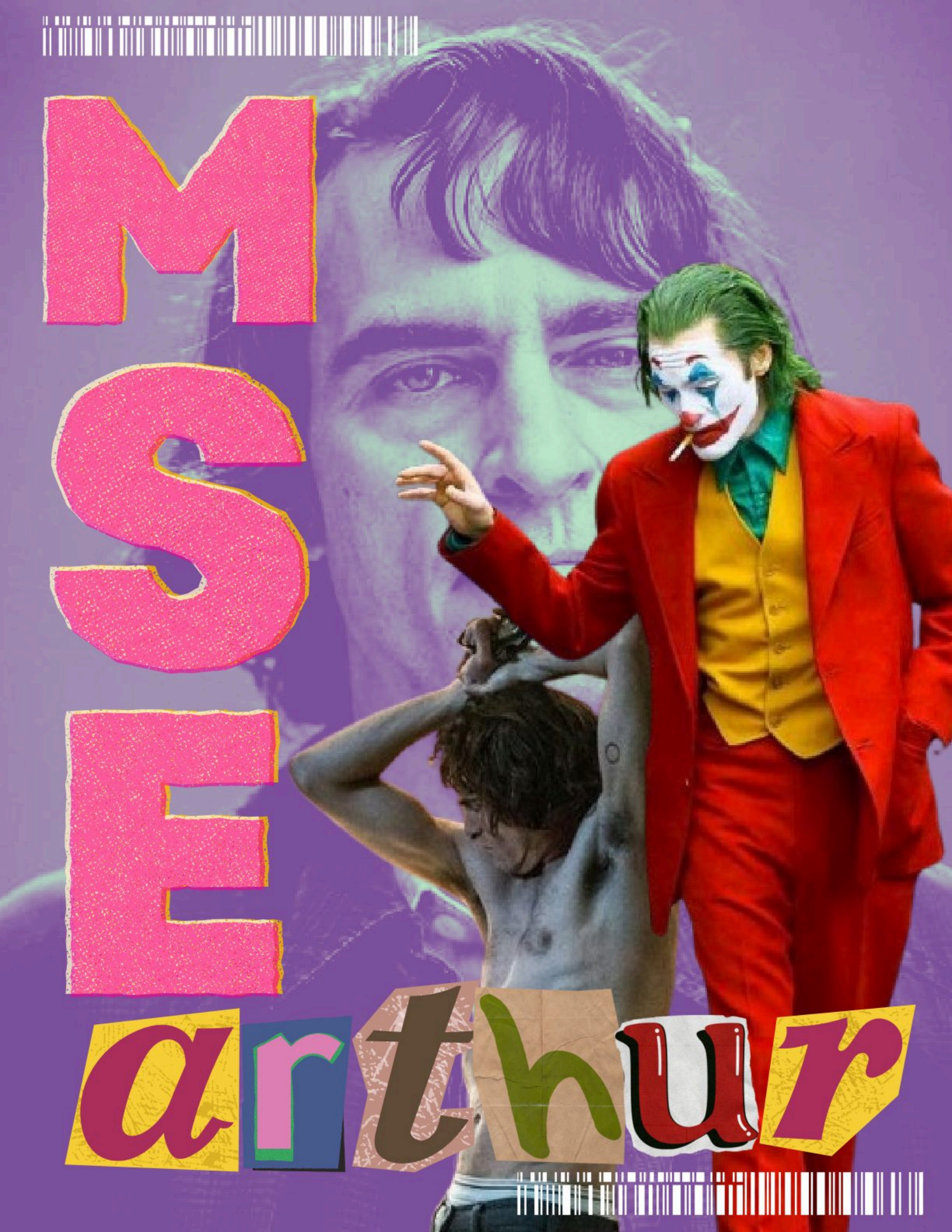
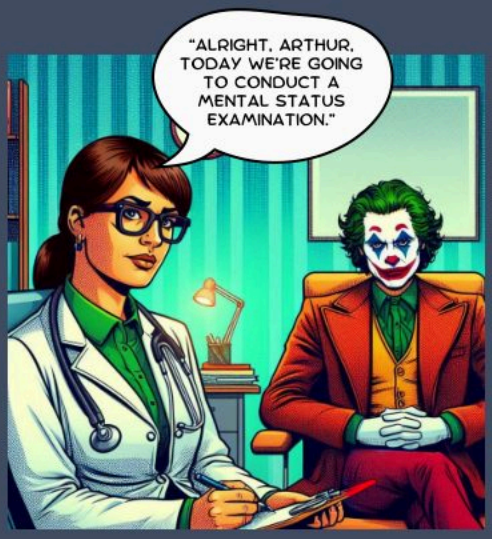

MEET
arthur

MADNESS STATUS EXAMINATION

















SOMETIMES, IT'S THE PATIENT WHO DOES THE DIAGNOSING..."

introduction

Arthur's story

"All it takes is one bad day to reduce the sanest man alive to lunacy. That's how far the world is from where I am. Just one bad day." (Joker, 2019)

Joker is a 2019 American psychological thriller movie directed by Todd Phillips.

Arthur Fleck, a struggling clown with a condition causing uncontrollable laughter, dreams of being a comedian but faces constant rejection. After losing his job for accidentally showing a gun at a children's hospital, Arthur is attacked by three men on a subway and kills them in self-defense. This sparks a citywide protest, and Arthur's access to medication is cut off. His mental state deteriorates as he discovers his abusive childhood and that his relationship with his neighbor Sophie was imagined. After killing his mother, Arthur fully embraces his clown persona, murders his former colleague and a TV host on live television, igniting riots across Gotham. He is eventually arrested, but rioters free him. In the end, Arthur is in Arkham State Hospital, laughing to himself with bloody footprints trailing behind him.

MSE

MSE or Mental Status Examination is a core assessment tool in psychiatry and psychology. The observations are recorded in a structured format, which gives a clear picture of the

The Joker is one of the most popular villains in modern cinema and comic books. Created in 1940 by Bill Finger, Bob Kane, and Jerry Robinson, he has appeared in many different versions, from a silly prankster to a dangerous killer. I especially like his signature makeup and suit that makes him look funny and scary at the same time. Choosing the Joker as a character is especially fitting for the Halloween season, and with World Mental Health Day just recently passed, it highlights important discussions about mental health

The Joker is a fascinating character to explore because he shows a wide range of psychological symptoms, making him an ideal subject for a Mental Status Examination (MSE).

Without his necessary medication, unemployed, mocked by society, neglected, and unaware of his true family background, it's easy to see how anyone in the Joker's position might break down. Arthur, like many people, just wanted to be heard, but even his psychiatrist barely listened to him.

The Joker's unpredictable nature kept me on edge, and his plight made me in fact sympathize with him.

Case History

Before conducting MSE, case history of the character was taken.

Arthur Fleck is a single man in his 30s or 40s who used to work as a party clown. He finished high school but its unclear if he studied further. He comes from a poor background, depends on public aid and has trouble managing money. He was referred to social services due to strange behavior and difficulty keeping jobs.

Arthur only has his mother, Penny Fleck, who raised him alone. Their relationship is unhealthy, with Penny depending on him too much and denying his mental health problems. Arthur once believed his father was Thomas Wayne, but this was either a delusion or a lie from his mother. Penny has a history of mental illness, including delusions and possible narcissism.

Arthur likely faced neglect and possible abuse in his early years. He was socially withdrawn as a child, emotionally unstable, and isolated. He was bullied in school and didn't form close relationships. He has no record of romantic relationships and has never used drugs or alcohol. Arthur's self-esteem is very low, and he struggles with his identity. While he dreams of becoming a comedian, he lacks the stability and skills needed to succeed and keep a steady job. There's no mention of religious beliefs.

CATEGORIES

appearance & behavior

[click above] Arthur arrived with a slouched posture and moved slowly, with small, shuffling steps and wore old, worn-out costume clothes. His grooming was poor, with clear signs that he struggled to keep up with his personal hygiene. He was tall and thin, with pale skin. His hair was wavy and dyed green, and his lips were painted bright red. He had several tattoos, the word "damaged" on his forehead.

Arthur's movements and behaviour was erratic and hard to predict with sudden, uncontrollable laughing fits unrelated to the situation. His face showed little emotion, and sometimes forced an awkward smile. Eye contact was inconsistent – either avoiding or staring intensely. While he could follow simple instructions, his attention wandered, and he took longer than expected to respond to what was happening around him.

speech & thought process

[click above] Arthur's speech was disorganized, going off track with irrelevant or confusing comments. How he spoke changed with his mood —he talked quickly when he upset, but slow and sluggish when he sad. Though he spoke low in volume, he had occasional loud outbursts. He gave long, detailed answers to questions but was otherwise short. His tone was mostly flat, with moments of excitement or anger and his speech had an uneven rhythm with many pauses.

Arthur's thought process was very disorganized and didn't make much sense. He showed delusional thinking, with loose connections between ideas and some made-up words. While he did not mention any thoughts about self-harm, but expressed a desire to harm others, especially Batman.

mood & affect

Arthur's mood showed signs of depression, anxiety, and occasional irritability. It was unstable, with frequent mood swings varying from moderate to severe, which greatly affected how he functioned. His emotional responses were limited, and inappropriate like laughing at the wrong times. His mood was chronic, with worsened periods, and he appeared emotionally shallow, showing little to no remorse for his past crimes and lacking empathy for others.

He mentioned feeling empty or numb, with moments of intense anger or sadness. His emotional expressions were dull and mismatched to situations. sometimes inappropriate, such as laughing at the wrong times. His affect was low but became intense during anger or distress, mostly showing anger, sadness or inappropriate laughter.

cognition

Arthur showed signs of suspicion, easily distracted and sometimes avoiding direct answers. He seemed indifferent and defensive when probed further. Though generally alert, he showed moments of confusion and disorientation, particularly during psychotic episodes. His cooperation fluctuated, sometimes he interacted positively with me, but at other times, he resisted engaging. Despite a distorted sense of self, he remained oriented to time, place and people.

CATEGORIES

perception

Arthur's memory for recent and past events was mostly intact, with a reasonable understanding of his situation. Clinically, he appeared to function at a higher cognitive level than most people. He denied hallucinations, paranoia, or other major symptoms linked to schizophrenia. However, he showed strong delusions of grandeur and persecution, believing he was superior and society was conspiring against him. He also experienced auditory hallucinations that affected his view of reality.

insight and judgement

Arthur had limited insight and judgement. He was aware of his aggressive outbursts but struggled to explain them, by brushing them off as jokes and responding with the rhetorical question, “Do I really look like a guy with a plan?” He admitted his lack of impulse control was a major reason for his repeated offenses.

Arthur denied interest in starting fires but admitted to burning down his family home as a child, without clarifying details. While rejecting the idea of being mentally il, he showed some awareness of needing help but downplayed the seriousness of his situation. His understanding of his behavior was limited, and his judgement impaired, often shifting blame to others or outside circumstances, rationalizing his actions and avoiding personal responsibility.

conclusion

Arthur’s story shows how unchecked trauma, and a lack of support can push someone over the edge, transforming them from a victim into a symbol of rebellion. In the end, Arthur is not purely evil; he is a product of his environment – a fine line between madness and humanity.

