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# The Concept of the Anti-Hero Character in the Movie *The Mask* (1994)

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***Abstract:*** *This study explores the duality of the main character's persona in The Mask (1994) by applying Christopher Vogler's narrative framework within the context of film studies. The research aims to investigate the concept of the anti-hero as a recurring character type in modern narrative texts, particularly in cinematic works, where characters are defined by flawed attributes and ethically ambiguous behavior. The relevance of the anti-hero lies in its deviation from conventional heroic archetypes and its function as a representation of shifting public values and beliefs. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method using a narrative structuralism approach. The analysis draws on Christopher Vogler's concept of the anti-hero and Eaton's (2012) anti-hero theory to examine narrative elements within the film. The film's narrative presents the main character through traits such as manipulative, cruel, petty, malicious, selfish, ill-tempered, and duplicitous behavior. Primary data consist of significant character interactions, dialogues, and visual representations in specific scenes, while secondary data are obtained from previous studies and relevant literature on anti-hero representation and heroic film theory. The findings indicate that the main character in The Mask successfully embodies the anti-hero archetype by critiquing everyday identity repression, releasing subconscious impulses, and disrupting social conformity through chaos. This study contributes to academic discussions on anti-hero characters by demonstrating how The Mask, beyond its cartoonish entertainment value, functions as a structural narrative text in which manipulative traits dominate the character's transformation.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Films can be considered works of literature, alongside poetry, prose, and novels. Through the medium of storytelling, films serve as a vehicle for conveying various messages to audiences. As a medium for creative and humane expression of ideas and narrative concepts, film stands on par with other literary forms (Luthfiah et al, 2023). The literary method has influenced film significantly; however, the practice of literature itself has also evolved under the influence of film. Films are often referred to as a performing art because they typically rely on actors as the primary means of expression (Klarer, 2004).

The Mask 1994, very relevant For examine anti-hero character. It's interesting to study because its main character demonstrates a strong and unique heroic character, a far cry from conventional superheroes in other heroic films. Creating an intriguing duality, The Mask transforms from a shy and overly masculine man into a hyperactive, chaotic figure when donning the mask. He's a hero who saves the city, but in an anarchic way,

rather than through the noble morality of Superman or Batman. The Mask experiences chaos without full redemption, but with an absurdist comedic twist that rejects traditional heroic resolutions. This creates a narrative space for analyzing dual identities and critiquing the Hollywood concept of heroism.

According to Eaton (2012), a rough hero is similar to an anti-hero in that both characters have defects, but the rough hero's weaknesses are worse since he is gloomier. He can be a murderer, a sadist, a criminal, or even the devil himself Especially because the complexity of his morals challenges traditional heroic norms. Eaton explains, "appealing mean-spirited person includes protagonists who are manipulative, petty, selfish, ill-tempered, duplicitous, malicious, or cruel." In this regard, Vogler agrees with Eaton's opinion Anti-hero is not the opposite of a hero, but a specialized kind of Hero, one who may be an outlaw or a villain from the point of view of society, but with whom the audience is basically in sympathy. In popular culture, antiheroes become room representations of identities more complex, fragile, and contradictory identity.

Finally, the research can be used as relevant analysis for studies more anti-hero characters widely, especially in wounded hero character. The Mask 1994 is relevant objects For understand dynamics character main as entertaining and suing id release social conformity alone. Through characters and plot the story of this film illustrate the transformation of the anti-hero from man shy, wounded , and marginalized become a wild rebel via Loki's mask which represents Jung's shadow archetype, letting go encouragement primitive id in form chaos cathartic cartoonish.

According to Eaton (2012), analysis anti-hero character no can released from context social, cultural and historical aspects, where understanding comprehensive to text narrative need placement character the in network intertextuality that forms meaning dynamic from properties darkness like manipulative, petty, ill-tempered, duplicitous, malicious, and cruel. Meaning that is not fixed and context dependent audience. The anti-hero subject is influenced by the structure narrative and context culture place he are, so that properties destructive this become reflection repression social release in a way cathartic, as in Stanley Ipkiss in The Mask (1994) is manipulative and malicious via masks.

The simultaneous application of Christopher Vogler's (2007) and Eaton's (2012) theories offers a perspective that moves beyond conventional Jungian psychological analysis, which tends to focus primarily on archetypal symbolism and intrapsychic processes such as the shadow and the unconscious. While a Jungian reading of The Mask (1994) would emphasize the mask as a manifestation of Stanley Ipkiss's repressed shadow self, the integration of Vogler's narrative hero framework and Eaton's anti-hero typology allows the character to be examined not only psychologically but also structurally and culturally. Vogler situates the anti-hero within a broader mythic narrative function that maintains audience empathy, whereas Eaton foregrounds moral ambiguity, social deviance, and contextual meaning-making. Together, these theories reveal how Stanley's transformation operates simultaneously as a mythic journey, a critique of traditional heroism, and a culturally situated expression of wounded masculinity, thereby producing a more dynamic and multidimensional analysis than a purely Jungian approach.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of the anti-hero has become increasingly significant in contemporary film and literary studies. Unlike traditional heroes who represent moral integrity, bravery, and altruism, anti-heroes are characterized by moral ambiguity, psychological complexity,

and socially deviant behavior. They often operate outside established ethical norms while remaining emotionally engaging for the audience.

According to Eaton (2012), anti-heroes are protagonists who possess serious moral flaws, such as manipulation, selfishness, cruelty, and emotional instability [3]. These traits distinguish anti-heroes from conventional heroes, whose actions are guided by clear moral principles. Eaton emphasizes that anti-heroic behavior must be understood within its social and cultural context, as the audience's sympathy toward such characters depends on narrative framing and intertextual meaning.

Eaton further categorizes anti-hero traits into several dominant characteristics, including manipulative, petty, selfish, ill-tempered, duplicitous, malicious, and cruel behavior. Manipulative anti-heroes tend to control others through deception and strategic lies, while petty anti-heroes respond excessively to minor insults or personal grievances. Selfish anti-heroes prioritize personal desires over collective responsibility, often ignoring potential consequences. Ill-tempered anti-heroes are emotionally unstable and prone to explosive anger, whereas duplicitous anti-heroes maintain double identities or conceal their true intentions. Malicious and cruel traits involve deliberate harm and enjoyment of others' suffering, even when presented in exaggerated or stylized forms.

Christopher Vogler's theory of the hero's journey complements Eaton's framework by positioning the anti-hero as a variation of the heroic archetype rather than its opposite [1]. This study primarily adopts Eaton's (2012) anti-hero framework as the main theoretical foundation, while Christopher Vogler's theory is used as a supporting narrative perspective to explain character transformation. Vogler argues that anti-heroes may appear as outcasts or social deviants, yet they fulfill similar narrative functions to heroes by undergoing transformation and facing internal conflict. In this sense, anti-heroes often represent wounded figures whose actions express suppressed desires, fears, and frustrations.

Within popular culture, anti-heroes frequently serve as symbolic representations of fragmented and contradictory identities. Their destructive behavior functions as a form of catharsis, allowing audiences to project repressed emotions onto exaggerated narrative chaos. In *The Mask* (1994), the anti-hero figure embodies this tension through cartoonish violence and absurd humor, enabling the audience to sympathize with morally problematic actions while recognizing their transgressive nature.

From a Jungian perspective, the persona of The Mask can be understood as the manifestation of Stanley Ipkiss's Shadow, representing repressed desires, aggression, and impulses that are suppressed by social norms. The Shadow does not signify pure evil but contains instinctual energies that the conscious self refuses to acknowledge. When viewed through Vogler's theory, this Shadow-driven persona functions as a narrative anti-hero rather than a villain, because it emerges from a wounded protagonist and serves a transformative purpose within the story. Vogler's framework allows the audience to remain emotionally aligned with Stanley despite the manipulative and cruel actions of The Mask, as these behaviors are framed as expressions of internal conflict and unmet psychological needs rather than inherent moral corruption. Consequently, the audience sympathizes with The Mask because his chaos externalizes hidden aspects of the self, fulfilling a cathartic role while still maintaining the underlying humanity of the hero.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the construction of the anti-hero character in the film The Mask (1994). Qualitative research is appropriate

for this study because it allows for in-depth interpretation of narrative elements, character development, and symbolic meaning rather than numerical measurement.

The primary data source of this study is the film The Mask (1994), directed by Chuck Russell. Secondary data consist of theoretical references related to anti-hero studies, film theory, and narrative analysis, particularly works by Eaton (2012) and Christopher Vogler. These sources provide conceptual tools for identifying and interpreting anti-hero characteristics within cinematic texts.

Data were collected through observation and documentation techniques. Observation involved repeated viewing of the film to identify scenes, dialogues, and character actions that represent anti-hero traits. Documentation included noting time codes, screenshots, and narrative contexts relevant to the analysis. The collected data were then classified according to Eaton's anti-hero categories: manipulative, petty, selfish, ill-tempered, duplicitous, malicious, and cruel behavior.

The data analysis process followed three stages: data reduction, data categorization, and interpretation. First, relevant scenes were selected based on their relevance to anti-hero traits. Second, these scenes were categorized according to the theoretical framework. Finally, interpretation was conducted by relating the findings to social, cultural, and psychological contexts within the narrative of The Mask (1994). This analytical process allows for a comprehensive understanding of how the anti-hero character is constructed and how it functions within popular culture narratives.This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the construction of the anti-hero character in the film The Mask (1994). Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because it allows for in-depth interpretation of narrative elements, character development, and symbolic meaning rather than numerical measurement.

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The units of data analysis in this study consist of specific scenes and dialogues that explicitly depict Stanley Ipkiss's transformation and actions as The Mask. Scenes were selected when they showed key narrative moments related to Vogler's heroic archetypes, such as the emergence of the anti-hero, confrontation with conflict, and expressions of internal struggle. In the stage of data reduction, only scenes relevant to Vogler's archetypal

functions such as the wounded hero, the shadow self, and moments of transformation were retained. These selected scenes were then organized and interpreted by mapping them onto Vogler's hero-related archetypes to identify how the anti-hero fulfills narrative roles traditionally associated with the hero's journey. Finally, conclusion drawing was conducted by synthesizing these findings to explain how The Mask operates as a sympathetic anti-hero whose narrative function aligns with Vogler's archetypal structure despite exhibiting morally deviant behavior.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After carefully examining the film The Mask, the personality aspects of the main character, will be explained and described based on Christopher Vogler's anti-hero theory. In discussing anti-hero structures, using Eaton's (2012) formula, we will classify them based on whether they are manipulative, petty, selfish, ill-tempered, duplicitous, malicious, or cruel.

Before discussing the specific anti-hero traits based on Eaton's (2012) classification, it is important to distinguish the dual identity of the main character in The Mask, namely Stanley Ipkiss and his alter ego, The Mask. These two identities represent contrasting psychological states: Stanley as a repressed individual constrained by social norms, and The Mask as the manifestation of his subconscious impulses. This distinction helps clarify how the mask functions as a catalyst that accelerates Stanley's character arc, transforming suppressed desires into exaggerated anti-heroic actions as conceptualized in Vogler's archetypal framework.

**Table 1.** Comparison of Stanley Ipkiss and The Mask

| Aspect | Stanley Ipkiss (Identity Repression) | The Mask (Release of Subconscious Impulses) |
|---|---|---|
| Social Position | Marginalized, shy, often bullied | Dominant, attention-seeking, uncontrollable |
| Personality Traits | Passive, insecure, obedient | Manipulative, impulsive, aggressive |
| Emotional State | Repressed anger and desire | Cathartic release of anger and desire |
| Moral Orientation | Generally law-abiding but powerless | Morally ambiguous anti-hero |
| Mode of Action | Avoidance, silence, compliance | Chaos, deception, exaggeration |
| Relation to Society | Victim of social pressure | Rebel against social norms |
| Archetypal Role (Vogler) | Ordinary Man / Suppressed Shadow | Shadow unleashed / Trickster Anti-Hero |

The table above demonstrates that the mask operates as a psychological catalyst rather than merely a supernatural object. In Vogler's archetypal perspective, The Mask embodies Stanley Ipkiss's shadow archetype the repressed instincts, anger, and desires that cannot be expressed in his ordinary social identity. Once activated, the mask removes social restraints and amplifies Stanley's subconscious impulses into visible actions. This transformation propels the character arc from repression to excess, allowing Stanley to temporarily gain power, confidence, and agency through morally ambiguous behaviors.

Consequently, each anti-hero trait identified in the following analyses manipulative, petty, selfish, ill-tempered, duplicitous, malicious, and cruel can be understood as exaggerated expressions of Stanley's suppressed identity, released through the catalytic function of the mask.

**1. Analysis Manipulative character**

Manipulative in the concept of anti-hero according to Eaton (2012) is an anti-hero protagonist who deliberately controls or manipulates others by interest self alone. Usually through deception Power or lies that are made.

There are manipulative aspects in the main figure that is :



**Figure 1**. The Balloon Show

(Russell, The Mask, 1994, minute 00.21.34)

In this scene (figure 1), the mask performs manipulative actions. After a problem with his neighbor, The Mask was chased by thugs the streets. His manipulative actions seen when The Mask ran and made balloon with various type form balloons, for divert view thugs the streets. The Mask makes balloon animal alive (giraffe, poodle, rabbit, until Tommy Gun shoots balloons real). This balloon aim for divert attention thugs from intention bad they forget want to threaten the Mask. Then The Mask makes shot real, so that shoot the thugs then blurry while laugh evil, and said "mission safe".

The Mask depicts figures who operate in the shadows of social norms with method controversial "end justifies the means". Expression the cathartic shadow archetype of the shy, marginalized Stanley reflects a universal sense of the "outsider" who is sympathetic. The Mask uses manipulation balloon For trick thugs through method cunning with the goal is to be able to free and run away. (see figure 1)




**Figure 2.** The Mask change clothes

(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 43:24)

In this scene (figure 2) Tyrell's robbers capture Mask, then *The Mask* does interrogation rough question bank robbery. *The Mask* takes out proof photo or proof Tyrell's mistake from Tina, provocation while change body to various form dancers, police, etc. for divert attention & control situation. Shot many times but can dodge.



**Figure 3.** The Mask hugging

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 43:30)*

The mask controls his enemy with deception power so that the enemy panic so that show manipulative side with hug enemy for avoid danger that occurs to him (see figure 3). Then change So "Employee of the Month" charter, sarcastic, mock-applause to humiliate the public. Then the mask stranglehold and as if exercise give friendly impression. The Mask also makes narrative threat for control exploitation emotion enemy from aggressive so embarrassed, story mentally from situation bad so plasticity good, even though Actually mocking. Then blurry look for safe while laugh. (figure 3).




**Figure 4.** The Mask froze when he was about to be shot by the police

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 58:28)*

In this scene (figure 4) *The Mask* is revealed the same police moment romance intimate with Tina in the park. And the police shout said "Freeze! Don't move!". Police want to shoot him and say don't move but *The Mask* does manipulative actions so that make himself Alone become ice cubes for avoid shooting Instead obedient or running, *The Mask* did a silly pose while hold sign "I surrender" while smile naughty. Then the police were confused, *The Mask* melted & ran away and danced so that make the situation is chaotic. (figure 4)




**Figure 5.** Shooting a gun

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 1:29:45)*

In this scene (figure 5) when the mask is fought again the same enemy wear weapons, *The Mask* directly emit lots weapon wear weapon fake instead make his enemy scared and straight away run. Even though weapons issued by *The Mask* weapons crazy (Tommy Gun, dynamite , etc.) Weapons fake cartoon. (figure 5)

## 2. Analysis Petty's character

According to Eaton (2012) Petty refers to the character characteristic reactive protagonist excessive to things small/trivial or insults personal, often reply feud on violation trivial with method proportional but cunning.



**Figure 6.** The Mask go to a fraudulent repair shop

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 22:29)*

In this scene (figure 6) *The Mask* arrives at Ripley's Auto Finishing, namely place workshop broken cheater his car previously. *The Mask* did a petty act with reply feud with destroy friend/boss workshop use bolt giant hit like a hammer hammer, while change the workshop writing So "Rip Off" Then the victim is thrown absurdly like a cartoon, then *The Mask* laughs satisfied because he already destroy box the then carry on journey (see figure 6). As a shy bank teller who often bullied, Stanley initially believe workshop that repair his car with true, but it turns out they cheat with overpriced and quality bills very bad work reflection repression social the daily experiences. This is so trigger feud petty. to which *The Mask* replies with bolt giant and change board so "Rip Off", change the pain heart so strength cathartic.

## 3. Analysis Selfish Character

According to Eaton Selfish is preoccupation self Alone prioritize interest personal above everything , often ignore others for profit selfish like power, love, or reply feud.



**Figure 7.** Throwing money away

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 36:13)*

In this scene (figure 7) *The Mask* shows selfish attitude. At Edge City Bank, gangster Tyrell begins robbery. Then *The Mask* came in, foiling the robbery. Tyrell's plan with cartoon chaos (Zorro's illusion , bullets So balloon animals). But instead of nature as hero. *The Mask* takes over robbery the money alone then go for can enter to Coco Bongo can dance with with Tina. Don't care the risks that will happen in the future. (figure 7)




**Figure 8.** Dancing with Tina

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, minute 57:24)*

In this scene (figure 8) *The Mask* comes out for chasing Tina for the sake of dating personal, don't care the danger that will happened to him, even though police again chase he, and gangster Tyrell threaten Tina. It is seen that the actions taken by *The Mask* were not care whatever the important situation romance with Tina most importantly. (see figure 8)

The two selfish scenes of *The Mask* at minute 36:13 (bank robbery) and 57:24 (chasing Tina) The Mask creates cartoon chaos (Zorro, balloons animals) for fail plan, but take money to get into Coco Bongo dance with Tina selfish priority romance personal as Approach stage: mental preparation via creative chaos, cynically as expression alone because rejected or reject society, while keep wound emotional and neglectful risk police /gangsters to create a sense of relief and mental balance. Continue to minute 57:24, chase Tina even though chased police and Tyrell threaten his life enter the "Ordeal" stage or the deepest test of moral limits, put everything risked for love shadow id released by The Mask. (see figure 8)

## 4. Analysis Ill-tempered character

According to Eaton (2012) it refers to an anti-hero character who is easy to imitate. covered emotion or bad temper .



**Figure 9.** Strike the clock with a hammer

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 19:00)*

In this scene (figure 9) *The Mask* is hiding past corridor apartment for avoid landlady agnes arriving arrive there is an alarm clock out pocket ringing hard disturb his secret mission. He tried stop fine But failed, then explosion anger sledgehammer, mallet, to giant hammer destroy the clock while shout "Snooze!" or "Keep it down!" the clock chimes still sound until totally crushed in matter This *The Mask* Character Easy explode temperament bad then Mrs. Trooper (neighbor his parent ) came out door, afraid Look figure strange, then shoot the gun at direction. Mask no injured (Loki's immunity), then reply silly: jumping around like frog crazy, bite Mrs. Trooper's finger, make he scream, while shout "Party's over!" before jump go out window. During that time, the alarm clock fell from pocket & him destroy with hammer giant Because disturb .




**Figure 10.** big trumpet

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 20:00)*

After shot neighbor & destroy the alarm clock, The Mask jumps stupid go out window apartment, block road car neighbors in a hurry (see figure 10). Then driver horn angry angry. Situation the make the mask feel disturbed finally he emit a big trumpet that sounds super loud and blows it toward car until glass his car broke and the the driver shock

because his behavior. Then *The Mask* laughed wicked because satisfaction his personality fulfilled and continued his nightly "Mision".

The Mask's ill-tempered second scene at 19:00 (destroyed alarm clock, bitten finger neighbors) and 20:00 (trumpet broken glass car in *The Mask 1994* in a way perfect reflects wounded anti-hero where Stanley Ipkiss blow up temperament bad as release catharsis from wound emotional. To disturbance social daily with anger cartoon -style goofiness (sledgehammer jam, jump) frog, super trumpet), not a noble hero but outcast relatable reply petty grudge against landlady Agnes and neighbor Mrs. Trooper who represents pressure social for hide desire free. (see figure 10).

## 5. Analysis Duplicitous Character

According to Eaton (2012) a duplicitous character is a two- faced character or lie keep going continuously one side plasticity well, the other side actually cunning.




**Figure 11.** Talking in front of miror

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 35:24)*

In this scene (figure 11) when *The Mask* says "I can't do that stuff without my green mask" illustrates duplicitous character because he have two faced he hide via lies chronic dami manipulation. *The Mask* made it great and can do Lots Chaos think, so that Tina is curious and protects identity his civil. Even though Stanley was aware Loki's optional powers but wear reason let mysterious. The duplicatous nature of *The Mask* is to make Tina curious, continue give secret info Coco Bongo → Profitable mask big for mission.

Stanley Ipkiss on purpose Lie chronic and manipulation to keep the mystery identity civil so that Tina is curious as well as give Coco Bongo secret information for the sake of romance "mission" personal. In simple Stanley is aware of Loki's optional powers but pretend to depend on the mask so that visible great and chaotic so reason enter in Tina's life, relatable for viewer as a cynical outcast who lies for the sake of winning emotional without tragic destroyed. Duplicity this Enter Approach to the Inmost Cave in Hero's Journey, where The Mask prepares tactics before, prepare a strategy for face share type challenge.

## 6. Analysis Malicious Character

According to Eaton (2012) the character has Malicious intentions deliberate evil For hurting targeted not random but justified because enemy more bad.



**Figure 13.** Shooting with a gun

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 21:56)*

In this scene (figure 13) *The Mask* makes balloon the become a weapons, and it turns out It is a weapon really Keep going shooting the people in front of him, *The Mask* took it, shot it bullet to direction thugs and their thugs run scared, Mask laughs satisfied while throw weapon.



**Figure 14.** The Mask draws water pipe

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 1:30:55)*

In this scene (figure 14) defeat Tyrell who has already lost his Loki mask. When he wanted to try kill The Mask using knife, The Mask draws a water pipe/spray use paintbrush miraculously, then Tyrell dragged by seepage water and drowned slowly. While Mask watched with smile satisfied while smoking, enjoying suffering his enemy who has lose. Way deliberate sadism for destroy with pleasure of intent to destroy + pleasure in suffering, supported cruel elements pass by violence physical overkill that is calculated not impulsive, this anti-hero scene creating an anti-hero twist where the audience satisfied

Tyrell got karma as criminal bloody, but Stanley's moral flaw is clear as a malicious rough hero who combines chaotic fun with cartoons with dark sadism.

## 7. Analysis Cruel Character

According to Eaton (2012) the nature of involving cruelty extreme or sadistic, enjoy the suffering of others even though cartoonish.



**Figure 15.** Prank pedestrians

*(Russell, The Mask, 1994, Minute 20:46)*

In this scene (figure 15) After the mask broke glass car neighbor use trumpet giant, *The Mask* continued chaos on the street. He met random passerby. pinch your nose hard until red, pull trousers in to on head, then push fall while laughing. The victim was seen pain but Mask is indifferent enjoy reaction the absurdity of pure sadism, not realistic But funny really. Enjoy cruelty sadistic & the suffering of others, even without strong reasons focus on pleasure so it can happen material people laugh.

Cruel in Vogler's anti-hero context is cruelty deliberate impulsiveness for pleasure personal (malicious pleasure), but framed cartoonish so that viewer sympathetic. Cruel *The Mask* is like Looney Tunes or full scene with the ridiculousness in which the characters fall cliff, like pinching the nose/pushing pedestrians who make the audience laugh, right? tragedy really. (see figure 15) The mask pushes fall pedestrians become slapstick, right? broken bone really reflects Stanley's feelings are shy and ever bullied by people and taking it out on others and the audience project frustration alone to absurd chaos without guilt appropriate popular Hollywood pattern that glorifies the cynical rebel against boring norms.

The findings above reveal that The Mask functions as a social critique of modern society that demands individuals to remain "artificially good" by suppressing anger, desire, and deviant impulses in order to conform to social norms. Stanley Ipkiss represents the ordinary individual who is polite, obedient, and morally restrained, yet repeatedly marginalized and humiliated. This constant repression creates psychological pressure that seeks release. The emergence of The Mask as an anti-hero persona becomes a form of catharsis, allowing suppressed emotions to erupt through manipulative, selfish, cruel, and chaotic behaviors. By presenting these traits in a cartoonish and humorous form, the film enables audiences to sympathize with the anti-hero while simultaneously questioning the

rigidity of moral expectations imposed by society. Thus, the anti-hero figure in The Mask symbolizes a collective desire to temporarily escape enforced goodness and reclaim agency through exaggerated rebellion.

## CONCLUSION

Film *The Mask 1994* depicts the dynamics of an anti-hero character through Eaton's (2012) approach, in which The Mask exhibits dark traits such as Manipulative (chronically lying to Tina to access Coco Bongo), Petty (seeking revenge by destroying Ripley's workshop), Ill-tempered (exploding in anger by destroying a neighbor's alarm clock), Duplicitous (two faces: civilian vs. masked T-shirt), Malicious (enjoying sometimes and then Tyrell), Cruel(pinching the leg incident in a Looney Tunes style) and Selfish. These characteristics are formed within the intertextual network of Edge City society.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that The Mask's character is more dominant in manipulative traits, which function as a primary strategy for transformation, from a shy, marginalized teller to an entertaining, chaotic rebel, challenging the hegemony of Hollywood social norms and enriching the analysis of modern anti-heroes.

Anti-hero characters play an important role in critiquing conventional morality standards within the Hollywood film industry by challenging the binary opposition between "good" and "evil" traditionally embodied by heroic figures. Unlike idealized heroes who strictly uphold moral codes, anti-heroes expose the limitations and artificiality of moral perfection imposed by mainstream narratives. Through morally ambiguous actions such as manipulation, selfishness, or cruelty anti-heroes reflect the psychological tensions of modern individuals who are constrained by social expectations. In Hollywood cinema, this figure functions as a critical tool to question dominant ideologies that equate morality with obedience, politeness, and emotional restraint. Consequently, anti-heroes allow audiences to negotiate ethical complexity and recognize that moral transgression can emerge as a response to social repression rather than inherent villainy.

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