CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this research. This chapter contains research questions, aims of the research, data source and context, research procedures, data collection and data analysis, data presentation, and summary of the films.

3.1. Research Questions

This research is intended to answer the following questions:

1. How is the character Joker portrayed in the film *Batman* and *The Dark Knight*?
2. What do these portrayals of Joker signify?

3.2. Aims of the Research

This research aims to:

1. Explore the portrayals of Joker in *Batman* and *The Dark Knight.*
2. Find out the signification of the comparison of the portrayals of Joker.

3.3. Data Source and Context

The data sources for this research are taken from the character of Joker in two *Batman* films. The first Joker is taken from a film entitled *Batman* whose duration is 126 minutes, directed by Tim Burton and released by Warner Bros. Company in 1989. The second one is from in a film entitled *The Dark Knight* which has a duration of 156 minutes, directed by Christopher Nolan and released by Warner Bros. Company in 2008. Both films are the adaptations of *Batman* comics

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published by DC Comics. *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) serves as a remake of *Batman* (Burton, 1989).

The research focuses on the portrayal of the main villain in the two films: Joker. This research analyzes how the character Joker is portrayed in each film. The two portrayals of the character Joker is analyzed using Boggs and Petrie's (2008) framework of characterization in film which includes (1) characterization through appearance, (2) characterization through dialogue, (3) characterization through external action, (4) characterization through internal action, (5) characterization through reactions of other characters, (6) characterization through contrast and dramatic foils, (7) characterization through caricature and leitmotif, and (8) characterization through choice of name. Bordwell and Thompson's (2010) cinematic techniques are also used in this research to support Boggs and Petrie's (2008) framework. However, as cinematic techniques cover broad elements and features in film theories, only several features are chosen for the purpose of the research such as *mise-en-scene*, camera shot and angles, and sound. The features are chosen because they are relevant to Boggs and Petrie's (2008) theory on characterization.

3.4.   Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to investigate the portrayals of the character Joker in two *Batman* films and reveal how film techniques such as *mise-en-scene*, camera shot and angle, and sound construct the portrayal of the character Joker. This study is descriptive in nature; it contains open-ended research questions and textual data source. As is generally known, the purposes of qualitative method are exploring phenomena and create meanings behind them rather than clarifying hypotheses about the phenomena (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). For instance, a researcher who uses qualitative method would investigate how Hollywood films create the representation of black people whereas a quantitative research would tend to prove that the black people representation issue makes sales of Hollywood films

drop by certain percentage. The characteristics of qualitative method are in line with this research.

Furthermore, qualitative descriptive method is chosen because it can provide complex textual descriptions regarding the issue in the research (Mack, et al., 2005). Mack, et al. (2005) also claim that qualitative method is one tool to identify intangible factors (e.g., emotion, perspective toward certain issue, or representation of a certain image) that cannot be determined by numbers. A descriptive qualitative method is an appropriate method for this study because the study will rely on collecting, categorizing, and analyzing the forms of scenes and shots in order to answer the research questions.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study are collected from two *Batman* films entitled *Batman* (Burton, 1989) and *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) in the forms of scenes and shots. The procedure in gathering the data is as follows:

1. Watch the films several times and take notes regarding Joker's appearance in both films.

2. Take screenshots of all the scenes containing Joker's appearance which support the overall theme and story of the films. *Batman*'s theme is built around the story of suppressing criminality and how the villain and the hero have an interrelated relationship. Meanwhile, *The Dark Knight*'s theme is built around maintaining a hard-owned peace and to save the order and justice in the attack of a sudden force.

3. Reselect the screenshots in regard to their context. The contexts of the scenes in the two films must be similar to each other. For instance, scene 4 in *The Dark Knight* in which Bruce Wayne reacts after Joker's threat is in the same context with scene 6 in *Batman* in which Bruce Wayne ponders after Joker challenge him. Both scenes also in the same context in regard to how other characters react to Joker.

4. Categorize the collected data (i.e. the relevant scenes containing the appearance of Joker) into several tables according to the types of

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characterization in film based on Boggs and Petrie's (2008) framework of characterization in films. The data from the two films are put side by side to make the comparison easier.

5. Analyze the collected data using Boggs and Petrie's (2008) framework of characterization in films. Chosen features in cinematic techniques proposed by Bordwell and Thompson (2010) such as *mise-en-scene*, camera shot and angle, and sound are also drawn on to strengthen the analysis of the characterizations of Joker.

6. Use the analyses and discussion from the characterization analysis to present comparisons of the portrayals of the character Joker.

7. Investigate the signification of the two portrayals of Joker by using the final analyses and discussion regarding the portrayals of Joker in the two *Batman* films.

3.6. Data Presentation

The categorized data are presented in the following table. The table covers the shots that portray the characterization of Joker. Each type of characterization is presented in one table. The table is divided into two columns to provide comparison between the two films.

Characterization Through Appearance	
***Batman* (Burton, 1989)**	***The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008)**
(a)	**(b)**
Explanation	**Explanation**
Figure a is one of the earliest	Figure b is one of the earliest appearances

appearances of the Joker. The scene shows that Joker has just killed his previous mob leader as a revenge for double crossing him. He sits on the dead leader's chair while reading an article about Batman on the *Gotham Globe*, Gotham City's newspaper. He then remembers who is the one mainly responsible for his disfigurement.	of the Joker. In the scene, Joker has just arrived at a gang leaders meeting, disrupting them. He nonchalantly walks in to the meeting even though he has just make a commotion after robbing one of the gang leaders. Joker proposes that the leaders use his help to kill Batman whom he thinks is above the law in Gotham.
Cinematic Techniques	**Cinematic Techniques**
Make-Up: Clown-like appearance. White skin. The eyebrows are arched. The corners of the red lips are permanently pulled. Short light green hair, perfectly combed backwards. **Costume:** Long dark purple coat, hiding a light purple colored suit behind it. Joker also wears orange shirt and yellow tie. He wears black leather gloves. **Lighting:** The lighting used in this scene is hard back lighting. **Camera Shot and Angle:** Joker is shot with medium close-up shot, with high angle.	**Make-Up:** Clown-like appearance. Joker's face is painted messily with white paint. He has scars on both sides of his cheeks and covered (or emphasized) by the use of red paint. He also wears the red paint on his lips. He has dark paint around his eyes. His yellowish green hair is messy. He has yellow teeth. **Costume:** Long purple suit, with green vest, brown tie, and purple pattern shirt. He also wears purple gloves with latex-like material. **Camera Shot and Angle:** Joker is shot with medium close-up shot, with high angle. **Lighting:** The lighting used in this scene is key lighting.

Table 3.1 Characterization Through Appearance

As shown in table 3.1, the character Joker in *Batman* (Burton, 1989) has a number of similarities and differences compared to the character Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008). Their make-ups are slightly similar as they both appear clown-like. Both portrayals use the color white as their face color. However, Joker in *Batman* (Burton, 1989) seems to have it permanently as the result of the chemical acid reaction on his body. Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) seems to just paint them by himself as we still can see some skin colored shade on his forehead. Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) also has scars, whereas Joker in *Batman* (Burton, 1989) does not have any apparent scars on his skin. Furthermore, Joker in *Batman* (Burton, 1989) grooms himself nicely and tidily, but Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) does not seem to care about personal tidiness and hygiene for he has yellow teeth and messy hair.

In terms of costume, both portrayals don purple colored suit, although the shade of the purple is slightly different. The differences lie on the fact that Joker in *Batman* (Burton, 1989) combines his purple suit with orange shirt and yellow tie, whereas Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) mixes them with green vest, brown tie, and purple pattern shirt.

Joker's disfigurement is further emphasized by the use of hard backlighting in *Batman* (Burton, 1989). The use of lighting gives a dramatic effect on his appearance, making his white skin glows like pearls against the dark background. This technique does not seem to appear in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) as the filmmaker still use key light which does not emphasize any of his appearance characteristic. However, both films apply the use of medium close up shot with high angle to portray the character Joker.

Considering the above comparison, *Batman*'s (Burton, 1989) Joker seems to be purposefully portrayed as someone who is different from any other human. The use of hard backlighting which emphasizes his disfigurement hints that after falling to the chemical acid, Joker is not the same human as others. His abnormality is also hinted by the domination of the color purple on his costumes, as purple is not a usual color of suits and tuxedo. However, the use of lighter colors, such as orange and yellow, implies that he can have fun in the dark situation. This notion is also supported by how Joker is given a permanent smile

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which implies that he always have "fun" and feeling happy in any situation just like a clown (hence, the clown-like make-up), even when he kills someone. This indicates his psychological condition as normal people would not gain pleasure from hurting others.

Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) is also portrayed as someone who is different from any ordinary beings, for usually men would not wear make-up or paint their faces in daily activities. His costumes, dominated with purple—color that not many men would wear—hints another strange preference of Joker. Moreover, his suit is dominated by dark colors, implying that his very presence would darken the atmosphere of the scene. His scars imply that he is a scary person, even scarier than the gang leaders. His frightening appearance is emphasized and dramatized by the use of mid close up shot with high angle, which makes his body looks taller and bigger. His untidy appearance implies that he is a careless person. Combined with his apparent scars, it can also imply that he might be using his untidy appearance and careless persona to purposefully scare people.

Both characters of Joker seem to be portrayed as someone who is entirely different from ordinary human beings. This argument is supported by how the two characters' costumes are dominated by purple, a color which most people would not wear in daily basis. Their very appearance—the clown-like make-up, white face, red lips, shades of green hair—also implies that they are indeed very different from others. However, Joker in *Batman* (Burton, 1989) seems to also seek the fun in the situation he's in by having a permanent smile, whereas the Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) seems to put emphasis more on scaring people rather than "having fun" by using untidy grooming and paint on his scars.

3.7. Summary of the Films

3.7.1. Batman

Gotham City district attorney Harvey Dent and Police Commissioner Jim Gordon are asked by the Mayor to protect Gotham City from its infamous criminals.

Meanwhile, a photojournalist Vicki Vale and reporter Alexander Knox begin to investigate "Batman", a criminal hunter in Gotham City.

Gang leader and mob boss Carl Grissom is targeted by Dent and Gordon. Using his knowledge and grudge on his right-hand man Jack Napier's affair with his mistress, he sets Napier up to be killed by acid chemicals. When Grissom's plan is in motion, Gordon suddenly appears and ambushes Napier. Napier attempts to flee the place only to meets Batman. Panics, Napier falls into the acid pit and is presumed dead. Batman then escapes.

Batman is actually an orphaned billionaire Bruce Wayne. Wayne holds a gala at his Manor and meets Vale. Later, they begin a romantic relationship. Meanwhile, Napier somehow survives the accident. However, Napier now is horribly disfigured as a side effect of the acid chemicals: he is now has a white chalk skin, emerald green hair, and eternal red grin. Napier drives himself insane and calls himself "The Joker", takes revenge on Grissom, kills him, and takes over Grissom's crime empire.

The Joker starts terrorizing Gotham with a prominent weapon, a chemical called "Smilex" which will make the victim die laughing and leaves maniacal grin on the corpse. The Joker tries to look for Batman and during this time, he also falls for Vale. He attempts to lure Vale but is stopped by Batman. Batman brings Vale to the Batcave where together they plan a protection to shield Gotham's residents from Smilex. Furious, the Joker promises to kill Batman.

Wayne visits Vale at her apartment intending to reveal his alter-ego. However, the Joker intercepts and shoots Wayne after he asks "Have you ever danced with the devil by pale moonlight?". He manages to escape because he has been wearing his Batman body armor. Wayne recalls that the robber who killed his parents uttered the same questions and gathers that Napier is the killer of his parents. Vale shows up in the Batcave, allowed by Wayne's butler Alfred Pennyworth. Wayne breaks up with Vale and then departs as Batman to stop the Joker.

Meanwhile, the Joker makes a parade of money to Gotham citizens only to attacks them with Smilex released from his giant parade balloons. Batman saves

the city using the Batwing. Enraged, the Joker shoots his thug and Batwing—he manages to get it crashed.

Again, the Joker kidnaps Vale on the top of a cathedral. Batman survives the crash and confronts the Joker. The two are having a fight and Joker is winning: he has Batman and Vale clinging on the cathedral roof. The Joker attempts to escape by helicopter but Batman succeeds to attach a gargoyle to Joker's leg, making Joker falls to his death.

Later, Gordon declares that the police have arrested Joker's men and reveals the Bat-Signal. Dent reads note from Batman which is filled by a promise that he will defend Gotham again later. Vale is taken care by Pennyworth who informs that Wayne will be a little late. Vale claims that she is not a bit surprised and the film closes with Batman looks at the Bat-Signal.

3.7.2. *The Dark Knight*

A Gotham City bank is robbed by a gang of criminals who double-cross each other until there is only one left. That one criminal is revealed to be the Joker. He escapes with the money.

Batman, District Attorney Harvey Dent, and Lieutenant Jim Gordon form a treaty to make Gotham free of organized crime. Bruce Wayne is mesmerized with Dent's thoughts and decides to support his career. Wayne believes that by doing so, he can give up his alter-ego Batman and lead a normal live with his childhood sweetheart Rachel Dawes, who is dating Dent.

Sal Maroni, Gambol, and the Chechen, mob bosses, organize a video call with corrupt accountant Lau. Later, Lau takes their funds and fled to Hong Kong. When still talking with Lau, the Joker interrupts them and warns them that Batman is the real problem. The Joker offers to kill Batman in exchange for half of the mobs' money. Gambol originally declines and insults the Joker. The Joker kills Gambol and takes over his gang. With this, the other mobs decide to take Joker's offer.

Dent captures the mobs while Batman catches Lau in Hong Kong. Lau is brought back to Gotham to testify against the mobs. Later then, the Joker threatens

to kill people unless Batman reveals who he actually is. The Joker starts by murdering Commissioner Gillian B. Loeb and the judge in the mob trial. The Joker attempts to kill the Mayor of Gotham but Gordon stops the assassination. Dent later figures out that Dawes is the Joker's next target.

Frustated, Wayne decides to reveal who Batman is. However, Dent already announces that he is actually Batman. Dent is taken to custody but the Joker snoops, attacking the convoy. Batman rescues Dent and Gordon. Gordon arrests the Joker and is promoted to Commissioner. Batman interrogates the Joker who reveals that Dawes and Dent are stuck in two separate locations surrounded with explosives. Batman and Gordon race to save Dawes and Dent. However, the Joker leads Batman to Dent's location. Unable to save both, both explosives explode, killing Dawes and disfiguring half of Dent's face. The Joker escapes with Lau.

An accountant at Wayne Enterprises deduces that Batman is actually Wayne and he tries to inform the public. Maroni grows aware of the Joker's unpredictability and double-crosses him by telling the Joker's location to Commissioner Gordon. The Joker sets fire on the mob's money, burns Lau alive, and kills the Chechen. The Joker feels the accountant's action interferes his original plan thus threatens to destroy a hospital unless someone kills the accountant. Gordon attempts to evacuates all hospitals and put the accountant in a protection.

In the hospital, the Joker meets Dent. The Joker manipulates him and makes him feel like he needs to take a revenge of Dawe's death. The Joker destroys the hospital and escapes with some hostages. Dent goes insane and kills people he thinks holds responsible for Dawes' death based on a coin flip. Dent kills Maroni and his driver.

Joker later announces that he will blow two containing ferries up: one with civilians and another with prisoners. However, he will let one live if the passengers of one boat blow up the other. Batman catches the Joker with the help of Lucius Fox and apprehends the Joker. The Joker tells Batman that the citizens of Gotham will lose hope if they know how Dent has turned into.

Gordon finds Dent at the building where Dawes died. Dent judges who shall live, Batman or himself, by flipping a coin. He later shoots Batman and attempts

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to kill Gordon's son. Dent's plan is stopped by Batman who tackles Dent off the building to his death. Batman convinces Gordon to preserve Dent's heroic image by making Batman responsible for the killings. The film ends with the police launch a search for Batman, Gordon destroys the Bat-Signal, Fox watches a sonar device self-destructs, and Alfred Pennyworth burns a letter from Dawes.

3.8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the methodology which is used in the research. It has included the research questions, aims of the research, data source and context, research procedure, data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and the summary of the films. In order to answer the research questions, further analysis and more elaborated data presentation are presented in the next chapter. The analysis in the next chapter is done according to the procedure which is written in this chapter.