

**The Resilience of the Main Character in the Film Farha (2021): A Structuralist Analysis**

**Wafa Fatimatuzzahra**  
[wfzhr11@gmail.com](mailto:wfzhr11@gmail.com)

**Irfan Addriadi**  
[addriadi@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:addriadi@uinsgd.ac.id)

**Khomisah**  
[khomisah@uinsgb.ac.id](mailto:khomisah@uinsgb.ac.id)

**Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung**

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the forms of resilience exhibited by the main character in the film Farha (2021) by Darin J. Sallam, as well as to examine how the film's intrinsic elements work together to construct the meaning of that resilience. This film was selected because it depicts the traumatic experiences of a Palestinian teenage girl living amidst the 1948 Nakba tragedy, while also showcasing the protagonist's struggle in facing psychological pressure, fear, and alienation during the war. This study was conducted by integrating Wellek and Warren's structuralism with Michael Ungar's multisystemic resilience theory. The research method used is qualitative descriptive, with research data consisting of scenes, conflicts, and visual elements that demonstrate the main character's resilience process. Data was collected through the watch and note technique by watching the film repeatedly, then selecting scenes relevant to the research focus. The results of the analysis show that the character Farha's resilience is constructed through three main forms adaptive negotiation, ecological resilience, and meaning-making, which evolve alongside changes in the conflict and the character's psychological state. Additionally, intrinsic elements such as characterization, plot, setting, conflict, and visual symbols such as confined spaces and the sky play a crucial role in reinforcing the portrayal of the protagonist's resilience. Through this approach, the researcher asserts that resilience in the film Farha is a process of adaptation and transformation rooted in the character's inner strength and the social and cultural values that underpin it, thereby enriching film studies through an interdisciplinary approach that bridges literary structuralism and contemporary psychosocial perspectives.

**Keywords:** Resilience; The Film Farha; Structuralism; Wallek and Warren; Michael Ungar

**INTRODUCTION**

Literature is a form of human expression that depicts various experiences, feelings, and life values through beautiful and meaningful language. Literary works serve

not only as a means of entertainment but also as a medium for reflecting on human social, cultural, and psychological realities. According to Wellek and Warren, a literary work is a complete and interconnected system, in which elements such as characters, plot, and setting play a role in shaping the overall meaning (Muthmainah & Rohanda, 2025). Therefore, a literary work cannot be understood in isolation but must be understood through the integration of its intrinsic elements. The structuralist approach developed by Wellek and Warren views literary works as living, interconnected structures.

Over time, film has come to be viewed as a form of modern literature that combines narrative and visual elements. Film shares structural similarities with fictional prose, such as characterization, plot, setting, and theme, which collectively construct the story's meaning. Therefore, film can be analyzed using literary theory because it possesses a system of meaning organized through narrative and symbolism. One film worth examining through this lens is *Farha* (2021) by Jordanian director Darin J. Sallam. The film explores the tragedy of the 1948 Nakba, depicting the period when thousands of Palestinians lost their homes and lands due to Israeli aggression. The story is told through the perspective of a teenage girl named Farha. The main character, Farha, is portrayed as a teenager whose life undergoes a drastic change when her village is attacked, forcing her to hide in a state of fear, loneliness, and psychological distress.

This story not only depicts the suffering caused by war, but also illustrates resilience that is, an individual's ability to endure and adapt in the face of trauma. In psychological studies, resilience is understood as a process of positive adaptation to life's pressures. Michael Ungar proposed the concept of multisystemic resilience, which states that resilience is the result of a dynamic interaction between the individual and their social, cultural, and other support systems (Ungar & Theron, 2020). Thus, an individual's resilience depends not only on internal strength but also on access to external resources that support the adaptation process. In the film *Farha*, the main character's resilience is not only portrayed through psychological aspects but is also built through the film's intrinsic elements. The confined setting, intense conflicts, and the use of visuals and audio contribute to depicting the character's emotional state. This demonstrates that the meaning of resilience does not stand alone but is formed through the integration of narrative and cinematic structures. Therefore, a structuralist approach is relevant for examining the relationships between these elements in constructing a holistic meaning.

A number of previous studies have examined the film *Farha* through the lenses of semiotics, literary psychology, and feminist literary criticism. These studies have successfully uncovered Palestinian cultural symbols, the characters' inner conflicts, and the representation of women in situations of war and colonialism. However, previous research has focused primarily on the outcomes of character representation, rather than on the process by which the characters' resilience is formed within the film's structure itself. Based on this, this study offers a novel perspective by not only analyzing *Farha* as a character who survives the trauma of

war but also examining how that resilience is shaped through spatial pressures, the development of conflict, social relationships, and the visual symbols that emerge throughout the film. Thus, this study offers a new perspective in film studies by viewing resilience not merely as an individual psychological trait, but as a meaning constructed structurally and psychosocially within the film as a whole

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies of Darin J. Sallam's film *Farha* (2021) have attracted the attention of various researchers because the film not only presents a historical narrative but also captures the complexity of individual experiences in conflict situations. Previous studies have shown that the film can be interpreted through diverse perspectives, ranging from semiotic analysis and the psychological states of the characters to gender representation within the context of colonialism. This diversity of approaches underscores that *Farha* is a film open to multidimensional social interpretations.

A study conducted by Gilang Ramadhan, Rohanda, and Dayudin (2024). Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach to analyze the relationship between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant in the film *Farha*. The study focuses on the social and cultural meanings represented through visual signs, dialogue, and narrative elements in the film as a form of representation of the collective identity of the Palestinian people during the Nakba tragedy. The results indicate the presence of social and cultural values such as religious values, solidarity, power, theory, and aesthetics that construct a sense of humanity within the film. This study successfully demonstrates how the film functions as a medium for articulating Palestinian collective memory and cultural identity. However, the research focuses more on the relationship between signs and cultural meaning, thus not yet leading to an in-depth analysis of the main character's subjective experience, particularly regarding the process of resilience and individual resilience in facing traumatic situations. Consequently, the adaptive personal dimension has not yet been comprehensively explored.

A different approach is demonstrated in the study by Eka Kurnia Firmanyah and Aulia Yolana Huzafa (2024). They employ a literary psychology perspective to examine the inner conflict of the main character in the film *Farha*. The study focuses on *Farha*'s emotional turmoil, trauma, and psychological responses to the violent situations she experiences. It employs Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, specifically the concepts of the id, ego, and superego. The results indicate that the ego component is the most dominant aspect within the protagonist when facing pressure and conflict during the war. Additionally, the study demonstrates how *Farha* employs ego defense mechanisms as a means to cope with the fear and internal pressure she experiences. To support the psychoanalytic analysis, this study also incorporates film structural analysis through Algirdas Julien Greimas's actant schema and functional structure. Nevertheless, this study focuses on internal individual analysis. It has not connected these psychological conditions to external factors that also influence the character's adaptive responses. However, in

contemporary research, understanding individual resilience needs a broader approach. This approach should consider the relationship between the individual and their environment.

Meanwhile, a study by Abdullah Faqih, Yayan Rahtikawati, and Khomisah (2024) looks at the film *Farha* through feminist literary criticism. It focuses on how Palestinian women are represented in the colonial and patriarchal context of 1948. The study shows that female characters in the film are not just victims; they also act as agents who assert their own power against oppressive social structures. By analyzing the physical, psychological, and social imagery of the female characters, this study uncovers the ideas behind the portrayal of Palestinian women. It also highlights how women resist patriarchal expectations that limit their freedom of movement. However, the research mainly focuses on gender construction and women's representation, so it has not yet made resilience as a dynamic process of psychosocial adaptation a central topic.. In other words, the characters' resilience is understood more as a form of feminist representation rather than as a process of resilience shaped through the interaction between the individual and their social environment.

From these three studies, it is evident that each has made a significant contribution to enriching our understanding of the film *Farha*, but none has yet fully integrated an analysis of the work's structure with the dynamics of individual resilience. This indicates a research gap that allows for the combination of textual and psychosocial approaches to produce a more comprehensive interpretation. Therefore, this study aims to bridge that gap by combining structural analysis and resilience theory within a single analytical framework.

Theoretically, this study draws on two main foundations: literary structuralism and resilience theory. The structuralism developed by Wellek and Warren views literary works as a cohesive and interconnected system, in which meaning does not reside in a single element but rather in the relationships between elements such as theme, plot, characters, setting, and message. This approach emphasizes the importance of internal analysis of the text or work to understand the meaning constructed as a whole. In the context of film, this approach is relevant because films also possess narrative and cinematic structures that work in unison to convey a message. Meanwhile, the theory of resilience used in this study refers to the concept of multisystemic resilience developed by Michael Ungar. Resilience is understood not as an innate trait of an individual, but as a dynamic process involving interactions between the individual and various surrounding systems, such as family, community, culture, and social conditions.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using a film analysis approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to explore and deeply understand the meaning of the main character's resilience in the film *Farha* (2021) by Darin J. Sallam through the narrative and visual elements that construct the overall story. The film in this study is viewed as a text with a structure and meaning that can be analyzed through the interrelationships among its intrinsic elements. The data sources in this study consist of the film *Farha* (2021), accessed via the official Netflix platform as the primary object of analysis, as well as various supporting references such as scholarly articles relevant to the research focus. These references are used to strengthen the theoretical foundation, particularly regarding structuralism and the concept of resilience.

### **Instruments and Procedures**

Data collection was conducted using the watch-and-note method, employing a visual and narrative analysis approach. The researcher watched the film repeatedly to understand the plot, the development of conflict, the dialogue, and the visual elements present in each scene. Subsequently, the researcher selected specific scenes deemed to represent the main character's resilience in facing stress and traumatic situations. The selection of scenes was based on several considerations, namely scenes that showed the character's psychological changes, survival skills, decision-making processes, responses to stress and trauma, as well as scenes that had a strong connection to the film's intrinsic elements such as conflict, setting, visual symbols, and plot development. The selected scenes were then documented in the form of screenshots to facilitate the interpretation of visual data.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach through several stages. The first stage involves identifying the film's intrinsic elements, such as theme, characterization, plot, setting, conflict, and message, as they appear in the selected scenes. The second stage involves interpreting the forms of resilience demonstrated by the main character using Michael Ungar's multisystemic theory of resilience, such as adaptive capacity, emotional resilience, survival processes, and the interpretation of traumatic experiences. The final stage involves linking these interpretive findings to Wellek and Warren's structuralist approach to examine the integration of the film's intrinsic elements and visual components in constructing a comprehensive understanding of resilience. The analysis results are then presented in the form of a systematic narrative description supported by scene screenshots to clarify the research interpretation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher presents the findings of a study on the forms of resilience exhibited by the main character in the film *Farha* (2021). The data analyzed in this study consists of selected scenes from the film that depict resilience, whether through the screenplay, the character's expressions, or the visual representation of the situations portrayed. These scenes were documented in the form of screenshots and analyzed based on their relationship to the elements of theme, characters, plot, setting, and message as part of the film's narrative structure.

Based on the analysis conducted, the intrinsic elements that make up the film *Farha* consist of themes. The main theme of this film is the struggle of Palestinian women in the face of social pressures and political conflicts that deprive them of their rights to freedom and education. This theme represents resilience and the spirit of perseverance amid extreme conditions. According to Wellek and Warren, a theme is the core idea that animates the entire narrative structure and serves as the unifying axis among the intrinsic elements. Furthermore, the film is set against the backdrop of the Nakba, the great tragedy that occurred in 1948 when more than 500 Palestinian villages were destroyed and over 700,000 of their inhabitants were brutally expelled from their lands (Bedirian, 2021). The film begins with peaceful life in a Palestinian village, continues with the internal conflict between Farha and her father, reaches its climax when Farha is hidden in a warehouse, and concludes with the resolution as Farha emerges into freedom. From a resilience perspective, this plot development reflects the dynamics of the resilience trajectory a psychological process that moves from stress toward adaptation and transformation (Fitriani & Rachmawati, 2021).

This study shows that the main character in the film *Farha* (2021) exhibits several forms of resilience, namely resilience in the face of limitations, the ability to manage emotions, resilience in coping with trauma, and resilience as a process of self-transformation. Therefore, through the character of Farha, who embodies these forms of resilience, the researcher understands that a person's resilience does not mean being free from fear or pain, but rather the ability to persevere and adapt amidst the most devastating situations (Ungar, 2021b). Each form of resilience emerges in different situations and is constructed through the integration of the film's intrinsic elements. Further explanations and discussions regarding each form of resilience are presented in the following subsections.

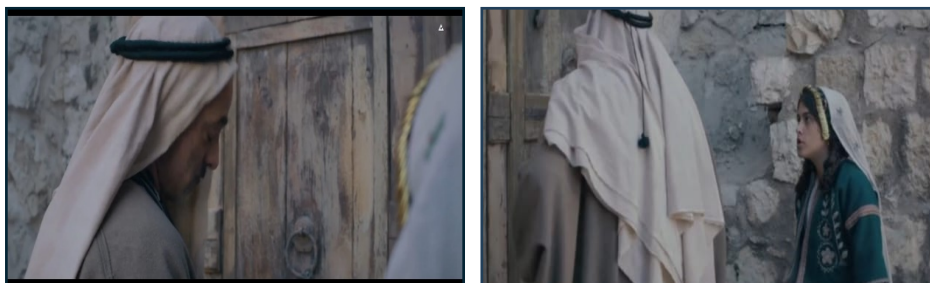
### Psychological Resilience Through Motivation and Hope for the Future

Data 1:



In the scene at 1:12, when Farha is reading under a tree while her friends play, it illustrates how resilience manifests as intrinsic motivation to fight for the future; this scene depicts “navigating resilience” an individual’s ability to find meaning and negotiate resources that support well being despite being in a situation full of limitations (Fitriani & Rachmawati, 2021). Visually, this resilience is emphasized through framing techniques that separate Farha from the background of the other children playing. This spatial separation symbolically isolates Farha from the resignation of her environment and highlights a strong internal focus. This framing technique aligns with Mahmud’s (2020) concept, which states that frame distance and framing can imply meaning or evoke emotions in the audience. The main character, Farha, is portrayed as a fourteen-year-old girl who is intelligent, diligent, and eager to learn. The characterization of this figure is central to the film’s structure because it is through the character that the themes and conflicts are realized. Wellek and Warren describe the character as a dynamic element that drives the plot and conveys the story’s moral message (Wellek & Warren, 1949).

Data 2:

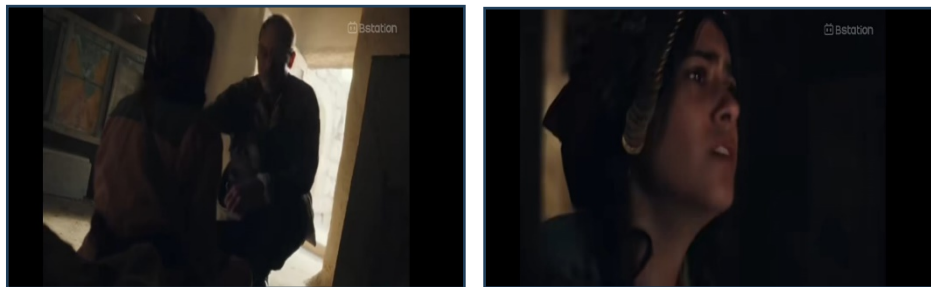


In the scene at 14:32, when Farha asks her father for permission to attend school, she demonstrates the ability to negotiate with authority figures without losing her respect. In the conversation, Farha tries to convince her father that education is important for her future, even though at that time Palestinian women were still constrained by social norms that viewed higher education as inappropriate for women. Farha’s father repeatedly refused her request due to societal views still rooted in patriarchal traditions, where women were expected to stay at home rather than pursue education. Visually, Farha’s emotional facial expressions, while

maintaining steady eye contact, reflect an adaptive inner resilience. This visual element illustrates how the subject leverages social capital and intimate relational ties to peacefully navigate the structural boundaries of patriarchy. This situation exemplifies a form of adaptive negotiation, where resilient individuals strive to negotiate meaning and agency under pressure without resorting to destructive resistance (Ungar, 2019).

### Resilience in Spatial Limitations

Data 3:

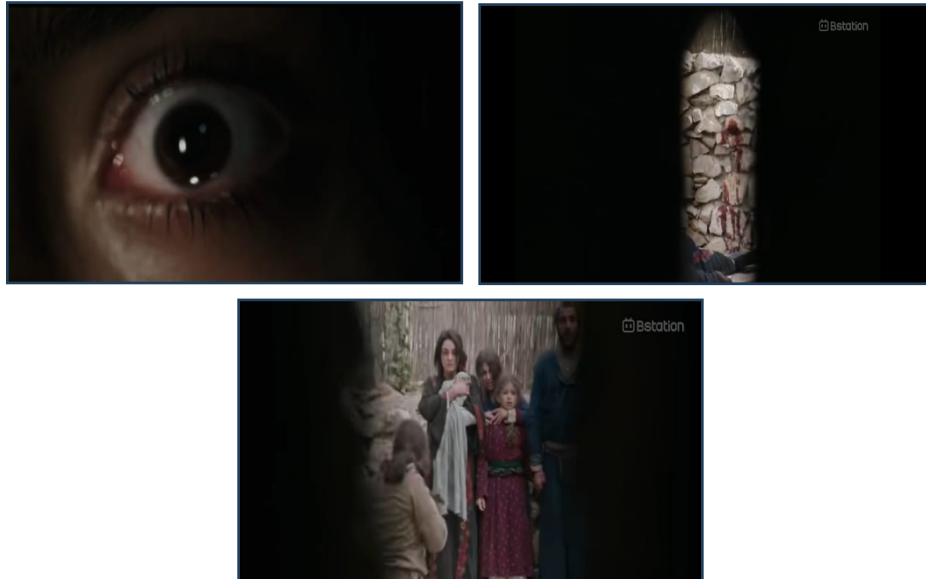


Farha's psychological transformation becomes increasingly evident in the scene at 29:08, when her father hides her in a warehouse to keep her safe from the Israeli forces. Farha's father believes that the warehouse is the safest place to protect his daughter from the increasingly dangerous war situation. This scene marks the starting point of Farha's shift from dependence toward emotional independence. This process is a manifestation of self-reconstruction within resilience, where an individual forms a new identity after losing a sense of security. Visually, the transition from bright outdoor lighting to the pitch-black darkness of the warehouse symbolically severs Farha's visual dependence on the outside world and forces her to navigate internally.

The plot of the film *Farha* is progressive, flowing from a stable phase toward collapse, and then toward the protagonist's moral rebirth. According to structuralist theory, the plot is a logical mechanism that unites events and explains character development (Broto, J. P. K. H., & Rahayu, 2020). In line with Masten's perspective, this plot demonstrates that resilience does not occur instantly but unfolds through stages involving suffering, reflection, and recovery (Masten, 2021). Additionally, this scene falls within the early stage of the conflict. The enclosed setting reinforces the atmosphere of oppression, while Farha's characterization begins to evolve from that of an ordinary teenager into an individual facing an extreme situation. The form of resilience evident in this scene is the ability to endure under uncertain conditions. According to Ungar (Ungar, 2022), resilience is an individual's adaptive process in the face of life's pressures. Thus, this scene serves as the foundational starting point for the development of the main character's resilience.

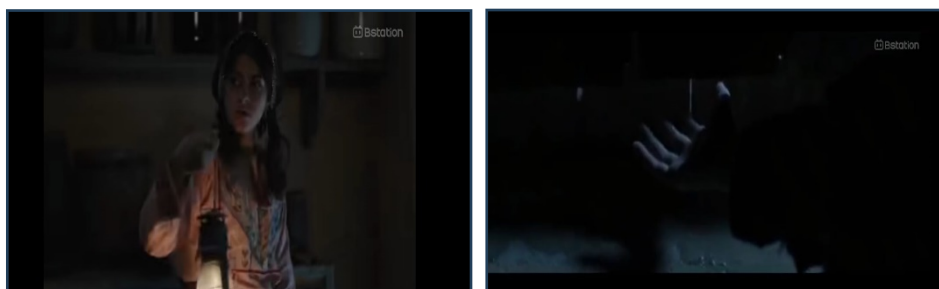
### Resilience through Emotional Regulation

Data 4:



The film's climax occurs in a scene at 62:23, when Farha witnesses the brutality of the killings committed by Israel. Despite being in a state of deep trauma, Farha chooses to survive this serves as a symbol of the pinnacle of human resilience the ability to transform trauma into moral consciousness. Ungar (2020) states that resilience is also reflected in an individual's ability to regulate their response to stress. Within the narrative structure, this scene occurs during the escalation of conflict. The setting encompasses two primary spaces: a Palestinian village and the warehouse where Farha is hidden. This transition from public to domestic space symbolizes a duality of space that reinforces the narrative of trauma and the transition from dependence to independence (Umayyah, 2023). Structurally, the setting functions as a psychological and social context that intensifies the conflict. In the resilience approach, spaces like the warehouse depict an ecologically oppressive context that paradoxically fosters adaptive capabilities.

### Resilience under Conditions of Physical Limitation



Farha held on because she clung to her father's promise that he would return to pick her up after helping the villagers fend off the Israeli army's attack. Farha's father

also assured her that the warehouse was the safest place and that he wouldn't leave her there for too long. Her hope in her father's promise became the emotional strength that sustained Farha's resilience while she was in the warehouse. Farha's condition grew increasingly weak due to the scarcity of food and water. In the scenes at 34:40 and 42:38, Farha finally discovers the remaining food supplies her father had stored in the warehouse before the war began. However, as her thirst grows more intense, she finds no source of water at all until, when it finally rains, she reaches her hand through a small hole in the warehouse wall to catch raindrops. Visually, the rainwater in this scene is no longer merely a natural weather element but acts as a sacred element symbolizing an ecological intervention that merges with Farha's fighting spirit. The form of resilience emerging in this scene is ecological resilience the individual's ability to adapt to an environment marked by severe limitations (Ungar, 2011).

### Resilience as Self-Transformation

Data 6:



The scene at 1:20:07, when Farha finally realizes that her hopes for her father will not be fulfilled. That realization becomes a turning point that drives Farha to make her own decision to save her life. In her weakened state, Farha tries to break down the warehouse door with all her might. However, her efforts are in vain and only result in her getting injured. Nevertheless, Farha continues to look for a way to escape the warehouse. Regardless of what awaits her outside, her loneliness and anxiety drive her to flee the only safe place she has. Farha then rummages through sacks of wheat stored in the warehouse until she finally finds a pistol that her father likely hid before the war began. Farha then used the pistol to unlock the warehouse and escape from her hiding place. However, as soon as Farha emerged from her hiding place the stark contrast between the setting depicted before and after her confinement revealing the harsh reality of the Nakba she was confronted directly with an outside world transformed by the war.

Structurally, this scene serves as the resolution phase, revealing a significant transformation in the protagonist's character. Initially, the warehouse was perceived as a safe haven a space her father believed would protect them from Israeli military attacks. However, as time went on, that space gradually became a symbol of isolation, uncertainty, and the psychological pressure that continued to weigh heavily on the protagonist. In these circumstances, Farha no longer endures by waiting for help, but rather out of a drive to save herself. This shift in attitude

reflects a psychological development from dependence toward independence; this change is a pivotal point in the character's growth as it marks the protagonist's transformation from a passive teenager into an individual capable of making decisions amidst a crisis. Additionally, the scene where Farha uses a gun to unlock the warehouse holds symbolic significance: the tool, which was initially associated with conflict and violence, is now used as a means to attain freedom. Visually, the contrast between the dark, cramped warehouse and the open sky that Farha gazes at after escaping reinforces the symbolism of the transformation from confinement to freedom. The symbol of the sky in this scene represents hope, courage, and a new life after enduring a long period of suffering. In the context of the Palestinian struggle, the sky can also be interpreted as a symbol of freedom that endures even as the people's living space is stripped away by war and oppression.

The message conveyed in this film is that women possess the moral and spiritual strength to endure even under the most extreme conditions. This message is not conveyed directly through dialogue, but is developed through Farha's psychological journey as she gradually transforms from a fearful teenager into an individual capable of facing reality with newfound courage. Resilience in contemporary films serves as a means of social awareness, where human values and women's resilience become moral symbols for the audience (Sari, 2024). Within the framework of Ungar's theory, the film's message affirms that resilience is a form of meaning-making the ability to transform traumatic experiences into a foundation for a more meaningful life (Ungar, 2021a).

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the forms of resilience exhibited by the main character in the film *Farha* (2021) using Wellek and Warren's structuralist approach and Michael Ungar's multisystemic theory of resilience. The results indicate that Farha's resilience is represented through her ability to adapt within limitations, her emotional regulation amid traumatic situations, and her courage to make decisions necessary for survival. These forms of resilience are constructed through the integration of intrinsic film elements such as theme, characterization, plot, conflict, and visual elements that reinforce the main character's psychological development. The film *Farha* demonstrates that human resilience stems not only from inner strength but also from the values and social context that shape it. This study not only provides a theoretical understanding of the relationship between the structure of a work and human values but also serves as a reflection that, even in the most difficult situations, humans retain the ability to survive, adapt, and find meaning in the suffering they endure. In addition, this study is expected to serve as a reference in literary and film studies, particularly in research that combines structural analysis with a psychosocial perspective. Future research is encouraged to explore resilience using different films, other interdisciplinary approaches, or to examine cinematographic elements in greater depth to broaden analytical perspectives in contemporary film studies.

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