In

contrast, the prudential motives refers to motivations that are based on principles of ethics and morality. In understanding, the prudential motives can be interpreted based on the general understanding of social motivation and social behavior as the motivation to act in a way that conforms to social and ethical norms, with the aim of gaining acceptance and respect from others. Prudential motives found in this movie can be seen in the data below:

Data 5



Picture 5 (0:25:09-0:25:46)

Desmond met his father and explained that he wanted to become a medical soldier.

Desmond : **No, I won't be able to live with myself if i don't.**

I'm going to be a medic.

That's going to be my way to serve.

Tom Doss : See you go, think it all out.

What, you figure this war is just going to fit in with you, your ideas.

Desmond : Well, i don't doubt it's going to be hard.

Tom Doss : It won't be hard, it'll be impossible.

You know, whatever beliefs you have in your crazy head now, they won't ever play out.

It don't work that way. And if by some, i don't know miracle chance you survive, you won't be giving thanks to God.

The scene and dialog display the moment when Desmond meets his father to tell him that he will become a soldier of war. Desmond also explains that he will become a medical soldier because as his willing to serve the country. Knowing this, Desmond's father forbids it since it will not be very incompatible with what Desmond thinks. Also, Desmond's father thinks Desmond is crazy and commits to tell him about the danger of being a combat medic that only the miracle of God could save Desmond in the battlefield.

The elaboration above shows how Desmond's intention that he wants to become a medical soldier because Desmond feels that he will not feel himself useful if he does not do what is in him. in this data, Desmond's actions explain prudential motives because Desmond's actions of doing what is morally right or wrong have an impact on his emotional or psychological well-being. Moreover, Desmond wants to act according to his own moral or ethical standards, and his actions are determined not only by self-interest but also by the psychological impact of his refusal.

Data 6



Picture 6 (0:36:46-0:37:21)

Captain Clover asks why Desmond refused to hold the gun.

Captain Clover : You're conscientious objector, and you joined the army?

Desmond : Well no, sir. I'm a conscientious cooperater.

Captain Clover : Are you screwing with me, Doss?

Desmond : No. **No, sir. I volunteered.**

I ain't got no problem with wearing my uniform, or saluting the flag and doing my duty.

It's just carrying a gun and the making of human life.

Captain Clover : You don't kill? That's all.

Desmond : Yes, sir, that's all.

From the scene, Desmond told captain clover that he didn't want to hold a gun and preferred to be a medical soldier, captain clover was angry with Desmond because what Desmond said was an act as a dissident soldier but Desmond said the reason he joined the army was because he wanted to do it as a volunteer and Desmond didn't even mind the clothes he wore during the war as long as he could participate in the war as a medical soldier without having to carry a weapon. so captain clover concluded that the reason Desmond didn't want to hold a gun was because he didn't want to kill.

In the narration above, it can be seen that the reason why Desmond joined the medical army was because he only wanted to be a volunteer because he only wanted to help without having to hold a weapon and did not question wearing a uniform, saluting the flag, and carrying out his duties. Desmond's speech refers to the action of prudential motives; by complying with military norms and social responsibility, Desmond's actions are seen as complying, preventing potential conflicts or negative consequences due to his non-compliance with his mistakes.

Data 7



Picture 7 (0:47:37-0:49:19)

The Lieutenant did not give Desmond his graduation leave

Lieutenant : Private Doss, I'm afraid I can't authorize your pass.

This is a furlough for men who have passed the basic training.

- Desmond : Well,sir, respectfully,sir, I have.
I put in for this furlough three weeks ago. I'm getting married this afternoon
- Lieutenant : It says you're not rifle qualiflied.
- Desmond : **Well, I'm not required to carry a rifle, sir.** Colonel, he...
- Lieutenant : Colonel determination was..
" Doss must be allowed to work as a combat medic,
Provide he qualifles in all other areas of his training."
And you have not qualifled on the rifle range, private. Pretty clear.

The scene above demonstrates how Desmond and the other soldiers have passed their military training and can take leave, but the lieutenant did not certify Desmond's passing, so he cannot take leave. Desmond explained to the lieutenant that he had applied for leave three weeks ago and was getting married in the afternoon but the lieutenant did not give Desmond leave because Desmond did not pass the rifle test but Desmond said that he was allowed by the Colonel not to hold a rifle, however the lieutenant did not give Desmond leave because the Colonel said that Desmond should be allowed to work as a medical soldier but Desmond did not pass the rifle test so Desmond did not get the leave he wanted.

In the narration above, it can be seen that Desmond's decision not to carry a weapon is not based on a compulsion or order, reflecting his personal decision that he does not want to hold a weapon. Desmond's action demonstrates the prudential motives present in his decision not to hold a weapon, as it can be seen as a prudent move to avoid conflict with military norms while sticking to his moral principles. Thus, his statement reflects an understanding of the potential consequences of his decision, and he chooses to follow the rules while still upholding his principles.

3.3. Reason

Reason can be expressed as moral consideration as well as acting altruistically based on ethical principles, beliefs, or a sense of responsibility to uphold certain values refers to the understanding and application of ethical principles through the process of moral judgment. It involves using logic and critical thinking to determine what is right or wrong in a given situation, as well as how people should act based on the ethical principles they hold. The data below show reason found in this movie.

Data 8

In this data, the conversation and scene are similar to data 1 on the *Desire* , and therefore this data is also used in data 8 on the *Reason*.



Picture 8 (0:22:28-0:22:57)

Desmond told Dorothy that he was going to be a medical soldier

Dorothy : What?
 Desmond : I have to enlist.
I can't stay here while all of them go fight for me.
 Dorothy : Yes, you can. You can stay here.
 Desmond : Dorothy, I have to.
 I want to be a medic. I figure I'll saving people, not killing them

In this scene, Desmond drives his girlfriend Dorothy to the hospital before Dorothy gets out of the car. Desmond says to Dorothy that he wants to enlist as a soldier because Desmond can't just stand by and see people fighting for him, and Desmond is motivated to enlist as a soldier because Desmond's father is also a former World War One soldier. That's why, Desmond's desire to enlist is getting bigger. However, this was not approved by Dorothy because of how the war was. Dorothy told Desmond to stay and not enlist as a soldier, but Desmond's decision was unanimous: he would become a medical soldier and he would save people, not kill them.

The explanation above shows how Desmond believes that as a member of his community or group, he has a responsibility to contribute and cannot just stay in a safe environment while others are struggling, and also that his father is a former World War One soldier, making Desmond have to enlist as a soldier. Desmond's actions are a reflection of his sense of responsibility or determination to contribute and share the burden shouldered by his comrades on the battlefield, while his words convey values such as courage, justice, and active participation in shared responsibility.

Data 9

In this data, the conversation and scene are similar to data 6 on the *Prudential Motives* , and therefore this data is also used in data 9 on the *Reason*.



Picture 9 (0:36:46-0:37:30)

Desmond explains to Captain Clover that he doesn't want to kill.

Captain Clover : You're conscientious objector, and you joined the army?
 Desmond : Well no, sir. I'm a conscientious cooperater.
 Captain Clover : Are you screwing with me, Doss?
 Desmond : No. No, sir. I volunteered.
 I ain't got no problem with wearing my uniform, or saluting the flag and doing my duty.
It's just carrying a gun and the making of human life.
 Captain Clover: You don't kill? That's all.
 Desmond : Yes, sir, that's all.

In this scene, where after Desmond told captain clover that he didn't want to hold a gun and preferred to be a medical soldier, captain clover was angry with Desmond because what Desmond said was an act as a dissident soldier but Desmond said the reason he joined the army was because he wanted to do it as a volunteer and Desmond didn't even mind the clothes he wore during the war as long as he could participate in the war as a medical soldier without having to carry a weapon. so captain clover concluded that the reason Desmond didn't want to hold a gun was because he didn't want to kill.

From the explanation above, the reason Desmond did not want to hold a weapon during the training camp was because of the rational thoughts and considerations Desmond had regarding the act of carrying a weapon and respect for human life. Desmond's actions were motivated by his strong anti-violence principles and belief in the value of human dignity. Desmond also demonstrated his refusal to carry a weapon, his refusal to commit murder, and his firm belief in the value of human life.

Data 10



Picture 10 (1:35:51-1:36:28)

Desmond rescued the injured Smitty and brought him to safe place

Smitty	: I'm scared. : I'm scared.
Desmond	: It's going to help the pain. No, don't. Don't you do that. Come on Come on, Smitty, you stay with me. Let's go. We must move. It's not safe here. Hey. Help me get him down
Army	: Can't help him, buddy, he's gone
Desmond	: No.

In this scene, in the morning, the atmosphere became chaotic because the Japanese army counterattacked the American army from underground with a very large number. The outnumbered American army finally retreated and asked for help. as a result of too many Japanese soldiers, some American soldiers were injured, especially Desmond's training partner, "Smitty." Smitty suffered a severe gunshot wound, and Desmond quickly helped Smitty and provided first aid. But Smitty's severe injuries made Desmond ask for help from other soldiers, but the soldier said that he could not help because Smitty had died.

From the description, it can be seen that Desmond is trying to take Smitty to a safe place. Desmond's actions are considered as the ability to understand, assess, and make decisions based on logical considerations, where Desmond's moral actions play an important role in determining rational and reasonable actions.

Data 11



Picture 11 (1:38:26-1:39:00)

Desmond tries to get up and save soldiers in need of help

- Desmond : What is it you want of me?
I don't understand.
I can't hear you.
- Army : Medic, help me! Help me!
Help me.
Help me, Lord.
- Desmond : **All right.I'll save everyone.**

In this scene, the American army had to retreat from the front line because the Japanese army attacked them. Because of that, all the soldiers had retreated, but only Desmond was still on the front line, saving his friend. Due to the retreating army, Desmond was confused about whether to retreat or stay in place because many of his friends died unhelpfully while the Japanese army was still attacking and attacking them. In that condition, Desmond spoke to God, "What is it you want of me? I don't understand.". Hearing his friends still asking for help made Desmond return to the front line to save his remaining friends.

The previous narration shows how Desmond hears his friends calling for help, so he goes to the front line to help his friends. Desmond's actions are motivated by a strong desire to save everyone, even though he is not carrying a weapon or committing murder, which means Desmond's actions can be interpreted as a combination of selfless courage and confidence in his abilities as a medical soldier.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Influencing people for good deeds related to the effort to construct well-being society. This matter is also the purpose of an altruism society to support one to another. In line with it, story is the medium to influence the society since the good values always embodied in it and need to be shared to the audience (Sofian, 2022: 61). Good values in a story, for example a movie, is inserted to let people know that sacrifice as Desmond Doss as an individual in real life and more over as a character in *Hacksaw Ridge* movie do.

From the movie, Desmond Doss presents his sacrifice in three form namely as a desire, prudential motive and also a reason. Enrolling himself as a medical soldier comes after his root of desire to help others. Furthermore, the prudential motives lead him to conclude that's this not merely an idealistic act but also personal protection and decide rationally not to bring weapons to battlefield that he could involve in war to safe instead of killing people. The story then expected to inspire people how to be a good human being in the midst of society.

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