

## CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

This final chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the research on judicial stress in the lyrics of *Sentenced* and the in-game story of *Il Siracusano*. The study aimed to identify the internal and external forms of stress experienced by the protagonist and analyze how these struggles are represented through semiotic symbols. Using Miller's theory of judicial stress and Barthes' semiotic framework, the researcher uncovered the connection between a character's psychological burden and Siracusa law's fatal flaw. In addition to summarizing the findings, this chapter provides suggestions for future researchers interested in exploring similar themes in popular media and literary studies.

### 5.1 Conclusion

This research explores the representation of judicial stress and systemic corruption through a semiotic analysis of the *Arknights* EP *Sentenced* and *Il Siracusano* in-game story. Synthesising Monica K. Miller's (2011) framework on judicial stress with Roland Barthes' semiotic theory reveals several key conclusions about the portrayal of the judiciary in popular media.

Firstly, the analysis reveals that the internal factors of judicial stress are primarily manifested through the 'moral dilution' and psychological fragmentation of the protagonist, Lavinia Falcone. The lyrics "The face in the mirror, I barely know her" signify a deep identity crisis, in which the judge can no longer recognise the idealised version of herself who once pursued true justice. This internal conflict is not merely personal, but a consequence of a 'bruised conscience', where the

constant compromise of ethics results in the protagonist feeling 'sentenced' by her professional decisions.

Secondly, external factors of judicial stress are rooted in the institutional decay of Siracusa, specifically the 'Grey Hall' and the overarching influence of the Famiglie. The research finds that the judicial struggle is characterised by a lack of autonomy, with the law being described as a 'distorted old rubric' that the judge is unable to improve. This institutional pressure transforms the judge's role from that of an independent arbiter to that of a 'foot soldier' who merely executes the will of those in power. This highlights the structural challenges that make impartiality impossible in a compromised system.

Thirdly, a semiotic analysis of symbols such as the gavel, the monster and the foot soldier uncovers the 'myth' of the Siracusan legal system. The 'gavel', denoting authority, becomes a source of torment that falls like 'cannonballs', symbolising the destructive weight of a judge's decisions in a corrupt society. Furthermore, the 'foot soldier' symbol deconstructs the myth that judges possess inherent power, instead revealing that they are instruments of the mafia that obey its commands. Collectively, these symbols portray a 'ruined institution' where traditional values such as righteousness and honour are exposed as hollow myths designed to mask exploitation.

In conclusion, this study shows that the song *Sentenced* and the story *Il Siracusano* are strong warnings about how a corrupt legal system fails. By using the ideas of Miller and Barthes, the research proves that judicial stress is more than just a personal problem; it is a sign that the whole system is broken. In Siracusa, the

law is not used to protect people, but rather as a tool for the powerful to control others. This creates a loop of despair: a 'ruined institution' causes a 'bruised conscience' for the judge, and that guilt makes the institution even weaker. Ultimately, the protagonist is 'sentenced' by her own attempt to stay honest in a dishonest world. Her tools, like the gavel, lose their meaning and become symbols of her pain instead of her power. By looking at this one character's struggle, we can better understand how games and music highlight real-world problems.

## 5.2 Recommendation

Despite its findings, this research has limitations. The analysis focuses on only one song, one character, and selected story materials. Additionally, semiotic interpretation contains subjective elements, meaning different analytical approaches may reveal alternative perspectives. This topic could be examined through psychological or physiological studies, particularly regarding how stress, trauma, or emotional strain shape a character's behaviour and symbolism. Future research could analyse other *Arknights* EP songs, compare multiple characters using different theoretical frameworks, examine player interpretations, or explore how game media communicates social issues more broadly.