

The Impact of Capitalist Society on Arthur's Character Development as Portrayed in *Joker* (2019) Film

Muhammad Atthariq Chairani¹, Mardliya Pratiwi Z.², Jonathan Irene Sartika Dewi M.³

¹English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies
Mulawarman University

²English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies
Mulawarman University

³English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies
Mulawarman University
Email: athairt@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak struktur sosial kapitalis terhadap perkembangan karakter Arthur Fleck dalam film *Joker* (2019), dengan menggunakan teori Marxisme dari Karl Marx dan konsep karakterisasi film menurut Boggs dan Petrie. Berada dalam konteks analisis sastra melalui medium film, penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan kualitatif dari Mikos untuk mengevaluasi *mise en scène* serta transformasi karakter. Dua ciri utama masyarakat kapitalis dianalisis, yaitu pembedaan kelas dan eksploitasi manusia, khususnya bagaimana kondisi tersebut berkontribusi pada kemunduran psikologis Arthur. Meskipun film berfokus pada Arthur sebagai figur utama dari kelas proletariat, penelitian ini mengakui keterbatasan representasi perspektif kelas pekerja secara lebih luas. Evolusi karakter yang kompleks berhasil diidentifikasi, memperlihatkan transisi Arthur dari pribadi yang sabar dan baik hati menjadi impulsif dan psikopat. Studi ini juga membuka ruang bagi pembacaan alternatif dan mempertimbangkan keterbatasan generalisasi temuannya terhadap karya sastra atau konteks sosial-politik yang lebih luas.

Kata kunci: masyarakat kapitalis, pengembangan karakter, eksploitasi, *Joker*

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of capitalist social structures on Arthur Fleck's character development in *Joker* (2019), using Karl Marx's theory of Marxism and film characterization concepts by Boggs and Petrie. Positioned within the context of literary film analysis, this research applies Mikos's qualitative approach to evaluate *mise en scène* and character transformation. Two defining features of capitalist society are examined such as class distinctions and human exploitation, particularly how these conditions contribute to Arthur's psychological descent. While the film centers on Arthur as the primary proletarian figure, the research acknowledges the limited depiction of broader working-class perspectives. A nuanced character evolution is identified, showing Arthur's transition from patient and kind to impulsive and psychopathic. The study invites alternative readings and considers its limited generalizability to broader literary or sociopolitical contexts.

Keywords: capitalist society, character development, exploitation, *Joker*

A. INTRODUCTION

Literary work is influenced by the condition and portrays the social phenomenon in society. According to Klarer, social phenomena, such as economic, political, and sociological, were analyzed in a literary work (Klarer, 2013). It reflects the social situation in a certain society. In a certain society, a capitalist group owns the wealth, and the power tends to control the society. This condition is related to the process of production involving the production forces, and it has a relation to capitalism. This economic system has divided society into social classes. The division of social classes is based on each person's economy, politics, and power status. They are divided into the dominant class (bourgeoisie) and the subordinate class (proletariat). The bourgeoisie has the power to manipulate the politics, government, education, and entertainment of society. As a member of society, the proletariat experienced social-economic injustice and political instability due to the bourgeoisie's domination.

The portrayal of capitalist society is found in literary works. This kind of society becomes the story's conflict, and the characters may struggle to develop their traits throughout the plot. The characterization will represent a changing transformation of behavior during the development. Therefore, the character needs a process to change by the events or situations in the society to make it more realistic in a natural way that relates to the story. In this case, literary work portrays how the social condition in a capitalist society can affect character development. This representation is not just found in prose, play, and poetry but also in the film.

Film, as a modern literary medium, has increasingly been used to critique social structures and reflect societal tensions. The intersection of cinema and Marxist theory enables scholars to interrogate the economic and class dynamics embedded in visual storytelling. Prior studies often focus on structural inequality or symbolic resistance in dystopian or class-divided settings (e.g., *Parasite*, *Snowpiercer*), but few have thoroughly examined *Joker* (2019) as a personalized microcosm of capitalist alienation.

One of the films that portrayed this phenomenon is *Joker* directed by Todd Phillips in 2019. This film is the origin story of the Joker. The film tells the story of Arthur's survival in a capitalist society until he becomes a Joker. Through the film, the researcher analyzed the main character development through the social condition in a capitalist society. It shows how Arthur Fleck, a comedian, develops into a killer, Joker. It also shows a capitalist society where Arthur lives, which makes the researcher choose this film. It aims to examine the social, political, economic, and cultural understanding of how literature reflects society and reveals the truths about social interactions. Despite widespread discourse surrounding Arthur Fleck's psychological breakdown, existing research tends to treat his transformation either through a psychological or cinematic lens, rarely foregrounding systemic exploitation using Marxist theory. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Arthur's character within the social hierarchies of Gotham City, drawing on Boggs and Petrie's framework of characterization and Mikos's method of film analysis. The rationale lies in illustrating how capitalist conditions, particularly class oppression and human commodification serve as catalysts for behavioral change.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the social condition and how it gives an impact on Arthur's character development as represented in *Joker* film by using marxism and Boggs and Petrie's ways of characterization theory. Based on the background above, the objectives of this study are to reveal the social condition in a capitalist society and to uncover the impact of social conditions in a capitalist society on Arthur's character development as represented in *Joker* film.

Thus, the study not only interrogates how capitalist society contributes to Arthur's descent but also situates his personal experience within broader ideological critique. While Arthur is the focal character representing proletariat struggle, the film's limited portrayal of collective working-class resistance is acknowledged as both a constraint.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This passage presents the theories that are used to conduct the research in the following sections:

1. Film in Literature

The form of literature does not only appear in traditional written mediums such as prose and poem. However, Klarer defines that the written medium is also connected with other media such as the stage, painting, film, music, or even computer networks as the main concern in literature study (Klarer, 2013). Therefore, many writers leave the traditional path of literature, namely old textual forms, and find new ways to express literature in visual and acoustic elements.

A film can be analyzed using literary criticism because literary techniques determine it then that practice developed under the impact of film on particular features. As it shares the same technique, film analysis uses various elements such as plot, conflict, setting, and character and characterization.

2. Character and Characterization

Character is a common topic for analysis in literature. It is the type of individuals inside the story. According to Abrams, characters are the persons signified in a dramatic or narrative work interpreted by the reader (Abrams, 1999). The construal of a character is based on how the writers or authors characterize the characters in their work.

a. Types of Character

Based on their importance, the types of characters are divided into major and minor characters. The major character is vital to the development and resolution of the conflict. The minor character is present to complement the major characters but has less influence on the story.

Based on their constellation, types of characters are divided into protagonists and antagonists. The protagonist is the main character on whom interest centers on a plot. The antagonist in the story is pitted as an important opponent to the protagonist.

By its complexity, types of characters are divided based on their dimensions. There are round and flat characters. Round characters are difficult to describe. This type of character is more like a person in real life, and like a person in real life, it can surprise the reader or audience (dynamic). This type of character is built with a single personality or idea and is presented without much individualizing detail.

b. Ways of Characterization

Characterization is the way to describe or explain the detail of a character in the story. In this case, Boggs and Petrie divide ways of characterization in the film through appearance,

dialogue, external and internal action, the reaction of other characters, dramatic foils, caricature, and leitmotif (51 - 55).

3. Character Development

A character is considered important since it shapes and builds a story in a literary work. Character development is the changing behavior from certain characterizations into certain characterizations. It can be affected by interaction with the social environment that the character experienced in the story (Lemme, 1995). Therefore, the development of character will be important to build an attractive and unexpected ending.

a. In Behavior

The change in character is deeply affected by the action of the plot. Based on the process, the character undergoes some important changes in behavior as a result of the action in the story. This changing behavior may be a permanent one or just a whimsical shift that will change back again later. The characters in the story might gain some new significant personalities.

b. In Outlook

As the story progress, a physical appearance is one of the developments seen in a character. This includes costumes, gestures, and mannerisms. After the growth experienced by a character, the developed character can display a different outlook. Directly, the physical appearance of a character has a strong influence on its behavior. Outlook showed by the character can be an expression of the personality on its characterization.

4. *Mise en Scène*

In the original French, *mise en scène* means “putting into the scene”. This term was applied for the first time to the practice of directing plays. It refers to all those properties of the cinematic image that stand independently of camera position, movement, and editing. In this case, these are related to lighting, costumes, sets, the quality of acting, and other shapes and characters in the scene (Corrigan 51 – 52). It is about the theatrics of space as that space is constructed for the camera. *Mise en scène* can operate not only as a part of narration (the unfolding of story information) but also visually and poetically meaningful as they are chosen intentionally.

5. Marxism

This concept was proposed by Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820 – 1895). Marxism did not begin as an alternative theoretical approach to literary analysis. Firstly, marxism begins by providing a philosophical system and a plan of action to change society. It defined a social, political, economic, and cultural understanding of the nature of reality, society, and the individual (Bressler, 2011). Then, the origin of Marxist criticism lies not in its historical approach to literature but in an understanding of history itself (Eagleton 3). It shows how literature reflects society and how literary texts can reveal truths about social interactions.

a. Capitalism

Capitalism was originally and still is, to some extent, an economic concept. The notion of a capitalist society is an extrapolation from economic to social relations. It assumes some

constructive power on the part of economic structures, a superstructure on the fundamental basis of the economic condition. The notion of a capitalist society is an extrapolation from economic to social relations. It assumes some formative power on the part of economic structures, a superstructure on the fundamental basis of the economic condition (Dahrendorf, 1959).

In a capitalist society, there are two classes related to each other as the product of the means of production. The first class is the bourgeoisie. This class possesses the means of production. The second class is the working class or the proletariat. This class does not possess the means of production, instead uses its labor power to generate value for the bourgeoisie as a condition for its survival. Although, economic grouping can be primarily considered as the basis for class distinctions in capitalist society.

The term exploitation was used in the early nineteenth century as it was by the French. This term brings two meanings. First, is a term related to the act of utilizing something for any purpose. Then, the word exploitation is a synonym to use. The second meaning is the act of utilizing other people unjustly or cruelly (Williams, 1977). The conception of exploitation in the labor process in capitalism defines it as a distinctive mode of production in the wage-labor process of commodity production. The wage-laborers work can be divided into two parts. The worker produces commodities whose value is equivalent to the value of those goods required for his subsistence and the work by which he produces commodities whose value exceeds the value of these subsistence goods.

C. METHOD

This research uses qualitative research. According to Flick, qualitative research focuses on examining the social production of issues, events, or practices through non-standardized data collection and analysis of texts and images rather than numbers and statistics (472). Furthermore, this research also included a Marxist study, Bressler explains that a Marxist study refers to a dynamic process that maintains a proper critique of a text that cannot exist in isolation from the cultural situation in which the text is involved (178). In film analysis, Mikos defines that analyzing film becomes important in a mediatized society. As the media of communication, films are part of discursive and social practices. They reflect the condition and structures of society and individual life (409). Therefore, the researcher designed this thesis as a film study because it focuses to analyze a film to see the social condition in a capitalist society and how it impacts the character development of individual life.

1. Data and Source of the Data

The data in this research was taken from the script and the scene in *Joker* (2019) film directed by Todd Phillips. Therefore, the researchers collected words, phrases, or sentences from the film dialog and the scene displaying action saved by taking the picture from the film. Chosen data were those which represent conditions in a capitalist society and Arthur's character development.

2. Research Instrument

According to Creswell, the researcher is the one who gathers the data and interprets it in the research (Creswell, 2003). The research instrument is the researcher himself as the main key

instrument of data collection. The researcher should be employed the methods of collecting the data in conducting the research.

3. Data Collection

To collect the data from the film, there are four steps done by the researcher. The first step is to watch the film entitled *Joker* several times. After watching the film, the researcher has taken some notes and gathered the data through the event or scene that portrays the social condition in a capitalist society and Arthur's character development. Next, the researcher re-watched the film to check and take some data that may have been missed at first. The last step in data collection is rechecking the data that has been gathered before.

4. Data Analysis

In data analysis, Mikos states that a film analysis should systematically investigate the film text. There is main analytic work to analyze a film (Mikos, 2014). For the first step, the researcher categorized the data into two categories. First is the social condition in capitalist society. The second is the impact of capitalist society on the main character development. The second step is the interpretation and contextualized of analyzed data. All data taken in the form of a scene and script are analyzed through the *mise en scène* to see the explicit meaning represented in the *Joker* film (2019). The next step is the evaluation, which consists of evaluation I and evaluation II. In evaluation I, the researcher assesses to analyze and interpret data. The last step is evaluation II, where the researcher assessed the results to make sure that the results properly answer the research questions.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Social Condition in Capitalist Society

The social condition in capitalist society is seen through the collected words, phrases, or sentences represented by the script and the scene. Then, the features of capitalist society are divided into class distinction and human exploitation.

a. Class Distinctions in *Joker* Film

The first feature of capitalist society that is seen in the story is a class distinction. In *Joker* film, the society is structured based on each person's economic, political, and power status dividing society into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the main two classes. Based on the description, the bourgeoisie in the *Joker* film are Thomas Wayne and Murray Franklin. Then, the proletariat in this story is Arthur Fleck. He must survive in a capitalist society by selling his labor power with low wages.

In the film, Thomas Wayne is a character shown as a businessman who wants a major position in Gotham city. He is told as the wealthy industrialist in Wayne Enterprise. Controlling the economic system is not enough for Thomas to control society. To stabilize his power status in Gotham City, he takes advantage by running for the mayor position. Thomas Wayne wants more power, not only by his economic factors but also by his political system, to control the society and become the dominant class or the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat.

- Thomas Wayne : It's one of the reasons why I'm considering a run for mayor. Gotham's lost its way.
- The Host : What about the eyewitness report of the suspect being a man in a clown mask?
- Thomas Wayne : Well, it makes total sense to me. What kind of coward would do something that cold-blooded? Someone who hides behind a mask. Someone who is envious of those more fortunate than themselves, yet they're too scared to show their own face. And until those kinds of people change for the better, those of us who have made something of our lives will always look at those who haven't as nothing but clowns. (*Joker* 00:39:02 - 38)

Throughout this incident, Thomas, as a wealthy person, wanted to gain the power to control society by running for the mayor position in Gotham City. He considers the bourgeoisies who have economic status in society only to see the proletariat as clowns. This system fits the idea of capitalism, which gives power to people who hold the process of production involving production forces, such as Thomas Wayne. As stated by Bressler, the bourgeoisie, who has the economic power, will gain social and political control of their society (168).

Another bourgeoisie depicted in this film is Murray Franklin. He was the host of the talk show "Live with Murray" attended only by the bourgeoisie. Murray also wears a rich man suit with old soft shoes as it shares the same common attributes with other bourgeoisie. Murray Franklin guides this event into a bourgeois comedy show when the show discusses the bad conditions that exist in Gotham City with a joke.

- Murray : So, everybody's heard about the super rats that are in Gotham now, right?
- Audience : Yeah.
- Murray : Well, today, the mayor said he has a solution. You ready for this? Super cats.
- Audience : (laugh)
- Murray : But in all seriousness, I mean, these rats are... (*Joker* 00:12:42 – 00:13:00)

In the dialogue above, Murray discusses the problem of the proletariat as a joke. He responds that the super rats in Gotham city can only be solved with super cats. Super rats here have the meaning of proletariats who have started many actions as protestors against the government. To overcome this, super cats need to oppress super rats that have started to act in Gotham city. The government wants to use super cats to keep the proletariat under control so that their position as the bourgeoisie remains stable.

In this film, the character that is classified as the proletariat are not shown much. Only Arthur, as the main character, struggles to live in Gotham City as a proletariat. Arthur faces many injustices from the beginning of the story because of his status and his work as a clown. Arthur's first classification as proletariat was portrayed when he worked as a clown and danced in the middle of Gotham as a part of his job.

Hoyt : But I got another complaint. It's starting to piss me off. Kenny's Music. The guy said you disappeared. Never even returned his sign.

Arthur: Because I got jumped.

Hoyt : Didn't you hear? For a sign? That's bullshit. It doesn't even make sense. Just get him his sign back. He's going out of business, for God's sake, Arthur.

Arthur: Why would I keep his sign?

Hoyt : How the fuck do I know? Why does anybody do anything? If you don't return the sign, **I gotta take it out of your paycheck.** (*Joker* 00:17:55 – 00:18:26).

This scene shows that Hoyt exploited Arthur just for a sign. He did not want to discuss this problem with Arthur. As a laborer who works in a small club in the middle of Gotham City, Arthur must live on the wage he receives from there. Of course, Arthur could not return the sign because it was destroyed and his wage would be taken from the above incident. Hoyt, a person who has the power to employ workers in his club, does not think about the welfare of his employees. He just wants to enjoy the results of his agency's process labor.

b. Human Exploitation

In the film, the portrayal of capitalist society is also shown through the human exploitation experienced by Arthur as the proletariat. Arthur is often utilized by those around him harshly or cruelly for personal gain. The first form of exploitation that Arthur experienced was when he was invited to the show. A few days after his clip was shown at the show, it unexpectedly became famous for the jokes made by Murray. Murray was also interested in inviting Arthur as a guest at the show. Later, Arthur was called by a show Booker from the Live with Murray program. He asked Arthur to come to the show and perform his famous laugh act. However, when the show was broadcasted, Arthur felt disappointed and expressed his frustration with Murray because of his exploitation.

Arthur : You're awful, Murray.

Murray : Me? I'm awful? Oh, yeah, how am I awful?

Arthur : **Playing my video. Inviting me on this show. You just wanted to make fun of me.** You're just like the rest of them. (*Joker* 01:44:18 – 01:44:34)

In the dialogue above, Arthur was upset that Murray utilized him for personal gain. He felt that Murray was just like the rest of the bourgeoisie, who often exploited their workers. This act of exploitation is in line with Marx's conception about exploitation that applies to the labor process in capitalism (Buchanan 122). In this case, Murray used Arthur's famous clip to invite Arthur to gain an advantage over him. Arthur explained that Murray just wanted to laugh at him wanting to be a comedian by playing his video clip and inviting him to the show. This exploitation is one of the characteristics of a capitalist society where Arthur's dreams are far from being achieved as he came from the proletariat class and only needs to sell his labor power to give profit to the have class like Murray.

2. Arthur's Character Development as The Impact of Capitalist Society

As the main character, Arthur lives in a metropolis capitalist Gotham City, where the classes are divided into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Through this social condition, Arthur drives

to face his character development. As it developed, Arthur faced many bad events that later influenced his changing characterizations that will be explained below

a. Patient Person into Impulsive Person

The first Arthur's character development happened when he worked at Haha's Booking Talent. Working in a capitalist society, Arthur had to get some exploitation by the bourgeoisie. At this moment, Arthur is described as a very patient person. He could control his emotions while being bullied by the upper classes.

Randal : You Okay? I heard the beat down you took. Fucking savages.
Arthur : It was just a bunch of kids. I should have left it alone.
Randall : No. They'll take everything from you if you do that. All the crazy shit out there. They're animals. (*Joker* 00:15:56 – 00:16:12)

As someone from the proletariat class, Arthur as a patient person is shown clearly through the dialogue above. At the beginning of the story, Arthur is bullied by teenagers because he worked as a clown. The proletariat like Arthur did do not anything because he does not want to get into more trouble. As he talks with Randall about this bullying, his patient character makes Arthur think it is normal for a group of teenagers to do.

The patient character in Arthur is also shown when he is asked to return the musician's sign that he used when he works. The sign was stolen by a group of boys to oppress Arthur, as described above. It was impossible to return because the group had broken it off to beat Arthur. However, Hoyt still insisted that Arthur return the sign.

Hoyt : If you don't return the sign, I gotta take it out of your paycheck. Are we clear? Listen, I'm trying to help you. Okay? And I'll tell you something else. The other guys, they don't feel comfortable around you, Arthur, because people think you're weird. Okay? And I can't have that around me. (*Joker* 00:18:24 – 42)

In this scene, Hoyt as Arthur's boss, threatened Arthur if he did not return the sign. Even though Arthur had explained that many boys were bullying him, Hoyt would still cut his wage if he did not return the sign. Then, Hoyt also scolded Arthur because the people who worked there were uncomfortable around Arthur. Arthur's character as a patient person is shown through his external action from the way he only smiles and remains calm even though Arthur is very upset about this problem. He remained patient and smiled, acting moderately.

After he experienced much exploitation while working in a capitalist society, Arthur's character began to develop. He could no longer tolerate all the suffering he faced as a member of the proletariat class in a capitalist society. Arthur changes from being patient and can control his behavior but turns into an emotional or impulsive person. This character development was seen after Hoyt fired Arthur. He is no longer tied to his work environment, which often provides exploitation.

The Clerk : I'm sorry, man. Like I said, I can't release these records, you know, without proper forms. I could get in trouble. Look, if you want to bring your mom in here to sign, that'll be much easier, but I can't let this go

without her signature, okay? I'm sorry. No, man! Shit! Come on, man.
Give it... (*Joker* 01:12:47 - 01:13:09)

In the dialogue above, the officer refused to provide the medical record file about his mother because Arthur did not bring the required proper forms. However, Arthur was no longer able to control himself. He immediately tried to steal the file from the officers' hands. The two had a clash, but Arthur managed to steal the file and took him running towards the emergency stairs. This shows Arthur's character to turn impulsive just to satisfy his will through his external action.

b. Care Person into Reckless Person

From the beginning of the story, Arthur is described as loving his mother, Penny Fleck. Arthur's character as a caring person is shown when he has not experienced much exploitation by the bourgeoisie. This is shown when Arthur dreams of watching a live talk show live with Murray in the studio. Arthur was asked to stand up from the audience by saying that he lived with his mother in Gotham city, but suddenly the audience laughed because of it. Arthur confidently said that he was taking good care of his mother.

Arthur : I know what that's like, Murray. I've been the man of the house for as long as I can remember. I take good care of my mother.
Murray : All that sacrifice, she must love you very much.
Arthur : She does. She always tells me to smile and put on a happy face. She says I was put here to spread joy and laughter. (*Joker* 00:13:46 – 00:14:05)

Arthur's character as a caring person for his mother in the scene above is seen through Arthur's dialogue. From the *mise en scène*, the lighting that focuses on Arthur's character also makes him look confident enough to express his care and affection for his mother sincerely. His concern for his mother also made him an obedient child. From the dialogue above, his mother always asked him to smile and put on a happy face to spread joy and laughter. This is what makes Arthur dream to become a comedian while working as a clown. Arthur, who always smiles and puts on a happy face when oppressed by the bourgeoisie, becomes the reason for his patient character.

Arthur's character as a caring person begins to develop when he finds out that his mother has lied to him. Arthur's character begins to develop into a reckless person. His character, who only cares about his mother, has developed to be widespread. Arthur begins to develop into a character who only cares about the welfare of others without paying attention to himself. His reckless character can be seen after Arthur kills Randall at his house. At that time, Gary also visited Arthur's house, but Arthur only killed Randall because Arthur cared about Gary. Gary was always kind to him and was often bullied because of his physical appearance.

Gary : What the fuck, Arthur?
Arthur : What? It's okay, Gary. You can go. I'm not gonna hurt you.
Gary : Oh!
Arthur : Don't look. Just go.
Gary : Fuck. Hey, Arthur?
Arthur : Yeah?

Gary : Arthur, can you get the lock?

Arthur: Shit. Sorry, Gary. Gary? You were the only one that was ever nice to me. (*Joker* 01:28:51 - 01:30:00)

In this scene, Arthur's character as a reckless person is depicted through his dialogue when he told Gary to leave his house after killing Randall. Looking through the *mise en scène*, Arthur still has the power to kill Gary through his character that is focused on lighting that creates a tense atmosphere to give a dominating impression of Arthur's character. However, Arthur's character development which cares a lot above him, makes him let Gary go. Even though Gary could have reported this murder to the police but Arthur did not care.

c. Kind-hearted Person into Psychopathic Person

Another character development found in Arthur's character is when he was originally a kind-hearted person who turned into a psychopath. In this film, the scene that shows Arthur's kindness is when Randall talks about the problems that happened to Arthur before. At that time, Arthur had just been bullied by a bunch of kids. Then Randall offered him a firearm to protect him from the other intruders. Nevertheless, Arthur felt he could not keep the weapon, and he refused.

Arthur: I'm not supposed to have a gun (*Joker* 00:16:45).

In this scene, Arthur's character as a kind-hearted person is shown through Arthur's dialogue. As a friend, Randall gives Arthur a gun because he felt sorry for Arthur. However, Arthur clearly said that someone like him should not keep a gun illegally from the dialogue. Arthur knew that doing so could get him in trouble or hurt others. In the frame, these two characters are highlighted by sunlight from the outside. This is what proves Arthur's kind character through his desire to reject the weapon. Even so, Randall still forces Arthur to keep the weapon because Randall's goal is to make Arthur cause trouble.

Arthur's character development from a kind person begins when his kindness is no longer appreciated. He was often exploited just because of his kindness. Then, his kind character develops into someone cruel. This happens because he can no longer withstand all the exploitation he received while living in a capitalist society. The last scene that proves Arthur's character development turns into a psychopath is when Arthur is invited as a guest star on the Live with Murray show. As the host, Murray began to talk to Arthur. For Arthur, those who never understand the social conditions that exist in Gotham City are awful but, Murray sees it as an excuse for people like Arthur. Murray's statement made Arthur annoyed and without thinking, Arthur killed Murray as a joke he threw.

Arthur : How about another joke, Murray?

Murray : No, I think we've had enough of your jokes--

Arthur : What do you get when you cross a mentally-ill loner with a system that abandons him and treats him like trash? I'll tell you what you get. You get what you fucking deserve,- (Shoot Murray)- (*Joker* 01:44:54 - 01:45:08).

Through this scene, Arthur's character as a psychopath is shown again. Arthur, who was already very upset, ruthlessly shot Murray in the head with the gun he had gotten from Randall

earlier. Looking through the *mise en scène*, Arthur's character, which has begun to develop into a ruthless killer, can be seen from the action and appearance used by Arthur. The murder that was on a live talk show did not make Arthur hesitate to kill Murray even though he knew there were millions of eyes watching him. Arthur's character development is also seen through his appearance shown by Arthur.

Discussion

The study is concerned about how Arthur Fleck's character develops as the impact of capitalist society is portrayed in the Joker film. In Marxism, economic condition is the base of all social and political status of a person. Then, having economic power will also include social and political power as well. All human events including individual domains will have specific material causes. It focuses on the relationships among the classes.

Living in the middle of capitalist society as a proletariat brought Arthur to experience a lot of exploitation due to the economic gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This is what influences Arthur's character to develop from the beginning of the story. In this case, two common features of capitalist society are found in the story. These conditions become the influence of Arthur's character development revealed in the story. The first feature found in the story is the class distinction. The social class in this story is divided based on each person's economic, political, and power status which is further divided into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The second is human exploitation.

Then, those social conditions faced by Arthur while living in the capitalist metropolis Gotham city as the proletariat become the influence of capitalist society on Arthur's character development. After seeing the exploitation felt by Arthur, the researcher found that there are changing behaviors as the impact of social conditions in capitalist society. In this case, the data showed how Arthur's character developed from a patient, caring, and kind-hearted person into an impulsive, reckless, and psychopathic person. These representations are portrayed by Arthur's external actions, dialogues, and appearance. Further, Arthur is classified as a dynamic character since he has a complex personality like a person in real life and develops to surprise the audience.

Arthur is meant to represent how the proletariat choking under economic pressure. Then their problems are capitalized on when Thomas Wayne calls them clowns and instruct them to follow him, as he tries to maintain his power through the political system he creates. Like Gotham City, the Joker film personifies our society what happens a person pushed and exploited to the brink can become. This becomes the understanding of how truly awful a capitalist society is. Arthur, originally a clown who wanted to become a comedian, developed into a killer, Joker.

E. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the social conditions in capitalist society and how it gives impact Arthur's character development in *Joker* (2019) film, it can be concluded there are two common features in a capitalist society such as class distinction and human exploitation. The class distinctions in this film are represented through the division of two classes, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. All these characters ignore the welfare of the proletariat and neglect the human aspects of a person. The proletariat in this film is Arthur's character, who is shown in his struggle to survive in a capitalist society. Arthur must survive in bad working conditions in the entertainment

industry mostly to low wages and inhumane treatment. In this case, Arthur as the proletariat character often faced many exploitations living in a capitalist society.

As the impact of capitalist society, Arthur's character develops into impulsive, reckless, and psychopath from the patient, care, and kind-hearted person. Further, Arthur as a dynamic character is shown through Arthur's external actions, dialogues, and appearance that is seen in the scene. He has a complex personality like a person in real life and develops to surprise the reader.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *A glossary of literary terms*. Earl McPeck.
- Boggs, J. M., & Petrie, D. W. (2008). *The art of watching films*. McGraw-Hill.
- Bressler, C. E. (2011). *Literary criticism: An introduction to theory and practice* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Buchanan, A. (1979). Exploitation, alienation, and injustice. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 9(1), 121–139.
- Corrigan, T. (2010). *A short guide to writing about film*. Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2003). *Research design*. Sage Publications.
- Dahrendorf, R. (1959). *Class and class conflict in industrial society*. Stanford University Press.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Klarer, M. (2013). *An introduction to literary studies*. Routledge.
- Lemme, B. H. (1995). *Development in adulthood*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Mikos, L. (2014). Analysis of film. In U. Flick (Ed.), *Qualitative data analysis* (pp. 409–423). Sage Publications.
- Philips, T. (Director). (2019). *Joker* [Film]. Warner Bros. Pictures.
- Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and literature*. Oxford University Press.