

Analysis of Psychological Aspects of The Main Character in Movie “Joker” Based on Sigmund Freud Theory

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to analyze the main characters on the movie “Joker” by Todd Phillips. This research was categorized as descriptive qualitative research. The data were taken from the movie and the scripts. The theory of the psychological aspect is based on Sigmund Freud theory such as the Id, ego, and superego. The main character’s Id was about his negative thought to the unfair life due to the negative response from his surroundings. It was a pleasure principle that worked through primary process thinking. The main character’s ego was about killing people who are wrong. It was a reality principle which worked to satisfy all of the Id’s demand through secondary process thinking. The main character’s superego was keeping a good people to be alive. It was a moral principle that reflected to an idealistic standard through the rules of parents and society.

Keywords: psychological aspects, main character, movie, Sigmund Freud Theory

A. INTRODUCTION

A story must have main character to extend the plot of the story. They have an important role and give the most effect to what happens in the story. In playing the role, the main character must present the story deeply. It has relation to the psychology. It stated by Endraswara (2003:96) that *psikologi sastra adalah kajian sastra yang mengandung karya sebagai aktivitas kejiwaan*. Basically, literary psychology can be analyzed through the assumptions and literary work of the writer.

Joker is an American psychological movie directed by Todd Phillips. The main character is Arthur Fleck, a comedian who has a mental disorder that ultimately commits a crime. The researcher is interested in analyzing the main character in the movie “Joker” based on Sigmund Freud theory such as Id, Ego, and Superego.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Main character

Main character is the most important participant in a movie. It can be 1 person or more. It is also often referred as actors or actresses because they specially have an ability to perform through the dialogue and action. This means that the main characters can pretend to play a character so that is like a real character.

The existence of the main character in the movie is to extend the plot in order to make it interesting. Besides, the main character is the center of the story. According to Grill (1995: 127) main character is a figure who hold an important role, dominant and high intensity in each conflict that builds a story, and they will also usually be complex and fully developed.

The characters who are performed in the movie has a relation to the human psychology. Rakhmat (2007: 33) mentioned that there are some factors that influence the human psychology. They are personal factor and situational factor. In the personal factor, the psychology comes from the individual itself including biological and socio-psychological. In the situation factor, the psychology comes from the outside of individual including social, culture, temporal, technology, and so on.

2. The actress and actors of the movie “Joker”

There were many characters involved in the movie “Joker”.

1. Arthur Fleck (Joker) as the main character
2. Murray Franklin as the host of the Murray’s talk show
3. Penny Fleck as Arthur’s mother
4. Thomas Wayne as the billionaire who is running for mayor of Gotham city
5. Sophie Dumond as Arthur’s love
6. Bruce Wayne as the Wayne’s son
7. Randal as Arthur’s co-worker
8. Gary as Arthur’s co-worker
9. Psychologist as Arthur’s Psychologist

3. The Synopsis of Movie “Joker”

Joker is a psychological movie directed by Todd Phillips. This movie's actor is an American, Joaquin Phoenix as Arthur Fleck (Joker). This movie becomes the most controversial movie in 2019.

The movie told about the Arthur Fleck, a mentally-troubled comedian. He had a pathological laughing disorder that caused him laugh at inopportune times. He often visited a psychiatrist to consult and get medicine.

The story begins when the Arthur's billboard was stolen by some street youths then beaten him in an alley. After that incident, a co-worker named Randall gave him a gun for his life safety. Unfortunately, Arthur made a small mistake. He brought that gun to the children's hospital and acted as clown. When he was performing, suddenly his gun fell down. On the other hand, it is because his co-worker stabs him back. He told the boss that Arthur bought that gun, whereas the fact that he gave it to him. At the same time, he got an information that the social service office, a place for him to get medicine was closed. That problems made him stress and depression.

When he was on the way back home by subway, Arthur was afflicted by three businessmen. Spontaneously, he shot them all by the gun. That assassination would start the demonstration against the rich people using the clown mask.

On the next day, Arthur tried to perform a comedy in a talk show at night as a mockery but it failed because of he could not stop laughing on the stage. This Arthur's bad performance presented on television by Murray Franklin as the host of its talk show.

At night, Arthur read a letter's mother about a popular politician, Thomas Wayne. He knew a fact that he was an illegitimate child of him. That made him really mad to his mother for keeping a secret for a long time. Knowing that fact, Arthur went to Wayne's house, but he met his Wayne's son there.

In the next day, he met Wayne in a public event and told the truth in order to get his confession. In a contrary, he got an unexpected response. Wayne told that his mother was a mentally unstable and not his biological mother.

To prove the Wayne's information, Arthur visited Arkham Hospital and took his mother's case file forcibly from an employee to verify the data. After reading it, he believed that all of the Wayne's information was correct.

When he visited his mother in the hospital, Arthur remembered about what was his mother did when he was child. His mother was physically abusive towards him. That fact made Arthur so mad on her mother and killed his mother at once.

Sophie was a woman that he liked. She got surprise when saw Arthur inside of her home. Something changed his mind because of her negative response. That was way he killed her too.

In Arthur's apartment, he was visited by two co-workers who wanted to express their condolences to his mother's death. But Arthur killed one of them cruelly and let another go because of his kindness to Arthur in the past.

At home, Arthur was called by a woman by phone to invite him to the Murray show. Before the show aired, Arthur asked Murray to introduce him as a Joker. On the stage, Murray welcomed him warmly and asked him some questions. But Arthur continually explained about the assassination in a subway. He also explained about how people left and mocked him, including Murray. Then, he shot Murray in that show.

At the end, when the psychiatrist asked him a question. Arthur answered the psychiatrist by saying that the actually psychiatrist did not understand about him. And then killed the psychiatrist too.

4. Sigmund Freud Theory

Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis. He composed that there are three parts of human personality. Freud's personality theory (1923) saw the psyche structured into three parts (i.e., tripartite), the id, ego and superego, all developing at different stages in our lives. They interact together to create a behavior and have a powerful influence to the individual personality. The Sigmund Freud theory proved that there is a relationship between psychology and literature (Milner, 1992: 14-25).

a. Id

Id is the biological component of the personality. It is the only basic elements of the human personality present at birth including instincts, impulses and drives. The id operates based on the pleasure principle (Freud, 1920). It is the human unrealistic and unconscious part of psyche which always gives the respond immediately to desire, wants and needs.

The concept of Id's thinking is primary process thinking. It is an unconscious thinking which focused on the immediate gratification of instinctual demands. As a result, it is illogical and irrational.

b. Ego

Ego developed from Id. It operates based on the reality principle. The ego is 'that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world.' (Freud, 1923, p. 25). Ego works to satisfy all of the desire, wants and needs of the Id's demands with acceptable manner in realistic and socially.

The Ego mediates between Id's unrealistic and the reality which becomes a decision-making. The concept of Ego's thinking is through secondary process thinking. It is more rational, logical, realistic, and sophisticated.

Ego also is called as the leader of personality but it is existing between Id and superego. Ego must obey the reality principle by following the human's demand that are limited by reality. Id and ego do not have morality, so both of them do not know all the good and bad things (Minderop, 2010:20-22)

c. Superego

Superego develops from ego. It is a moral principle that has a relation to norms and rules in environment (family and society). It is also the personality aspect that reflects to an idealistic standard, not a realistic principle. The function of superego is as a controller between Id dan Ego.

Feist (2010: 34) explains that superego is divided into two parts, namely ideal ego and conscience. Ideal ego is all about forming an ideal individual

behavior through the rules of parents and society. Conscience is the failed behavior that is prohibited by parents and society.

C. METHOD

The researcher used descriptive qualitative method which used to analyze the psychological aspects of the main character in the movie “Joker” presented by Todd Phillips. The researcher described and analyzed the movie by watching and reading the script repeatedly. Then, the researcher identified and analyzed the Id, Ego and Super Ego of the main character in that movie based on Sigmund Freud theory.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Arthur Fleck was the main character of the movie “Joker”. This character was very interesting to be analyzed because It was about the suffering of an individual. He appeared as an extreme reaction to helplessness and adversity in facing life. People kept making fun on him. He seemed like unlucky man and alienated, due to the unfair life.

A. The Id

Based on the movie, Arthur wanted to be a famous comedian. Because of his pathological laughing disorder, he failed to make a joke on the stage. Something changed him when he got the negative responses from his surroundings. There were two factors influencing him; personal and situational factor. The personal factor was from family and the external factors were from working environment, living environment, his idol, and psychiatrist.

In running his life, Arthur thought that his life was unfair. He only asked the politeness and wanted to get good responses from other people. The incident that occurred in the subway was a cruel action. Three men tortured him without clarifying. They did not give a chance to explain why he could not stop laughing.

In the family environment, he was disappointed and mad to his mother, Penny Fleck, for keeping a secret for a long time about who his father was. After knowing it, Arthur met Thomas Wayne to ask for clarifying. Unfortunately, he did

not admit it. He said that he was an adopted child and his mother was a crazy woman. In order to prove that, he went to Arkham hospital to find the data of his mother. The results showed that his mother has a mental disorder.

In working environment, he was still treated unfairly. One of his co-workers, Randal, stabbed his back until he got fired. To vented his frustration, he slammed his head against the wall. The Id works unrealistic and unconscious.

The problem also appeared from his idol, Murray Franklin-the host of a talk show. He invited Arthur to his show, but something happened to Arthur when he was on the stage. his joke considered was not funny.

In the social health services, Arthur always consulted to psychiatric regularly. He wanted to get more medicines because he cared to his condition. In their dialog, the psychiatric always asked him the same question every week. Arthur said that “all I have is a negative thought, but you do not listen anyway”.

B. The Ego

The Arthur’s ego is killing people who acted in wrong ways to him. He thought that comedy was a subjective. People decided what was right or wrong, in the same way they decided that comedy was funny or not. Arthur’s Ego drive him in order to satisfy all of Id’s wanted through action. In the first incident of three men in the subway, Ego worked through secondary thinking process in the form of making-decision. So, suddenly, Arthur shot them all by gun.

Arkham Hospital data showed that her mother has a mental disorder. His mother abused him, which caused him got in bruises all over Arthur's body and severe trauma to his head. Arthur thought that his life is not a tragedy, but a comedy. To satisfy his Id’s, then he killed his mother.

When his two co-workers visited Arthur’s house, one of them explained about the subway assassination. He remembered that Randal had a mistake to him in the past, so that Arthur stabs him by a knife.

In the talk show, Arthur told to Murray that he was wrong. He was really mad to him since he made Arthur’s comedy as a joke to boost that show. To satisfy his id’s want, Arthur shot him by a gun.

Psychiatrist's disregard Arthur's Id. So, his ego worked to by killing the psychiatrist.

C. Superego

Arthur's superego could be seen from what was his mother said when he was a child. She said that he had to smile and put on a happy face. She also said that he had to spread joy and laughter in his life.

The superego-controlled Arthur's Id and ego. There was some Arthur's superego regarding his action in facing life. He always kept people's life who did not have problems or negative response to him. It happened to Wayne's son and Gary as his co-worker. When Arthur visited Wayne's house, he met Wayne's son in front of the gate. He did not have idea to kill him. Moreover, he comforted him by showing a little magic like a clown who entertained a little kid. Whereas, he did not wear a clown costume.

Gary is one of his co-workers who has a short body (midget). When he visited Arthur's house with Randal (the other co-worker), Arthur only killed Randal and did not kill another co-worker because he did not have any problems with Arthur. He was a good person. So, Arthur let him go.

Both of these moments should be possible for Arthur to kill them all. In the reality, Arthur keeps them because they are a good people. Arthur's superego here works based on moral principle.

E. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

According to Sigmund Freud theory, there are three parts of human psychology. They were Id, ego, and superego. The Id was about pleasure principle including instincts, impulses and drives. It worked through the primary process thinking. The Arthur's Id was about his negative thought to the unfair life due to the negative response from his surroundings. The ego was about the reality principle which worked to satisfy all of the Id's demand. It is rational, logical, realistic, and sophisticated through secondary process thinking. The Arthur's ego was killing people who were wrong. The superego was the moral principle. It was a personality aspect that reflects to an idealistic standard through the rules of

parents and society. In addition, it was as a controller between Id and Ego. Arthur's super ego is keeping a good people alive.

The researcher hope that the results of this analysis would be useful for other researchers that has a relation to the psychological analysis.

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