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# PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICT OF THE CHARACTER ARTHUR FLECK IN THE JOKER'S MOVIE

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui konflik – konflik psikologi yang terdapat dalam tokoh utama Arthur Fleck dalam film Joker 2019. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, dimana data yang disuguhkan berupa kata, frasa maupun kalimat dan bukan berupa angka. Dari hasil analisis, terdapat beberapa konflik yang terjadi. Terdapat konflik eksternal dan internal yang terjadi dalam cerita tersebut. Konflik eksternal biasanya terjadi ketika pertentangan antara individu dengan individu lain atau suatu kelompok. Sedangkan konflik internal biasanya muncul dalam batin atau psikologi dari tokoh. Adapun teknik pengumpulan data sebagai berikut: (1) Menonton film (2) Mencatat adegan yang termasuk dalam masalah utama (3) Mengelompokkan data (4) Mengurutkan kembali data yang tidak sesuai (5) Makna.

**Kata Kunci: Konflik Psikologi, Konflik Eksternal, Konflik Internal, Joker**

## Abstract

This study aims to determine the psychological conflicts contained in the main character Arthur Fleck in the 2019 Joker film. The method used in this study uses a qualitative descriptive method, where the data presented are in the form of words, phrases and sentences and not in the form of numbers. From the results of the analysis, there are several conflicts that occur. There are external and internal conflicts that occur in the story. External conflict usually occurs when there is a conflict between an individual and another individual or a group, While internal conflicts usually arise in the mind or psychology of the character. The data collection techniques are as follows: (1) Watching movies (2) Recording scenes that are included in the main problem (3) Grouping data (4) Reordering data that are not appropriate (5) Meaning.

**Keyword: Psychological Conflict, Eksternal Conflict, Internal Conflict, Joker**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a very important communication tool for every human being. Of course, language is useful for interacting in people's lives. Also language, it is possible for humans to develop and abstract away various events that appear around them. Language is one of the characteristics that distinguish humans from other creatures. This is because humans have a developing mindset. With the ability of humans to develop a tool to communicate in order to express their thoughts, feelings, or desires. Language is used by anyone and anywhere. Language has a duty as a medium to convey a meaning in communication, both orally and in writing.

With regard to language as a tool to express a thought or feeling, then language can be packaged through a mass media in communication studies such as films. Finally, film is also seen as a language that generates meanings through a system of cinematography, sound, editing, and so on, all of which work like language.

The use of films in community learning is partly based on the consideration that films have the ability to attract people's attention and have the ability to deliver unique messages. With the storyline and the conflict discussed, it supports the running of the film. There are so many themes that are raised into the film, such as love stories, other social

stories that sometimes make viewers get carried away like players who have starred in the film, for example being sad, crying, angry and hateful.

Based on these, researchers are interested in conducting research on the storyline that discusses the psychological conflicts contained in the Joker film, that is in the main character Arthur Fleck. Joker is one of the anti-hero films from DC Comics which was released on October 2, 2019 and was directed by Todd Phillips. This story tells of a man named Arthur Fleck who struggles to find his identity in the city of Gotham by working as a clown because according to his mother's words that his goal in life is to make people laugh.

Arthur who plays a comedian has a mental illness, where he was born from a simple family and his mother also has a mental disorder too. People treat people who have this disease badly, both verbally and non-verbally. This is where conflicts arise.

This psychological thriller film is one of the most popular films in 2019, reported from the official IMDb website (m.imdb.com) this film has a rating of 8.4/10. Therefore, researchers are interested in analyzing the psychological conflict aspect of this film in accordance with the studies that will be discussed in this study. Analyzing psychological conflict here, the author analyzes the conflicts that occur in the main character Arthur Fleck / Joker, both internal and external conflicts that occur in the character. as we know that psychological problems are very important for our life and something that we should be aware of as human beings.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method what researcher use here is a descriptive qualitative method, where the researcher analyses the song lyrics. The object



of the research analysis is theme and rheme from the song lyrics.

Another method to collect data is following technique that proposed by Ary (2002), by observing an event, settings, or documents of popular culture, data can be obtained. Step by step of this research is to search the song lyrics first. The second step is to analyze the source. Third step is to make a several points of theme and rheme that obtained from the source. And the final step is to explain the result with systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory. The results will be in a form of table to determine which one is theme and rheme, also the researcher will count how much certain theme appeared inside the song lyrics.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Identification of Problem

Based on the background, the problem to be discussed by the author can be formulated as follows:

1. How the conflicts are depicted in the film?
2. How does the conflict affect the joker?

### Research Objectives

The aims and objectives of the research are:

1. To find out how the conflict is portrayed in the film.
2. To find out how the conflict affect to Joker.

### 3.2 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this paper is to further deepen knowledge of literature, especially the study of literary psychology, Sigmund Freud's thoughts in literary works. In addition, it is hoped that this research can be useful for people who want to learn literature.

#### a. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.4 THEORITICAL FOUNDATION

#### Previous Research

This research use five research paper which correlate with the psychological conflict.

First, Intan Saraswati, Suyitno, Herman J. Waluyo (2014) the student in *Universitas Sebelas Maret* the title is "*Novel Lalita Karya Ayu Utami (Kajian Psikologi Sastra dan Nilai Pendidikan)*" in the journal, the writer describes the relationship between intrinsic elements in Lalita's novel, psychological aspects of characters, and the emergence of various educational values in Lalita's novel.

Second from Cicilia Damayanti (2015) English Education, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Indraprasta University PGRI, Jakarta. With the title "*Psikologi Sastra Dalam Novel The Book Of Proper Names Karya Amelié Nothomb*" in the journal, the writer Analyzing psychological conflicts that occur in the characters in the novel using descriptive qualitative method.

Third from Tiyas Sukma, M, Pipit Warisma, Mekar Ismayani (2019) and the title is "*Analisis Konflik Tokoh Dalam Novel Rindu Tere Liye Berdasarkan Pendekatan Psikologi Sastra*" the writer examine the conflict of characters in the Rindu novel using a qualitative descriptive method using a literary psychology approach.

Fourth from Reza Rozali\*,Mulyono, Maharani Intan Andalas (2018) IRPJ Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, Faculty of Language and Arts, Semarang State University, Indonesia the title is "*Fenomena Perilaku Psikopat Dalam Novel Katarsiskarya Anastasia Aemilia: Kajian Psikologi Sastra*". This study describe the phenomenon of psychopathic behavior in the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia with the approach of literature psychology, using the theory of psychopath personality disorder from Sigmund Freud.

And the last are from Ratih Widia Riyani, Yusak Hudyono , Dahri Dahlan (2019) Mulawarman University, the title is "*Kepribadian Tokoh Utama Dalam Novel Prahara Cinta Alia Karya Arif Ys: Kajian Psikologi Sastra*", The results of this study are referring to the structural elements of the novel which are intrinsic and extrinsic elements and personality changes in the main character in the novel *Prahra Cinta Alia* by Arif YS.

#### 3.5 LITERATURE

Literature is a work of art mediated by language. Literary works are also seen as imaginative works. As quoted by Luxemburg et al.(2008), several characteristics of literature. 1) literature is a creation, not an imitation 2) Literature is a spontaneous overflow of emotions 3) literature is autonomous, does not refer to something else; literature is not communicative 4) Literary autonomy is characterized by a coherence 5) Literature presents a synthesis between contradictory things. 6) literature reveals the unspeakable. From the original meaning, Literature includes all forms of human writing, such as scientific records, holy books, letters, laws, etc (Surastina, 2018: 3).

Literature was born from the basic human urge to express himself interested in human and human problems, such as a sense of empathy for an event. This event gave rise to an inner conflict that led to the emergence of a literary work. Therefore, literary works are created to be enjoyed, internalized and utilized for the audience. Through literature, we understand more about human life. A work can enrich the reader's insight with various points of view such as religion, psychology, history, social, and anthropology.

In conducting a literature review, we don't just summarize by commenting globally, but must highlight the work from various

aspects. Examining literary works can be in the form of studies that explain phenomena, characteristics or matters relating to the content that affect literary works. Like a literary work that will be studied from a psychological point of view, the observer has mastered matters relating to psychology with literature.

### 3.6 Literature Psychological

Literary psychology is a branch of science that is used to examine a literary work from a psychological point of view. In relation to psychology, Wallek and Warren (2014: 90) state that a study of literature using psychology can be carried out in 4 steps, 1) Study of Author Psychology as a type or person, 2) study of creative processes, 3) Study of type and law - the laws of psychology applied to literary works, and 4) Studying the impact of literature on readers or what is known as the Psychology of Readers.

The development of literary studies has brought together literature with other sciences such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, gender, and history. In this case, various literary approaches have been born, that are literary psychology, sociology of literature, feminism literary criticism, and new historicism. From the explanation above, it appears that literary psychology was born as a type of literary study that is used to read and interpret a literary work, the author of literary works, and their readers by using the concepts and theories that exist in psychology.

According to Albertine Minderop (2016: 55) in his book *Psikologi Sastra* states that literary psychology is influenced by several things. First, literary works are the creation of a psychological process and the author's thoughts. Second, the study of literary psychology is a study that examines the psychological reflection in the character, so that the reader feels lulled by the

psychological problems of the story, which sometimes feels themselves involved in the story. We can relate that Psychology and Literature have a functional relationship because they both study the mental state of others.

### 3.7 Film

Film is part of a complex mass media. Film is defined as pieces of images that are put together into a single unit (Alfathoni&Manesah, 2020:1). Literally, film is *cinematographie* which comes from the word *cinema* which means "movement". *Tho* or *phytos* which means "light" *grapic* is a "Picture". Therefore, film can be interpreted as painting a motion by using light. At first, film were not part of literary works. In the 20th century, fiction movie were declared as a category of literary works based on the effects produced by the audience. Film are categorized as modern dramas which are shown as complete performances that meet the criteria and elements of fiction such as plot, characters, setting, narrative perspective, language style, and messages to be conveyed through audio visuals.

Literary research studies on movies can also be discussed through scripts or texts that can be focused on character analysis, characterizations, storylines, and time and place settings in the story. According to Askuria Basin in his book *Teknik Pembuatan Film*, classifying film by type, method of making films, and by films theme.

1. Film by type, that is:

a. *Story movie* (Fiction)

Films made or produced based on stories written and played by actors and actresses. Most films are commercial.

b. *Non-story movies* (Non-Fiction)

A film that takes a true story as its subject.

2. According to the way of filming

a) Experimental Film

Films made without referring to the usual film-making rules.

#### b. Animated Movies

Films made using images or other inanimate objects, such as dolls, tables, chairs that can be brought to life with animation techniques.

### 3. By Movie Theme (Genre)

#### a. Drama

This theme emphasizes more on the human interest side which aims to invite the audience to feel what the characters are experiencing.

#### b. Action

This theme presents scenes of fights, battles with weapons.

#### c. Comedy

This theme contains things that make the audience smile or even laugh out loud.

#### d. Horror

This theme features scary scenes that give the audience goosebumps.

#### e. Tragedy

Tragedy-themed films generally show the conditions or fate experienced by the main character in the film.

### 3.8 Joker 2019

Joker is a 2019 American psychological thriller film directed by Todd Phillips. This film tells the story of a man named Arthur Fleck who works as an aged clown and lives with his mother Penny in the city of Gotham. Fleck keeps trying to achieve his dream of becoming a Stand Up Comedian, but the jokes always turn on him. Amidst the roar of laughter from the audience, Fleck was secretly thinking of something. He has a brain disorder that causes him to laugh at the wrong time or when he feels stressed. He often visits social service workers to get medication and consultation for her mental problems. At that time, Fleck's billboard is stolen by a gang of street children

who then gang up on him in a deserted alley. Since then, his friend gave him a weapon to protect himself in case something like that happens to him again. A small mistake happened, while he was working as a clown in a children's hospital, the gun he was carrying fell out of his pocket and he was reported to his workplace and fired. When he was about to go home, on the subway he was ambushed by 3 unknown men so Fleck accidentally raised his gun and shot the three men. Arthur did not realize that the treatment he made had turned into a protest movement against the rich people in the city by wearing a clown mask.

The other day, Arthur tried to do stand up comedy at a cafe, but it didn't happen because he couldn't control his laughter on stage. So that the incident became the subject of discussion and by Murray Franklin, one of the comedians showed Arthur's video and made it a subject of ridicule. The ridicule from the people seemed to make him very disappointed. From there, evil thoughts emerged to make his identity as a vile Joker and become a visible killer.

This film is a favorite film that received a high rating according to IMDb with a total of 8.4/10. Therefore, the author chose this film as the object of research.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This study uses descriptive qualitative research because the data are in the form of words or phrases and not numbers, the results of the author's research contain evidence of illustrative data screenshots that describe a fairly strong presentation. According to Nazir, descriptive research is research that seeks to describe phenomena that occur in a real, realistic, and actual way at this time. Qualitative research data can be interpreted as data that is present in the form of words,

sentences, expressions, narratives, and pictures (Ramdhan, 2021: 2).

Helaludin (2019) : In general, the concept of a sample is a small part of the population that is determined to be used in the process of collecting data in research. Researchers used transcripts from the joker film to analyze it. transcript data was obtained from a website on google, The Internet Movie Script Database (<https://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Joker.html>).

The data collection techniques are as follows: (1) Watching movies (2) Recording scenes that are included in the main problem (3) Grouping data (4) Reordering data that are not appropriate (5) Meaning

## 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study resulted in several conflicts contained in literary works in the form of films. The conflicts are internal and external conflicts.

### 6. Discussion

#### 6.1 External conflict

This conflict occurs due to conflict between living things, both individuals and groups. Therefore, external conflict can be divided into two, social conflict and physical conflict.

#### 6.2 Social Conflict

##### 1. JOKER

(into phone)

"Hoyt, let me explain."

HOYT (OVER PHONE)

"Oh, this'll be good. Please tell me why you brought a gun into a sick kid's ward?"

JOKER

(into phone)

"It was, it was a prop gun. It's part of my act now."

HOYT (OVER PHONE)

"Bullshit. Jingles would never carry a fucking gun. Besides, Randall told me you tried to buy a .38 off him last week."

In this scene, it can be seen that there is a conflict between the Joker and his boss who is scolding him for finding the Joker carrying a weapon at work.

2. the third guy sees him reaching and tries to grab the bag from him--  
Joker pulls on it--

(Scene 33.)

3. Joker reaches out to grab the bag--  
And the guy tosses it over his head to one of his friends. Keeping it away from Joker.

Three guys in suits tossing a bag around, playing 'monkey in

the middle' with a clown.

(Scene 34)

The quote here includes social conflicts because the Joker was bullied by 3 foreign men who were on the train. Where conflicts occur between individuals and groups.

#### 6.3 Physical Conflict

1. The Kids Start Kicking And Beating The Shit Out Of Joker.

It's Brutal And Vicious. Nobody On The Street Stops To Help.

Close On Joker's Hobo Clown Face, Down On The Ground. Sweat

Running Down His Face, Smearing His Make-Up. He Doesn't Even

Look Like He's In Pain. He Just Takes The Beating

In the scene, it can be seen that he experienced a physical conflict, namely a kick from some naughty teenagers.

2. WHAP! Out of nowhere one of the guys punches him hard in the face. Joker goes down as if in slow motion. Blood coming from his nose. He tries to get up, but his feet slip from under him and he falls back down –

In this scene, the physical conflict that occurs is the Joker gets punched in the face by the person who bullied him on the train so that blood comes out of his nose.

3. And the third Wall Street guy starts kicking him-- The others join in. Surrounding Joker on the ground, kicking him deliberately, sadistically, and the music swells--

BLAM!

#### 6.4 Internal Conflict

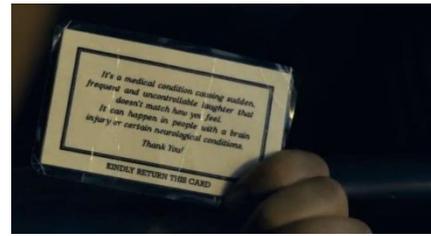
Joker has mental illness.

1. AND SUDDENLY JOKER STARTS TO LAUGH. LOUD. He covers his mouth trying to hide it-- Shakes his head, laughter pausing for a moment, but then it comes on stronger. His eyes are sad. It actually looks like the laughter causes him pain.

2. WOMAN ON BUS : "You think that's funny?"

Joker shakes his head no, but he can't stop laughing. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out a small card. Hands it to the woman. CLOSE ON THE CARD, it reads: "Forgive my laughter. I have a condition (more on back)" She turns the card over and there is a bunch of information in small writing-

In the quote above, it can be seen that the inner conflict felt by the Joker is that his illness always recurs when he feels pressured by circumstances.



3. Joker runs into the bathroom, locks the door behind him and SUDDENLY EVERYTHING HITS HIM ALL AT ONCE-- He throws up into the dirty toilet, puking his guts out--

He finishes, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. And pulls the gun out of his waist, looking around for someplace to throw it out. Under the sink he sees a rusted, metal grate hanging off the wall covering some pipes.

(Scene 40)

In the quote above, it includes Internal Conflict where the inside of the joker feels anxiety due to the incident of shooting 3 men on the train.

4. Joker: "I don't know. I read you can get it from a brain injury or, or a lesion in there. My mom said I was born this way. Born laughing."

(Scene 48)

In this quote, it can be seen that the Joker has a brain injury from birth which makes him always laugh when he feels depressed.

#### 7. CONCLUSION

Based from the findings and discussions above, the researcher found several findings that proof the theme and rheme in the Mili's song "Galahad and Scientific Witchery", also what kind of theme that included in the song lyrics itself.

Most of the theme 16 song lyrics' clause is unmarked theme. There are 11 unmarked themes and 5 marked themes. For the theme itself, there is 10 topical theme, 2 textual theme, and 4 interpersonal themes.

Because this is a story that written into a song lyric, most of themes have a lot of topical themes that referring to certain circumstances

in the story, meanwhile for textual and interpersonal theme appeared whenever the characters in the story have a conversation.

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