

Understanding Human's Purgation Through Catharsis in Keigo Higashino's *The Miracles of the Namiya General Store*

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2024-06-23 Revised: 2024-07-21 Published: 2024-08-07	This research aimed to understand the concept of human purgation carried out by humans as a form of self-defense from problems they were dealing with. The author examined human purgation in the novel entitled "The Miracle of The Namiya General Store" by Keigo Higashino through the lens of psychoanalysis with the theory of
Keywords: The Miracle of The Namiya General Store; Psychoanalysis; Catharsis' Human's Purgation; Self-defense.	catharsis disseminated by Sigmund Freud from Josef Breuer's treatment of Anna O. The theory of catharsis, in brief, was to release negative emotions through positive activities such as telling them to people who could be trusted or experts in their fields. The data collection technique used was descriptive-qualitative, namely by reading, identifying, and interpreting the novel in the form of words, sentences, paragraphs, and conversations as data. Based on the results of the study, it could be seen that humans had many types of self-defense traits to divert their pain, one of them being through the catharsis method. Through catharsis, humans performed purgation and utilized their emotions for positive things.
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2024-06-23 Direvisi: 2024-07-21 Dipublikasi: 2024-08-07	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami konsep human purgation yang dilakukan manusia sebagai salah satu bentuk pertahanan diri dari masalah-masalah yang ia hadapi. Penulis meneliti human purgation dalam novel berjudul <i>"Keajaiban Toko Kelontong Namiya"</i> karya Keigo Higashino melalui kacamata psikologianalisis dengan teori katarsis yang disebarluaskan oleh Sigmund Freud dari pengobatan Josef Breur
Kata kunci: Keajaiban Toko Kelontong Namiya; Psikologianalisis; Katarsis; Penyucian diri; Pertahanan diri.	teon katarsis yang disebaruaskan oleh signunu Freud dan pengobatan joser breu terhadap Anna O. Teori katarsis secara singkat adalah melepaskan emosi negatif melalui kegiatan positif seperti menceritakannya kepada orang yang dapat dipercaya atau ahli dibidangnya. Teknik pengambilan data yang digunakan yaitu, descriptive- qualitative yaitu dengan membaca, mengidentifikasi, dan melakukan interpretasi dari novel dalam bentuk kata-kata, kalimat, paragraf, dan percakapan sebagai data. berdasarkan hasil penelitian dapat diketahui bahwa manusia memiliki banyak jenis sifat pertahanan diri untuk mengalihkan rasa sakit mereka, salah satunya melalui metode katarsis. Melalui katarsis, manusia melakukan human's purgation dan menyalurkan emosi yang bergerumul dalam diri mereka kepada hal yang positif.

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who need the presence of other humans in their daily lives. From the beginning of life, humans tend to seek togetherness with others, form communities, and develop strong bonds with members of their group. This social creature is reflected in the human need for affection, support, and friendship, which form the basis for forming social relationships that are important for individuals' emotional and psychological wellbeing. Through social interaction, humans learn, develop, and expand their understanding of the world and themselves, making existence in society an inseparable aspect of human life.

Eventhough, they need each other, relationships with other humans have certain boundaries that they set according to their desires or needs. Everyone in this world definitely has one or two deepest secrets that they cannot tell or spill to anyone, especially those they know well. The act of hiding secrets is an example of the boundaries that humans create towards other humans. However, only some can carry their secrets at the end of their lives. Most of them still need a "place" to share their secrets to feel relieved and not alone in this world. This "place" can be in the form of inanimate objects or living creatures; it doesn't always have to be fellow humans, and the most important thing is that this "place" can make them feel safe. Sharing their deepest secrets with others can also be classified as Human Purgation.

We can find the phenomenon of human Purgation all around us. Lots of people try to share their deepest secrets with the experts (psychologists), pets, plants, inanimate objects, and strangers they meet in real life or on the internet. They do it to feel "clean" and no longer be the only ones to endure their deepest secrets alone. This phenomenon has been among us for a long time. We can observe human behavior and how it handles a problem through literature.

Literature is a media that plays an essential role in understanding the patterns that form in human survival. Through literature, we can find the basis for humans doing certain things since this pattern was formed and what they have gone through to produce the habits they have today successfully. One of the literary works is a novel. The novel provides more information about people's life patterns at that time than they thought. In this discussion, the author analyzes one of Keigo Higashino's novels, The Miracles of the Namiya General Store. The author will find out how the factors that influence human Purgation through Catharsis are depicted and why human Purgation is one of the human needs in life as a form of self-defense according to the theory of Catharsis.

Based on the explanation above, the author will do a more profound exploration related to the first about what are the factors influencing characters's human Purgation through the catharsis theory in The Miracles of the Namiya General Store by Keigo Higashino, and the second is how the characters in novel utilize catharsis processes through human's Purgation as a means of self-defense against internal conflicts and emotional distress. Several studies use The Miracles of The Namiya General Store by Keigo Higashino as the object. However, none of them used the catharsis theory by Sigmund Freud as the theoretical perspective. One of the studies that uses The Miracles of The Namiya General Store as the object is from Guo, Y. (2022) entitled "The Redemption of Humanity in Higashino Keigo's Miracles of the Namiya General Store." This study discusses the psychology of the protagonist, Mr. Namiya, who is also sick, and the letters he receives as a "cure" for his pain. Mr. Namiya suffers from mental illness and loneliness, so the letters are present as "friends" in his solitude.

"The reason why people are fond of Higashino's works is that he touches on the most vulnerable parts of humanity, where the interweaving of good and evil is the truest face of us. Through his works, we seem to see our inner self, but also see various problems in the society caused by human beings, thus alarm us. No matter when you read Higashino keigo's work, it is never out of time." Guo, Y. (2022) Catharsis theory is a branch of Sigmund Freud's psychological theory of self-defense. Schafer, R. (1980). Freud's views on Catharsis influence the development of psychoanalysis as an interpretive discipline aiming to develop a systematic account of human action. This theory teaches us to release pent-up or blocked emotions within ourselves through positive things such as writing and expressing what has been a burden on the mind so far. In addition, painting, dancing, and various other positive activities can also be categorized as a form of self-defense through catharsis theory.

This activity of releasing emotions can also be called human's Purgation. Ackreman M. (2015) purgatory is defined as "an intermediate state after death for expiatory purification" or "a place or state of temporary suffering or misery." That is why Purgation is closely related to the theory of Catharsis; according to Malpede, K. (1999), Catharsis, a powerfully transformative inner experience, is denoted by the term "purgation" in ancient Greek tragedies. In many cultures' healing practices, Jackson, S. (1994) catharsis procedures involve evoking, heightening emotional intensity, and ultimately releasing or discharging emotions.

Catharsis theory and Human Purgation both have the same concept and are intertwined. The difference is that the concept of Catharsis, in general, is often applied or used to describe the release of emotions experienced by characters in literary works, as well as by the audience. In psychotherapy, it refers to the process of expressing and processing repressed emotions, leading to emotional healing. Whereas Human Purgation refers to cleansing or purification, it is often used in a medical or metaphorical sense. In the context of emotions, it relates to the expulsion or release of emotional burdens or distress. Human's Purgation can be seen as a component or result of Catharsis. The act of cleansing or releasing pent-up emotions leads to the catharsis experience. While Catharsis is the overall process and effect, Purgation is the mechanism of this emotional release.

The Miracles of The Namiya General Store by Keigo Higashino is a Japanese novel published in 2012 and has been translated into various languages, one of which is English. This book blends elements of mystery, fantasy, and human drama, creating a unique narrative that resonates with readers. This book tells the story of Mr. Namiya's grocery store, which eventually turns into a place where people send letters containing their grievances and deep emotions that they have been suppressing alone. Some of them feel they need a place to exchange their thoughts and get the best solution from Mr. Namiya, but not a few make it a place to spill all their emotions without expecting anything in return. The point is that this book is a poignant and engaging novel that offers a compelling exploration of human nature, the impact of kindness, and the interconnectedness of lives across time. Higashino's masterful storytelling ensures that readers are not only entertained but also moved by the characters' profound insights and emotional journeys.

Keigo Higashino wrote The Miracles of The Namiya General Store to encourage readers to reflect on the importance of empathy, hope, togetherness, and the long-term impact of our actions. In addition, the stories in each character's letters to the Namiya General Store often contain hope and redemption, that no matter how much of a mistake is made, there will always be hope and redemption for it. In essence, the letters in this novel serve as a form of expression or emotional outpouring so that the characters feel re-purified or successful in purgatory. In navigating the factors that drive the characters to perform human Purgation, the author relates it to Sigmund Freud's catharsis theory, where someone who experiences excessive emotional pressure needs self-defense to divert these thoughts, one of them is through Catharsis. Catharsis is not a form of self-defense where a person denies what they are experiencing, but rather a form of self-defense where they release their emotions through positive things such as writing or telling it to others they trust. Jin, W. (2015) Catharsis in psychoanalysis is not a mechanism of discharge linked to abreaction but rather a process during which the subject is "unveiled" and confronts the enigma of his desires.

II. METHOD

This study uses the descriptive-qualitative method; the results are in the form of descriptions based on personality analysis of the characters in the novel *The Miracles of The Namiya General Store* by Keigo Higashino. Qualitative research emphasizes inductive reasoning, where the author obtains to develop hypotheses from observations (Koh, 2000, p. 220). Kalof (2008) in Aspers (2019, p. 146) explains that qualitative research focuses on understanding processes, experiences, and meanings people assign to things. The author analyzes it by reading, identifying, and making some interpretations from the novel *The Miracles of The Namiya General Store* by Keigo Higashino in the form of words, sentences, paragraphs, and conversations as the data.

The author collects and identifies data from the novel as a whole in the form of paragraphs, sentences, and utterances related to the research problem and interprets all of it using one of the branches of Psychoanalysis theory-the Catharsis theory disseminated by Sigmund Freud from Josef Breur's treatment of Anna O. The Catharsis theory in brief is to release negative emotions through positive activities such as telling it to a trustworthy person or an expert (psychologist). The author collects information from different times, events, situations, and places in the novel and applies the theory by Sigmund Freud to analyze the topic. The author uses various points of view when reading the story and is always open to any other perspective that comes unexpectedly when reading from different sources.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The author presents the findings and discussion based on identifying and interpreting data collected from the novel *The Miracles of the Namiya General Store* by Keigo Higashino.

A. The factors influencing characters' human Purgation through catharsis theory in *The Miracles of The Namiya General Store* novel

The process of human Purgation or Catharsis in The Miracles of The Namiya General Store is experienced by several characters who send their letters to the Namiya General Store. Each of them has a different background story and problem; nine people have different emotional turmoil and different hopes of redemption. Some of these factors are feeling scared and uncertain about the future, fearing what society would think of what they were going through, having personal dilemmas, regret and guilt, and hope and redemption. The first character that the author will discuss is Kosuke Waku, a little boy in a difficult situation where he knows that his father and mother have done bad things, so they have to run away from home secretly at night. Kosuke's family is facing severe financial troubles, which have led his parents to plan an escape to avoid their debts and start anew elsewhere.

"My parents want to take me and run off into the night. They have a ridiculous amount of debt, and we can't repay it, so my dad's company is going under. We're supposed to leave town at the end of the month. They're saying I need to switch schools. I want to make them change their minds. They told me the collections man will hunt us down no matter how far we run. I'm scared that we will have to run forever. What should I do?" Keigo Higashino (2012, p. 138)

As a child. Kosuke was deeply affected by the turmoil and instability this situation brought. He feels scared and uncertain about the future and struggles with leaving his home, friends, and everything familiar behind. He expressed his anxiety in a letter addressed to Mr. Namiya as a form of human Purgation or self-defense after he had spent long nights struggling with his emotions alone. Writing is one of the most common methods of Catharsis, whether to whoever it is addressed, writing down the emotions or feelings that haunt you can help relieve them. The argument can be strengthened by the statement from Mugerwa, S., & Holden, J. (2012) that Writing therapy may be a costeffective, easily accessible alternative to psychological therapies in general practice, potentially improving mental and physical health.

It can be concluded that the factor that encourages Kosuke to perform human Purgations through Catharsis is that he is frantic enough to hold this big secret alone, especially at a very young age; it haunts his sleep that they must constantly run away. The second factor is that writing is the only form of positive emotional release that he can do without raising suspicion from any parties. Kosuke wrote his letter under the pseudonym Paul Lennon as a sign that he could not carelessly spread his identity or his parents would be caught. Another factor that influenced the characters to commit human Purgation was the fear of what society would think they were going through, although none of them knew what was happening. However, some of the characters experienced emotional distress and fear that what they did was so bad and against social norms that they could no longer bear it all alone. Hence, they decided to write a letter to Mr. Namiya as a form of sharing and hoping to get a solution from someone.

".....From the letter, I gathered she had gotten pregnant by a man who already had a wife and kids, and she was torn up about whether to have the child or have an abortion..." Keigo Higashino (2012, p. 112)

In one of the letters sent by Midori under the pseudonym Green River, her feelings for the man are strong. Still, she is also aware of the moral and emotional implications of a relationship with someone already committed to another person. Midori feels stuck and needs clarification about the best course of action. The moral and emotional pressure of someone being cheated on is the most significant factor that causes Midori to engage in Catharsis. To strengthen the argument, according to Eisenberg, N. (2000), Moral emotions, such as embarrassment, guilt, and shame, play a crucial role in moral behavior and regulation, with empathy-related responses playing a role in prosocial and antisocial behavior. So, the moral and emotional pressure that Midori feels becomes a decisive factor that drives a person to commit human Purgation. This moral pressure is experienced by Midori and most of the other characters who send letters to Mr. Namiya.

The next factor is a personal dilemma; characters in the novel face significant personal challenges and decisions that lead to emotional turmoil. For instance, characters like Atsuya, Shota, and Kohei are burdened with guilt, confusion, and past regrets, driving them to seek advice and find emotional release through the letters they encounter. Dilemma is a form of emotion that is quite disturbing for humans, especially when making decisions. Nichols, S., & Mallon, R. (2006). Moral dilemmas are influenced by both emotional responses and rules, and people distinguish between actions that violate rules and are generally considered wrong. Of course, the most appropriate form of self-defense is Catharsis by considering getting a solution so that they can make decisions for their future lives. Someone with a solid personal dilemma certainly needs a place to get "enlightenment" on the dilemma he has experienced.

The next factor is regret and guilt in the past. As a human being, being haunted by the shame and guilt that has happened certainly makes them feel they have an unresolved debt. Lucas, M. (2004) Existential regret leads to a combination of existential anxiety and existential guilt, resulting in a paralysis of action and choice. That's why some characters decide to perform human Purgation as a form of purification from the guilt that has haunted them all this time. Through the guidance in the letters, they find ways to confront and reconcile with their past actions, leading to emotional Purgation. This process is seen in the stories of characters who revisit their past decisions and seek to make amends or find peace.

Last but not least, the factors that influence the Catharsis of each character are hope and redemption. They hope that by writing these letters, they can make up for all the mistakes and complaints that have haunted their minds so far. It was the most likely form of selfdefense when there was nothing else they could do to change their destiny. They shed all their deepest emotions and secrets in the form of human Purgation by writing letters to Mr. Namiya. This self-defense can temporarily help them distract themselves from their bad feelings and then move on after feeling "pure" successfully performing after human Purgation.

B. In several ways, the characters in Keigo Higashino's *The Miracle of The Namiya General Store* utilize the process of human Purgation through Catharsis as a form of self-defense against internal conflict and emotional distress.

In "The Miracles of the Namiya General Store," characters utilize catharsis processes through emotional Purgation to self-defense against internal conflicts and emotional distress. The catharsis processes in the novel are writing letters, receiving guidance, reflecting on the advice, and, most importantly, taking action. The way the characters utilize catharsis processes as a means of self-defense is by confronting guilt, expressing grief, and securing stability and emotional clarity. After discussing the factors that influence characters' human Purgation, it's time to break down the catharsis process in the novel The Miracles of The Namiya General Store by Keigo Higashino. The first, of course, is letter writing; the act of writing letters to Mr. Namiya allows characters to articulate their deepest fears and concerns, which is the first step towards emotional release. This process of externalizing their internal struggles helps them to confront and address their issues.

The second is Receiving Guidance. Mr. Namiya's empathetic and thoughtful responses give the characters new perspectives and practical advice, helping them to overcome their dilemmas. This guidance acts as a catalyst for their emotional healing. The third is Reflecting on the advice. By reflecting on the advice the characters receive, they can make decisions that are true to who they are, leading to a sense of resolution and peace. The last and most important thing is to take action. Implementing the advice and making positive changes in their lives allows the characters to move forward, turning their emotional distress into personal growth and resilience. Taking action is essential because not all take action and implement Mr. Namiya's advice, which leads to unexpected things, like Kosuke, who chooses to leave his parents, contrary to Mr. Namiya's message.

The next is a discussion of how the characters utilize the catharsis process as self-defense. It is known that in this book, the night before his death, Mr. Namiya asked his "customers" to write him a letter with feedback on whether his advice was helpful to them or not,

"On September 13, from exactly midnight until daybreak, the advice box of the Namiya General Store will be reopening for one night only. We kindly ask that anyone who has ever asked for and received advice to give us your unfiltered opinion. How did it affect your life? Did you find it useful, or was it useless? Please leave your letters in the mail slot in the shutter, just like old times. We look forward to hearing from you." Keigo Higashino (2012, p. 121)

The results of the letters illustrate how many people found Mr. Namiya's advice helpful. They even explained what they went through and their decisions after regaining control. They no longer feel anxious and haunted by the murmurs of destructive emotions that they have been experiencing; the human's Purgation through Catharsis did manage to make them feel "pure" again and have a more peaceful life. Let's break down how the characters utilize the process of human Purgation through their Catharsis. The first is by confronting guilt; the characters confront their guilt completely openly to Mr. Namiya as a form of "releasing" the emotions they have been dealing with. This process helps the characters reflect on the mistakes they made in the past and perform human Purgation so that they can reduce internal conflict and alleviate feelings of guilt. And it can be seen from the quote,

"Atsuya shook his head again. "I dunno. But I do know one thing. I'm done messing with other people's stuff." Keigo Higashino (2012, p. 253).

Atsuya, burdened by his past criminal behavior, finds Catharsis by answering letters left at the Namiya General Store. By putting himself in the shoes of those seeking advice, Atsuya develops empathy, which helps him understand his own emotions better and navigate his path toward self-improvement. This statement can be strengthened by Donohue, M., & Tully, E. (2019), confronting guilt motivates children to engage in reparative behaviors, which successfully alleviate guilt and prevent depression. Confronting guilt is one of the ways of human Purgation through Catharsis. Next is Expressing grief. Some characters express their emotions by expressing the grief they experience. By expressing their grief, they turn the feeling of grief into something positive.

"Kosuke had a duty to offer a gesture to help him rest peacefully. It had said "unfiltered opinions" were welcome, but that didn't mean they wanted brutal honesty. The important thing was to express to them that the advice had been spot-on." Keigo Higashino (2012, p. 177)

Feelings of guilt so burden Kosuke that he chooses to jump out of the car and let his parents commit suicide by fabricating as if Kosuke also participated in the suicide plan so that Kosuke's new identity is no longer disturbed by his past. The grief that he just got turned into something positive by writing a letter to Mr. Namiya and making it seem as if he and his family found a way out, and now they are living happily together. Kosuke's actions are a form of expressing grief in a positive form. Shah, N. (2015) Expressing grief is the process of relinquishing emotional attachments to the lost object and resurrecting the lost object in the psyche.

Last but not least is securing stability and emotional clarity. The characters managed to gain mental strength and emotional clarity after they performed human Purgation. Human Purgation helps the characters relieve conflicts they have the inner been experiencing and the unstable emotions that occur due to guilt in the past. By performing human Purgation, they release the emotional turmoil that haunts them. They managed to reach a point of peace and managed to control themselves. This is reinforced by Li, Y., & Ahlstrom, D. (2016); emotional stability (ES) is a valid and reliable construct that predicts group leadership, job satisfaction, selfefficacy, and commitment and moderates the relationship between individual commitment and group relationship conflict.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The analysis of "The Miracles of The Namiya General Store" by Keigo Higashino shows that Human's Purgation is a form of self-defense or so-called Catharsis that humans need. By analyzing the factors that encourage a person to engage in Catharsis and how the characters maximize human Purgation through Catharsis, it is found that humans need other people who are certainly wiser in making decisions. Although different people's advice is not always accepted, at least by releasing the grumbling of emotions that swell within, humans can survive all the chaotic emotional and psychological problems that come their way. Self-defense is not designed to be a permanent pain reliever, nor does it guarantee that someone who has performed human Purgation will be completely free from the emotional criticism that haunts them. However, at least this catharsis self-defense relieves the emotional criticism that haunts them throughout their lives. This analysis shows that the need for human Purgation is closely related to a person's psychological problems. Someone may need advice from others or need to be heard about the issues they have been dealing with.

B. Suggestion

This study recommends that further literary studies continue to explore Psychoanalysis, especially about self-defense and the Catharsis approach, to reveal the psychological and social dynamics of humans in dealing with emotional turmoil arising from past trauma. Understanding how humans manage to release negative emotions into positive things is very important; this can certainly increase the number of people who feel "saved" after releasing their emotions through positive things.

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