

## Beyond The "Joker" Movie: Cinema As A Politainment Agent

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### Abstract

In the scope of this study; *Joker* (2019) film will be analyzed and examined as a political entertainment medium through cinematic narration. The film is assessed both in terms of scene analysis and in terms of the film's current discourse. Within the framework of this study, *Joker* film evaluated thematically as a political entertainment thus this article aims to enlighten the relationship between cinematic representation and political circumstances through the perspective of Douglas Kellner's Cinema Wars narrative. The goal of this study was to break down *Joker* film to examine its ideological and aesthetic representations within the social, political and cultural context in the timeframe when the film was released to build up a bridge between political reality through the employment of cinematographic machinery.

**Keywords:** Cinema; Cinematographic apparatus; Representation; Political cinema; *Joker*



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# Beyond The “Joker” Movie: Cinema As A Politainment Agent

## Ibrahim Dalkılıç

### Introduction

It has been 125 years since the Lumiere Brothers premiered their first motion picture at the Grand Café in Paris in 1895, and despite its long history, film has a considerably shorter history than other form of art. In addition, cinema theorist Rudolf Arnheim stated the following about cinematic history: “We were there for the first time in history when an art was developing. All other art forms are as old as humanity and their roots are just as dark (Arnheim, 1997). For over a century, however, cinema has been a mass communication instrument that has influenced people's social, cultural, political, and economic lives by touching an individual's life dynamics in a manner that no other art form has.

Andre Bazin (2004) describes motion picture as the objectivity of time and states that it is a language that enables the reproduction of technical and mechanical reality. Marxist theorist Eisenstein emphasizes the transforming effect on masses of the art of cinema. According to Tarkovsky, cinema is an art that enables the viewer to make connections with what they see on the silver screen and their own lives and while doing this, it does not allow for the natural flow of life to be ruined (Tarkovsky, 1989). It is evident that all the mentioned cinema theorists have referred to the connection between motion pictures and reality.

Motion films have become an ideological tool desired by dominant powers, rather than just an art form, due to the powerful relationship they build with individuals through a sense of realism. So, how can the function of motion pictures that are intended to be produced with ideological goals maintain the link to reality? The perspectives of Comolli and Narboni (1971) enable for a better comprehension of the situation: Camera and film are devices that enable for the replication of reality, and they are the elements that make up the ideological side of motion pictures in this context. Even if the instruments or procedures utilized in a film are based on fact, it is still nothing more than a narrative of the ruling powers' ideology.

Hayward (1984) talks about how ideology is not the desire of absolute dominant classes in society, but it is a function to re-impose their ideas and thoughts to classes within the society in which they are dominant. Althusser (2014) on the other hand, has a different perspective on the matter and states that society plays an important role in realizing ideologies. While ideologies create subjects one by one, these subjects are what provide meaning and value to the ideology within conditions on a national level that provide trust. Thus, while ideology manifests in the everyday lives of people and societies through subjects, then in return subjects shape societies to serve political powers or dominant classes. Thus, society is formed in a way that would function how the dominant powers want.

In *Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser conceptualized the entire process (ISA). According to Althusser, the dominating forces' production tools must be constantly refreshed for them to be able to create inside the *Ideological State Apparatuses* process. The renewal of production circumstances ensures the continuance of production within a societal system. As many cinema theorists express, there is a strong bond that motion pictures create with individuals through the feeling of reality has enabled it to become an ideological tool desired by dominant powers and not just an art form (Wood 1977; Ryan and Kellner, 1988). So how can the function of motion pictures desired to be produced with ideological aims continue the connection with reality? Comolli and Narboni's (1971) views allow better understanding of this situation: Camera and film are tools that allow a reproduction of reality and within this context they are the factors that make up the ideological side of motion pictures. Nevertheless, even if the tools or techniques used in a film are pieces of reality, it is nothing but the narrative of the ideologies that the dominant powers have.

In the framework of this study, the film *Joker* (2019) will be placed at the center of mentioned theories and the film will break down by the ideological and aesthetic representations in the story to find out the connection between reality and the cinematic medium. It is aimed to find a relation between cinematic representations and social, political, and cultural milieu in which film was released.

## The Cultural Industry Powerhouse: Hollywood

Culture is required for dominant beliefs to manifest, be accepted, and later be retained at the locations where they have expanded. According to Kolker (1999), culture involves all our beliefs and activities, and it is something that people create over time, rather than something that occurs naturally. As a result, dominant beliefs might be embraced by the public if they are the outcome of a deliberate process through a culture that they perceive as natural. Motion pictures, like other forms of mass communication, are a component of a larger cultural matrix. It comes to life within a society's culture and becomes a component of the culture-making process. Thus, it was born through ideology, but then it became a tool that feeds it. The aspect that enables culture to spread is the conformity and stability of it. After being remanufactured into different styles and discourses of ideologies, motion pictures have contributed to the stability of this flow (Yılmaz, 2008).

Just like Balazs, Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Benjamin and many other theorists, Althusser also evaluates motion pictures through a Marxist perspective. According to the Marxist point of view, the world order foreseen by capitalism is possible with the reproduction of continuity from an economic, political, and cultural level. Marx (1999) states that the determiner of the creation of historical processes was the production and reproduction of life rather than the economy. In 1947, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, the Frankfurt School philosophers influenced by Marxism put forth the concept of “the industry of culture” relating to the reproduction of culture and

dominant ideologies becoming vessels of this concept (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997). The industry of culture is defined as the reproduction of dominant ideologies into new forms and the spread through various vessels and the order of capitalist machinery that enables a creation of a mass culture production. According to Adorno and Rabinbach's (1975) cultural industry theory, the idea of culture does not emerge from the bottom of society. To put it another way, it is not a mass phenomenon. The idea of industrializing culture to create a common mass culture is a concept that is dominated from the top and instilled in the masses by dominant powers. Culture, according to Adorno (2006), is a construct that deceives people into believing they are living the life they deserve and allows them to feel tranquil. The goal of the cultural industry is veiled, as stated by Lunn (1984). Individuality and freedom of choice are essential aspects of a person's personality. Adorno (2006) focused on motion pictures in his work *Minima Moralia* and regarded cinema as a vital component of the cultural sector. Cinema, like other popular mass communication tools such as radio and television, has become a medium with no feature other than being commercial, according to Adorno.

Cinema, with its fascinating structure, has become one of the most successful replication instruments of the cultural business in its historical narrative, and despite the fact that the first movie showing occurred in France, the industry's ideological production center has relocated to

America. The repercussions of two significant wars in the center of Europe, in particular, cannot be disregarded in terms of political, cultural, and economic devastation. After the First World War, America's moves toward motion pictures became increasingly favorable, allowing it to grow into a massive production hub for the Hollywood culture industry's ideological factories.

Baumbach (2019) states that Benjamin's hypothesis that cinema will never leave the political arena is still true today. However, when Benjamin mentions that motion pictures are political, he mentions this from a revolutionist and socially functional point of view. Nevertheless, Comolli and Narboni's article titled *Cinéma / Idéologie / Critique* which was published in the extremely effective journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1969, has a different approach to Benjamin when they say "Every film is political ". Within their hypothesis, Comolli and Narboni use "political" to mean "ideological". According to them, every film is as political as the ideology which they were created with. This approach is particularly useful in presenting the functioning mechanism of the cultural sector. From this perspective, it is reasonable to assume that the political message conveyed by the motion film will be decided by the ideology of the author of that message. Marxist literature, on the other hand, considers anything that is stated to be political to be political. Kellner (2010) discusses how modern Hollywood depicts current events in motion pictures and how the major political powers of the period are translated into Hollywood movies in this framework. What Kellner means by translating is that specific political discourses are encoded into media texts.

Motion pictures code ideologies of life into encryptions of specific forms, motifs and representations and present them to the audience.

Films have become a significant activity in people's lives because of their magical realms that transport them to new worlds every time. Cinema, as Tarkovsky (1989) put it, is both an art form and a means of amusement. The fact that motion movies are a tool that people use to fill their spiritual emptiness and hunt for the "time they wasted" is what makes them so magical and appealing nowadays. A moviegoer tries to fill in the blanks in their own life with what they see on the screen. As a result, the viewer is attempting to make up for lost or wasted time. As a result, people seek to fill the spiritual void that has arisen because of their modern life's uneasiness and miscommunication.

### Cinema as a Politainment Agent

Adorno and Horkheimer (2010) emphasize that at the center of the production process of the industry of culture lies individuals whose right for free time has been taken away from them due to daily problems and their contribution to the functioning of the system has been decreasing day by day due to the depression they're experiencing in their personal lives. The way to save the individual from the spiritual depression, unhappiness and deadlock is to take them under the



influence of a concept based in “entertainment” and manage them. This concept which is the aim and eventual conclusion of the industry of culture enables the production of entertainment through political goals within one of its products: motion pictures. Being entertained through political goals and the strengthening of dominant ideologies’ existence through the positive mind set created by entertainment is not a new phenomenon. Uzunaslán (2005) stated that in Ancient Rome, the emperors would use entertainment through gladiator games arranged by the political power in order to benefit their political goals. Throughout Roman history, it can be seen that there are positive political feedback through the link between the entertainment created with gladiator games and the happiness of the public. As it can be seen, the relationship between political powers and entertainment is one that has a long history and it has transformed over time, keeping pace with the changing structure of the society and has reached today. Just as Algül (2009) has pointed out, at the point that it has reached, to draw attention in media and the society, the intensity of entertainment features have been increased and entertainment is being used more and more to reach political goals.

The notion of ‘politainment’ was introduced by Dörner (2001) and consists of a combination of the phrases politics and entertainment, has gained traction in this context. In its most basic form, politainment is the transmission of political messages via entertainment. Using entertainment as a tool for political reasons makes political aspects and messages more understandable while also

making them more interesting. Media has become an increasingly essential instrument for political forces due to the potential influence it might have on an individual's actions and attitudes. The intended translation is achieved, and the building of a mass culture is strengthened by integrating popular cultural components with ideological statements.

Technological, economic, political, and sociological advancements, like Schulze's "experience society" notion, are crucial in forming conceptions like mass culture and consumerist society. With an increase in the flow of information addressed at individuals, particularly through the media, the ability to raise awareness or grab attention has increased. As a result, the concept of politainment has transformed the dominating powers' cinematic goods and other mass communication tools into political message carriers that appear to be entertainment tools by inventing new concepts. Along with its primary responsibilities of informing and educating, mass communication techniques have evolved to play an increasingly essential role in entertainment, as the necessity for aspects that entertain rather than inform or educate has grown in the capitalist lifestyle. McQuail (2010) highlights the soothing effect of the concept of entertainment while listing the societal roles of mass communication. He goes on to explain that media products facilitate entertainment and are variables that reduce society stress, emphasizing the importance of these functions.

Motion pictures allow viewers to get engrossed in a plot that keeps them glued to their seats. Through the politainment agent, cinema's potency allows for the transmission of political messages disguised as enjoyment. When someone watches a movie, they unconsciously perceive the coded and replicated ideological messages and accept them as natural or the usual because of the catharsis they feel from the emotional surge created by entertainment. As a result, political messages are delivered to the stupefied and passivized individual, allowing for the reproduction of transferred ideas.

Hence, it can be said that the concept of Politainment has created a new reality that assembled politics into entertainment. This new reality requires a form of experience. For this reason, politics is conveyed to regular citizens today (Dörner, 2001, p.31). In other words, using mass communication means, politics has succeeded to infiltrate not only political officials but also citizens' everyday lives. It is not recounting the truth, but a fabricated truth, no matter how much motion pictures create the illusion of relaying the current situation. The audience internalizes the ideological hypothesis that has been taught to them inside the notion of entertainment by utilizing aspects that have been related with each other within the storyline of the film. While cinema creates the viewers' agreement, it also removes some suppressions connected to cinema's artificiality by employing molds, and it establishes a suitable foundation for the viewers to accept the hypothesis provided.

## Materials And Methods

The purpose of this research is to look at the use of motion pictures as a political entertainment tool, especially using the 2019 film *Joker*, directed by Todd Philips and centered on the life of failed entertainer Arthur Fleck. The Joker has been the arch-nemesis of Batman since 1943 and has been depicted in a number of movies (Booker, 2023). With the film *Joker*, for the first time a window into the Joker's life has opened to the world or rather Gotham. For the first time in the Batman series, the audience is given the chance to see another side of the Joker and empathize with the character who was classified as Batman's archenemy, and Gotham bears witness to the other side of the narrative. With a sole focus on the movie *Joker*, this study aims to evaluate how motion pictures are employed as a tool of entertainment while pacifying diverse figural patterns and convincing the spectator of the presented argument. In their work *Cinema Wars: Hollywood Film and Politics in the Bush-Cheney Era*, Ryan and Kellner (2009) present the idea that the ideological state of the time when a film is produced directly affects the motion picture and it has a key role in having the audience accept liberal protests. As a result, Ryan and Kellner find a link between the ideological environment of the period and the numerous movies in Hollywood during the Bush presidency, particularly the Batman series. They examined how structural and storytelling aspects were used to fictionalize the movies. The goal of this research is to evaluate

the film *Joker* using Ryan and Kellner's approaches while considering the film as a political entertainment tool, interpreting the film using the dynamics of the time, and analyzing the ideological conjuncture put forth by the dominant powers within a society with the role located on the society.

This study is based on the idea that cinema and the film industry are ideological instruments rather than just entertainment tools. Within this context, the *Joker* was analyzed in terms of the anti-hero character's isolation from society because of societal and individual events, as well as the impact on the city of "Gotham," which is societally famous despite having no political purposes on an individual level. A link was tried between the ideologies depicted in the film and reality, as well as how isolated people who are not accepted in society turn to violence. The 2019 movie *Joker* directed by Todd Philips and featuring Joaquin Phoenix, was analyzed within this background. The film was examined in the context of all its setting and its content. Thematically, the film was assessed as a political entertainment tool, and the emotional changes experienced by the audience were examined. The utilization of media is a key part of a movie. Fleck's ambition of appearing on television becomes an obsession, and this constant obsession aligns with the concept of media ratings. The media's role in legitimizing violence, as well as the film's depiction of it, must be acknowledged.

Kellner's transformation narrative will be the center of The Joker's analysis method. Many conservative films created in the United States during the Bush-Chaney era, according to Kellner, are transforming their international affairs and policies and practices to ensure political ideologies into feature film productions and narratives. In his study, Kellner defines transforming as coding or translating dominant political ideologies such as Reaganism or liberalism using various forms into media texts. Transforming within a motion picture is coding sound, dialogues, scenes and narratives such as discourse and ideologies into film texts. "Thus, film readings can be related on a broad aesthetic level from the form and style analysis of the motion picture to the philosophical imaginings of life." (Marcuse, 1979)

## Discussion

The use of media is a factor that must be considered within the framework of the film. Fleck's desire to star in a television show becomes an addiction, and this passion is linked to media ratings. Another element to consider is how media tools are used to legitimize violence and how this is depicted in the film. The film masterfully depicts Arthur Fleck's change as a result of his use of the media as a tool.

The movie takes place in a world where optimism has vanished and trust in the court system and capitalists has faded. Even though the Joker's killings are portrayed to the public as a sign of "injecting optimism" into society, it is clear that the society is represented as beyond zero in the film and that they have been coded dangerously. The film sends a message about how "dangerous" the general populace might be based on its structure.

The director does not attempt to establish a barrier between the audience and the character within the limits of the picture. Furthermore, even after developing into a monster as a result of so much despair and social seclusion, the director does not purposefully create a gap. As a result of this strategy, the public is justifying Arthur Fleck's activities. The "harm" that Fleck can inflict on society without gaining political advantage, as well as the empathy he generates for the villain, show the hallmarks of deliberate judgments made by the director.

The film illustrates the inadequacy of the public's moral response to injustice with this content. However, the film focuses on the personal and individual axis of moral categories, with just a cursory depiction of the systematic concept of "evil" provided to the viewer during the psychotherapy scene. When this is the case, the film's only option is to demand individual punishment rather than advocating for systemic change. The viewer, on the other hand, is shown the disparities between classes from the first scene. The considerable differences across classes are tangible manifestations of societal issues and aggressiveness.

Throughout the character's evolution, the film employs a number of surprising and terrifying approaches in order to impress the audience. Through the empathy it develops by presenting the Joker's exclusions as well as his rejection from society and its captivating music, the picture takes over the audience's rationale in a short period of time. When regarded in this view, it is clear that the film's audience is being drawn into a polarized world in the same way that other propaganda devices are.

It is important to note at this point that the film was released during Donald Trump's presidency of the United States of America. The film's major goal is to make the audience feel sorry for the Joker. The "Jokerization" technique was introduced for the first time in this picture to viewers who had no prior knowledge of the Joker's past. The fact that the audience supports violence and murder in the film's overall flow demonstrates that the manufacture of this concept is ongoing throughout the film, precisely as Noam Chomsky predicted.

According to Kellner, movies shown in Hollywood cinemas in 2006-2007 were preparing audiences for violence by creating complex tools of torture to punish the bad, just as many torture devices were created in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo, among many other places around the world, to punish the so-called enemy and harmful individuals. Many viewers could relate to the anguish in these scenes. Sadomasochistic pleasure is something they like. The Joker is revealed to



be the perpetrator of the gang's bank heist and other attacks that prompted reprisal from various criminal gangs in the city in Christopher Nolan's 2018 film *Batman Dark Knight*.

The Joker is shown in the aforementioned film as a destructive and nihilistic individual whose soul thrives on disorder and chaos. In today's context, the Joker represents the soul of terrorism, and the film is full of iconography linked to September 11th, with black clouds shrouding the sky in darkness and an explosion at the outset of the film leading the spectator to believe there has been an attack on the city.

Kellner claims that as the plot unfolds, a cinematic picture of attacks on the city's companies, banks, police, and legal system is displayed to the viewer. In this desperate position, Batman begins his pursuit of the Joker, taps his phone, and as soon as he captures him, he disregards all human rights and the constitution and begins torturing him. This scene appears to validate the Bush-Cheney administration's anti-terrorism agenda. If the villain is clearly evil, whatever done to get rid of him is acceptable, according to this theory. Even if it means crossing over to the dark side. Their time, according to Kellner (2013: 33), depicts the link they formed as a result of cultural and political strife, and they can be seen within this frame. Following this logic, modern Hollywood films display cinematic prose depending on the socio-political and economic conditions of the period they were made. Through its visuals, scenes, and tales, films provide light to a specific word, and, as Walter Benjamin and Adorno have remarked, cultural forms such as

cinema light the sociological frame of their period and produce dialectic images. Perhaps movies aren't the most pinnacle kind of culture after all.

### Analysis of the Film:

At the start of the film, we can see how the future character of Joker, Arthur Fleck, has been attacked and no one is helping him. This scene is showing the audience how the character is alone and degenerated from the society from the first few minutes of the film.



Figure 1: Intro Scene, Joker's Exclusion from the Society

Arthur Fleck needed psychiatric assistance as a result of a previous sickness. Fleck is seen receiving assistance in a health center established as a depiction of the state at the beginning of the

film. The audience is informed that the support service has been cancelled due to budget constraints in the next scenes, and a note in Arthur Fleck's notebook draws attention in another scene. The statement that Fleck crossed out in his notepad, where every sentence had a spelling mistake, is as follows: "I just hope my death makes more cents than my life."

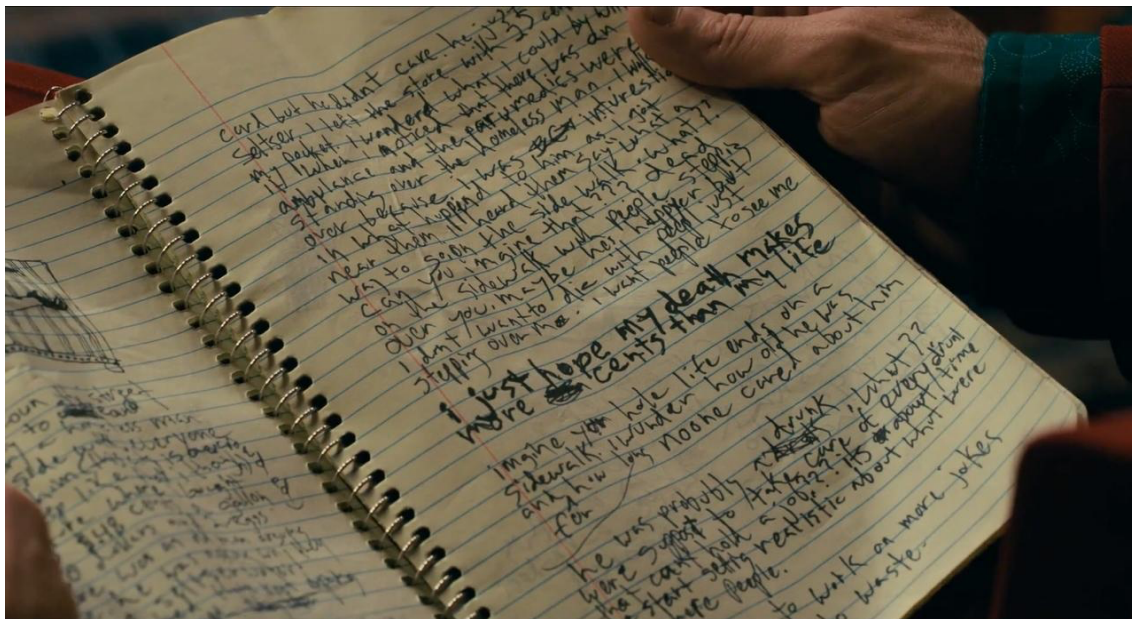


Figure 2: I just hope my death makes more cents than my life

The director is attempting to establish a double meaning in this scene. Despite the fact that Fleck's writing skills indicate that he is uneducated, the sense/cents aspect exhibited in this scene is indicative of a societal disintegration. The concept of someone's death being worth more than their life is explored throughout the film, and the audience encounters this reality within the psychic world of the protagonist.



Figure 3: Dark theme

The picture has a dark theme in its overall framework. The film, which was shot in a dark tone as a representation of Fleck's captivity, remains dark until Arthur Fleck begins his killings and is "liberated." In terms of general structure, the picture appears to be continuing with chilly hues. The scenes depicting Arthur Fleck alone have a somber tone to it, but after the killings begin, the visuals become more vibrant and warmer tones are used.

The audience is not provided any existential information about Arthur Fleck throughout the film. Fleck, who worked as a clown, was rejected by his father and continuously pressured by his mother to become someone he wasn't. The name of his mother is scribbled on the post box beneath the house. There are no instruments on display to explain why it's there. The television screen is the only thing that can save us from this disappearance. He favors his idol TV presenter's name,

"Joker," above his own name at the end of the film, when he will appear on the mass communication tool.

The use of mass communication tools is prevalent all through the film. The television is Arthur Fleck's and his mother's only source of entertainment. The film's screens, with the exception of a few scenes, are mostly black and white. Except for those featuring Thomas Wayne from Arthur Fleck's favorite show, the Murray Show, all screens are black and white. His mother was claimed to be Fleck's father since he was in love with Thomas Wayne.

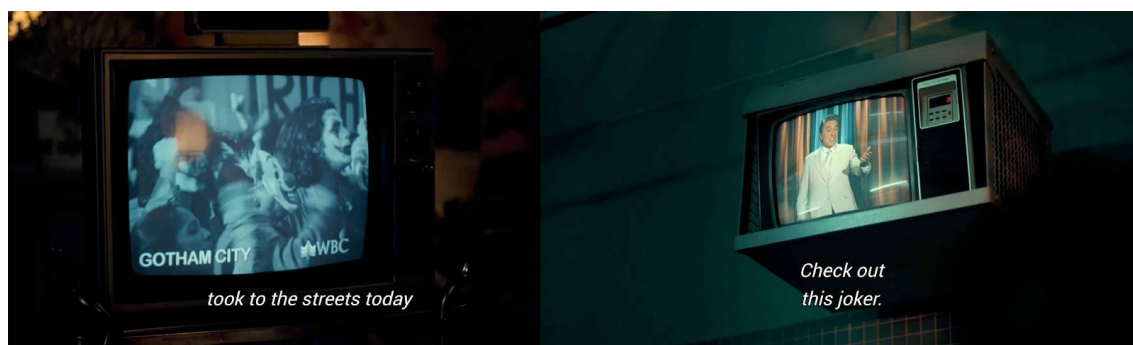


Figure 4: When the life gets colorful

The viewer is also shown how Arthur refers to the television as "everyone" throughout the film. The message is conveyed that the television narrative reflects the general populace. As a result, the effect of mass communication technologies, as well as Fleck killing his idol who was a TV presenter on screen at the end of the film, is not coincidental.

The message that the television is the source of light in the house is repeated throughout the film. The audience is shown the truth that when linked characters appear on screen, the screen,

which is usually black and white, becomes colored. As a result, despite the black and white television screens, Arthur Fleck and his mother's fantasy world is full of color.

Giving a gun to Fleck by a colleague helps in normalizing the gun in Fleck's mind. Another example is the black woman in the elevator signaling with a gun. Arthur Fleck is abused by youngsters at the opening of the film and afterwards beaten up while doing his job. When we arrive at the train fight scene, Fleck has reached a stage where he has become one with his character and has accepted the consent of someone killing another person.



Figure 5: The act of killing

Fleck may be seen swiftly walking into a public restroom after committing the crime. Here, Arthur discovers the meaning of his existence and begins to dance on his own. For the first time, Arthur Fleck becomes one with the Joker in this scenario.



Figure 6: The Joker is reborn

When the psychological councilor declares that the state will no longer support this cause in a scene, her comments "They don't care about people like you, Arthur" are a depiction of the structure of thought about people within the system based on the film. This scene marks the beginning of Arthur's "Liberalization" and transformation into the Joker.

Within the film, a detailed contrast of the Bourgeois and labor classes is also made. In the movies, there is a showing of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. Outside the cinema, there are demonstrations, but the film is being screened inside. Cold colors are preferred for the protests

outside and warm colors are chosen for the inside of the cinema. This situation is important in showing the differences between the rich and the poor and the bourgeois and labor classes.

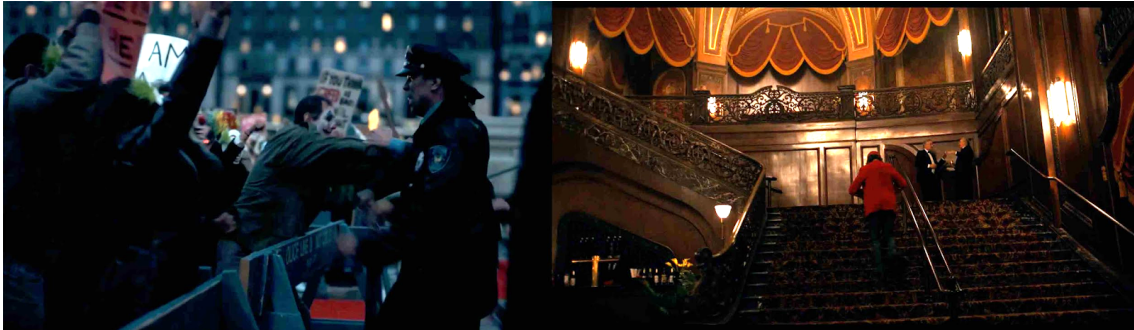


Figure 7: Capitalist “Modern Times”

The usage of joker masks in the train scenario, on the other hand, is a reflection of a habit we engage in on a daily basis. Everyone being the "Joker" has a lot in common with those who wear protest masks in their everyday lives. It's worth noting that several protestors in Minneapolis wore George Floyd masks. A similar protest had taken place in *La Casa De Papel/Money Heist*, when people wore Dali masks to protest.



Figure 8: Mask up the chaos



The fact that he chose to appear as the Joker instead as Arthur Fleck on his long-delayed dream, the "Murray Show," demonstrates similarities between his character and the Mass Communication Tool. While Arthur Fleck depicts a non-existent, marginalized person, the Joker is a character who has earned a reputation for himself in society and has been imitated as a source of inspiration by others. As a result, in this scene, Fleck, who prefers the name Joker, is demonstrating to the audience that he has assimilated into civilization and has evolved into a social entity by adapting to societal conditions. The importance of mass communication technologies to Arthur Fleck is demonstrated throughout the film, even in the final scenes. Fleck claims to have killed three accountants using mass communication tools. In addition, his favorite character, Murray, gets killed in front of the audience on a mass communication tool. This story demonstrates the power of television.

The director shows the event's fulfillment through multiple screens and tales. This story is told to the viewer using a metaphor of a slow pan out of the camera and a representation of the same event being presented on other screens and channels. In this scene, it is demonstrated that the media is not a collection of voices, but rather a single voice heard from a variety of sources. Within this framework, a critique of the current media's viewpoint is made.

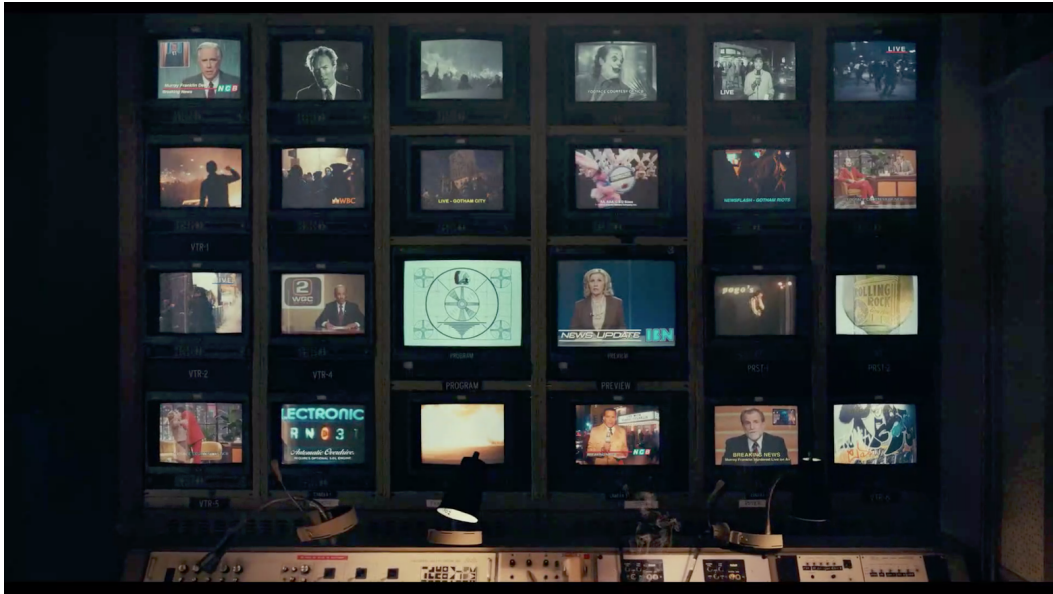


Figure 9: Single voice, mass publicity

The Joker's heroism is now complete in the last scenes of the film. The confrontation between police and protestors depicts the necessity for a character to take on the role of hero and rouse the crowd. The impact of mass communication techniques on this realization is enormous.



Figure 10: Gotham City stirs up

Douglas Kellner claims in his book *Cinema Wars* that the media had foretold Obama's election. The book examines how the American Film Industry requires films in order to legitimize all of America's recent wars and fights. The fact that the film *Joker* was released just before the George Floyd protests in Minneapolis is an interesting element. Following the assassination of George Floyd by American police on May 25, several protests with the slogan "Black Lives Matter" erupted around the world, however it can be observed that the first of these events was shown in the *Joker* movie as a "excluded" society.

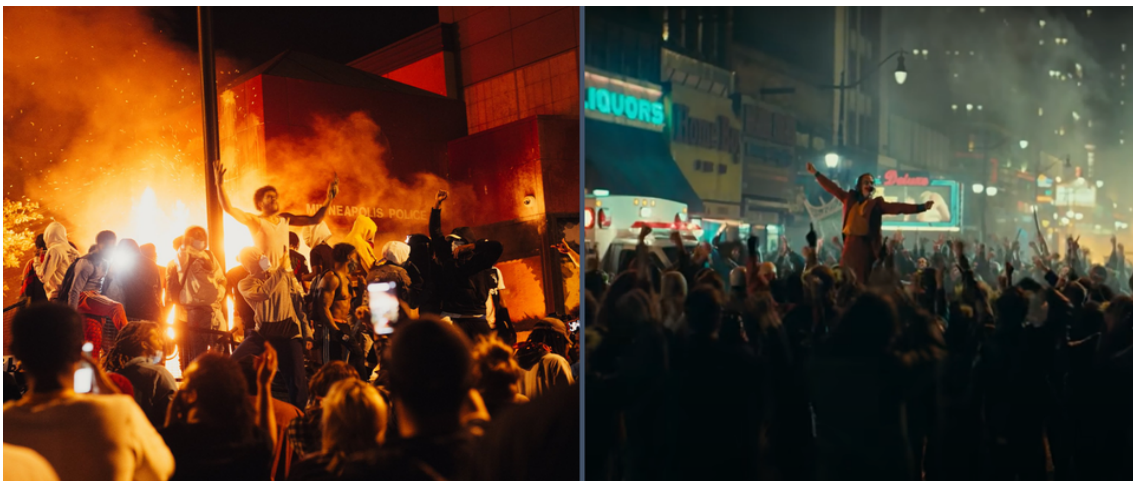


Figure 11: The uprising of hegemony

The *Joker* is a psychotic who incites the citizens of Gotham City to join a revolutionary movement, which is described as "lawlessness, inequity, corruption, theft, and all-around pessimism." Thousands of rebels in clown masks went out into the streets to pillage and kill after three bankers and one TV presenter were killed. This basic and widely accepted statement encapsulates the world's true mass violence.

Despite major media coverage, protesters never adequately explain what is driving the uprising. What maintains and influences these behaviors to relate to crucial methods of social identification, according to research and modern crowd theory. The sense of shared identities places important constraints on what happens during a riot and where the violence occurs. Whether in the film or during the Minneapolis events, the demonstrators are using their actions to reclaim their reputation after years of persecution from the police and authorities. The downside is that, rather than focusing on peaceful protests that strengthen violent acts, the media instead concentrates on looters, contributing to pillaging.



Figure 12: The Joker and the reality

Another intriguing comparison between the film and the Minneapolis events is the act of a person wearing a Joker mask attempting to set fire to a Chicago police car. This behavior also serves as a demonstration of how the Joker film is received in society.



Figure 13: Walking away with trace

The Joker, who has turned into a merciless murderer as a result of being rejected as a patient by the system, is seen in the final scene of the film going to a hospital for psychological counseling. A individual that the system had refused to fix for economic reasons will be reintroduced into the system and corrected. The lesson here is that these events would not have occurred if the system had not initially rejected this individual. The George Floyd incidents in America illustrate a similar point.

## Conclusion

This is a film about "a lonely mental patient" and "a society that kicked him to the curb and treated him like trash," as the Joker puts it. Arthur Fleck lives in a capitalist metropolis where he is constantly deprived. As a clown, he can barely make ends meet by performing perilous stunts. The Joker was committed to a psychiatric facility and was forced to care for his crippled mother, who was living in a filthy apartment. He developed a mental disorder quickly, and due to budget limitations, he lost access to the health care he was receiving.

For many years, the public had the opportunity to observe the "Joker" as the total opposite of a hero. Batman's origin story has always been a tense one. The city billionaire has always been portrayed as the sole guy who can bring justice in the films. In "The Dark Knight" (2008), Heath Ledger's Joker is a character who keeps us from comprehending the character's inner existence. While the Joker was a man who "wanted to see the world burn," Batman was a dull reflection of the Bush administration's imperialist mentality. The American media tried to convince the public that the terrorists were not motivated by imperialist crimes in the Middle East. They were simply "evil" individuals who "despised freedom."

The film, *Joker*, is turning the backwards narrative of the Batman series on its head. Even though Arthur Fleck had committed terrible crimes, he was not born a criminal and the audience

see how he went insane through a crime system. At least at these early stages, the film is giving inspiration to the masses to fight against their oppressions. The police shoot an innocent protestor just for following him. The crowd who was common symbols and thus had collective powers easily overwhelm these criminal police and take their revenge. While watching the clown masks, who can't make the connection between the Yellow Vests in France that had challenged the state powers and the George Floyd protests in Minneapolis?

Different to the other films in the series, in *Joker*, we are complying to watching the story through the eyes of the Joker whose crimes we had already come to expect. Just like how Donald Trump wants us to see the events through his eyes following the smear campaign against him in the 2016 American Presidency Elections in which the media had clearly not wanted him.

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