

THE INFLUENCE OF TERROR ON THE PERSONALITY OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN FOUR SHORT STORIES BY STEPHEN KING

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the influence of terror on the main character's personality in four short stories by Stephen King. In Stephen King's short stories *Mr. Harrigan's Phone*, *The Life of Chuck*, *If it Bleeds* and *The Rat*, terror occurs because of the unusual change in certain objects. People are mostly not accustomed to being aware of terror. Theoretically, terror has certainly been used to gain power and political achievement for centuries. The descriptive qualitative analysis method is applied in this research. The finding posits that people affected by terror usually have psychological reactions such as anxiety/fear and curiosity. Therefore, someone tries to fight it as a form of self-defense. If an individual is constantly exposed to terror, it can potentially change one's personality.

Keywords: influence; terror; personality; main character; reaction; anxiety; curiosity; self-defense.

I. BACKGROUND

Terror is an event that causes humans to experience deep trauma and fear. According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (the great Indonesian dictionary), it explains that terror has a meaning that creates fear, horror, and cruelty by something that can be in the form of objects or the character of the terror act. Basically, terror is also not always related to physical violence and scares people, even though people are not directly affected.

Nursalim (2014:331) stated terror or terrorism is not always synonymous with violence. Terror is psychological pressure, the aim of terror is to create fear, terror is also a real act (Batmani, 2020:80). Terrorism is an act of violence aimed at random targets (no direct relationship with the perpetrators) which results in damage, death, fear, uncertainty and mass despair (Mustafa, 2002:31).

Technology has a very important role in changing personalities. The impact is very

dangerous for its users, the presence of the internet in the hands of radicalism and terrorism groups, because of these groups, the internet media becomes an effective medium for propaganda tools (Agus SB, 2016: 18).

According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), personality is an essential trait that is reflected in a person's attitude. In Sigmund Freud's theory of personality, it says that personality is the core of psychology. In other words, the science that discusses the human psyche and personality. According to Allport on Nara, (2016): "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment"

Personality has an understanding, specifically what makes a person different from others, what makes him unique from others. This aspect is called "individual uniqueness" (Zaviera, 2020:26).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative research applies descriptive analysis method as well as literature study (library research). The primary objects of this research are Stephen King's

short stories titled *Mr. Harrigan's Phone*, *The Life of Chuck*, *If it Bleeds*, and *Rat* by Stephen King. Theoretical books and scientific journals

are also taken as the secondary data to support

the analysis.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Harrigan's Phone tells the story of a child character. He is often in church as a singer and reader of the Bible. The name of the character of this little boy is Craigstar, he received a job from Mr. Harrigan, the owner of a very large house. Craigstar has a job that was only to read books every day to Mr. Harrigan. The terror began when Craigstar gave an *iPhone*.

Mr. Harrigan had social conflicts with Craigstar because he did not really like technology. Mr. Harrigan started to like technology because Craigstar always showed him how to use *iPhone*. However, it is very unfortunate that Mr. Harrigan died not long after getting the *iPhone*. Craigstar, who did not know what to do, put the *iPhone* in Mr. Harrigan's pocket. Of course, the terror appeared not long after Mr. Harrigan died, the *iPhone*, which should not work when it was in the pocket of the dead, suddenly got a message from Mr. Harrigan that made Craigstar shocked and frightened.

The results of the first story, *Mr. Harrigan's Phone*, has an element of terror, namely the *iPhone*. The analysis shows that there is an unrealistic element from the terror coming from the *iPhone*, because in this story it is stated that the *iPhone* is in the pocket of a dead person and can send messages by itself to Craigstar which contains "Pirateking", a password that belongs to Mr. Harrigan's, a kind of morse code approved by Craigstar and Mr. Harrigan before he died. Therefore, the terror that was raised in this story came from the *iPhone* which was coming from the coat pocket of the dead man.

Craigstar in *Mr. Harrigan's Phone*, experiences a *Realistic Anxiety* reaction, a fear of real anger and existence which caused him to apply self-defense method called *Rejection*

(it is done by blocking events that come from outside consciousness), *Isolation* (this mechanism works by diverting scary emotions and memories), and *Elimination* (it is erasing thoughts or feelings that are not wearing). The *iPhone* is described as a magic tool to request desire. There have been two people who died because Craigstar told him through his *iPhone*.

Craigstar, at first had a Choleric personality because of his background as a church worker, a worker at Mr. Harrigan's house, a hard working nature, cheerful, brave, optimistic, and extravagant. However, after experiencing the *iPhone* terror, his personality changes to Sanguinist, becoming less brave or hesitant in acting, moody, quiet, a loner and vindictive.

The short story *The Life of Chuck* tells the story of the main character, Marty Anderson, a man who has a profession as an English teacher. The story is set in California, United States. The story of *The Life of Chuck* is divided into three parts, the first part is *Act III: Thanks, Chuck*, this section explains why the billboard that always appears says *CHARLES KRANTZ. 39 GREAT YEARS! THANKS, CHUCK!*

The second part of the story is *Act II: Buskers*, because this part tells of Chuck as a temporary city busker, looking for entertainment. However, it was unexpected that at first he only wanted entertainment by joining buskers, but Chuck was able to find his skills by dancing, so everyone focused on Chuck at that time.

The last story is *Act I: Contain Multitudes*. This last part explains where Chuck came from because of his skill in dancing. He is still in Marty Anderson's time because the plot is backwards which is functioned to reveal Chuck's identity. The

terror that appeared here is the billboard of Chuck's name itself. The analysis reveals that the name in the ads is not just any ad name, but there is a flashback behind it which posits that there is an underlying message in the ad which holds the past memories.

The result of the second story in *The Life of Chuck*, which has an element of terror, specifically the "Name" of the Billboard (*CHARLES KRANTZ. 39 GREAT YEARS! THANKS, CHUCK!.*), based on the analysis of the main character, Marty Anderson, undergoes a terror that always follows him by the billboard written *Charlez Krantz. 39 Great Years, Thanks, Chuck!*.

The terror experienced by the main character causes curiosity in the character, which then encourages the main character to carry out a self-defense mechanism called *Replacement* (this mechanism works by diverting the direction of the impulse to a substitute target). Substitution is a mechanism that works by diverting the direction of the push to the replacement target. The result of all this caused a change in his personality, from *Phlegmatic*, a person who has a background as an English teacher with a calm, patient, diligent work, broad-minded, diligent and agile personality turned into *Nervous* as the impact caused by the terror of the name *Chuck* on the billboard. His trait becomes uneasy, protester, impatient, aggressive, and vindictive.

The short story *If it Bleeds* tells the story of a main character named Holly Gibney who is a private detective who always solves cases that occur. It wasn't long before he got news of a bombing at Albert Macready High School and had been killed and injured. The terror that appeared when Holly Gibney wondered who was behind the bombing.

Holly Gibney was suspicious of a reporter named Chet Ondowsky, who was the first person to cover the bombing. In the end, evidence after evidence referred to Chet Ondowsky, who could be said to be the main suspect. Chet Ondowsky then slowly revealed who he really was, so that he could have

killed Holly Gibney, because the person of the bombing was Chet Ondowsky as a journalist who covered the scene, strangely why this crime was hidden behind the media. After violence occurred here until a fight between Holly's friend and Chet. This proves that Chet Ondowsky does not hesitate to kill anyone.

Another interesting part about this story is that the mastermind behind the bombing is hiding behind the media, making people think about who the executor is.

Therefore, this story is the longest of the four stories that the researcher analyzed. In the 3rd story, entitled *If it Bleeds*, there is an element of terror in the form of a bomber who can be called a terrorist. The main character is named Holly Gibney, a detective who has a case to solve, which is to uncover the perpetrator behind the bombing. The terror received is from the antagonist named Chet Ondowsky.

Holly Gibney, as the main character, does not feel afraid and he is confident at first because he is a detective who has handled many cases in addition to having strong evidence that the bomber is Chet Ondowsky.

The results of this short story *If it Bleeds*, is an element of terror in the form of the antagonist as the terrorists hiding behind the media. In other words, the element of terror inherent in a reporter who becomes a bomber and then turns into the media, named Chet Ondowsky.

At first, the bomb terror was felt by the local community where Holly Gibney lives, namely Pennsylvania. After a deeper investigation of the bomb was found to be the person behind the media, he was Chet Ondowsky, a journalist. The leak of Ondowsky's secret as the bomber caused Holly Gibney to be terrorized by Ondowsky. This act of terror by Ondowsky pushed Holly to solve this case alone.

Holly Gibney has a *Neurotic Anxiety* reaction (anxiety that arises without knowing the danger that threatens it) when exposed to terror and is faced with self-defense methods,

specifically self-defense where one makes oneself a substitute target and *Rationalization* (it is easy to lie to oneself), this analysis results in a change in the main character's personality who was initially *Phlegmatic* due to his background as a private detective and has the characteristics of being calm, patient, diligent, broad-minded, having a good memory, agile, able to stand alone without much help from other people, become *Sanguinist* because of the terror caused by the antagonist journalist whom is also the terrorist. His personality changes are having difficult decision making nature, lacks courage or hesitation in acting, moody, quiet, aloof and vindictive.

The short story *Rat* is about a main character named Drew Larson who is a novelist and writes great Best Seller novels. The beginning of the novel is less convincing. Then he thought of writing somewhere that might be quiet, like a forest. He wanted to write at his grandfather's place on Sitehouse Street.

There was a cabin which was a very quiet place, so he wanted to go there and ask his wife Lucy for permission. After after some time of preparation, Drew rushed off to the place which took one day to get there. Unfortunately for more than two weeks there was a storm that made Drew sick and his illness relapsed, then the novel he wrote did not progress at all until he met a rat.

Rat is a terror threat that will occur in this last story. The rat in this story is described like the character of *Aladdin*, whose task is to grant wishes or request, but with an "agreement". The rat said that the novel would be finished and famous, but with a

IV. CONCLUSION

The discussion conducted through the study of the main character in Stephen King's four short stories: *Mr. Harrigan's Phone*, *The Life of Chuck*, *If it Bleeds* and *Rat*, raise the theme of terror faced by each of the main character. Craigstar, Marty Anderson, Holly Gibney and Drew Larson, are the main characters because of the intensity of their

condition that someone close to him dies. The element of terror in this story is in the form of a rat.

Drew did not believe it, terror was felt however, when the rat said there was a reward, which is the death of Al Stamper. The main character's initial reaction when exposed to such terror is afraid and phobia of the Rat, but then becomes revenge.

The results of the fourth story are obtained from the short story *Rat*, which has an element of terror in the form of rats. The analysis of the main character, Drew Larson, is the terror experienced caused by a rat.

The Rat in this story can be said to be a symbol of terror which causes Drew Larson to react to terror, namely the emergence of curiosity and dealing with terror by means of a self-defense mechanism, namely *Replacement* (this mechanism works by diverting the direction of the impulse to a substitute target).

Therefore, there was a personality change in Drew Larson, who was originally *Sentimental* with a background as a writer who has a strong emotional nature, has a secondary function, intuitive, talkative, influencing, enjoys nature, and loves peace and quiet. The terror of the rat turned the main character's personality into *Sanguinist* with the characteristics of having weak emotional characteristics, inactive functioning, difficult to make decisions, lack of courage or hesitation in acting, moody, quiet, aloof, clinging to his position and vindictive.

performances and their dominant involvement in the story from beginning to end.

From some of the results obtained from a series of research processes above, it can be concluded that the influence of terror in these four short stories shows that terror can be the most influential on the main character's personality, but this does not prevent the main

character from fighting the terror that approaches, even though there are some characters who choose to fear terror. There are still very few community groups who know about the dangers of terror in their environment. Because so far they only know about terror about its actions, not the effects that will occur when terror comes. Meanwhile, terror has always been represented in an unfavorable form, such as being feared and avoided. It is a fact that no one even wants to be exposed to terror.

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Basically, both the influence of terror and communication, are interrelated with personality that can change slowly, be it their orientation towards terror, as well as their presence and other personality traits. No one wants to experience terror which causes personality change because humans share the same nature and desire to live in a community without the pressure of terror. (Gerard Heymans:1984).

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