



**Arthur Fleck as Villain Protagonist Portrayed in
Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie**

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Abstract

The research delves into the depiction of Arthur Fleck as a Villain Protagonist in Todd Phillips's *Joker*. Researchers conducted qualitative analysis using the movie script written by Todd Phillips in 1919 as the primary source of data. The theoretical framework employed to examine the portrayal of a villain protagonist, specifically Arthur Fleck, draws on the theory developed by C. Baldick and Bergstrand. The findings of the analysis reveal that Arthur Fleck aligns with the characteristics of a Villain Protagonist, as outlined in the theory, showcasing malevolence, betrayal, and the capability to endanger others. These traits are evident in Fleck's actions, particularly in his engagement in acts of killing and violence against other characters in the movie.

Keywords: Character; joker; protagonist; villain

A.INTRODUCTION

The enjoyment of literary works is significantly influenced by the presence of characters, integral elements in storytelling. Characters are crafted with specific roles and functions in the narrative. The major character, distinguished from minor characters, plays a crucial role in establishing meaning in various situations, contributing significantly to the overall development of the story Stanton (1965:17).

Readers derive enjoyment and insight into the essence of life by experiencing it through the perspective of the main character, fostering a sense of sympathy for the character. This empathetic connection is particularly associated with the protagonist character in literary works, as their portrayal is intricately woven into the value and artistic representation of human life within these works (Little, 1966:1). Consequently, literature not only serves as a medium for conveying moral messages but also acts as a means for individuals to grasp and explore the imaginative realms of human existence. It is important to highlight that the protagonist character is essentially the outcome of the presence of the major character. Typically, the major character in a narrative assumes the role of the protagonist, as argued by Stanton (1965:17).

The researcher asserts that the major character is identified as the protagonist due to their frequent appearances and their function as the lens through which readers perceive the story. Therefore, the researchers are interested in conducting a research on the villain protagonist Portrayed in Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie.

The 2019 film "Joker," directed by Todd Phillips and co-written with Scott Silver, is a thriller based on DC Comics characters, with Joaquin Phoenix portraying the lead role. The movie premiered at the 76th Venice International Film Festival on August 31, 2019, winning the Golden Lion, and was subsequently released in the United States on October 4, 2019. It received 11 Academy Award nominations, winning for Best Actor (Joaquin Phoenix) and Best Score.

Dealing with the term "villain," Baldick (2001:272) stated that it refers to the primary evil character in a narrative, typically functioning as the protagonist against the hero or heroine, though occasionally the villain may also take on the role of the protagonist. The perception of the villain's character varies based on readers' sympathy and perspective. This study focuses on exploring the concept of the villain as the protagonist, emphasizing the viewpoint of a villain protagonist. According to Bergstrand (2019:4), villain characters are malevolent, traitorous, and possess enough power to endanger others, instigating a sense of urgency to prevent their actions. The strong emotions of fear and hatred directed towards villains play a significant role in political conflicts.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher utilizes descriptive qualitative methods, emphasizing the collection of narrative explanations over numerical data. The presentation of research findings incorporated quotes from collected data to substantiate observations. Qualitative research, focuses on elucidating social phenomena, aims to provide readers with an understanding of the intricacies of the social world and the reasons behind the current state of affairs.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following data listed in the below table are the findings of Arthur Fleck as Villain Protagonist Portrayed in Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie.

Table 1 Findings of Arthur Fleck as Villain Protagonist Portrayed in Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie

Indicators	Data No	Data	Data Source
An evil character Malevolent powerful enough to endanger others.	1	The guy makes his way to the stairs, unaware that Arthur is behind him – BLAM! The third guy falls, tumbling down the stairs. Arthur walks over to the body and empties the chamber – BLAM! BLAM!	(Phillips & Silver, 2019:31)
powerful enough to endanger others.	2	AND ARTHUR STABS THE SCISSORS AS DEEP AS HE CAN into Randall's neck. Blood spurts. Randall screams. Gary stumbles back in shock—	(Phillips & Silver, 2019: 77)
An evil character Malevolent powerful enough to endanger others.	3	Randall blindly fights back, screaming in pain, flailing his arms, his own blood blinding him -- Arthur grabs Randall by the head -- all of his pent up rage and frustration pouring out of him -- AND SLAMS HIS HEAD AGAINST THE WALL. AGAIN. And AGAIN. And AGAIN.	(Phillips & Silver, 2019: 77)
An evil character Malevolent Powerful enough to endanger others Strong emotions of fear and hatred	4	And as Murray Franklin turns, JOKER SHOOTS THE SIDE OF MURRAY'S HEAD OFF—	(Phillips & Silver, 2019:96)

Data number 1 is as follows,

The guy makes his way to the stairs, unaware that Arthur is behind him – BLAM!
The third guy falls, tumbling down the stairs. Arthur walks over to the body and empties the chamber – BLAM! BLAM!
(Phillips & Silver, 2019:31)

The aforementioned excerpt furnishes compelling evidence that supports the elineation of Arthur as a villainous protagonist. The utilization of impactful expressions such

as "BLAM!" conveys a sense of deliberate and forceful actions carried out by Arthur. The specific scenario in which Arthur pursues an unsuspecting individual and unleashes multiple shots, ultimately leading to a descent down the stairs, serves to emphasize a calculated and harmful agenda. Notably, Arthur's choice to empty the chamber adds another layer to the portrayal of his character as a malevolent figure, highlighting his capacity to imperil others through ruthless and violent conduct. This aligns seamlessly with the archetype of a villainous protagonist.

Delving deeper into the nuances of the quoted passage, the use of onomatopoeic language like "BLAM!" not only captures the audacity of Arthur's actions but also signifies a purposeful intent behind them. The deliberate nature of these forceful actions positions Arthur as a character who actively engages in acts of violence, thus contributing to the construction of his villainous persona. The subsequent depiction of Arthur pursuing an unsuspecting individual, culminating in a hail of gunfire and a consequential fall down the stairs, further underscores the calculated and harmful nature of his agenda. This narrative choice serves to heighten the stakes and solidify Arthur's role as a protagonist with protagonistic qualities.

Arthur's decision to empty the chamber, a deliberate and consequential act, serves as a pivotal moment in the character development, amplifying the malevolence associated with him. The act of emptying the chamber signifies a cold and calculated determination to inflict harm, showcasing not only a capacity for violence but a willingness to go to extreme lengths. This calculated violence contributes significantly to the overarching portrayal of Arthur as a malicious figure, capable of causing harm without remorse. It is this unapologetic and ruthless aspect of his character that aligns him with the archetype of a villainous protagonist, a central character whose actions and motives challenge traditional notions of heroism.

In essence, the quotation serves as a linchpin in substantiating the portrayal of Arthur as a central character with unmistakable villainous traits. His deliberate and harmful actions, underscored by the specific choice of language and narrative elements, contribute to the construction of an protagonist who defies conventional expectations. This archetype of a villainous protagonist challenges the audience's perceptions and invites a more nuanced understanding of the character. The quoted evidence not only serves as a testament to Arthur's malevolent nature but also highlights the narrative intricacies that make him a compelling and complex figure within the broader context of the story.

Data number 2 is the finding of Arthur Fleck as Villain Protagonist Portrayed in Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie

AND ARTHUR STABS THE SCISSORS AS DEEP AS HE CAN into Randall's neck. Blood spurts. Randall screams. Gary stumbles back in shock—
(Phillips & Silver, 2019: 77)

The above quotation functions as compelling evidence, affirming the portrayal of Arthur as a malevolent character possessing both the inclination and the power to jeopardize others. The vivid depiction of Arthur forcefully thrusting scissors deep into Randall's neck constitutes a graphic and violent act, providing a clear manifestation of his malicious intent. The accompanying details of blood spurting and Randall's anguished screams serve to accentuate the gravity of Arthur's actions, portraying him as a character with the capacity to inflict significant harm upon others. Moreover, the stark depiction of Gary's shocked recoil, stumbling back in response, underscores the forceful and menacing nature of Arthur's conduct. This particular excerpt significantly contributes to the construction of Arthur as an antagonist characterized by malevolent tendencies and the capability to pose a substantial threat to those in his vicinity.

Diving into the intricacies of the quoted passage, the explicit description of Arthur's act – the forceful insertion of scissors into Randall's neck – not only establishes the violent nature of his actions but also serves as a poignant visual representation of his inherent malevolence. The deliberate choice of such a visceral and brutal act portrays Arthur as a character not merely driven by circumstances but one actively embracing a dark and harmful path. The resulting imagery of blood spurting and Randall's screams further amplifies the severity of Arthur's deeds, leaving an indelible impression of his capacity to cause intense suffering.

The aftermath, as depicted by Gary's shocked reaction and stumbling back, offers a glimpse into the immediate impact of Arthur's actions. Gary's physical recoil underscores the palpable threat posed by Arthur, emphasizing the profound shock and fear instilled in those who witness his malevolent deeds. This reaction serves to magnify the perception of Arthur's power, not just in terms of physical strength but also in the psychological impact he leaves on those around him. It accentuates the notion that Arthur is not merely a character who engages in violence for survival but one who actively wields his malevolence as a weapon, instilling fear and chaos in his wake.

In the broader context of the narrative, this excerpt plays a pivotal role in shaping Arthur's character as a formidable protagonist. The portrayal of his malevolent tendencies, coupled with the demonstrated ability to cause harm, positions him as a complex and formidable force within the story's dynamics. The deliberate crafting of Arthur as a character capable of endangering others adds layers of tension and unpredictability to the narrative, challenging conventional expectations of character roles.

In conclusion, the provided quotation functions as a crucial piece of evidence that contributes significantly to the characterization of Arthur as a malevolent protagonist. The graphic and violent nature of his actions, illustrated through the stabbing of scissors into Randall's neck, leaves an indelible impression of his capacity for harm. The subsequent details, including blood spurting and the horrified reaction of onlookers, serve to underscore the gravity of Arthur's malevolence, establishing him as a character with the power to pose a substantial threat to those in his orbit. This excerpt enriches the narrative by presenting Arthur as a multifaceted protagonist whose actions resonate with a palpable sense of menace and danger.

Data number 3 is the third findings of Arthur Fleck as Villain Protagonist Portrayed in Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie.

Randall blindly fights back, screaming in pain, flailing his arms, his own blood blinding him --
Arthur grabs Randall by the head -- all of his pent up rage and frustration pouring out of him -- AND SLAMS HIS HEAD AGAINST THE WALL. AGAIN. And AGAIN. And AGAIN.
(Phillips & Silver, 2019: 77)

The quoted passage serves as a significant body of evidence supporting the portrayal of Arthur as a villain protagonist, delineating his character as inherently malevolent and possessing the power to imperil others. The detailed account of Randall's desperate attempts to fight back, accompanied by his screams of pain and the harrowing image of being blinded by his own blood, constructs a vivid tableau of the intense suffering inflicted by Arthur's actions. These descriptions offer a glimpse into the darker facets of Arthur's character, emphasizing his capacity for cruelty.

Within this distressing narrative, Arthur's aggressive response becomes a focal point, amplifying the portrayal of his malevolent nature. His actions, such as seizing Randall by the head and repetitively slamming it against the wall, reveal a visceral release of pent-up rage and frustration. This sequence not only underscores the brutality of Arthur's behavior but also

provides insight into the tumultuous emotional landscape driving his actions. The relentless and forceful nature of these physical assaults further accentuates Arthur's power to inflict harm, solidifying his status as a character with not only villainous traits but also the capability to endanger those in his vicinity.

Examining the sequence in detail, the description of Randall blindly fighting back underscores the chaotic and unpredictable nature of the confrontation. Randall's screams of pain and the unsettling image of being blinded by his own blood create a poignant depiction of the anguish wrought by Arthur's malevolence. The use of sensory details contributes to the visceral impact of the scene, evoking a profound emotional response from the audience and cementing the gravity of Arthur's actions. This narrative choice serves to immerse the reader or viewer in the unfolding brutality, heightening the tension and accentuating the emotional weight of the protagonist's malevolent deeds.

The aggressive response by Arthur, manifested in the act of grabbing Randall by the head and slamming it against the wall, is a pivotal moment that encapsulates the depth of his malevolent nature. This physical manifestation of violence serves as a cathartic release for Arthur, shedding light on the inner turmoil and seething anger that drive his actions. The repetitiveness of the slamming against the wall not only accentuates the intensity of his rage but also suggests a calculated intention to exert dominance and inflict maximum harm. Through this brutal act, Arthur's malevolence is not merely a reactionary force but a deliberate choice, reinforcing his role as a protagonist with morally ambiguous qualities.

The relentless and forceful nature of Arthur's actions in this sequence contributes to the overarching portrayal of him as a character with villainous traits. The emphasis on his power to inflict harm goes beyond mere physical prowess; it delves into the psychological realm, exploring the depths of his malevolent psyche. Arthur's capability to endanger others, as showcased in this brutal episode, adds complexity to his character, challenging traditional notions of heroism and antagonism. This nuanced depiction aligns with the archetype of a villain protagonist, a central character whose actions and motivations blur the lines between good and evil.

In essence, the brutal sequence described in the quoted passage plays a crucial role in shaping the characterization of Arthur as a villain protagonist. The vivid depiction of suffering, coupled with Arthur's aggressive response and the relentlessness of his actions, contributes to a nuanced portrayal of his malevolent nature. This multifaceted representation adds depth to the protagonist, inviting the audience to grapple with the complexity of his

character and question traditional notions of morality in storytelling.

Data 4 is the evidence of Arthur Fleck as Villain Protagonist Portrayed in Todd Phillips's *Joker* Movie

And as Murray Franklin turns, JOKER SHOOTS THE SIDE OF
MURRAY'S
HEAD OFF—
(Phillips & Silver, 2019:96)

The provided quotation is a stark and decisive moment that serves as compelling evidence supporting the characterization of Arthur as a villain protagonist, aligning with the indicators commonly associated with this archetype. The act described, where Joker shoots the side of Murray Franklin's head off, encapsulates several key aspects that characterize Arthur as a villain protagonist: his evil nature, malevolence, the power to endanger others, and the evocation of strong emotions, particularly fear and hatred.

Firstly, the sheer brutality of the act itself positions Arthur squarely within the realm of an evil character. Shooting someone in the head is an extreme and malicious action, and the choice of words, particularly "JOKER SHOOTS THE SIDE OF MURRAY'S HEAD OFF," paints a vivid and gruesome picture. This act goes beyond mere villainy; it signifies a deliberate and malevolent intent, portraying Arthur as a character willing to engage in heinous acts without remorse or empathy.

The malevolence of Arthur is further emphasized by the specific target chosen—Murray Franklin. Murray represents a public figure, and the context of a televised show suggests a premeditated and public display of violence. The intentional choice to commit such a violent act in a public setting heightens the impact and establishes Arthur as a character with a malevolent agenda, seeking not only personal retribution but also to instill fear on a broader scale.

The act of shooting the side of Murray's head off also underscores Arthur's power to endanger others. In this moment, he is not just a disturbed individual acting out in a fit of rage; he is a calculated and dangerous force capable of causing significant harm. The ruthlessness displayed in choosing such a method of violence speaks to a level of power and control that goes beyond the immediate act itself. Arthur's capacity to endanger others is not confined to physical harm alone; it extends to the psychological impact of his actions on a larger societal scale.

Additionally, the emotional response evoked by this act contributes to the portrayal of

Arthur as a villain protagonist. The use of capital letters and the descriptor "SHOOTS THE SIDE OF MURRAY'S HEAD OFF" creates a sense of immediacy and intensity, eliciting strong emotions from the audience. The abrupt and shocking nature of the act is likely to instill fear in the characters within the narrative, as well as in the audience witnessing this pivotal moment. The visceral reaction to the violence perpetrated by Arthur taps into the realm of horror, generating a profound sense of dread and repulsion that aligns with the indicators of a villain protagonist.

Furthermore, the act of shooting Murray Franklin on live television suggests a desire to be seen and heard, emphasizing Arthur's need for recognition and the amplification of his villainous identity. This calculated decision to commit a heinous act in the public eye reveals not only a malevolent nature but also a strategic understanding of the power dynamics at play. Arthur's actions go beyond personal grievances; they are a manifestation of a broader, societal rebellion, with the potential to sow seeds of fear and hatred on a larger scale.

In conclusion, the provided quotation serves as a powerful testament to Arthur's characterization as a villain protagonist. The act of shooting the side of Murray Franklin's head off encapsulates the evil nature, malevolence, power to endanger others, and the evocation of strong emotions of fear and hatred. This pivotal moment in the narrative crystallizes Arthur's transformation into a formidable protagonist.

D.CONCLUSION

Arthur Fleck emerges as a villain due to the pervasive underestimation of his capabilities. He takes the lives of three individuals who have consistently insulted and harmed him, responding with violence when pushed to his limits. In a further twist, Fleck also murders his own mother, having discovered her deception about his true parentage. This revelation contributes to his growing malevolence. Additionally, Fleck sadistically kills his office acquaintance, Randall, driven by betrayal after learning of Randall's deceit. Finally, he targets Murray Franklin, perceiving that he has been manipulated and used by Franklin throughout his life, leading to the culmination of his descent into villainy.

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