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CLASSIFICATION OF EMOTION CONCEPTS REPRESENTED BY BENJI AND DAVID IN A REAL PAIN (2024) SCREENPLAY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the emotions depicted by the two main characters, Benji and David, in Jesse Eisenberg's screenplay A Real Pain (2024) using David Krech's classification of emotions within the framework of literary psychology. The study aims to identify the basic and complex emotions experienced by the characters and to explain how these emotions contribute to their psychological development throughout the narrative. A descriptive qualitative design was employed, with the screenplay serving as the primary source of data. The data consisted of dialogues, narrative descriptions, character actions, and stage directions that represented the emotional experiences of the two protagonists. The data were collected through documentation and analyzed by classifying emotional expressions into basic emotions (happiness, sadness, fear, and anger) and complex emotions (love, guilt, shame, and repressed guilt) based on David Krech's theory. The findings reveal that both characters experience all categories of emotions, although they express them in different ways. Benji predominantly displays sadness through open and impulsive emotional expressions, whereas David's emotional experiences are largely characterized by fear, emotional restraint, and psychological conflict. The study demonstrates that the screenplay portrays emotions not only as individual psychological responses but also as significant elements that shape characterization, interpersonal relationships, and narrative development. The findings demonstrate that Krech and Crutchfield's classification provides an effective framework for understanding emotional representation in contemporary film screenplays.

Keywords: Literary psychology; emotion classification; screenplay; Krech and Crutchfield; A Real Pain

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INTRODUCTION

Literary works have long been recognized as reflections of human experiences, emotions, and social interactions. Beyond providing entertainment, literature enables readers to explore psychological conditions, interpersonal relationships, and moral values through fictional narratives. Among various literary forms, the screenplay occupies a unique position because it combines dialogue, character actions, and visual directions to

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construct stories that can be interpreted both as literary texts and as the foundation of cinematic production. Consequently, screenplays provide valuable material for literary and psychological analysis, particularly in examining how emotions shape characterization and narrative development (Abrams & Harpham, 2015; Klarer, 2013).

Emotions play a crucial role in literary narratives because they influence characters' perceptions, decisions, and relationships throughout a story. Literary psychology considers emotional experiences essential for understanding how fictional characters respond to internal conflicts and external situations. Emotional representation therefore contributes not only to character development but also to the progression of the narrative and the construction of thematic meaning. Recent studies have further emphasized that emotional dynamics are fundamental to narrative comprehension, as they influence both character development and audience engagement with literary texts and films (Vishnubhotla et al., 2024; Wang & Tang, 2021). Accordingly, analyzing emotions in literary works offers deeper insights into the psychological dimensions of fictional characters.

One psychological framework frequently applied in literary studies is the classification of emotions proposed by Krech and Crutchfield (1969). They categorize emotions into two major groups: basic emotions, consisting of happiness, sadness, fear, and anger, and complex emotions, including love, guilt, shame, and repressed guilt. Unlike basic emotions, which emerge as immediate responses to particular situations, complex emotions involve cognitive appraisal, moral evaluation, and self-awareness. This classification provides a systematic framework for identifying how emotional experiences are represented through characters' dialogue, actions, and interpersonal interactions within literary works.

The object of this study is the screenplay of A Real Pain (2024), written and directed by Jesse Eisenberg. The screenplay tells the story of two cousins, Benji and David, who travel to Poland to honor their late grandmother and reconnect with their Jewish heritage. Throughout the journey, their contrasting personalities generate various emotional conflicts that reveal differences in how they perceive situations, regulate emotions, and interact with one another. Benji is portrayed as impulsive, outspoken, and emotionally expressive, whereas David tends to be cautious, reserved, and emotionally restrained. These contrasting psychological characteristics make the screenplay an appropriate object for examining emotional representation through a literary psychology perspective.

Several previous studies have examined emotional representation in literary works using Krech and Crutchfield's classification of emotions. Mulatsari and Pamungkas (2023), Pricila et al. (2023), and Nafisa and Subandiyah (2024) identified various emotional categories experienced by fictional characters in novels and demonstrated that emotions contribute significantly to characterization. Similarly, Pujiastuti and Rusmawati (2021) analyzed emotional expressions in a film using a literary psychology approach. Although these studies successfully classified emotional categories, most focused primarily on identifying emotions experienced by individual characters. Limited attention has been given to comparing emotional

representations between multiple protagonists within a contemporary screenplay while distinguishing systematically between basic and complex emotions.

Based on this gap, the present study investigates the emotion concepts represented by Benji and David in the screenplay of A Real Pain (2024) using Krech and Crutchfield's (1969) classification of emotions. Specifically, this study aims to identify the basic and complex emotions experienced by both protagonists and to explain how these emotions are represented through dialogue, characterization, and character actions. By applying a literary psychology approach, this study contributes to a broader understanding of emotional representation in contemporary screenplays and demonstrates how emotions function in constructing characterization and interpersonal relationships within literary narratives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary Psychology

Literature has long been recognized as a medium through which human experiences, thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are represented. Beyond providing aesthetic value, literary works portray psychological aspects of human life, enabling readers to understand how individuals respond to internal and external conflicts. Consequently, psychological approaches have become an important perspective in literary studies because they facilitate the interpretation of characters' mental processes and emotional experiences.

Literary psychology is an interdisciplinary approach that integrates psychological theories into the analysis of literary texts. Rather than examining the author's personal psychology, this approach focuses on the psychological dimensions represented through fictional characters, their motivations, behaviours, interpersonal relationships, and emotional responses (Minderop, 2018). Wellek and Warren (1956) argue that literary psychology provides valuable insights into the inner lives of literary characters by explaining how psychological phenomena are reflected in narrative structures and characterization.

Within literary psychology, emotions play a significant role because they influence characters' decisions, behaviours, conflicts, and relationships throughout a narrative. The analysis of emotional representation enables researchers to understand not only what characters experience but also how these experiences contribute to their psychological development. Therefore, literary psychology provides an appropriate framework for examining emotional representation in literary works, including contemporary movie screenplays.

David Krech and Crutchfield's Classification of Emotions

This study adopts the classification of emotions proposed by Krech and Crutchfield (1969), which categorizes emotions into basic emotions and complex emotions. Their theory explains that emotions are psychological responses resulting from interactions between cognitive appraisal, personal experience, and environmental stimuli. Emotional reactions are therefore

influenced not only by external situations but also by individual interpretations and personality characteristics.

Basic emotions are immediate affective responses to particular situations and include happiness, sadness, fear, and anger. These emotions generally emerge spontaneously and are expressed through observable verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Happiness is associated with pleasure and emotional satisfaction, sadness reflects experiences of loss or disappointment, fear arises from perceived threats or uncertainty, and anger develops in response to frustration or perceived injustice.

In contrast, complex emotions require higher levels of cognitive evaluation and self-awareness. Krech and Crutchfield identify love, guilt, shame, and repressed guilt as examples of complex emotions because they involve interpersonal relationships, moral judgment, and self-evaluation. Love reflects affection and emotional attachment toward others, guilt emerges when individuals perceive that they have violated personal or moral standards, shame results from negative self-evaluation in social contexts, and repressed guilt occurs when feelings of remorse remain unexpressed or are psychologically suppressed. Compared with basic emotions, complex emotions develop gradually through reflection and social interaction rather than as immediate reactions to external events.

The distinction between basic and complex emotions provides an appropriate analytical framework for examining the emotional experiences of fictional characters because it allows researchers to identify not only what emotions are experienced but also how these emotions reflect psychological development and interpersonal relationships within the narrative.

Table 1. Krech and Crutchfield's (1969) Classification of Emotions

Category	Emotion	Characteristics
Basic Emotions	Happiness	Pleasure, satisfaction, enjoyment
	Sadness	Loss, disappointment, grief
	Fear	Anxiety, threat, uncertainty
	Anger	Frustration, hostility, resentment
Complex Emotions	Love	Affection, attachment, empathy
	Guilt	Moral responsibility, remorse
	Shame	Embarrassment, negative self-evaluation
	Repressed Guilt	Suppressed remorse, unresolved emotional conflict

Note. Adapted from Elements of Psychology (Krech & Crutchfield, 1969).

Among the various psychological theories of emotion, David Krech's classification provides a practical framework for analyzing emotional representation in literary texts. Krech and Crutchfield (1969) classify emotions into two broad categories: basic emotions and complex emotions (See table 1). This classification distinguishes between universal emotional responses and emotions that involve more complex cognitive and social processes.

Basic Emotions

Basic emotions are immediate psychological responses that occur naturally when individuals encounter particular situations. Krech identifies four categories of basic emotions:

1. Happiness, characterized by feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, enjoyment, and psychological well-being.
2. Sadness, reflecting emotional pain, disappointment, grief, or loss resulting from unfavorable experiences.
3. Fear, arising from perceived danger, uncertainty, or threat, often leading to avoidance or protective behaviors.
4. Anger, emerging when individuals experience frustration, injustice, or obstacles that prevent them from achieving desired goals.

These emotions are considered universal because they are commonly experienced across different individuals and cultural contexts.

Complex Emotions

Unlike basic emotions, complex emotions involve cognitive evaluation, social interaction, moral judgment, and personal reflection. According to Krech, complex emotions consist of:

1. Love, representing affection, emotional attachment, empathy, and concern for others.
2. Guilt, arising when individuals recognize that their actions have violated personal or social standards.
3. Shame, emerging from negative self-evaluation and concern about social judgment or personal inadequacy.
4. Repressed guilt, referring to feelings of guilt that are consciously or unconsciously suppressed, often influencing an individual's emotions and behavior indirectly.

Because literary characters frequently experience both immediate emotional reactions and deeper psychological conflicts, Krech's classification provides a comprehensive framework for examining how emotions are represented throughout a narrative. In this study, Krech's classification serves as the primary analytical framework for identifying and interpreting the emotional experiences of Benji and David in A Real Pain (2024).

Movie Script as a Literary Text

A movie script, or screenplay, is the written foundation of a film that presents the narrative structure, dialogue, character development, scene descriptions, and dramatic actions before the production process begins. Although primarily created as a production document, a screenplay can also be analyzed as a literary text because it contains narrative elements

comparable to those found in novels and dramas, including characterization, plot, setting, conflict, and theme (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

Unlike a completed film, a screenplay presents characters' thoughts, conversations, emotional expressions, and dramatic situations entirely through written language. These characteristics make movie scripts particularly suitable for literary and psychological analysis because researchers can examine emotional representation directly from the textual narrative without being influenced by cinematic techniques such as acting, editing, or cinematography (Hurbis-Cherrier & Rabiger, 2020).

Accordingly, the screenplay of A Real Pain (2024) serves as the primary source of data in this study because it provides detailed textual evidence of the emotional interactions between the two main characters, Benji and David.

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined emotional representation using David Krech's classification of emotions in different literary and audiovisual works. Saraszeta, Prabowo, and Ardini (2025) analyzed idiomatic expressions in A Real Pain using McCarthy and O'Dell's framework. Their findings demonstrate that idiomatic expressions contribute to character portrayal and emotional expression, although the study focuses on linguistic features rather than emotional classification. Lubis and Hidayatullah (2024) investigated emotional classification in Idgitaf's Mengudara album using David Krech's theory. Their qualitative analysis identified ten emotional categories, with fear emerging as the dominant emotion expressed in the song lyrics. Wisnu and Azhari (2024) analyzed the emotional experiences of Suminta in the drama Sayang Ada Orang Lain using Krech's classification of emotions. The study revealed that sadness dominated the character's emotional experiences as a consequence of social and personal conflicts. Although these studies apply David Krech's theory, they investigate different research objects, including song lyrics, drama scripts, and linguistic expressions. None of them specifically examine the emotional dynamics between two major characters in a contemporary movie screenplay by integrating literary psychology with textual narrative analysis.

Based on the previous studies, research employing David Krech's classification of emotions has mainly focused on novels, drama scripts, and song lyrics. Limited attention has been given to contemporary movie screenplays, particularly those that explore the emotional interactions of multiple protagonists within a single narrative. Furthermore, previous studies generally identify emotional categories without explaining how emotional experiences contribute to characterization and narrative development. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the basic and complex emotions experienced by Benji and David in A Real Pain (2024). Using David Krech's classification of emotions within a literary psychology framework, this study explains not only the types of emotions represented in the screenplay but also how these emotions shape the characters' development and interpersonal relationships throughout the narrative.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine the emotions depicted by the two main characters, Benji and David, in the screenplay A Real Pain (2024). Since the objective of the study is to interpret emotional representations expressed through textual narratives rather than to measure them quantitatively, a qualitative approach is considered appropriate. The study adopted a literary psychology perspective and employed David Krech's classification of emotions as the analytical framework to classify and interpret the emotional experiences represented in the screenplay.

Data Source

The primary data of this study were obtained from the screenplay of A Real Pain (2024), written and directed by Jesse Eisenberg. A screenplay is the written version of a film that presents the complete narrative through dialogues, scene descriptions, character actions, and stage directions before the production process begins (Bang, 2022). The screenplay was selected because it constitutes the primary textual source from which all dialogue, stage directions, and character actions were analyzed. Unlike the finished film, which communicates meaning through audiovisual elements such as cinematography, editing, music, and acting, a screenplay presents the story entirely in written form. Consequently, it provides direct textual evidence of characters' emotions, interactions, and narrative development, making it an appropriate source for literary and psychological analysis (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

The screenplay was retrieved from the Internet Movie Script Database (IMSDb), a publicly accessible online repository that provides film screenplays for educational and research purposes. The screenplay was selected because it contains complete dialogues, narrative descriptions, and character interactions that accurately represent the emotional experiences of the two main characters throughout the story. Since the objective of this study is to examine emotions as represented in the written narrative rather than in audiovisual performance, the screenplay serves as the primary source of data. The e raw data consisted of textual units containing emotional expressions, including dialogues, narrative descriptions, character actions, and stage directions involving Benji and David. These textual units were identified, documented, and organized for further analysis according to the research objectives.

Data Collection

The data were collected using the documentation method. First, the researcher watched A Real Pain (2024) to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline, character relationships, and narrative context. The screenplay was then read several times to familiarize the researcher with the sequence of events and the emotional development of the characters. During subsequent readings, all dialogues, narrative descriptions, character

actions, and stage directions related to the emotional experiences of Benji and David were identified and highlighted. Relevant excerpts were then recorded and organized according to the emerging emotional categories to facilitate systematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using David Krech's (1969) classification of emotions within the framework of literary psychology. The analysis consisted of four stages.

First, all identified textual units were examined to determine whether they represented emotional expressions experienced by Benji or David. Second, each excerpt was coded and classified into one of Krech's emotional categories, namely basic emotions (happiness, sadness, fear, and anger) or complex emotions (love, guilt, shame, and repressed guilt). The classification was based on the contextual meaning of the dialogues, narrative descriptions, and character actions presented in the screenplay.

Third, the classified data were interpreted by considering the narrative context, characterization, and interpersonal relationships between the two main characters. This stage aimed to explain how emotions were represented and how they contributed to the psychological development of the characters throughout the narrative.

Finally, the findings were synthesized and discussed by relating the identified emotional patterns to David Krech's theory and relevant previous studies. This process enabled the researcher to explain not only the types of emotions represented in the screenplay but also their significance in shaping character development and supporting the progression of the narrative.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings demonstrate that although Benji and David encounter similar situations throughout the narrative, they differ considerably in the ways they experience and express emotions. Benji generally communicates his emotions openly through verbal expressions and spontaneous behavior, whereas David tends to regulate and internalize his emotional responses. These contrasting emotional patterns contribute significantly to the characterization of both protagonists and shape the interpersonal conflicts that drive the narrative.

The discussion is organized into two sections. The first examines the representation of basic emotions, while the second analyzes complex emotions. Each subsection interprets selected extracts from the screenplay using Krech and Crutchfield's (1969) theory and discusses how the emotions contribute to character development and interpersonal relationships.

Basic Emotions

David Krech and Crutchfield (1969) define basic emotions as immediate psychological responses that naturally arise when individuals encounter particular situations. These emotions include happiness, sadness, fear, and anger. The analysis indicates that all four categories are represented in the screenplay. However, the frequency and manner in which they are

expressed differ between Benji and David, reflecting their contrasting personalities and psychological conditions.

Happiness Experienced Appears in Benji

The analysis identified happiness as one of the dominant basic emotions experienced by Benji throughout the screenplay. His happiness is primarily expressed through spontaneous verbal expressions, positive interactions with others, and emotional openness. In contrast, David experiences happiness less frequently and tends to express positive emotions in a more restrained manner. These contrasting emotional patterns demonstrate the different ways both characters respond to meaningful interpersonal experiences.

The movie script shows how happy Benji is through the dialogue. Benji's quick answers, especially when talking with other people following the same guide in Poland, were easy to notice. Benji is eager to meet new people and listen to their stories, which is clear from the things he says.

The following dialogue illustrates Benji's expression of happiness.

> ELOGE: I guess you won't be the only one on this trip, James.
> JAMES: Happy for the company, Eloge.
> ELOGE: But I did convert to Judaism, about ten years ago. I am actually African born, Rwandan.
> This is fucking music to Benji's ears
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 19)

Benji's inner thoughts are shown in this quotation, "This is fucking music to Benji's ears," but he doesn't say it out loud. The quotation shows that when Benji finds out that Eloge is from Rwanda and has converted to Judaism, he suddenly expresses how happy, excited, or intrigued he is. Benji's strong curiosity in people from other backgrounds, cultures, and histories is the reason for this response. The narrator's description shows his internal joy, allowing the audience to understand his feelings even though he doesn't express them verbally. Benji's personality becomes more vibrant when he meets people with unique life experiences. He is happiest when he has strong relationships with other people and when he is doing things that align with his values. As a result, the script gently depicts Benji as someone who expresses his emotions, is intrigued, and is sympathetic.

Furthermore, another quotation shows Benji's happiness in dialogue:

> INT. WARSAW HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT
> David squeezes into the cramped bathroom. Benji closes the door.
> DAVID: Why are we in here?
> BENJI: (huddling up intensely) I just wanna thank you so much for doin this with me. I know it was tough for you to take off work, leave your little boy. But I didn't realize I how much I needed this.
> DAVID: Well, that's great, man. I'm happy to... see you happy. I know it's been a tough few month
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 35-36)

In this quotation, Benji's genuine comment about this trip with David affects him as a person. His comments show how the trip with David affects him. His intense huddling shows that he wants to share something important. By praising David's sacrifices, such as taking off work and leaving his young son, Benji conveys that he understands the importance of their relationship and genuinely cherishes their shared experience. Benji feels happy when someone he trusts deeply notices him, encourages him, and understands him. His actions show his gratitude. Benji's statement, "I didn't realize how much I needed this," suggests that being with David gives him a sense of security and comfort that he hasn't experienced during the "tough few months" that David mentioned. In this conversation, Benji's happiness is portrayed as warm, genuine, and personal. He expresses his desire for emotional intimacy and connection, showing how his happiness is connected to the comfort and company he finds in David. Consequently, this exchange effectively characterizes Benji, highlighting the profound impact of his relationship on his mental state and revealing his more reserved inner world.

Sadness Experienced Appears in Benji

Unlike happiness, sadness is portrayed as a prolonged emotional experience that significantly influences both characters throughout the screenplay. The analysis indicates that sadness is primarily associated with grief, loneliness, disappointment, and unresolved family memories. Although both characters experience sadness, they respond to it differently. Benji externalizes his emotional pain through direct verbal expressions and impulsive behavior, whereas David tends to internalize his sadness and suppress his emotional reactions.

The following quotation illustrates Benji's sadness:

> BENJI: And I've been in kind of a funk since she died.
> MARCIA: I'm so sorry, Benji.
> BENJI: Yo, thank you Marcia, you're a sweetheart. And things have been kinda downhill for me. She was my favorite person in the world. (Genuinely chokes up) Shit, I'm sorry.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 22)

The quotation above shows how Benji feels when he talks about his grandma's death. The dialogue shows how important his grief is. He says that he's been feeling down since she died. He even says that she was his favorite person in the world. This shows how deep his inner pain is. When he says "Shit, I'm sorry," it shows that he is sensitive and uncomfortable with expressing sadness to others. This means that he is not used to sharing his mental struggles or weaknesses with people. Benji's honesty in this conversation shows a different, more sensitive side of his personality. This is different from his usual loud and funny personality. This quotation accurately describes Benji. He hides his inner pain behind humor, but he also lets his words reveal his pain.

Fear Experienced Appears in Benji

The following details in the movie script show how Benji's expresses his fear:

> BENJI: Just the creepy feeling of being, like, royalty on this train, you know? Does anyone not see the irony here?
> DAVID: Benji, please
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 44)

Based on the quotation above, the use of characterization through dialogue method express Benji's fear where it takes place inside the first-class train car, considering he has been reflecting back on how Jews were similarly oppressed, especially the earlier train incident, Benji's feelings are a mixture of fear and rage. This complex emotional reaction demonstrates that his fear is related to collective memory and past trauma in addition to the current circumstance. He uses words like "creepy," "irony," and "royalty on this train" to suggest a strong emotional discomfort. He implies that the difference between their comfortable situation and the terrible past related to trains during the Holocaust makes him feel morally and psychologically troubled.

Anger Experienced Appears in Benji

The following details in the movie script show how Benji expresses his anger or rage:

> Benji claps one hand together and motions toward James, as if to say "James won't shut the fuck up."
> David looks at Benji like, "Who the fuck cares?" Benji responds with an expression like, "I fucking care."
> Benji starts heading over to James. David knows it's not good.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 60)

Based on the quotation above, the scene takes place within a Jewish cemetery with Benji, David, and their guided tour group. According to James, Kopleman's grave is the oldest in Poland; it before Shakespeare's lifetime, the United States' founding, and the development of the locomotive. However, Benji becomes upset and angry because he thinks that a cemetery is an honorable and sacred place. He feels this way of the sadness that the Jewish people buried there experienced in the past. His anxious body language, strong facial expressions, and decision to face James's show how emotionally tense he is. These actions show how important it is to Benji to respect Jewish heritage. In the end, this way of describing the character shows Benji's strong emotions, how he protects his culture, and how he gets angry when people ignore his history or religious beliefs.

The movie script also says that Benji's anger is shown through his actions. This shows how his frustration and anger appear physically:

> INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
> They are through dinner, sipping drinks. The mood feels light, except Benji who is stewing.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 64)

The other characters are having a nice, relaxing dinner, but Benji's actions make it clear that he is mad. His anger contrasts with the happiness around him, showing what he's feeling. The script uses the word "stewing" to describe Benji, showing that he is unhappy on the inside. This is shown through things like fidgeting, stiff posture, or restless movements. This way, we can understand his unhappiness without needing to have a conversation about it. Benji is described as a passionate and morally oriented person. He reacts intensely to events he thinks to be unfair or

insulting. His anger is shown through how he acts instead of through what he says. This shows that he is someone who is very sensitive to the pain of others and is unafraid to express himself, even in situations where he might not be able to.

Guilt & Repressed Guilt Experienced Appears in Benji

Guilt and repressed guilt are classified by Krech and Crutchfield (1969) as complex emotions because they involve self-evaluation, moral awareness, and cognitive reflection rather than immediate emotional reactions. The analysis reveals that Benji experiences both emotions throughout the screenplay. His feelings of guilt emerge when he recognizes the burden that his behavior places on David, while repressed guilt is reflected in his tendency to conceal these feelings instead of expressing them verbally. The following excerpt illustrates Benji's experience of guilt.

> David grabs his bag and heads for the exit. Benji follows, looking guilty.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 48)

This excerpt represents guilt because Benji becomes aware that his actions have contributed to David's emotional and physical exhaustion. Earlier in the journey, David assumes responsibility for organizing the trip, supporting Benji emotionally, and ensuring that everything proceeds smoothly. After leaving the train, Benji notices David's fatigue and hurried movements, prompting him to recognize the consequences of his own dependence on his cousin. His guilty facial expression reflects self-awareness and remorse, which are central characteristics of guilt according to Krech and Crutchfield (1969). Rather than resulting from external punishment, Benji's guilt arises from his personal realization that he has failed to reciprocate David's care and responsibility.

From a literary psychology perspective, this scene reveals an important aspect of Benji's psychological development. Although he is frequently portrayed as impulsive, outspoken, and emotionally expressive, he also possesses a strong moral awareness. His guilty expression demonstrates that he is capable of evaluating his own behavior and recognizing its emotional impact on others. This moment therefore humanizes Benji by showing that his seemingly carefree personality masks a deeper sense of responsibility and empathy toward David.

Shame Experienced Appears in Benji

Shame is one of the complex emotions identified in Benji's emotional experiences throughout the screenplay. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), shame arises when individuals negatively evaluate themselves or perceive that they fail to meet personal or social expectations. Unlike guilt, which is directed toward one's actions, shame is closely associated with negative self-perception and feelings of inadequacy. The analysis indicates that Benji experiences shame when he is confronted with questions about his future and personal achievements, as illustrated in the following excerpt.

> There's a calm pause. David still has the joint.
> DAVID: So, what are you thinking about doing when you get back to Binghamton?
> BENJI: What do you mean?
> DAVID: I mean, like, what's your plan?

> Benji pauses, uncomfortable. He notices David has the joint.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 84)

This dialogue represents shame because Benji reacts with visible discomfort when David asks about his future plans. Rather than answering directly, Benji delays his response and redirects the conversation, suggesting that the question evokes feelings of insecurity rather than simple uncertainty. His hesitation and avoidance indicate that he perceives himself as falling short of the expectations associated with adulthood, career, and personal achievement. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), shame develops when individuals experience negative self-evaluation and become acutely aware of perceived personal deficiencies. Benji's reaction reflects this psychological condition, as he appears unable to discuss his future without experiencing emotional discomfort. From the perspective of literary psychology, this scene reveals Benji's fragile self-concept. Throughout the screenplay, David is portrayed as a responsible individual with a stable family life and clear direction, whereas Benji struggles with instability and uncertainty. Although David's question is asked out of genuine concern, Benji interprets it as a reminder of his own perceived failures. Consequently, his shame does not arise from David's intention but from his own internal comparison with his cousin. This response demonstrates how shame is rooted in self-perception rather than in external judgment alone.

Love Experienced Appears in Benji

Love is classified by Krech and Crutchfield (1969) as a complex emotion that involves affection, emotional attachment, empathy, and concern for the well-being of others. Unlike basic emotions, love develops through interpersonal relationships and is reflected in consistent acts of care and emotional support. The analysis indicates that Benji expresses love primarily through thoughtful actions rather than explicit declarations of affection. One example is presented in the following extract.

> BENJI: Don't worry. I picked you up a yogurt. (takes a yogurt out of his pocket) It's a little warm.
> DAVID: Did you really get this for me?
> BENJI: Of course, dude. I figured you'd be rushing around and everything.
> DAVID: Thank you, Benji.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 4)

This extract represents love because Benji demonstrates genuine care for David's well-being through a thoughtful and considerate action. Rather than merely expressing affection verbally, Benji anticipates David's needs by bringing him food, recognizing that David is often preoccupied with organizing the trip and may neglect basic necessities such as eating. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), love is characterized by empathy, concern, and a willingness to prioritize another person's welfare. Benji's action reflects these characteristics, as his concern arises from an understanding of David's habits and emotional state rather than from a sense of obligation.

> David takes his socks off and sniffs. Benji notices:

> BENJI: Yo, dude. I totally forgot. You have super nice feet.
> DAVID: Do I?
> BENJI: Yeah, and they've aged really, really well. Your toes are like mad straight. It's nice.
> DAVID: Thanks, man.
> BENJI: No weird feet knuckles or stray hairs. Very classy.
> DAVID: Okay, thank you. I guess I never really evaluated them.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 14)

This extract also represents love, as reflected in Benji's spontaneous expression of admiration and personal attention toward David. Rather than teasing or mocking his cousin, Benji openly compliments a detail that most people would consider insignificant. His remarks demonstrate genuine affection and emotional closeness, indicating that he feels comfortable expressing appreciation without embarrassment. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), love is characterized by empathy, emotional attachment, and a sincere concern for another person's well-being. Benji's comments illustrate these characteristics by revealing his attentiveness to David and his willingness to express positive feelings openly.

Complex Emotions Experienced by David

David is portrayed as a cautious, reserved, and emotionally controlled character. Throughout the screenplay, he tends to regulate his emotions internally rather than expressing them openly. His emotional responses are generally conveyed through subtle facial expressions, silence, restrained dialogue, and nonverbal behavior. The analysis identified three basic emotions and three complex emotions experienced by David.

Happiness Experienced Appears in David

The analysis identified several instances in which David experiences happiness, one of the basic emotions classified by Krech and Crutchfield (1969). Although David is generally portrayed as a reserved and emotionally controlled character, the screenplay reveals moments in which he expresses genuine happiness through subtle verbal and nonverbal responses. Unlike Benji, who communicates positive emotions openly and enthusiastically, David's happiness is often reflected in his spontaneous laughter, relaxed gestures, and comfortable interactions with those closest to him. These expressions suggest that David's positive emotions emerge primarily in situations that provide emotional security, familiarity, and meaningful interpersonal connection. The following extracts illustrate how happiness is represented through David's emotional experiences in the screenplay**.**

> BENJI: Turn around! Let me get the whole picture!
> David laughs and does a cute little spin.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 2)

This extract represents happiness, one of the basic emotions identified by Krech and Crutchfield (1969). David's laughter and playful response indicate an immediate feeling of pleasure resulting from his reunion with Benji after a long period of separation. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), happiness is characterized by positive emotional experiences that emerge in response to situations perceived as enjoyable or personally meaningful.

David's spontaneous laughter and willingness to participate in Benji's playful request demonstrate that he feels emotionally comfortable and genuinely pleased by their reunion. From the perspective of literary psychology, this interaction provides an early indication of the close emotional bond between the two cousins. Although David is generally portrayed as cautious, reserved, and emotionally restrained throughout the screenplay, this moment reveals a temporary relaxation of those characteristics. His playful behavior reflects a sense of trust and familiarity that allows him to respond naturally to Benji's enthusiasm. Rather than expressing happiness through explicit verbal statements, David communicates his positive emotions through nonverbal behavior, illustrating that emotional expression can also be conveyed through gestures and actions.

Fear Experienced Appears in David

Fear is one of the basic emotions experienced by David throughout the screenplay. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), fear emerges when individuals perceive danger, uncertainty, or potential negative consequences, often producing feelings of anxiety and psychological tension. The analysis indicates that David frequently experiences fear in situations created by Benji's impulsive and reckless behavior. Unlike Benji, who tends to act spontaneously, David anticipates possible risks and becomes increasingly anxious when events appear beyond his control.

> DAVID: This is ridiculous. Tickets are probably like twelve bucks!
> BENJI: It's the principle of the thing. We shouldn't have to pay for train tickets in Poland. This is our country!
> DAVID: No it's not! It WAS our country. They kicked us out because they thought we were cheap!
> The boys enter the next car. David is increasingly nervous. They see the conductor enter from the other side.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 52)

This extract represents fear because David becomes increasingly anxious as he realizes that Benji's plan to ride the train without paying may lead to confrontation or punishment. His objections and rising nervousness indicate that he perceives the situation as risky and potentially humiliating. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), fear is characterized by feelings of insecurity and apprehension triggered by perceived threats. David's reaction reflects these characteristics, as he worries about being caught by the conductor and facing the consequences of their actions. From the perspective of literary psychology, this scene highlights David's tendency to anticipate negative outcomes and prioritize safety and social responsibility. His fear does not arise solely from the possibility of punishment but also from the loss of control created by Benji's impulsive decision-making. This psychological pattern contrasts with Benji's carefree attitude and contributes to the recurring tension between the two cousins throughout the narrative.

> David is silently panicking as he watches Benji's bag go through a sensor. David makes nervous eye contact with the serious Polish TSA Agent. Benji is unfazed as his bag emerges on the other side
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 11)

This extract also represents fear. David's silent panic and nervous eye contact with the TSA agent indicate intense anxiety even before any actual problem occurs. Rather than reacting to a confirmed threat, he imagines the possibility of something going wrong and becomes emotionally distressed. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), fear often involves anticipation of danger and uncertainty about future events. David's behavior illustrates this anticipatory fear, as he mentally prepares for a negative outcome that may never happen. From a literary psychology perspective, David's fear reveals a personality that is cautious, responsible, and highly sensitive to potential risks. He tends to imagine worst-case scenarios and feels responsible for preventing harm, especially when Benji's actions may endanger them. This contrasts sharply with Benji's relaxed and unconcerned attitude, reinforcing the screenplay's portrayal of two individuals who respond to uncertainty in fundamentally different ways.

Anger Experienced Appears in David

Anger is one of the basic emotions experienced by David in response to situations that threaten his sense of responsibility and emotional security. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), anger arises when individuals perceive frustration, disappointment, or interference with their expectations or goals. Throughout the screenplay, David's anger is often triggered by Benji's impulsive behavior, particularly when it places Benji or others at risk. Unlike Benji, who expresses anger openly and confrontationally, David tends to suppress his emotions until prolonged stress and anxiety eventually manifest as visible frustration.

> INT. LUBLIN HOTEL ROOM – MORNING
> David is sleeping, sitting up in bed. He had a rough night. Suddenly, the room phone rings. He startles awake.
> DAVID: Hello.
> BENJI (on the phone): Dude, we're all downstairs waitin' on you.
> INT. LUBLIN HOTEL ELEVATOR – MORNING
> David, now dressed, rides the elevator down. He's pissed.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 74).

This extract represents anger because David's emotional response develops after a night of worry caused by Benji's unexplained disappearance. The screenplay describes him as having "a rough night" and later explicitly states that he is "pissed," indicating that his accumulated anxiety has transformed into frustration and anger. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), anger is commonly elicited when individuals experience prolonged frustration or when their expectations are disrupted by the actions of others. David's emotional state reflects these characteristics, as his concern for Benji's safety ultimately develops into resentment after his efforts and worries appear to be disregarded. From the perspective of literary psychology, David's anger is not merely a spontaneous emotional outburst but the result of accumulated psychological tension. His frustration stems from the emotional burden of constantly feeling responsible for Benji while receiving little reassurance in return. Rather than immediately expressing his dissatisfaction, David internalizes his concerns until they become emotionally overwhelming. This

pattern suggests that his anger functions as a secondary emotion, emerging after extended periods of fear, worry, and emotional exhaustion.

Overall, David's anger is represented through restrained emotional expression, physical tension, and visible frustration following prolonged psychological stress. These findings suggest that anger in A Real Pain function not only as an immediate reaction to conflict but also as the culmination of unresolved anxiety and emotional responsibility, highlighting David's role as the more cautious and protective character in the narrative.

Guilt and Repressed Guilt Experienced by David

Guilt and repressed guilt are among the complex emotions experienced by David throughout the screenplay. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), guilt arises when individuals recognize that their actions or inactions have violated personal or moral expectations, whereas repressed guilt occurs when these feelings are consciously or unconsciously suppressed rather than openly acknowledged. The analysis reveals that David experiences both emotions when Benji confronts the family's past and indirectly accuses those who abandoned him during his most difficult moments.

> BENJI: Oh, Marcia, I'm sorry, fuck them. I wouldn't miss a week. She was tough on me. She was the only one in the whole fuckin' family who would keep me honest. Everyone else just disappeared when I needed them most.
> There's a weird silence at the table because of his admission and because David is being implicated.
> JAMES: She sounds really special.
> Benji nods to himself. David stares at Benji, guilty and also irritated.
> (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 68)

This extract represents guilt because Benji's emotional confession implicitly reminds David of his own absence during Benji's difficult periods. Benji's statement that "everyone else just disappeared when I needed them most" indirectly implicates David, prompting him to confront the emotional consequences of his past actions. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), guilt is characterized by self-reproach and the recognition that one has failed to fulfill personal or moral responsibilities. David's guilty expression reflects this internal evaluation, suggesting that he acknowledges Benji's emotional pain and recognizes his own perceived shortcomings as a cousin. From the perspective of literary psychology, David's reaction illustrates how unresolved family relationships can evoke self-conscious emotions. Rather than defending himself or denying Benji's accusation, David remains silent while staring at Benji, indicating that he is processing the emotional weight of the confession. His silence suggests that the emotional conflict is directed inward rather than expressed through confrontation, revealing his tendency to internalize psychological distress.

The same extract also illustrates repressed guilt. Although David's facial expression reveals remorse, he does not verbally respond to Benji's accusation or attempt to explain his past behavior. Instead, his guilt remains unspoken, accompanied by visible irritation that reflects emotional tension rather than open acknowledgment. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969),

repressed guilt occurs when individuals suppress feelings of remorse because they are unable or unwilling to confront them directly. David's silence therefore functions as an indicator of emotional repression, demonstrating that his psychological conflict remains unresolved.

Shame Experienced Appears in David

Shame is another complex emotion experienced by David throughout the screenplay. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), shame arises when individuals perceive that they have failed to meet personal or social expectations and become negatively aware of themselves in the presence of others. Unlike guilt, which focuses on one's actions, shame involves a negative evaluation of the self and is often accompanied by embarrassment, humiliation, and a desire to avoid public attention. The analysis indicates that David experiences shame when Benji publicly criticizes his decisions and places him in an uncomfortable social situation.

> BENJI: Don't take this the wrong way or anything, but we've just been going from one touristy thing to another, not meeting anyone who's actually Polish.
> JAMES: Benji, I'm sorry to say this, but that's kind of what these tours are. You signed up for this tour.
> BENJI: Dave signed up for the tour.
> James is incredibly uncomfortable. He looks to David, who is mortified. (Eisenberg, 2024, p. 61).

This extract represents shame because David becomes the focus of public attention after Benji shifts responsibility for the guided tour to him. Although Benji's remark is brief, it implicitly criticizes David's decision in front of the other tour participants, placing him in an embarrassing social situation. The screenplay explicitly describes David as "mortified," indicating an intense feeling of humiliation and self-consciousness. According to Krech and Crutchfield (1969), shame develops when individuals perceive that they have been negatively evaluated or exposed before others, leading to feelings of personal inadequacy and embarrassment. David's reaction reflects these characteristics, as his emotional discomfort stems not only from Benji's criticism but also from the public nature of the incident. From the perspective of literary psychology, David's shame reflects his strong concern for social acceptance and interpersonal harmony. Throughout the screenplay, he consistently attempts to avoid conflict and maintain positive relationships with those around him. Consequently, being publicly identified as the person responsible for the itinerary threatens his self-image and places him in a psychologically vulnerable position. His reaction demonstrates that his emotional distress is rooted more in concern about how others perceive him than in the criticism itself.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to classify the emotions experienced by Benji and David in the screenplay A Real Pain (2024) using David Krech and Crutchfield's (1969) classification of emotions within the framework of

literary psychology. The analysis identified eight emotional categories portrayed throughout the screenplay, consisting of four basic emotions happiness, sadness, fear, and anger and four complex emotions love, guilt, shame, and repressed guilt. These findings demonstrate that both characters experience similar emotional situations but differ significantly in the ways they perceive, regulate, and express their emotions.

The analysis reveals that Benji predominantly externalizes his emotions through direct verbal expressions, impulsive behavior, and spontaneous emotional reactions. In contrast, David tends to internalize his emotions, expressing psychological conflict through silence, restrained gestures, and subtle behavioral responses. These contrasting emotional patterns not only distinguish the personalities of the two protagonists but also shape the interpersonal conflicts and emotional dynamics that drive the narrative. The findings support Krech and Crutchfield's (1969) argument that emotions are influenced by both situational experiences and individual psychological characteristics.

This study also demonstrates that Krech and Crutchfield's classification of emotions provides an effective analytical framework for examining emotional representation in contemporary film screenplays. By applying literary psychology to A Real Pain, the study extends previous research that primarily focused on identifying emotional categories by showing how emotions function as psychological mechanisms that construct characterization, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and contribute to narrative development. Consequently, the screenplay portrays emotions not as isolated psychological reactions but as interconnected experiences that reflect the complexity of human relationships, memory, responsibility, and personal identity.

Despite these findings, this study is limited to the analysis of two main characters in a single screenplay using one theoretical framework. Future studies may compare emotional representations across different films, literary genres, or cultural contexts, or combine Krech and Crutchfield's theory with other psychological approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of emotional representation in literary and cinematic works.

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