



The Analysis of Freud Theory on Psychological Aspects of the Main Character in Movie “Everything Everywhere All at Once” (2022)

Christine Kurnia¹ and Lala Palupi Santyaputri¹ 

¹ School of Design, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Jl. M. H. Thamrin Boulevard 1100 Lippo Village Tangerang 15811, Indonesia
christinekurnia2712@gmail.com, lala.santyaputri@uph.edu

Abstract. Film is a unique form of art because it can reflect human life through its character, story, and conflicts. Every human being has their own psychological condition that affects their personality. The psychological condition of a human being is very complex and shaped by the many life experiences they have been through. Storytelling in film can be enriched by characters with their own complex personality. Therefore, this study was made to analyze how to represent complex psychological conditions of main characters in the film scene. The film that will be analyzed is “Everything Everywhere All at Once” by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, released in 2022. This film tells about family conflict where each main character has their own psychological condition and inner battle. The method used in this study is a qualitative method, including an analysis of main character’s psychological condition through "Everything Everywhere All at Once" film scenes. The result of this study will show each main character’s psychological condition that most affects their personality and how its portrayed in the film. The urgency of this study is to remind the importance of each film character having a specific psychological condition or personality to enriched storytelling in the film.

Keywords: Film, Character Psychology, Analysis, Everything Everywhere All at once, Storytelling.

1 Introduction

Film is an artistic expression medium to tell various messages to the audience through a storytelling medium as mentioned by Wibowo [1]. There’s a large range of what kind of message that could be told through a film, such as reflecting from human’s life. Film captures reality in society and projects it to the big screen as mentioned by Sobur [2]. In other words, it can reflect human life through its character, story, and conflicts. Storytelling in film can be enriched by the complexity of the character psychology, the same as the reality about how complex a human's mind is. There are separated layers that become one contributing to certain human’s behavior according to Freud [3].

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In film, there are many important elements to build the storytelling, such as cinematography. Cinematography in film has a crucial role in conveying the story, emotions, and characters to the audience. Cinematography depends on how the type of shot and framing is used in a film to give a certain meaning. Cinematography can also portray the psychological condition of a character in a film. The example of a film that has a good complex character that's shown on its film scene is *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022). *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) is an A24 studio's film directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert. This film successfully won 7 awards from 11 nominations at the 95th Academy Awards or Oscar 2023 as mentioned by Reul [4].

This film mainly tells about an Asian immigrant family in America with parent-child conflict, where the main character has their own psychological condition and inner battle that affects their life. Besides that, there is a multiverse plot, where each character has an alternative role in other lives. Uniquely, even though each character has an alternative role, the relationship between the characters remains the same, such as the tense relationship between Evelyn and Waymond, her husband and Joy, her child. In general, the various conflicts in this film are triggered by problems within their characters and the way they deal with these conflicts is also based on the psychological conditions of the characters themselves.

Therefore, this research will analyze the psychological condition of Evelyn, the main character in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), and by how it is being shown in the film. This analysis aims to determine the relationship between the psychological condition of the main character and the impact that influences the development of the character's personality. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) will be analyzed based on psychoanalysis theory in the book "The Ego and The Id" by Sigmund Freud.

2 Methodology

The research uses qualitative methods with descriptive analysis. Qualitative research method, according to Creswell [5], is a way of understanding the meaning of individuals to ascribe a human or social problem. Descriptive analysis, according to Creswell, [5] is a method that describes certain existing conditions based on gathered information. The qualitative research will be focusing on the case study and narrative research. The case study is based on film scene, analyzing Evelyn, the main character's psychology shown in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*'s scene and the narrative research, analyzing how personality could develop from time to time by certain psychological conditions. The theory is based on "Psychoanalysis Theory" by Sigmund Freud in his book, "The Ego and The Id". The psychoanalysis theory consists of three parts, id (unconscious mind), ego (rational mind), and super ego (morality, norms, and value) according to Freud [3].

3 Result

3.1 Cinematography

Cinematography is a powerful aesthetic aspect that can effectively communicate the film storytelling. It has the capability to touch the audience's feelings. Some of the important ways that cinematography could contribute to storytelling is through the selection shot types and framing techniques. By thoughtfully choosing what elements to show in the film scene, allows for the communication about the character's details, including their emotions, relationships, and the overall storyline. Type of shot consists of close up, medium shot, and full shot. Close up camera shot is used to reveal emotions and reactions by filling the frame with the part of the subject, for example the face of a person. Close up is a perfect shot to show an important and emotional moment. Medium shot, which typically frames from the waist up through the torso, is the most frequently used shot in filmmaking. It's often used as a transitional shot during dialogue scenes, as a lead-in to important moments that will later be shown in close-up shots. Full shot captures the entire subject from head to toe while also providing some context of the surroundings. Full shot telling the audience about basic information of the character's such as physical appearance, behavior, and actions before focusing on their reaction or feelings [6].

Types of framing in cinematography, such as single, two or three shot, over the shoulder (OTS), and point of view (POV), also plays an important role in storytelling. single shot showing one subject in the frame, drawing attention to their presence and actions. Two or three-shot framing shows two or three subjects in the frame, showing their relationships and interactions. Over the shoulder (OTS) framing positioned the camera behind one subject's shoulder, showing perspective with a partial view of another character. Usually, OTS is used during a dialogue, by showing the character's point of view. Point of view (POV) framing showing the subject's perspective by presenting the scene through their eyes. This type of framing invites the audience to be involved in the story as if they were the subject [7].

3.2 Psychoanalysis Theory

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis Theory [8] explains how human psychology was. Psychoanalysis theory consists of three layers of human psychology, id, ego, and super ego. These three layers are affected by many events and result in a complex personality of a human.

First part of psychoanalysis is the id, the unconscious layer of mind or called the primary thinking process. The Id has existed long ago since born, consisting of instincts and impulses. The Id was mainly affected by desires according to Freud [8]. This part will unconsciously want to fulfill their needs and pleasure immediately, as a new born baby did. In other ways, when it's not fulfilled immediately, it may create tensions. To prevent tensions, humans might even do certain things impulsively to fulfill their desire and sometimes it can be selfish yet non-sense.

The second layer is the ego, developed by the id. The ego is still a part of the id (unconscious mind) that has been influenced by external factors. The ego keeps human behavior rational and acceptable while fulfilling the id's desires. This layer also can be identified as a secondary thinking process, which uses a more realistic way of thinking. The ego doesn't focus much on the righteousness of doing certain things, but still, thinking how to fulfill id's needs in a rational way according to Freud [8].

The last layer, the super ego determines the moral values of human behavior. The superego reflects on certain standards and norms in society, helps considering right or wrong. Moral values are mainly affected by family even though later it may be developed by the society. The super ego consists of the conscious (the wrong behavior that is prohibited by the society) and the ego ideal (the standards of right behavior), according to Freud [8].

4 Discussion

In "Everything Everywhere All at Once", Evelyn was an interesting main character to be analyzed. By the existing problems in the film, this research will analyze the roots of Evelyn's behavior in dealing with existing problems based on how it's being portrayed in the film scene.

4.1 Id

Based on the film scene, Evelyn is a child that always wanted to be loved and appreciated by her parents. However, since born, Evelyn's presence was unwanted by her father. When she was born, his father was disappointed when he found out that his child was a girl. This moment was shown in the film scene using a medium shot and point of view from Evelyn. Medium shots in this scene make the audience focused on Evelyn's father's expression towards her. Using the point of view (POV) framing from Evelyn's perspective, makes the audience feel as unwanted as she is. This scene carries over to the id (subconscious mind), knowing that she is not wanted, which influences the way she behaves. Later on, Evelyn didn't listen to her father when he didn't approve Evelyn's husband, who invited Evelyn to move to America together. Evelyn prefers people who actually love her than her father who doesn't want her, so she chooses to go inside the taxi and go.

This condition was shown in the film scene using medium shot, three shot, and point of view from the taxi. Medium shots in this scene showing the intense situation between Evelyn's relationship with her parents. Also, the three shot portrays their relationship too, with Evelyn standing on an opposite side with her parents could show they were on a different perspective. This scene was also viewed from inside a taxi. This framing makes the audiences feel involved again, by seeing the moments in real time.

4.2 Ego

As it has been mentioned before, the ego is developing from the id based on rational thinking. Because in her unconscious mind wants to be accepted by his father, she thinks about the " what if " scenario in her head that is projected in another Evelyn in the other multiverse. Evelyn's ego was shown in the film scene, when Evelyn was in the movie star universe. When she listened to her parents and rejected Waymond's proposal to move to America together, she would be a successful movie star and accepted by her family. This scene was shown in a medium shot and single shot. Medium and single shot of Evelyn standing in the ballroom that is full of people, portrays her satisfaction feeling successfully being an actor.

Her rational thinking would develop through the film later. At first, she's hard to accept her daughter, who didn't share the same values as her. As we could see on the film scene, when she wants to introduce her child's girlfriend to Evelyn's father, she didn't want to tell him that her child was a lesbian. Evelyn's ego is wanting to be accepted by her father, so she did that and didn't even think about how Joy would feel to be treated like that. The super ego part is also dominating her behavior when it comes to Evelyn's parents, she's afraid that this isn't a right thing based on her father's close minded thinking. This scene was portrayed with close up and two shot. Close up shot is a good way to show Evelyn's "ego" and emotional moment between her child and father. How she wanted to be appreciated by her father and neglected her child's feelings. Two shot that focused on Evelyn and her child blurred in the background, also helps showing her ego by dominating her child.

4.3 Super Ego

The last part that'll be analyzed is Evelyn's super ego, talking about her morals and values. Her morals and values were mainly affected by the Asian way in the family such as having close minded parents, emotional unavailable, deep rooted patriarchy, and hardworking culture. In the beginning of the film, Evelyn couldn't show her love to her child in a good way, she did it by saying to Joy that she is fat in this film scene. She became emotionally unavailable parents and neglected how her child would feel. The super ego part of Evelyn thinks this is a right way to show love because the values of love that she got from her family was being neglected.

This scene was portrayed in medium shot and over the shoulder then with two shot. Medium shot and over the shoulder is portraying the dialogue between Evelyn and her daughter. It's shown Evelyn's head is higher than her daughter, showing her domination towards her daughter again. Later on the scene, showing Evelyn and her daughter in two shot framing, showing the reaction between them. Evelyn stands stills and Joy leaves with her car. She didn't care much about her family's problems, because the importance of an Asian family is a successful business. She really cares much more about her business than her family because for her, success is only measured by how the business went, not really care about her family. It was shown by this scene portrayed in medium shot with over the shoulder framing. The scene was full of paperwork on Evelyn's table with medium shot. Over-the-shoulder framing between Evelyn and her

paperwork, invites the audiences to feel the importance and amount of the work that Evelyn must have done on that day. At the end of the film, with help from Waymond, her husband who loves her unconditionally, finally makes Evelyn to love her child in a realistic way, accepting Joy, as she is, despite wanting Joy to change.

In the film scene, she finally introduces Joy's girlfriend to his dad, even though she knows her father may not like it. The scene was using medium shot, over the shoulder, and three shot. The type of shot and framing used in this scene portrays the character development of Evelyn's super ego based on her dialogue. Over the shoulder framing shows that she's talking to her father and also three shot framing with Joy's girlfriend's presence beside her, looking at her, showing that this scene is focusing on Evelyn's reaction. The same line between Evelyn and Joy's girlfriend shows that Evelyn appreciate her as she is. The ego and super ego has developed well because of the new values she learned from Waymond. In the film scene, she finally hugged her husband and child showing how she finally accepted her loved ones as they are. This scene was using a medium shot and then a close up shot. The framing used is over the shoulder, portraying connections and relationship between characters. With the transition between medium to close up shot, it shows that the interaction between Evelyn and Joy becomes more emotional and getting close to each other. The close up shot shows Joy's crying and Evelyn's happy tears expression. This scene portrays more about how Evelyn's psychological condition in her super ego has developed to be a better person, especially as Joy's mother.

5 Conclusion

As mentioned by Sobur [2], film captures reality in society and projects it to the big screen that can reflect human life through its storytelling. Film storytelling can be enriched by the complexity of character psychology, the same as the reality about how complex a human's psychology is. Human behavior reflects their psychological condition. There are three layers based on psychoanalytic theory relating to certain human's behavior, id (unconscious mind mainly affected by desires), ego (rational thoughts that develop from unconscious mind), and super ego (moral values of behavior) according to Freud [3]. Based on the research, Evelyn, the main character in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) has a specific psychological condition that is affected by the id, the ego, and the super ego. The film character psychology is in line with psychoanalysis theory based on Freud's "The Ego and The Id".

The Id that Evelyn had is mainly affected by the feeling of unwantedness since she was born. It unconsciously makes her crave for the love and appreciation from her parents that she didn't get. The film scene when showing Evelyn's "Id" with a medium and POV which makes the audiences get involved in what she's been through. Evelyn's ego developed from the id. She had the feeling of unwantedness, so she projected it to her regret in marrying Waymond by thinking how she would be a successful actress and get the love from her parents. She also neglects her child's feelings, knowing that this is the realistic way to be accepted by Evelyn's parents. In the film scene, which shows Evelyn's ego, uses medium shot with single shot and close up with two shot.

Medium with single shot framing shows how proud Evelyn's feels while close up with two shot, but focused only at Evelyn and the background is blur, shows how Evelyn's behavior dominating the moment.

The super ego in Evelyn's behavior is mainly affected by the Asian family style, close minded parents, emotional unavailable, deep rooted patriarchy, and hardworking culture. This makes her being such an emotionally unavailable person and prioritizes her business. She determines whether it is right or wrong based on Asian moral values she grew up with. In other ways, the super ego is also affected by the id and ego. At the end of the film, Evelyn's behavior changed much better because the super ego or the moral values in her has changed and she became more open minded to accepting her family as they are. The change in moral values is caused by the love that she felt from her husband. In the film scene, super ego part of Evelyn was mainly portrayed by medium shot and over the shoulder (OTS), with two/three shot framing. This scene makes the audience focus on Evelyn's interaction with other characters. There are also close up shot after the medium shot, which makes the audiences focus on the emotional moment that Evelyn had and the development of her "id, ego, and super ego".

All of these layers are connected to one another resulting in a certain behavior. Every behavior has its own reason and is rooted in a complex way. By knowing the roots of psychoanalysis in humans, it could help people to be a better person. None of human behavior is created in a sec, there are many aspects from the unconscious mind, rationality, and moral values. Environment also play a big aspect affecting those three layers. A better environment can trigger the character development much better as Evelyn did. For future research, writers hope there'll be more movies that could tell the background story of the character, because it will successfully touch the audience's heart. The message will be told directly when the audience could relate with the character's behavior in the film when it's similar with what has happened to them.

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