



Representation of Mental Health Disorders in Hollywood Movies

Aji Septiaji^{1*}, Suherli Kusmana²

¹ Postgraduate of Primary Education, Universitas Majalengka, Majalengka, Indonesia

² Postgraduate of Indonesian Language Education, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia

*Corresponding author email: ajiseptiaji@unma.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received July 15, 2025
Approved August 05, 2025

Keywords:

representation, mental health, psychoanalysis, movies

ABSTRACT

Movie as a cultural medium not only reflects social reality but also shapes the construction of meaning towards mental health issues in society. This study focuses on five selected movies, namely *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), *Joker* (2019), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), and *Black Swan* (2010). Using Stuart Hall's theory of representation and Freud and Lacan's psychoanalytic approach, this research explores how the main characters are portrayed as experiencing schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, depression, and psychosis. The method used is descriptive qualitative analysis. The data were obtained through observation of visual text, dialog, and cinematic symbols. The results show that the movies tend to represent mental health disorders in two main patterns: (1) pathologizing individuals through tragic and dark narratives, and (2) romanticizing mental suffering as part of a character's genius or uniqueness. These representations have an ambivalent impact. On the one hand they raise public awareness about mental health but on the other hand they potentially reinforce negative stereotypes. The result of this research is expected to contribute to cultural, literary, and media psychology studies as well as provide a critical foundation for the production of more ethical and accurate movie that relate on mental health.

Copyright © 2025, The Author(s).

This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license



How to cite: Septiaji, A., & Kusmana, S. (2025). Representation of Mental Health Disorders in Hollywood Movies. *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education*, 6(3), 1351–1363. <https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v6i3.3861>

INTRODUCTION

Mental health has become one of the most prominent social issues in recent decades. Global awareness of the importance of mental health is not only growing in the medical and psychological fields but also extends to the popular culture that include literature, music, and movie. Movie as a cultural medium has great power to shape the collective imagination of the world including the social construction of mental illness. Through visual and audio narratives, movies are not only a means of entertainment but also an agent of ideological representation that influences public perception of people with mental illness.

In this context, representations of mental health disorders in movies play an important role in shaping public opinion. These representations can help open healthy discussions about mental illness, increase empathy, and reduce stigma (Arendt, et al, 2020). However, it is not uncommon for these representations to oversimplify, stereotype, or even romanticize mental illness that reinforcing misconceptions about the condition in society. Thus, a critical analysis of the representation of mental health disorders in movie is an urgent need in the context of contemporary cultural and literary studies.

Movies as a product of popular culture have great power in shaping people's perceptions of social issues, including mental health. Representations of mental illness in movies not only offer entertainment but also construct social meanings that can strengthen or weaken the stigma towards people with mental illness. Hollywood as a global movie industry has produced many works that portray mental health conditions both accurately and problematically. Movies such as *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), *Joker* (2019), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), and *Black Swan* (2010) feature various forms of mental disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, depression, and psychosis. While these works have the potential to raise public awareness about mental health, they carry the risk of simplifying or romanticizing psychological suffering that may shape misperceptions among audiences.

A Beautiful Mind depicts the life of mathematician John Nash who battles paranoid schizophrenia, showing how delusion and reality mix in the subjective experience of a genius. *Silver Linings Playbook* explores the dynamics of bipolar disorder and personal attempts to reconcile with the social world. *Joker* offers a dark portrait of how social alienation, childhood trauma and structural violence can give birth to brutal psychosis. Meanwhile, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* sensitively explores childhood trauma and depression in adolescent life and *Black Swan* illustrates self-destruction through the pressures of perfectionism and identity dissociation. The five movies are not only interesting to be analyzed because of the diversity of the types of mental disorders they address but also because of their depth of characterization, cinematic power, and cultural influence. These movies have sparked widespread discussion in the mass media and academia about the relationship between mental health, media power, and social perception. They provide a rich space for the study of representation and psychoanalysis.

This study seeks to examine the representation of mental health disorders in selected Hollywood movies through a psychoanalytic approach. This approach was chosen because psychology, particularly Freud and Lacan's psychoanalysis, provides a theoretical framework for understanding unconscious dynamics, trauma, and identity construction that often color character portrayals in movies (Sief, 2020). This analysis does not only focus on the textual portrayal of characters but also pays attention to the visual and symbolic elements that shape the representation of mental disorders in cinema.

The problem formulations in this study are (1) how do Hollywood movies represent mental health disorders through characters, (2) how do visual and symbolic elements in movies contribute to the construction of meanings about mental health disorders, and (3) what are the implications of representation for social perceptions of people with mental disorders? Therefore, the objectives in this study are (1) to describe the forms of representation of mental health disorders in selected Hollywood movies, (2) to analyze the visual and narrative construction of mental disorders in movies using a psychoanalytic approach, and (3) to examine the implications of representation for the formation of social perceptions of mental health. There are three things this research can impact namely as an addition to the repertoire of representation studies in

cultural and literary studies, specifically those related to mental health issues, providing insights to moviemakers, critics, and the public about the importance of accurate and empathic representations of mental health, and increasing public awareness of the importance of understanding and eliminating stigma around mental health disorders.

In this study, Stuart Hall's representation approach is used to interpret how the meaning of mental illness is constructed in these movies. Representation does not simply reflect reality but actively shapes and constructs meaning through sign systems and cultural discourse (Pirkis, et al, 2019). Representation of mental illness in movies. Therefore, it is not neutral as it is a product of cultural practices laden with certain ideologies that can reinforce or challenge dominant views on mental illness (Wahl, 2000). In addition, to deepen the analysis of the characters and the psychological dynamics displayed, a psychoanalytic approach is also used. Freud's theory of id, ego, and superego as well as Lacan's concept of the split subject and mirror image become the interpretative framework to understand the unconscious conflict, childhood trauma, and identity dissociation that emerge in the movie's narrative. The psychoanalytic approach is particularly relevant in reading these movies as many of the main characters experience intense internal struggles, between desire, reality, and the inability to achieve complete self-integration.

This research is limited to five Hollywood movies produced between 2000 until 2020 because they illustrate a broad and diverse spectrum of mental health disorders and they have a large socio-cultural influence, especially commercially, so that they can shape public discourse on mental health, namely *A Beautiful Mind*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *Joker*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, and *Black Swan*. The focus of the analysis is on the main character and the representation of mental health disorders through narrative, visual, and symbolic aspects in the movie. The approach used is cultural studies-based representation and psychoanalysis based on Freud and Lacan's theories. Using a qualitative-descriptive method, this study aims to uncover the patterns of representation of mental health disorders in the movie, as well as discuss the social and cultural implications of the narrative construction. This study is expected to enrich the academic discourse on the relationship between popular media, mental health, and cultural representation, as well as provide a critical foundation for the production and visual discourse on psychological issues in the contemporary era.

METHODS

This research uses qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. The objects of this research are five Hollywood movies produced from 2000 to 2020, namely *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), *Joker* (2019), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), and *Black Swan* (2010). The five movies were selected based on the consideration that each movie features a main character who experiences different mental disorders and has a significant cultural influence in shaping public perceptions of mental health. Data analysis was conducted through three stages. First, patterns of representation of mental illness in each movie were identified. This stage involved grouping recurring themes and narrative motifs, such as pathologizing, romanticizing, or humanizing characters with mental illness. Second, symbolic and narrative interpretation to understand how meanings about people with mental illness are shaped through movie language. Third, psychodynamic analysis of the characters using Freud and Lacan's psychoanalytic theory to reveal unconscious conflicts, repression mechanisms, childhood trauma, and identity fragmentation reflected in character development. The validity of the data in this study is through theoretical triangulation, by examining the data using two main theoretical approaches, namely

representation and psychoanalysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). In addition, confirmation of the analysis results was also carried out by comparing the research findings with secondary literature in the form of movie studies and relevant academic criticism. This aims to increase the credibility of the interpretation and avoid subjectivity bias in reading the movie. This research is limited to the five *Hollywood* movies mentioned with a focus on the main character. Through this method, it is hoped that the research will be able to make a critical contribution to the study of mental health representation in popular media and enrich the understanding of the psychological dynamics of movie characters through a psychoanalytic perspective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of mental health disorders has become an increasingly prominent theme in popular culture products, including Hollywood movies. Representations of conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, psychosis, PTSD, adolescent trauma, social violence, and the pressures of perfectionism have emerged as a response to the increasing collective awareness of mental health issues in modern society. Through narrative and visual construction, movie becomes a medium that not only records, but also produces new meanings about human psychological suffering (Kirkbride, et al, 2024). In this context, characters with mental illness are often portrayed in complex ways, in a tug-of-war between identity destruction, personal struggle, and social stigma. The following discussion outlines how mental illness is represented in five selected Hollywood movies, focusing on the psycho-social dimensions displayed through dialogue and character behavior.

1. *A Beautiful Mind* (2001): Representation of Schizophrenia as an Identity Struggle

A Beautiful Mind, directed by Ron Howard, follows the life journey of John Nash, a genius mathematician who suffers from paranoid schizophrenia. The movie shows the progression of Nash's illness through visual hallucinations and delusions that affect his perception of the real world. Representationally, the movie constructs schizophrenia as something disturbing, but at the same time "hidden" behind extraordinary intellectual achievements. In Stuart Hall's perspective, the movie employs a strategy of meaning construction through narrative appropriation: instead of caricaturing Nash as a "madman," it constructs schizophrenia as an integral part of the human struggle to find self-identity amidst an unstable reality (Alonso, et al, 2018). From a psychoanalytic perspective, Nash shows the conflict between the ego (his rational consciousness as a scientist) and the id (the unconscious desire for recognition and security). His delusions about government conspiracies served as a defense mechanism against the ego's inability to cope with real-world pressures. In the Lacanian framework, Nash's experience also shows a failure in the mirror stage, where he is unable to distinguish between imaginary representations and reality. Thus, *A Beautiful Mind* presents mental illness not as a moral aberration, but rather as a complex existential struggle, opening a space for empathy towards schizophrenics.

2. *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012): Bipolar Representation in Social Reintegration Efforts

Silver Linings Playbook, directed by David O. Russell, tells the story of Pat Solitano, a man with bipolar disorder who tries to improve his life after being released from a mental hospital. The movie represents bipolar disorder through narratives of personal recovery and social reintegration. The representation of bipolar disorder here tends to shift the focus from pathologization to humanization, emphasizing Pat's struggle to regain control over his emotions and build healthy relationships. Within Hall's framework, the movie creates an alternative code of representation that challenges the stereotype of bipolar sufferers as wholly destructive or

dangerous individuals (Alonso, et al, 2018). From a psychoanalytic perspective, Pat's journey shows the conflict between the rigid superego (social norms and family expectations) and the impulsive id (her emotional outbursts). Pat's interaction with Tiffany, another character who also struggles with emotional disturbance, exposes the Lacanian "desire" dynamic: two equally divided subjects try to form a symbolic bond to fill the void of their desire. The movie thus offers a more optimistic representation of people with mental illness, emphasizing the importance of social support and emotional recovery in overcoming bipolar disorder.

3. ***Joker* (2019): Representations of Psychosis and Social Violence**

Joker, directed by Todd Phillips, follows the transformation of Arthur Fleck, a man with severe mental illness, into the iconic criminal Joker. The movie represents mental illness as the result of social alienation, structural violence, and personal trauma. In Stuart Hall's perspective, *Joker* builds a narrative that insanity is not an internal condition, but rather a product of the interaction between fragile individuals and a violent social system. As such, the representation of psychosis in *Joker* serves as a critique of social indifference towards mental health. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Arthur Fleck is a subject caught in the gap between a repressive superego (society) and a rebellious id. Arthur's inability to fulfill the symbolic norms of society leads to the total disintegration of his ego, characterized by his brutal transformation into the Joker. Lacan would read Arthur's journey as an absolute failure in the symbolization stage, where the subject loses access to the structured symbolic world. While narratively powerful, this representation is also problematic as it associates mental illness with extreme violence, reinforcing societal fears of people with mental illness.

4. ***The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012): Representations of PTSD and Adolescent Trauma**

The Perks of Being a Wallflower, directed by Stephen Chbosky, follows the life of Charlie, a shy teenager who secretly struggles with childhood trauma and depression. The movie represents PTSD and depression with great sensitivity, avoiding excessive stereotypes. Within the framework of Hall's representation, the movie creates a space for the private experience of trauma that has broad social resonance. Charlie is not portrayed as a victim or hero, but rather as a complex individual trying to understand himself. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Charlie is a classic figure of the divided subject. His childhood trauma (sexual abuse) forms unspeakable unconscious desires, interfering with his ability to function symbolically fully. Charlie's relationship with his friends can be seen as an attempt at identity reconstruction through a new symbolic network, replacing the damaged family structure. The movie demonstrates the importance of social support in trauma recovery, offering a nuanced and empathetic representation of mental illness.

5. ***Black Swan* (2010): A Representation of Psychosis and the Pressures of Perfectionism**

Black Swan, directed by Darren Aronofsky, tells the story of Nina Sayers, a young ballerina who experiences psychosis amidst the pressure to achieve artistic perfection. The movie represents psychosis as a failure to integrate self-identity. From Stuart Hall's perspective, this representation shows how cultural norms about perfectionism, the female body, and self-control can produce psychic disintegration. Nina is portrayed as a victim of a social structure that idealizes self-destruction for the sake of aesthetics. In psychoanalytic analysis, Nina's journey reflects the conflict between the id (wild desires, sensuality) and the superego (moral ideals of chastity and control). Failing to balance the two, Nina's ego collapses, which is expressed through hallucinations, identity dissociation, and ultimately self-destruction. Lacanian reading sees Nina as a subject who loses the boundary between the imaginary and the real, causing the collapse of

her symbolic structure. *Black Swan* thus offers a chilling representation of how social pressures can fatally undermine psychic identity.

Through the five movies that have been analyzed, it is clear that each character told as the main character to live a normal life is not easy because the biggest challenge is in self-control. The results of the analysis of five movies containing mental health disorders based on Freud and Lacan's theories can be observed in the table below.

Table 1 Anaisis of Representation of Mental Disorders in Movies

No.	Movie Title	Mental Disorders	Patterns of Representation (Representation Theory)	Psychoanalysis (Freud & Lacan)
1	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i> (2001)	Schizophrenia	Representation of existential struggle; schizophrenia is personalized as part of the individual's journey of finding self-identity.	Freud: Conflict between ego and id. Lacan: Failure to distinguish between reality and imaginary (mirror stage failure).
2	<i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012)	Bipolar Disorder	Representations of recovery; focus on social reintegration and interpersonal relationships as the path to healing.	Freud: The tension of the id and superego in controlling emotional impulses. Lacan: The attempt to fill the void of desire through symbolic relations (social relations).
3	<i>Joker</i> (2019)	Psychosis	Representations of psychosis as a product of social alienation and structural violence; narratives of madness as a form of resistance.	Freud: Disintegration of the ego due to social pressure. Lacan: Complete failure in the symbolic stage; disconnected from the social order of language and meaning.
4	<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> (2012)	PTSD, Depression	Representation of adolescent trauma; showing private experiences that get social space for healing.	Freud: Repression of childhood trauma; manifestation of depression. Lacan: Attempts to reconstruct identity through new symbolic networks (social relations).
5	<i>Black Swan</i> (2010)	Psychosis, Identity Dissociation	A representation of self-destruction due to cultural pressures on the female body and perfectionism.	Freud: The brutal conflict between the id (desire) and superego (moral ideal) that leads to the destruction of the ego. Lacan: The loss of the boundary between the

imaginary and the symbolic, leading to the rupture of identity.

The table in the document presents an analysis of five Hollywood movies that address mental illness, each represented through cultural representation theory and Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis. These patterns reveal how movies do not simply present mental illness as pathology, but rather as a symbolic terrain for issues of identity, desire and social attachment (Clement, et al, 2020).

The five movies show a pattern of representation of mental disorders that does not only focus on medical aspects but also places psychological conditions as a reflection of inner conflict, trauma, and social and cultural constructions. Freud and Lacan's approach reinforces the understanding that mental illness in movies is a manifestation of complex psychic conflicts and individual disconnection from a stable symbolic order (McGinty, et al, 2021). Thus, movie becomes a symbolic space that allows viewers to understand mental illness as an existential, social, and ideological narrative. Meanwhile, the general pattern of representation of mental disorders in movies can be observed in table 2 below.

Table 2 General Patterns of Representation of Mental Disorders in Movies

Aspects	Common Patterns Found	Brief Explanation
Representation Type	Dualistic: Pathologization vs Humanization	Some movies show sufferers as victims of the system (humanization), while others reinforce negative stereotypes (pathologization).
Narrative Strategy	Focus on trauma and identity struggles	Mental disorders are often constructed as a result of past trauma and identity conflict.
Causes of Mental Disorder	Interaction of internal and external factors	Internal: psychological pressure; External: social violence, cultural expectations.
Patient Image	Ambivalent: genius, victim, or threat	Characters are portrayed as intelligent but fragile (<i>A Beautiful Mind</i>), rebellious (Joker), or traumatized (Charlie).
Psychological Dynamics (Psychoanalysis)	Ego Integration Failure; Identity Disintegration	There is a tension between the id, ego, superego (Freud) and a failure of integration between the imaginary, symbolic and reality (Lacan).
Social Role of the Environment	Dominant factors in the emergence or worsening of disorders	Alienation, social rejection, and external pressures aggravate the character's mental state.

The analysis of the five Hollywood movies selected in this study shows that the representation of mental health disorders in popular cinema forms certain consistent patterns. These patterns reflect the construction of complex meanings about people with mental illness, both in narrative, visual and psychological aspects (Thornicroft, et al, 2013).

1. Dualistic Patterns: Pathologization vs Humanization

Based on the general pattern table that has been compiled, there is a dualistic pattern of representation. Some movies, such as *Joker* (2019) and *Black Swan* (2010), tend to represent people

with mental illness as dangerous or destructive, reinforcing the pathologizing aspect. On the other hand, *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) and *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012) construct a more humanistic representation, highlighting the characters' existential struggles and capacity to rebuild their self-identity.

This polarization suggests that popular media does not present a single model of mental illness. Instead, the movies' representations operate in the tension between building empathy and reinforcing stigma, in line with Stuart Hall's concept of how meaning is actively constructed in the process of representation.

2. Narrative Strategy: Trauma as the Center of Conflict

Past trauma emerges as the center of conflict in almost all of the analyzed movies. For example, Charlie in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* experiences PTSD due to childhood abuse, while Arthur Fleck in *Joker* faces deep psychosocial trauma. The use of trauma narratives shows how mental health is not only understood as a biological condition, but also as a result of the accumulation of scarring social experiences. In terms of Hall's representations, this represents a shift from a purely medical model to a cultural model, where mental disorders are seen as a result of social, familial or cultural failures to provide safe spaces for individuals.

3. Psychological Conflict: A Psychoanalytic Perspective

The psychoanalytic approach helps deepen the understanding of the internal dynamics of the characters. In Freud's analysis, the conflict between the id, ego, and superego emerges as the dominant theme in the personalities of the main characters. Nash in *A Beautiful Mind* shows the ego constantly trying to balance its delusions (id) with the demands of reality (superego). Meanwhile, in the case of Nina in *Black Swan*, the extreme tension between sensual urges (id) and the demands of social perfectionism (superego) eventually leads to the destruction of the ego. In the Lacanian perspective, the disintegration of identity becomes an important theme. A character's failure to establish integration between the imaginary, symbolic and real realms results in an identity crisis and the experience of psychosis. Arthur Fleck in *Joker* is a classic example of a Lacanian subject who fails to enter the symbolic order of society, thus falling into a void and existential chaos.

4. Social Representation: The Role of Environment and Identity Construction

The relationship diagram shows that movie representations of mental illness cannot be separated from socio-external factors. Cultural pressure, structural violence, social expectations, and emotional isolation emerge as dominant factors that worsen the characters' mental state. In other words, these movies indicate that mental illness is not merely personal or biological, but rather a relational product between the individual and society. This is consistent with cultural critiques of traditional medical models that tend to ignore social factors in the etiology of mental disorders.

5. Constructing the Image of the Sufferer: Ambivalence of Empathy and Fear

The characters in the analyzed movies form ambivalent images of mental patients: they are sometimes portrayed as wounded geniuses (*A Beautiful Mind*), victims of the social system (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*), or threats to the social order (*Joker*). This ambivalence shows that representations of mental health in movie still move on an ambiguous spectrum between evoking empathy and instilling fear. The instability of this image shows that the representation of mental health in popular culture is still in the process of negotiation. Viewers are brought to feel both empathy and discomfort, forming a never fully stable understanding of what it means to be "mentally ill."

6. Social and Academic Implications

Socially, these patterns of representation contribute to society's perception of mental illness. Complex representations can help open up more inclusive discussions about mental health. However, on the other hand, pathological and violent representations can reinforce stigma and discrimination. Academically, this research enriches the study of representation in cultural studies and opens up possibilities for further research, such as analyzing audience reception of representations of mental illness or cross-cultural comparative studies.

Table 3 Analysis of Representation of Mental Disorders Based on Movie Dialogues

No.	Movie Title	Mental Disorders	Dialogue on Mental Health	Representation Analysis
1	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i> (2001)	Schizophrenia	"I can solve this. I can solve this."	Nash's obsession with patterns reflects an inability to distinguish between reality and delusion.
			"They're watching me. They're everywhere."	There is paranoia, showing the pressure of the id on the ego.
			"You can't reason your way out of this."	Representation of the failure of rational logic in dealing with mental illness.
2	<i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012)	Bipolar Disorder	"I have nothing but love for you, but I can't live with you until you get your act together."	Representation of social conditions for the reintegration of mental patients.
			"Excelsior!"	Pat's personal motto: coping with emotional fluctuations and maintaining optimism.
			"I'm not gonna run away!"	Seeking control over his impulses and emotions.
3	<i>Joker</i> (2019)	Psychosis	"Is it just me, or is it getting crazier out there?"	A reflection of social alienation and a perceived unstable world.
			"I just hope my death makes more cents than my life."	Indications of severe depression, loss of self-worth.
			"I have nothing left to lose."	Representation of the point of total psychic collapse.
4	<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> (2012)	PTSD, Depression	"Why do I and everyone I love pick people who treat us like we're nothing?"	Trauma that forms dysfunctional relational patterns.
			"We accept the love we think we deserve."	Internalization of trauma as a damaged self-concept.
			"I feel infinite."	Representation of a moment of emotional transcendence in the midst of depression.
5	<i>Black Swan</i>	Psychosis,	"I just want to be	The pressure of the

(2010)	Identity Dissociation	perfect."	perfectionistic superego that forms the destruction of the ego.
		"It's my turn." (in the hallucination scene)	Dissociation of identity: an alter ego that takes over Nina's consciousness.
		"I was perfect." (before death)	It symbolizes both the victory and the total destruction of the subject under the pressure of the social ideal.

The table presented reflects the trend of representation of mental disorders in Hollywood cinema through five popular movies: *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), *Joker* (2019), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), and *Black Swan* (2010). Each movie showcases a different mental disorder, with an emphasis on the psychological complexity of the main character and their interactions with their social environment.

Discussion

The five movies analyzed show that mental illness is often represented with dramatic and symbolic nuances, touching on existential, social, and psychoanalytic aspects. The dialogues raised in the movies become important markers to understand the characters' inner struggles within the social structure (Kirkbride, et al, 2024). Hollywood movies not only present mental illness as a clinical condition, but also as a field of identity conflict, social pressure, and a crisis of meaning in life.

Table 4 Important Scene Moments in the Movie

No.	Movie Title	Key Scene Moments	Description
1	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i> (2001)	The scene where Nash talks to his hallucinated friend in the campus courtyard.	"John Nash interacts with hallucinations in <i>A Beautiful Mind</i> (2001)."
2	<i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012)	The scene where Pat runs wearing a plastic garbage bag, shouting in anger.	"Pat's emotional outbursts as a manifestation of bipolar disorder in <i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012)."
3	<i>Joker</i> (2019)	The scene where Arthur laughs uncontrollably on the bus and is misunderstood.	"Arthur Fleck's pathological laughter as a symptom of psychosis in <i>Joker</i> (2019)."
4	<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> (2012)	The scene where Charlie sits alone at the party, looking isolated.	"Charlie showed symptoms of social depression in <i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> (2012)."
5	<i>Black Swan</i> (2010)	Scene of Nina staring at the mirror with a forked face (hallucination scene).	"The dissociation of Nina's identity in <i>Black Swan</i> (2010)."

Dialogues in movies have an important function in constructing textual and emotional representations of mental health disorders. An analysis of key dialogue excerpts from the five movies studied shows how verbal narratives become a means to represent characters'

psychological turmoil, identity conflicts, and traumatic experiences (Smith, et al, 2021). In *A Beautiful Mind*, lines such as "They're watching me. They're everywhere." emphasizes the distortion of reality that John Nash experiences due to schizophrenia. This dialog shows the dominance of the id over the ego, where subjective perception trumps logical rationality. This representation supports psychoanalysis' reading of the failure of integration between external reality and psychic reality. In addition, the phrase "I can solve this" shows Nash's attempt to control his internal world through logic, although he is constantly defeated by hallucinations.

In *Silver Linings Playbook*, Pat explicitly expresses her struggle to manage her emotions and impulses through lines such as "I'm not gonna run away!" and the motto "Excelsior!" which becomes her personal mantra. These dialogs show the tension between the impulsive id and the ego's attempt to manage social superego pressure. This representation creates an optimistic narrative about the possibility of social reintegration of people with bipolar disorder through self-control and social support.

The Joker uses existentially charged dialog to depict Arthur Fleck's alienation and mental breakdown. The line "Is it just me, or is it getting crazier out there?" not only represents personal madness, but also highlights the perception of an increasingly chaotic world. This reinforces the representation that mental illness in *Joker* is not just an individual illness, but a symptom of structural violence and social isolation. A Lacanian reading of this dialog shows Arthur's failure to find a place in the symbolic order of society.

In *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, dialogues like "We accept the love we think we deserve." show Charlie's internalization of trauma, forming a low and destructive self-image. This dialogue opens up space for psychoanalytic analysis of how childhood trauma constructs the subject's desire and social relations. Thus, the representation of PTSD in this movie is more subtle and psychological, emphasizing the importance of social networks as a place of identity reconstruction.

Meanwhile, *Black Swan* features dialog that directly expresses the perfectionistic pressure on Nina, such as "I just want to be perfect." This dialog reflects a highly repressive superego, which ultimately leads to ego fragmentation and identity dissociation. The dialogue "It's my turn." in the hallucination scene indicates the emergence of an alter ego as a result of Nina's failure to integrate the desires of the id and the demands of the superego. This representation illustrates how cultural pressures on women's bodies and performance can result in psychic disintegration. Overall, the use of dialog in these movies serves as a verbal articulation of the characters' internal conflicts and an effective means of constructing mental health narratives (Piana-Ripoll, et al, 2019). Dialogue makes it clear that mental illness does not only appear in the form of visual behavior, but also manifests in verbal expressions of fear, desire, trauma, and identity struggles (Wang, et al, 2018).

This finding confirms that analyzing mental health representation in movies needs to construct language as an important medium of meaning formation. In line with Stuart Hall's theory, dialog functions not only as a reflection of the characters' psychological reality but also as a social construction that constructs the audience's understanding of mental illness. On the other hand, a psychoanalytic reading enriches the analysis by showing that behind every verbal statement lies a deeper unconscious dynamic, which shapes the character's mental experience. Thus, the combined analysis of visual, narrative and verbal representations results in a more holistic understanding of how popular cinema shapes the discourse on mental health in the contemporary era.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that representations of mental health disorders in selected Hollywood movies form complex narrative and visual patterns. Through analysis of *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), *Joker* (2019), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), and *Black Swan* (2010), it is found that mental illness is represented not only as an individualized clinical condition, but also as the result of complex interactions between personal trauma, social pressure, and cultural expectations.

In general, the representations that emerged moved on a spectrum between pathologization and humanization. Some movies reinforce stigma through portraying characters as threats to society (*Joker*, *Black Swan*), while others seek to build empathy and understanding towards people with mental illness as individuals struggling to recover and function in society (*A Beautiful Mind*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*). From a psychoanalytic perspective, the main characters in all five movies exhibit intense unconscious conflict dynamics, such as the tension between id, ego, and superego (Freud), as well as identity crisis due to the failure of symbolic, imaginary, and reality integration (Lacan). This is seen in symptoms such as identity dissociation, delusions, compulsive behavior, and extreme ego destruction.

The use of dialog in the movie reinforces the construction of these representations, showing how the experience of mental illness is articulated through emotional, traumatized and reflective verbal expressions. Thus, language, visualization, and narrative structure in the movie work together to shape the meaning of people with mental illness in the eyes of the audience. The implications of this research point to the importance of critical engagement with representations of mental health in popular media. Simplistic or stereotypical representations risk reinforcing stigma and misconceptions, while complex and empathetic representations can open up space for a more inclusive social understanding of people with mental illness. Academically, this study enriches the discourse on the relationship between media, popular culture and mental health. Further research is recommended to examine how audiences perceive these representations, as well as expand the object of research to movies from different cultures and production settings to enrich cross-cultural perspectives.

REFERENCES

- Alonso, J., Liu, Z., Evans-Lacko, S., Sadikova, E., Sampson, N., Chatterji, S., & Abdulmalik, J. (2018). Treatment Gap for Anxiety Disorders is Global: Results of the World Mental Health Surveys in 21 Countries. *Depression and Anxiety*, 35(3), pp. 195-208. <https://doi.org/10.1002/da.22711>.
- Arendt, F., Scherr, S., & Romer, D. (2020). Effects of exposure to movie portrayals of mental illness on stigma and help-seeking among adolescents. *Health Communication*, 35(14), 1732-1740. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2019.1663461>.
- Aronofsky, D. (Director). (2010). *Black Swan* [Movie]. Fox Searchlight Pictures.
- Chbosky, S. (2012). *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* [Movie]. Summit Entertainment.
- Clement, S., Schauman, O., Graham, T., Maggioni, F., Evans-Lacko, S., Bezborodovs, N., & Thornicroft, G. (2020). What is the impact of mental health-related stigma on help-seeking? A systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies. *Psychological Medicine*, 50(1), 11-27. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291719000337>.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2017). *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Routledge.

- Howard, R. (Director). (2001). *A Beautiful Mind* [Movie]. Universal Pictures.
- Kirkbride, J. B., Anglin, D. M., Colman, I., Dykxhoorn, J., Jones, P. B., Patalay, P., Pitman, A., Sonesson, E., Steare, T., Wright T., & Griffiths, S. L. (2024). The Social Determinants of Mental Health and Disorders: Evidence, Prevention and Recommendations. *World Psychiatry*, 23 (1), pp. 66-72. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.21160>.
- McGinty, E. E., Kennedy-Hendricks, A., Choksy, S., & Barry, C. L. (2021). Trends in news media portrayals of mental illness in the United States: 1995-2019. *Health Affairs*, 40(5), 803-811. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.01535>.
- Phillips, T. (Director). (2019). *Joker* [Movie]. Warner Bros. Pictures.
- Pirkis, J., Blood, R. W., Sutherland, G., Currier, D., & Jorm, A. F. (2019). Media portrayal of mental illness and its treatments: What effect does it have on people with mental illness? *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 28(3), 310-314. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796018000400>.
- Plana-Ripoll, O., Pedersen, C. B., Agerbo, E., Holtz, Y., Erlangsen, A., & Canudas-Romo, V. (2019). A Comprehensive Analysis of Morality-Related Health Metrics Associated with Mental Disorders: A Nationwide, Register-based Cohort Study. *The Lancet*, 394 (10211), pp. 1827-1836. [10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32316-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32316-5).
- Russell, D. O. (Director). (2012). *Silver Linings Playbook* [Movie]. The Weinstein Company.
- Sieff, E. M. (2021). Media frames of mental illnesses: The potential impact of negative portrayals on public attitudes toward schizophrenia. *Journal of Health Communication*, 26(2), 134-145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2021.1877597>.
- Smith, P. J., & Merwin, R. M. (2021). The Role of Exercise in Management of Mental Health Disorders: An Integrative Review. *Annual Review of Medicine*, 72, 72-82. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-med-060619-022943>.
- Thornicroft, G., Rose, D., Kassam, A., & Sartorius, N. (2013). Stigma: Ignorance, prejudice or discrimination? *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 190(3), 192-199. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.106.025791>.
- Wahl, O. F. (2000). *Media madness: Public images of mental illness*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Wang, K., Varma, D. S., & Prosperi, M. (2018). A Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of Mobile Apps of Monitoring and Management of Mental Health Symptoms or Disorders. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 107, pp. 73-78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2018.10.006>