

The Impact of Serial Killer Movie on Middle School Students: Reader Response Point of View

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ABSTRACT

Serial killer movies have positively and negatively influenced children's behavior, attitude, and perception. This study was conducted on students of middle school in Indonesia. The data was collected through interviews with six Indonesian junior high school children after they watched serial killer movies. The sample was chosen purposively based on the purpose of the study. The study finds out that serial killer movies negatively impact children's psychology, attitudes, and behavior, specifically who watch serial killer movies than other children who do not. After analyzing six participants, the researchers find out that most of the participants feel the same way. Most of them felt terrified and freaking out during the film was played. And above that, most participants do not feel affected psychologically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually affected them. Some of them have the same shadows as The Joker had, some of them have the same persona as what The Joker had, and some of them have the same animus or feminine side of them as what The Joker had. But that things (Shadow, Persona and Animus) did not affect them psychologically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Keywords: Serial killer, psychology, attitude, horror, movies

ABSTRAK

Film *serial killer* telah mempengaruhi perilaku, sikap, dan persepsi anak secara positif dan negatif. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa sekolah menengah di Indonesia. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara kepada enam anak SMP Indonesia setelah mereka menonton film *serial killer*. Sampel dipilih secara *purposive* berdasarkan tujuan penelitian. Studi ini menemukan bahwa film *serial killer* memiliki dampak negatif pada psikologi anak, sikap, dan perilaku mereka khususnya yang menonton film *serial killer* dibandingkan anak lain yang tidak. Dengan menganalisis enam partisipan, peneliti menemukan bahwa sebagian besar partisipan merasakan hal yang sama. Kebanyakan dari mereka merasa ketakutan, dan panik saat film diputar. Sebagian besar partisipan tidak merasa terpengaruh secara psikologis, mental, emosional, dan spiritual. Beberapa dari mereka memiliki bayangan yang sama dengan yang dimiliki *The Joker*, beberapa dari mereka juga memiliki persona yang sama dengan yang dimiliki *The Joker* dan beberapa dari mereka juga memiliki animus atau sisi feminin yang sama dengan yang dimiliki *The Joker*. Namun hal-hal tersebut (*Shadow, Persona* dan *Animus*) tidak mempengaruhi mereka secara psikologis, mental, emosional dan spiritual.

Keywords: *Serial Killer*, psikologi, sikap, horor, film

INTRODUCTION

Serial killer movies are also popular among Indonesian student audiences. However, at such a young age, they frequently cannot distinguish between fact and fiction and accept everything at face value. According to research, series killer movies delight children but also harm their mental health and way of life. When they become serial killers, most of them are abused in their families, according to the series killer movie. Abuse could have been emotional, physical, or sexual. It makes them bitter and sometimes drives them to seek vengeance by killing others (Knight, 2006). While this can result in some thrilling scenarios while viewing the movie, it does not imply that these children will have a favorable impact when they see serial killer movies. One sort of homicide is serial murder, which involves the death of three or more persons. Serial killers are those who commit multiple murders.

The first recorded case of serial murders in history occurred in the Roman Empire in 69 CE. Locusta, a serial killer, was killed for poisoning members of the royal family. There were serial murders recorded in European countries during the Middle Ages (Vronsky, 2018). Research has sought to provide explanations for serial killers' behavior as well as an examination of their personal development (Ostrosky & Ardila, 2017). In essence, there are two sorts of serial killers: child and adult serial killers (Harmening, 2014). To address their actions, a plethora of theories have been produced. Most serial killers have psychological disorders, and they find satisfaction in murdering. Many serial killers in history have been adults, but in recent decades, situations involving serial killers who are children have become more common. They are just as hazardous as adults since they exhibit the same psychological behavior (Knight, 2006).

Children, without a doubt, enjoy serial killer movies. However, films with frightening visuals, acute danger, loud noise, and blood and gore can cause a variety of disturbances in children. Several studies show serial killer movies enhance anxiety, sleep disruption, and fear of potential circumstances. These effects are felt by schoolchildren, disrupting their mental development at a young age. According to research, violence in movies is not something to be proud of, as viewers believe. We have our serial killers wandering around committing crimes in real life. The violence in serial killer movies is well-known in society. Children are harmed by the violence represented in films. It isn't easy to conceive that the viewers' children would desire to perform such things themselves.

PSYCHOLOGY OF SERIAL KILLER IN THE MOVIE

Individual variables are personal features and characteristics predisposing someone to commit violent acts. Psychological elements are an important attribute that determines an individual's conduct. Serial killers who exhibit symptoms of mental illness and psychotic activities are readily influenced and become serial murderers. Some people are predisposed to evil and engage in behaviors intended to hurt others. Another factor likely to be depicted in the film is a person's sexuality. Serial killers who have developed sexual pervasiveness commit sexual fantasies; they want to display the trait, thus, they become future serial killers to feed their sexual fantasies (Malizia, 2017).

An inventive life is an individual factor that affects if the serial killers in the film are also potential serial killers. The key element of a serial murderers is that they use their fantasy to build plans for the murder of another victim. They create an imaginary world in which victims are viewed as objects. Most serial killers are driven by murder, and some do not

rationalize their actions (Stone, 2005). Trauma is an important individual aspect in serial killers' past experiences with serial murder. Human brains respond to trauma in different ways. Serial killers deal with shocks in a sadistic manner, attempting to impose influence on the victim who caused the trauma. In other circumstances, the patient cannot cope with stress and, after developing fantasies in his mind, resorts to murder.

PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM

Psychoanalytic criticism uses the "reading" processes developed by Freud and other theorists to provide an interpretation of texts. It argues that literary works, like dreams, reflect the author's own unconscious wishes and fears and that an academic work manifests the author's neuroses. This view is based on the idea that a literary work displays the author's neuroses. It is commonly considered that all of the characters in a literary work are projections of the author's psyche, even though it is possible to conduct psychoanalysis on a particular character.

Utilizing a literary key for decoding is one of the more intriguing aspects of this tactic because it contributes to enhancing the worth of written expression. "The dream thoughts which we first encounter as we proceed with our analysis frequently strike us by the unusual form in which they are expressed," Freud wrote (26). "They are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are symbolically represented using similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech," Freud added. "The dream thoughts which we first encounter as we proceed with our analysis,"

This attempt at analysis, much like psychoanalysis itself, finds evidence of unresolved feelings, psychological conflicts, guilts, ambivalences, and so on within a literary work that may appear to be disconnected. The characters' responses to childhood traumas, the stresses of family life, sexual tensions and fixations, and other concerns of a similar nature would be reflected in the way they behave in the literary work. However, psychological material will be expressed in a roundabout way, disguised or encoded (such as in dreams) using principles such as "symbolism" (where the repressed object is represented in disguise), "condensation" (where multiple thoughts or persons are represented in a single image), and "displacement" (where anxiety is located onto another image by association).

Despite the significance of the author within the framework of this discussion, psychoanalytic criticism, much like New Criticism, is preoccupied with the question of "what the author intended." On the other hand, what the author did not intend (that is, what was covered up) is being sought after. The unconscious content has been warped by the filtering done by the conscious mind. Psychoanalytic critics will likely ask questions such as "What is Hamlet's problem?" and "Why doesn't Bront seem to be able to portray any positive mother figures?"

WHAT IS JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY?

Jungian psychotherapy, also called Jungian analysis, is a comprehensive and analytical approach to talk therapy that aims to develop balance and harmony between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the client's psyche.

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (also known as Carl Gustav Jung or CG Jung), who established Jungian therapy in the early part of the twentieth century, based it on the assumption that the unconscious is a source of wisdom and guidance that can help drive psychological growth.

Analytical psychology was the word that Jung was most comfortable working with, even though his method is now more frequently known as Jungian therapy. In addition, even though the phrases "Jungian therapy" and "Jungian analysis" are sometimes used interchangeably, the only people who are allowed to engage in the practice of "Jungian analysis" are certified "Jungian analysts." Practitioners of Jungian analysis are required to successfully finish a training program that the International Association has approved for Analytical Psychology.

It is possible that several years of research and study will be required to completely understand the various Jungian psychological approaches and implications because this depth psychology subfield is extensive and complicated. However, one of its primary premises is that if an individual cannot express their true selves, they are more likely to develop and thrive with mental health issues such as depression, addiction, anxiety, and others. This, in turn, results in unhealthy interpersonal habits throughout one's life.

The Jungian approach to psychology will help persons struggling with these issues by focusing on personal development and locating the historical roots of psychological issues, such as traumatic experiences throughout childhood. Instead of concentrating on individual symptoms such as anxiety, Jungian counseling takes a holistic approach to foster wholeness in the client's complete personality. The goal of each therapy is to urge the patient to investigate the more profound and, at times, more troubling aspects of their psyche to find their "true" self, as opposed to the person they are when they interact with the outside world. These explorations can be uncomfortable for the patient.

CORE CONCEPTS OF JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Carl Jung was a prolific writer with diverse theories that comprised his Analytical Psychology. According to Jung, the human psyche is made up of three parts: (1) the ego, (2) the individual unconscious, and (3) the collective unconscious. The ego symbolizes the conscious mind, and it is this mind that is responsible for a person's awareness of their existence as well as their feeling of personal identity. This is your personality, in addition to the order in which your thoughts, intuitions, feelings, and sensations are arranged. It establishes a link between the psyche's inner and outer worlds. The personal unconscious comprises memories that have been repressed, forgotten, or subliminally processed. It is possible to bring certain components of one's inner unconscious to the level of conscious awareness. Jung believed that for individuation to occur, a person's conscious ego and their own unconscious needed to be completely integrated.

One of Jung's most distinctive and debated contributions to the field of personality theory is what he calls the collective unconscious. This concept is also sometimes referred to as the transpersonal unconscious. According to this view, a standard configuration of the personal unconscious is shared by all individuals who belong to the human species. These shared ancestral memories are referred to as archetypes by Jung and are represented by universal motifs that appear in various cultures. One example of one of these innate characteristics is a phobia, such as a fear of the dark or of spiders. On the other hand, Jung claimed that archetypes had developed into separate subsystems of the psyche due to memories and visions passed down from ancestors.

INDIVIDUATION

Individualization is "the gradual development of a unified, integrated personality that incorporates greater and greater amounts of the unconscious, both personal and collective, and resolves any conflicts, such as those between introverted and extraverted tendencies." Within analytical psychology, the therapeutic objective of individuation is the process by which a person becomes a complete psychological individual. The individual appreciates their self-worth and uniqueness and embraces both the conscious and unconscious minds.

ARCHETYPES

Jungian archetypes, derived from the collective unconscious, are represented as images and themes with universal implications across many civilizations. These archetypes may manifest in dreams, literature, religion, or art. There are several archetypes that Jung examined within Analytical Psychology, however, we will focus on the four most frequently discussed:

1. **The Persona**

The persona, sometimes known as the "mask," represents the outward appearance that each human being portrays to the world. It does not express our inner personality but our "conformity" inside society. The persona, like acting, is the presentation we put on for others that is not who we truly are.

2. **The Shadow**

The shadow archetype represents the animal side of our personality. From the shadow, individuals gain creative and destructive energies, influencing their predispositions. This includes all the things individuals do not want to know about themselves or do not like. It is the part of the unconscious most accessible by the conscious.

3. **The Anima/Animus**

The anima/animus, according to Jung, are mirror representations of our biological sex. In other words, men have an unconscious feminine side, while women have an unconscious masculine side. The anima represents the feminine aspects, whereas the animus represents the male aspects.

4. **The Self**

The self is an essential component in Jung's Analytical Psychology. The self is what gives the human experience a sense of togetherness. Every individual should strive for selfhood to attain a balance between the conscious and unconscious.

METHOD

This study used data from two sources. The first source is based on a genuine story of serial killer Joker. The secondary source is 5 middle school kids who viewed the Joker movie as research subjects. They were also asked about their reactions to the Joker movie. To elicit a variety of responses. The reader's response was gathered through an interview with five broad questions regarding how the reader responded to the serial killer movie and story, including their reasoning and history that led to their response. During the interview, some follow-up questions were added. Semi-structured interviews (SSI) were used, which use a mix of closed-

and open-ended questions, sometimes supported by follow-up why or how inquiries (Adams, 2015). This tries to elicit more in-depth answers and responses from serial killer movie viewers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this research project was to evaluate the mental effects that watching scary or terrifying content on television or in the movies can have on young people. Watch how the youngsters respond as they are watching them as well. The study's outcomes indicate that children's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes are influenced for a significant amount of time after watching horror-themed television series and movies. Young children have trouble telling the difference between fiction and reality; therefore, it is important for parents to shield their children from disturbing or violent content on television. The violent creatures, monsters, and terrible, mutilated, or deformed individuals that are depicted in the shows, which influence children's memories, are naturally frightening. Whether they are real or imagined, visual pictures are essentially frightening.

According to the conclusions of this research project, parents should not let their children watch frightening television shows or horror movies because doing so exposes them to the risk of feeling distressing feelings. It may offer them entertainment and lift their spirits, but it will also have long-term and intricate effects on the way they behave and the perspectives they hold. The findings of this study suggest that children's exposure to scary media, such as movies and television shows, may negatively impact their confidence level and ability to learn. This study shed some light on how individuals are affected by horror films, how their personalities are affected by horror films, as well as how individuals react to horror films. There is no justification for any parent to permit their young children to watch a frightening television show, especially at a late hour. The findings of the current study are also in contrast to those obtained by Gilissen and colleagues (2006, as cited in Singh, 2014), who investigated the degree of fear exhibited by children aged 3 to 4 years old after watching a terrifying television program. According to their findings, youngsters exhibited a variety of adverse reactions after viewing violent or otherwise disturbing content on television.

The researchers discovered that the majority of the individuals feel the same way after examining six participants. During the film, the majority of them were afraid and freaked out. Furthermore, the majority of individuals do not believe it has damaged them psychologically, cognitively, emotionally, or spiritually. So, here are the specifics:

1. Nathan (Participant 1)

Nathan felt terrified during the film was played, his heartbeat was up and down. He was frightened and sometimes feel scared during the film was played. After, the film was ended Nathan did not feel that the film itself affected him psychologically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. He just feel self guard when something cautious or dangerous is approaching him. The sense of strong feeling of self aware is so much stronger after he was watching the film. But the most important thing is that he feels pity and awful towards the main character "the joker" himself when he was bullied and ashamed by everyone around him due to his mental status attitude. From that on Joker feels revenged and wanted to do such revenged things to all people surround him. The most important thing is that The Persona or Mask that the Joker wears daily affects him not to show his vulnerability to the public. Nathan also possesses a

strong man on a day-to-day basis, like what The Joker did, even though deep down he felt down, stressed, frustrated, anxious, and depressed sometimes.

2. Qais (Participant 2)

Qais did not feel terrified while the film played, but his heartbeat was up and down. He was not frightened, but sometimes he felt scared while the film played. After, the film was ended Qais did not feel that the film itself affected him psychologically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually at all. He just feels self-guard when something cautious or dangerous is approaching him. The sense of strong feeling of self-aware is so much stronger after he was watching the film. The introverted things of the Joker also possessed what Qais did on his day-to-day basis. Qais admitted that he is an introverted person that sometimes make him feels abandoned and isolated from the society that he lives in. He feels so difficult to express his feelings, intuitions, thinking and sensations to other people because he has not use to because of the introverted things that he possessed his all lives.

3. Putra (Participant 3)

Putra felt terrified during the film was played, his heartbeat was up and down. He was frightened and sometimes feel scared during the film was played. After, the film was ended Putra did not feel that the film itself affected him psychologically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He just feels self-guard when something cautious or dangerous is approaching him. The sense of strong feeling of self-aware is so much stronger after he was watching the film. But the most important things of all is he feels pity and awful towards the main character "the joker" himself when he was bullied and ashamed by all people surround him due to his mentally status attitude. From that on Joker feel revenged and wanted to do such revenged things to all people surround him. Putra felt the same way what the Joker has felt because Putra himself felt the similar situations. And Putra concluded that revenged things are depending to ourselves. The control is on ourselves either we wanted to do that thing or not. Putra admitted that he has a shadow that is similar what the joker has got which is being bullied by surroundings.

4. Reyhan (Participant 4)

Reyhan felt terrified during the film was played, his heartbeat was up and down. He was frightened and sometimes feel scared during the film was played. After, the film was ended Reyhan did not feel that the film itself affected him psychologically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He just feels self-guard when something cautious or dangerous is approaching him. The sense of strong feeling of self-aware is so much stronger after he was watching the film. But the most important thing is that he feels pity and awful towards the main character "the joker" himself when he was bullied and ashamed by everyone around him due to his mental status attitude. From that on Joker feel revenged and wanted to do such revenged things to all people surround him. Reyhan can relate the joker stories to his stories because he got a shadow that sometimes thrilled him to do such negative things but Thank God, he can control it.

5. Adrian (Participant 5)

Adrian did not feel terrified during the film was played, but his heartbeat was up and down. He was not frightened and but sometimes he felt scared during the film was played. After, the film was ended Adrain did not feel that the film itself affected him psychologically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually at all. He just feels self-guard when something cautious or dangerous is approaching him. The sense of strong feeling of self-aware is so much stronger after he was watching the film. Adrian can relate the animus thing or feminine thing that The Joker has possessed. Adrian also has the animus or feminine side which is he always uses skincare every single day that the Joker on the film also used make up every single day. So, Adrian can relate to these circumstances. Through this movie, he wants that a man who is using a make-up is okay. There is nothing wrong with a man that is using a make-up. It does not mean that we are gay or bisexual or something like that. It is okay for a man to use make up on the day-to-day basis.

6. Tyan (Participant 6)

Tyan felt terrified during the film was played, his heartbeat was up and down. He was frightened and sometimes feel scared during the film was played. After the film ended, Tyan did not feel that it affected him psychologically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He just feels self-guard when something cautious or dangerous is approaching him. The sense of strong feeling of self-aware is so much stronger after he watched the film. But the most important thing is that he feels pity and awful towards the main character "the joker" himself, when he was bullied and ashamed by everyone around him due to his mental status attitude. From that on, Joker felt revenge and wanted to do such revengeful things to everyone around him. Tyan can relate the story of Joker to his personal life. Growing up in a single-parent home and living with his grandmother and mother sometimes makes him feel sad, anxious, depressed, irritated and ashamed, but he always covers up his face with smile and laugh. He does not want people to know the real face of him. So, he wears a mask or persona to cover up his pains and his hurts of being grown up in a broken home family.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing six participants, the researchers find out that most participants feel the same way. Most of them felt terrified and freaking out during the film was played. And above that, most participants do not feel affected psychotically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually affected them. Some of them have the same shadows as The Joker had, some of them have the same persona as The Joker, and some have the same animus or feminine side as The Joker had. But that things (Shadow, Persona, and Animus) did not affect them psychologically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

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