

Extra Credit - The Joker from Batman: The Dark Knight

Antisocial personality disorder

1. Describe the main characters psychological disorder and the symptoms exhibited?

The Joker exhibits an extreme lack of empathy towards others, particularly towards the citizens of Gotham. Furthermore, he frequently takes action without any consideration of the consequences, though usually only in ways that won't affect him. He encourages two captured mobsters to fight one another with a broken pool cue for their survival, and he threatens to blow up a boat of citizens or a boat of prisoners to challenge Batman's sense of justice. In the opening scene of the movie, he is shown murdering his subordinates while robbing a bank so that he can get a bigger share of the haul. Ultimately, he describes himself as an unstoppable force of chaos in Batman's life.

2. How did it develop?

It is unknown how the Joker developed his condition, though at several points during the movie he tells conflicting stories about how he got the scars on his face, leading the viewer to believe he came from a troubled home with a mentally ill father. These are all probably precursors to developing Antisocial Personality Disorder.

3. How did it affect the character's life (work, health, relationships, family, etc.)?

In this movie, the Joker isn't seen to have any personal relationships, and his work consists mostly of scamming mobsters and fighting Batman. From this perspective, his disorder doesn't make that much of an impact on his daily routine. The mobsters he scams are perhaps more afraid of him than normal, and his disorder enables him to confront Batman's inner turmoil by playing with the lives of citizens, but overall the disorder does not seem to cause the Joker a large amount of distress.

4. Did the character get treatment? If not, why not? If so, what kind of treatment?

Canonically, the Joker was committed to Arkham Asylum for treatment, but in the movie no mention of treatment is ever made. As far as the movie is concerned, the Joker probably never sought treatment because of his distrust in society. The Joker doesn't seem willing to change his behaviors at any point during the movie.

5. How accurately was the disorder portrayed?

Antisocial Personality Disorder was portrayed fairly well in this movie, with the one exception that the Joker has an exceptionally extreme case of the disorder. The Joker has an extreme distrust in society, no fear of the consequences of his actions, and probably came from a very troubled home where the disorder could have developed. If he were portrayed as a little less extreme or exaggerated of a character, this would have been a much more believable representation of Antisocial Personality Disorder.