

# katakita the parental

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## The Parental Pressure and the Impacts to the Main Characters in *3 Idiots*

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### 1

### ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the parental pressure and how it gives impacts toward children in *3 Idiots*. This thesis uses the parental pressure concept by Medora M. Sletten and anxiety theory by Sigmund Freud. The aim of this study is to reveal that Farhan and Raju get two kinds of parental pressure, they are direct and indirect pressures. Later on, the impact of the pressure makes both characters experience anxiety, they are, reality anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Through this analysis, it can be concluded that Farhan and Raju get the pressure from their parents, and since both the main characters suppress their own ego, they suffer anxiety.

**Key Words:** Parental Pressure, Reality Anxiety, Neurotic Anxiety

Dramedy is the combination between drama and comedy, which allows the movie-writer to bring serious issues and problems that are either taboo or at least controversial. One of them is *3 Idiots*. There are three reasons why I choose this Bollywood movie. First of all, *3 Idiots* has a different concept of regular Bollywood movies. *3 Idiots* offers only three scenes of singing and dancing while usually, a typical Bollywood movie offers a lot of scenes. Second, *3 Idiots* well received by audience. *3 Idiots* got grossed around US\$76,81 million and has become the highest grossing Bollywood movie in its country and overseas (“Top,” 2012). Last but not least, *3 Idiots* also brings up a serious social issue in India relating to parents and children relationship. “Indian parents are almost certainly the most demanding.” (“Indian”, 2012). It shows that Indian parents have great expectation to their children’s career since they strongly believed that education can guarantee someone to a better life.

The analysis is on the parental pressure towards children. Most of the children do not realize that actually they get pressure from their parents. *3 Idiots* mainly centers on the parental ambitions that lead their children experience anxiety. Thus, I want to reveal what kinds of pressures are given to Farhan and Raju by their parents, and what the impacts of the pressures toward them are.

In order to answer the types of parental pressure and its impacts, I am going to apply the concept of parental pressure by Medora M. Sletten and anxiety theory by Sigmund Freud. Firstly, parental pressure is a condition perceived by children as indicating expectation of unlikely, even unattainable heights of accomplishment. Sletten says, parental pressure and expectations are creating a generation of disconnected and robotic children (2010, p. 1). The first expression of parental pressure is direct pressure, which is a way to express disappointment of the parents to their children. Another way to express the pressure is called indirect pressure, which comes from children’s feeling of responsibility that must make their parents proud of them.

Getting pressure from their parents, both main characters in *3 Idiots* must suffer anxiety as the result of suppressing their own ego. Anxiety is an unpleasant inner state that people seek to avoid. Although there are three type of anxiety, in this study I only used two types of three. Firstly, I am going to talk about reality anxiety. This kind of anxiety is one in which there is occurs emotional response to real threat or danger present in the environment (Singh, 338). In addition, I am going to talk about neurotic anxiety. It is the result of struggle between the need for immediate gratification of infantile impulses and the attempt of interrogator of internal and external demands to modify and control these impulses.

### THE PARENTAL PRESSURE AND THE IMPACTS TOWARD FARHAN AND RAJU

There are two types of parental pressure towards Farhan and Raju, that is, direct and indirect parental pressures. The impacts towards them after getting pressure from their parents are two types of anxieties: reality anxiety and neurotic anxiety.

#### Direct Parental Pressure

The first parental pressure is called direct pressure. As Sletten has stated in her concept, direct parental pressure is shown by parents in order to force children to aim parents' ambition. There are three expressions of direct parental pressure that can be seen from Farhan and Raju's parents: yelling, forcing, and complaining toward children.

Firstly, parents' yelling towards their children leads them to have pressure. In *3 Idiots*, parents express their disappointment by yelling toward their children. Farhan's father despises his son's obsession in photography. Farhan's father is the type of father who is very demanding and giving no option toward his only son. He strongly believes pursuing a career as a photographer cannot guarantee Farhan's future since pursuing career in an artsy, such as photography, way is more difficult instead of seeking a career which is more educational, such as engineering. To make it worse, that statement is also heard by Rancho, Farhan's friend, who accompanies Farhan to face his father. By yelling in front of Farhan's friend, it shows that another purpose of Farhan's father basically is making sure that Farhan's environment, specifically Farhan's friends, support him to study engineering. By getting yell from Farhan's father, Farhan feels the pressure to pursue something he has no interest in.

In addition, parents' forcing to pursue their ambitions towards their children makes them have pressure. In *3 Idiots*, Farhan's father describes how much money that Farhan can earn. By mentioning the reality that Farhan may get in the future, Farhan's father tries to make Farhan realize the difference between career that he wants to achieve and what the society may give. Farhan's father even compares the different future between Farhan, who desires to be a wildlife photographer, and Farhan's friends, who consistent in pursuing career as an engineer. By comparing the future that Farhan may get, he becomes shaky about his own decision and forcefully pursue engineer. The way Farhan's father forces his son makes Farhan feel pressure to achieve engineering, a career that his parents insists him to obtain.

Furthermore, parents' complaining towards their children makes them feel pressure to accomplish parents' desire. In *3 Idiots*, Raju's mother emphasizes the expenditure of the family toward her son. Reminding of the major problem in the family, Raju suffers pressure to be more aware with his study. Raju's mother also reminds Raju regarding his sister's marriage, which illustrates that Raju's mother worries about the future of her only daughter. Instead of worrying about Raju's future, his mother keeps mentioning about his sister's future. Therefore, the way Raju's mother complains gives Raju pressure to study well, so that he can help the family to raise the financial thing.

#### Indirect Parental Pressure

Another parental pressure is indirect parental pressure. According to Sletten, indirect parental pressure is a responsibility feeling that develops in children's mind which makes them feel sinful if they avoid parents' demand. There are two types of indirect parental pressure: instilling the feeling of guilt and high expectation.

#### Instilling the Feeling of Guilt

The first type of indirect pressure is instilling the feeling of guilt. According to Sletten, it comes from the understanding in children's mind that parents as the role models who naturally encourage children's development. There are two categories of instilling the feeling of guilt, which are, showing off, and blabbering.

First of all, parents' showing off their children to the society gives the children pressure indirectly. Successful children will make their parents boast about how great their children are. This kind of thought leads Farhan's father to force his son to succeed in studying engineering. Farhan's father tells his friend how successful his son is. The society, which is shown by mentioning Mr Kapoor's name in the conversation, judges that being a student at Institute College

of Engineering gives prestige not only to the students, but also to the parents. Indirectly, it gives Farhan pressure to fulfill his father's dream by being an engineer so that he feels the proud of being a successful son. The way Farhan's father puts his hope on his son makes Farhan feel the pressure to pursue engineering.

The second type of instilling the feeling of guilt is parents' blabbering of the money they already spent towards children. Coming from middle-class family, Farhan's parents try to provide Farhan all his needs. Normally parents will sacrifice their comfort without blabbering it to their children. However, by blabbering it like what Farhan's father did, he proves that he gives pressure indirectly to make his son pursue what he wants. In another word, it shows that Farhan's father wants his son recognize about what he has already sacrificed and makes sure that Farhan will not waste the chance that he already gets. For that reason, it shows that Farhan gets indirect pressure by the way his father blabbers toward him.

### **High Expectation**

Another type of indirect pressure is high expectation. Sletten says that children from disadvantage family are often expected to do well in school in order to care for their siblings and help with the bills. This situation makes parents unconsciously force their children to fulfill the ambition of getting a better life and makes children feel pressure. There are two kinds of high expectation: in education and in economic condition.

First, parents' high expectation in education toward their children makes them feel pressure. Raju suffers a great hope to fix economical problem in his family. In *3 Idiots*, Raju is shown that he needs good grade. However, Raju's parents make him unable to concentrate on studying since they give Raju high expectation for family. Every student needs good grades. However, by mentioning through the conversation above, it shows that the only thing that Raju wants in his school life is getting good grades. It makes him into someone who looks like so ambitious in order to achieve it. The conversation above also shows that his mother assumes that Raju can reach her expectation. By getting high expectation in education, leads Raju to have pressure to achieve parents' ambition.

Later on, parents' high expectation in economic toward their children make them feel pressure. Raju's father looks forward to his son to raise family economy. India puts man as the one who can be relied on since they use patriarchal culture in the family. The root of the problem of Raju's family is money. Since Raju realizes that he is the only son in his family, he tries to fulfill what his family expects him to be, which lead him into pressure to pursue it. Therefore, it shows that Raju gets indirect parental pressure by getting high expectation in economic.

### **The Impacts of Parental Pressure toward Farhan and Raju**

Farhan and Raju experience anxiety as the impact of parental pressure. There are two kinds of anxieties that I will discuss here, that are, reality anxiety and neurotic anxiety.

#### **Farhan and Raju's Reality Anxiety**

Reality anxiety is one of the impacts of parental pressure. It is a fear of real and possible dangers from the outside world. Being afraid of be flunked and being jobless are some examples that I would like to expose in this sub-chapter.

#### **Having Fear of Being Flunked**

Being flunked academically is scary for some people. It is because academic will affect students' image when they want to apply a job. It is characterized by being unable to concentrate on study and trying to study too much.

Firstly, being unable to concentrate on study is indicates fear of being flunked. In *3 Idiots*, Farhan finds himself trapped into the fear of being flunked on studying engineering which leads him into worry of making his father disappointed. The pressure from his parents to be an engineer makes him difficult to study since his own ambition is totally different from his parents' expectation. Even though Farhan has succeeded in enrolling in Imperial College Engineering, one of the best engineering colleges, he is still unable to reach good grade. His feeling as a son who has responsibility to grant his father's dream make this result become worse because he gets fear about

his father's thought. His fear of being flunked increases since he is not able to obtain his father's expectation. The analysis shows that Farhan is unable to concentrate on studying.

Next, trying to study too much illustrates fear of being flunked. Studying is a student's responsibility. However, studying so hard can be interpreted that the students have fear of being flunked. In *3 Idiots*, Raju is also nervous about his study. Bringing the hope from his family, he wants to study hard in order to get a good job one day. Raju knows how many exams that he is going to have in one semester. That is why, he wants to focus on his study, instead of helping his friend, Rancho. As a student, indeed his responsibility is studying. However, by stating accurate numbers of the exams that he is going to have, it shows that he prepares himself to avoid failure. Therefore, it shows the fear of being flunked, which is the impact of parental pressure.

### **Having Fear of Being Jobless**

Another reality anxiety that comes as the impact of parental pressure is having fear of being jobless. In this study, being unable to pass the exams is the characteristic of having fear of being jobless.

Being unable to pass the exams leads the students to have fear of being jobless. Farhan feels worried if he cannot work in engineering company. Farhan's father expects him to be an engineer, yet he feels difficult to fulfill that ambition. As the impact of parental pressure, Farhan experiences a fear of being jobless. Getting no job as the effect of being unable to pass the final exam leads Farhan's fear of being jobless. Having feared of failing the final exam continues to haunt him because he can only reach the lowest position in the list of the students' grade in his college. That is why, he wants to make sure that he still gets the job although he failed in the final exam. If this condition happens, Farhan thinks that it will reduce his father's disappointment to him.

### **Raju's Neurotic Anxiety**

Neurotic anxiety is another impact of parental pressure. Raju suffers neurotic anxiety since he is forced to be the one who is responsible in raising his family financial. There are two aspects that I would like to show: excessive reliance on the supernatural power, and excessive fear of future.

### **Excessive Reliance on the Supernatural Power**

The first type of neurotic anxiety is having excessive reliance on the supernatural power. There are two characteristics of excessive reliance on the supernatural power which are, praying excessively and wearing some charms.

First thing, praying to God excessively proves the excessive reliance on the supernatural power. In *3 Idiots*, Raju wants God to make his wish come true. He begs for favor to God. By praying often, he hopes that there is a change and easier way that God will give him. Raju believes that God can change his family condition into a better condition although they come from low-class family. As a neurotic sufferer, Raju keeps in mind that supernatural things can help him immediately. It makes him depend more on God. Furthermore, Raju suffers stress with his grades. He feels difficult to get good grade, while he thinks in order to reach his mother's expectation, he has to succeed in his study. However, the existence of Rector makes him difficult to accomplish his mother's obsession. Raju suffers worry since he needs to fulfill what his mother wants him to be. As human being, praying to God patiently in order to get what we want is a natural thing. However, the way Raju prays to God in anger like the statement above, when he said that he wanted God to burn Rector in hell and fry Rector-nuggets in bubbling oil, it shows that Raju already lose his patient. It shows that he prays to God over and over again before he loses his temper. Therefore, Raju suffers anxiety since there is an obstacle that he cannot avoid of.

Next, wearing some charms illustrates the excessive reliance on the supernatural power. In *3 Idiots*, Raju wears some charms. Raju considers it as a charm to help him suppress and remind him of the duty and the pressure that he has. Raju's responsibilities can be seen from how many rings that he wears. As a neurotic anxiety sufferer, he undergoes a fear of failing in his study. Bringing hope from all the members of his family, Raju gets depressed from the pressure to be



success. Being successful will not only give impact to Raju's future, but all of the members of his family.

### **Excessive Fear of Future**

Another type of neurotic anxiety is excessive fear of future. In this sub-chapter, it shows that Raju suffers worry about future excessively because of the pressure from his parents. There are three types of excessive fear of future: avoiding making friends, having problems with roommates, and trying to suicide.

First thing, avoiding making friends indicates excessive fear of future. In *3 Idiots*, Raju feels worry to stay closer with Rancho, one of his roommates. Being a part of Imperial College of Engineering student, Raju wants to put all concentration to study well. However, at the first time he meets Rancho, he feels that Rancho will give bad impact toward him, especially because Rancho becomes his roommate. Raju says, "He (Rancho) zaps a senior's private at night, finger the Director in the day. Best avoid him." This quotation indicates that Raju feel afraid of getting influence by Rancho. Raju, who suffers anxiety, judges Rancho even from the beginning because Rancho gives a bad impression in Raju's point of view. This bad impact refers to the future which lead Raju avoid to be friend with Rancho. The words "best avoid him" indicate that he does not want to have any relationship which can bring him into trouble. Raju thinks that Rancho is a kind of a troublemaker who can lead him into failure in his study. Therefore, it proves that Rancho undergoes worry which leads him into neurotic anxiety sufferer.

Then, having problems with room mates leads somebody in excessive fear of future. Raju undergoes the feeling of anxious to be a roommate with Rancho and Farhan. As a son who comes from low-class family, Raju realizes that he is responsible to increase the economical condition of his family. Therefore, Raju realizes he has to study hard in order to get good grades which can lead him to work in a great company so that he can get a better future. That is why, Raju thinks that becoming a friend of Rancho and Farhan can distract his way to fulfill his family's expectation. Raju is really careful about his future since his failure will give impact to the whole of his family. As a neurotic sufferer, Raju feels uneasy about his future because his study becomes stagnant. By standing on this fact, it leads him into having problems with his room mates. That is why, he chooses to avoid being friend with Farhan and Rancho and concentrates on his study. In the end, it shows that Raju suffers neurotic anxiety by having problems with his friends.

Thus, trying to commit suicide indicates excessive fear of future. In this movie, after causing a problem of taking a pee in the entrance of Rector's house, Raju is called by his Rector. In the meeting, Rector gives Raju an option, whether he wants to put his own name in a drop-out letter, or types Rancho's name, Raju's best friend. However, instead of choosing the option that is offered by his Rector, Raju commits to suicide. Committing suicide is not that simple. There must be a struggle which make people choose whether to still alive or stop their lives. Since Raju suffers the excessive fear of his future, he has difficulty to deal with the agreement that his Rector offer to him. For Raju, Rancho is one of his best friends who taught him a lot about life. However, he realizes that his family also needs his support by being successful to be an engineer. Being expelled from university becomes burden for Raju since his parents already suffer a lot to pay his study in university. It means, if Raju's Rector expels him, his own future and his family future will become even worst. As neurotic sufferer, being anxious about future is one of the symptoms. It leads him into fear too much about future which directly make him commits suicide. That is why, after knowing he can not deal with the reality to choose between Rancho, his best friend, or his own future, he comes with the idea to end his own life.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, using *3 Idiots* as the object of my analysis, it shows that parents-children relationship is complex. It shows how parents give pressure consciously or not. *3 Idiots* also shows that parental pressure is not a random feeling that Farhan and Raju feel. There is a cause and effect behind it. Therefore, parental pressure, in the truth, has several types which make the children feel overwhelmed with the pressure and lead them into anxiety. Although they look like normal children who want to make their parents proud of them, deep inside them, they suffer worry for the reason that their parents assume they can fulfill their parents' expectation. If the children never try

to cope with the pressure, it can lead them into a feeling of anxiety, or in a worst case, guide them into committing suicide.

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