



**THE AMERICAN WORK CULTURE REFLECTED ON THE
MAIN CHARACTER IN *FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S* MOVIE
(2023)**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for S-1 Degree Majoring American Studies in the English Department, Faculty
of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

I honestly state that this research thesis entitled “The American Work Culture Reflected on the Main Character in *Five Nights at Freddy’s* Movie (2023)” is written by myself without taking any works from other researchers in any university, in diploma degree, S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree. I also assure that, aside from the referenced sources, no other work has been used.

Semarang, 31st December 2025



Jasmine Najmunnisa Maheswari

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

When you see validation for a life's work and dedication, it's a beautiful day.

Mary Gauthier

APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This research thesis discusses the American work culture reflected on the main character, Mike, in *Five Nights at Freddy's*, directed by Emma Tammi. The aims of the research are to analyze the intrinsic elements, the characteristics, the challenges, the strengths, and the weaknesses of American work culture. This research thesis uses a sociological studies approach supported by Sociological Approach by C. Wright Mills. This research thesis applies a library research method. The primary data source is *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie, while secondary sources involve literary journals and articles associated with American work culture. The results of this research thesis reveal the intrinsic which are the characterization, the settings, the conflicts, and theme of the movie; and the extrinsic elements that present Mike's inner conflict and obligation to protect Abby against personal guilt and external threats. The movie also shows the characteristics, such as manual and emotional labor; the challenges, which includes monotonous and repetitive tasks, and family responsibilities; the strengths, namely adaptability and resourcefulness, and resilient under pressure; as well as the weaknesses of American work culture, like alienation and insufficient support.

Keywords: American work culture, intrinsic, characteristics, challenges, strengths, weaknesses

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

American work culture is a complex phenomenon, deeply rooted into the American history, economic, and societal fabric. It is commonly characterized as a culture embodies individualism, achievement, and the relentless pursuit of success. It is largely shaped by the Protestant work ethic, where hard work is seen as a goal, and a goal in itself, closely intertwined with notions of destiny and prosperity (Gregory, 2014:36). The American dream has remained a strong driving force, influencing personal ambitions and a desire to fit in with established societal norms, securing career advancement and financial security. However, this accomplishment may require a long working hours, a competitive mindset, as well prioritizing work over personal life, distinct among other industrialized countries.

Frontline workers may demonstrate surface or deep emotional labor; however, both surface and deep emotional labor heavily influencing either on job satisfaction or emotional exhaustion (Zhao et al., 2020:2). The nuances involved are subtler, as American work culture demands an understanding of its influence impacting to an individual's well-being, job satisfaction, work-life balance, across different industries and socio-economic context.

The phenomenon of American Work Culture is also reflected in a movie entitled *Five Nights at Freddy's*. *Five Nights at Freddy's* is a movie adapted from a game franchise with the same name and released in 2023. This movie is directed by Emma Tammi and written by Scott Hawton, the developer of the game itself. This movie tell about Mike Schmidt, a troubled young man haunted by the unsolved disappearance of his younger brother, struggling with unemployment and the approaching threat of losing custody of his little sister, Abby. Driven by desperation and a need to provide for Abby, Mike accepts a night security guard position at Freddy Fazbear's Pizzeria, an abandoned family entertainment center restaurant with a dark and sinister past. As Mike begins his night shift, he quickly discovers that the restaurant is more than just an empty, decaying building; it is inhabited by possessed animatronic characters – Freddy Fazbear, Bonnie, Chica, and Foxy. These animatronics, once sources of joy and entertainment, are bloodthirsty and seek to harm anyone who dares to enter their domain. The film explores themes of childhood trauma, grief, and the corrupting influence of power, while also subtly mirroring aspects of American work culture, such as low wages, dangerous working environment, and the exploitation of labor.

Five Nights at Freddy's movie offers an intriguing perspective which examines the dynamics of American work culture, specifically through the concept of Hicks' soft work theory. Hicks' theory argues that work is not strictly defined by concrete results, but also defined by the emotional, social, and psychological elements that

shape an individual's experience within the workplace. Mike Schmidt, the protagonist, faces the reality of a low-paying job as a security guard, symbolizing the negative psychological impacts associated with jobs like this, which are a prevailing issue in contemporary American work environments.

The writer chooses *Five Nights of Freddy's* movie as the object of this research thesis because it is a horror movie that portrays American work culture aspects. In this research thesis, the writer will analyze the intrinsic elements, the characteristics and the challenges of American Work Culture in Mike, as well as its strength and weaknesses reflected in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the intrinsic elements in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie?
2. What are the characteristics of American Work Culture through the main character, Mike, in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie?
3. What are the challenges of American Work Culture through the main character, Mike, in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of American Work Culture through the main character, Mike, in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie?

1.3 Research Aims

1. To analyze the intrinsic elements of *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie.
2. To analyze the characteristics of American Work Culture through the main character in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie.

3. To analyze the challenges of American Work Culture through the main character in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie.
4. To analyze the strengths and weaknesses of American Work Culture through the main character in *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research thesis covers intrinsic and extrinsic discussion of the movie *Five Nights at Freddy's*. The intrinsic aspect discussion covers character, characterization, settings, and conflicts. Meanwhile, the extrinsic aspect discussion covers the characteristics of American Work Culture on the main character, the challenges, the strength, and the weaknesses.

1.5 Previous Study

To prove the originality of this research thesis, the writer should have provided a study of the same object. However, there have not been any studies regarding *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Method of Data Collection

To write this research thesis, the writer uses library research. Library research is a type of systematic analysis that uses particular instruments, principles, and methods (George, 2008:1). Regarding library research, the data collected to this research thesis are split into primary data and secondary data. Primary data are data intentionally collected for study, whereas secondary data are data gathered to gain

new viewpoints, meanings, and findings (Saunders, 2012:678-681). The primary data is taken directly from the movie *Five Nights at Freddy's*, which closely examine the dialogue and cutscenes throughout the movie. The secondary data is gathered through literary review includes journal, articles, or reviews. The method of collecting the data includes watching the movie with close viewing, taking notes of the scenes and dialogues, classifying the data that has been taken from the scenes and dialogues, and then analyzing the data based on the research questions.

1.6.2 Research Approach

To write this research thesis, the writer uses a sociological approach. sociology focuses on the relationship between individual experiences and broader social structures through what he terms the sociological imagination (Mills, 1959:15). Through this perspective, the American work culture portrayed in the movie such as low wages, job insecurity, emotional labor, and institutional pressure is understood as a reflection of social structures and power relations operating within society. This research thesis examines how the movie represents the dynamics of American work culture by revealing the ways individual struggle is shaped by capitalist systems and institutional control using Hicks' Soft Work theory.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

I. Introduction

This section shows the background of the study, the research problems, the objectives of the study, the previous study, the scope of the study, and the writing organization.

II. Intrinsic Theoretical Framework

This chapter covers the theoretical review to explain the cinematography and the intrinsic aspects of the movie in chapter four, including character and characterization, settings, conflicts, and theme.

III. Extrinsic Theoretical Framework

This chapter covers the theoretical review to explain the extrinsic elements of the movie in chapter four, including the history, the characteristics, the challenges, the strength, and the weaknesses of American work culture.

IV. Result & Discussion

This chapter analyses the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the movie. It also explains the results based on the research questions.

V. Conclusion

This section summarizes the whole study of the discussion as well as the writer's point of view.