

**THE MISSING AGES IN
“KUNG FU PANDA 3” MOVIE:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERARY CRITICISM**

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'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'

- Prov. 22:6 (NIV)

ABSTRACT

This study aims at showing the connection between Po's past experiences and his present manifestations. This analysis intends to show the significance of the affection and primal parenting of both parents. A qualitative approach was employed to elucidate and evaluate the psychological concern depicted in this film. Given the narrative's visual medium, the utilization of cinematography in terms of camerawork served to articulate the storyline, environments, and characters. Additionally, the analytical framework of Sigmund Freud's "*psychoanalysis*" was adopted as the methodology for this examination, aiming to ascertain the sources of Po's anxiety as they relate to the phases of Freud's *psychosexual development*. As a result: **1)** Po experiences anxiety due to the insufficient fulfillment of his '*id*' during the *oral stage*, resulting in challenges in regulating his eating behavior, displaying pessimism, dependence, and heightened vulnerability to rejection. **2)** The lack of parenting at the *anal stage* makes him manifest a lack of self-control, disorganized, messy and careless behaviors. **3)** Po ultimately succeeds in building up his self-assurance.

INTRODUCTION

Kung Fu Panda 3 is a 2016 animated action comedy film produced by DreamWorks Animation which is directed by Alessandro Carloni and Jennifer Yuh Nelson. Some famous celebrities were involved in dubbing this movie: Po is dubbed by Jack Black, Li Shan is dubbed by Bryan Cranston, Master Shifu is dubbed by Dustin Hoffman, Kai is dubbed by J. K. Simmons, Master Tigress is dubbed by Angelina Jolie, Master Viper is dubbed by Lucy Liu, Master Monkey is dubbed by Jackie Chan, Master Mantis is dubbed by Seth Rogen, Master Crane is dubbed by David Cross, Ping is dubbed by James Hong, Mei Mei is dubbed by Kate Hudson, Grand Master Oogway is dubbed by Randall Duk Kim, and Bao is dubbed by Steele Gagnon.

Some awards that are achieved from the movie Kung Fu Panda 3 are: Annie Award for Best Animated Feature, Annie Award for Best Character Animation in a Feature Production, Annie Award for Outstanding Achievement for Animated Effects in an Animated Production, Annie Award for Outstanding Achievement for Production Design in an Animated Feature Production, MTV Movie Award for Best

Virtual Performance, and Kids’ Choice Award for Most Wanted Pet. Having this movie watched, a binary opposition was made to analyze the cause and effect between the past and present experiences.

In the film, Po ventures to the panda village and joins his birth father with own kind, but an obstacle arises when an evil immortal fighter named Kai returns to the reality realm and takes over the kung fu inner power, seeking to end Oogway's legacy. To stop Kai from taking the kung fu power from all the masters and Po’s tribe, Po creates a group of strong pandas to fight Jade Kai's followers and Po insists on being the leader to beat out him and save his fellows. This analysis is directed more towards Po who experiences psyche conflicts.

Binary Opposition

<p>Past Cause <i>“Stages of Development”</i></p>	<p>Present Effect <i>“Adult Fixation”</i></p>
<p>Lack of primal parenting of both parents, specifically affection from his mother at the stage of oral and anal phase.</p>	<p>Po is overly dependent. It can be seen that Mr. Ping always serves him food and he cannot last a day without his father. For example, while Po is in the panda village, Mr. Ping accompanies him and keeps serving him food. This makes Po always depend on Mr. Ping.</p>
	<p>Lacking gentleness, he feels the need to physically attack or to do some actions. He cannot control his dietary habit, and tends to be disorganized, lack self-control and messy.</p>

METHOD

This analysis was conducted using a qualitative method in which the data were explained and described in a manner of criticizing the psychological issue in the movie; therefore, psychoanalysis was used as the approach to psychoanalytic literary criticism. According to Freud, *“the id is the source of all psychic energy, making it a major component of personality.”* The id is the only component of personality that is present from birth. This aspect of personality is completely unconscious and includes instinctive and primitive behavior. Meanwhile, Freud believed, *“the ego develops from the id and ensures that the id's impulses can be expressed in a way that is acceptable in the real world.”* The ego operates in the conscious, preconscious mind. The ego is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality. Furthermore, Freud argued, *“the superego begins to emerge around the age of five that holds the moral standards and ideals we acquire from our parents and society (our sense of right and wrong).”* The superego provides guidelines for making judgments. Having the psychological issue found in the movie, a binary opposition is made to figure out the motives behind what happens between the present manifestations and the past experiences. Freud divided the stages of psychosexual development into five

stages: *oral* (0-18 months), *anal* (18 months - 3 years), *phallic* (3-6 years), *latency* (6-12 years), and *genital* (12+). He believed that the disruption within these stages will result in adult fixation. Having the data analyzed, the camera works that are used in the cinematography were occupied in the analysis.

DISCUSSION



The story begins when Kai is defeating master Oogway in the spirit realm in order to take master Oogway's chi power by the power of the other masters. Knowing Oogway cannot face Kai himself; he knows that he is too weak, so he finds a better solution to send

Po as a dragon warrior to face and defeat Kai. In this scene below, the camera turns into a medium shot to show the intimate relationship between the two characters: Po and his dad while chatting together.

Po in his bathroom for the first time, teaching kung fu. Mr. Ping comes and has a little conversation with him. Po: *"I thought that i would finally know who i was, if i'm not a dragon warrior then who am I?"* At this time, Po is having an anxiety about not knowing who he really



is, this explains how master Shifu tells him that he will soon be the dragon warrior, he over thinks and feels that he cannot go on. His unconscious mind reveals his *'id'* which demands immediate gratification to be able to master *'chi'* and to be fulfilled. However, his *'superego'* responds pre-consciously that he lacks skills and knowledge in Kung Fu. Noticing that his ancestors have got the key to master *'chi'* energy, his conscious *'ego'* weighs and decides to find out the place where he comes from and with the hope he can meet his real parents and to reveal the true self-image. When his psyche conflict occurs, he conducts defense mechanisms in order to relieve his anxiety. At this time, his defense mechanisms show *'rationalization'* that it is way too difficult to defeat Kai and at the same time, *'intellectualization'* occurs: he believes that it is a good idea to master *'chi'* in his village. The motive behind this is his curiosity about his own parents. When his psyche conflict occurs, it triggers the repressed memory in his

unconsciousness regarding the inadequate gratification of his 'id' towards the needs at the *oral* and *anal* phases. "At the beginning stage, children are highly dependent on their mothers and derive pleasure from sucking and swallowing." "At anal stage, pleasure is gained from the expulsion and retention of feces." (Freud, 296). He believed that children who become fixated at the oral stage tend to smoke, bite nails, drink and in their dietary habits, overreact, sensitive to rejection. Meanwhile, at the anal phase, fixation results in people being messy, disorganized, lack self-control, careless. In this way, he tries to use *displacement* as a defense mechanism by making an excuse to master 'chi' in his village.

This scene is showing how stressful Po is, and how he lacks self confidence, and he does not believe in himself. During this time, Mr. Ping comes and helps him bathe, and has a few conversations about who he really is. Here can be seen that he has the fixation from the oral stage, making him overly dependent. During this time, the camera turns from a long shot to a medium shot focusing on Po's expression when he is looking at him. It is used to show the interaction between the two characters first, then reveal Po's shockness.

When Li Shan admits that he knows nothing about 'chi,' nevertheless, Po needs it and believes in him, but he lies, "I lost you once, I am not going to lose you again." Li Shan realizes that what he does is wrong, but he has to so he will not lose his son, so he lies. At this time, Po's 'id' urges unconsciously the need to be able to master 'chi,' however, his 'superego' tells that it is ideal to achieve it by following his heart to go to his village. Meanwhile, his 'ego' pre-consciously faces the reality that he is unable to do that unless he goes there which causes delay gratification. Having this psyche conflict, his defense mechanisms reveal *projection*; instead of accepting his inability, he mistrusts Li Shan, assuming he is lying to him.

"The psyche was like an iceberg, with most of it being below the level of consciousness. The tip of the iceberg, above the water, corresponds to what we can become aware of. We are aware of some aspects of ego and superego functioning, but the processes of the id are entirely within the unconscious" (Freud, 295).

It means that the urges of 'id' which are repressed in the unconscious mind may appear anytime whenever it is triggered when a person's 'ego' is unable to manage his/her anxiety. At this time, Po's drive at the stages of *oral* and *anal* phases are represented as wishes that need to be gratified seem to be delayed.

In this scene, the camera starts to focus on Po's facial expression in close-up mode to show how he is overwhelmed with his anxiety. Po is in *denial*, and how he underestimates himself proves that he is not confident facing the reality that he has the burden to take the responsibility to defeat his enemy. *In Confucianism tradition, a family holds the ideal principle of filial piety in which the relationship between fathers and sons extends to the relationship between ruler and subjects* (Lam, 2016). In Chinese tradition,

a man is expected to have the obligation to conduct justice which is worth fighting for; however, in this case, he refuses to fight for justice.

What happens here is that master Shifu is in his final class, and he will no longer be able to teach, instead Po will. You can also see from the conversation they have, Master Shifu: *“From now on the training will be in the hands of the dragon warrior”* but Po denies and tells master Shifu that Tigress deserves it more. Po: *“What about Tigress?”*



She's the one that is always telling everyone what to do”. His *‘id’* is urging him that he needs to be a dragon warrior, but at the same time his *‘ego’* weighs like he is not the ideal one, so he denies and refuses politely. But his *‘superego’*, is forcing him to accept how he has to be the dragon warrior and master chi. In this case, both his *‘id’* and *‘superego’* are conflicting and following with his *‘ego,’* which dissolves in his defense mechanism *‘rationalization’* tells him that he is not worth it or to not believe in himself, and suggests Tigress to be the dragon master instead. His facial expression, his attitude and movement show how his anxiety rises, and how he can not control himself. This gives the idea that the impulse of his *‘id’* disruption during childhood in the unconsciousness comes up to the surface and leads him to which the stage of development *‘anal’* phase manifests and as the result, he lacks self-control. *“The crucial stage of psychosexual development is within 18 months - 3 years”* (Freud, 2005). Freud’s theory about psychosexual development consists of 5 stages. Anal phase is the second stage. According to Freud, the anus is the primary erogenous zone and area, which derived from controlling bladder and bowel movement. The issue and problem that causes this is mostly because of toilet training. Having a healthy personality, the character here has to be trained well by parents, if the issue has not been solved, then it will result in unhealthy behavior.

Po’s defense mechanisms here are denial and *rationalization*. How he denies the chance that has been given to him as a dragon warrior, and how he comes with an excuse as a result of this problem. He refuses to accept reality, and facts that he is the one chosen. Po avoids addressing the underlying reasons, and suggests Tigress to be the dragon warrior instead. He avoids challenges, and blocks any circumstances that may hurt him.



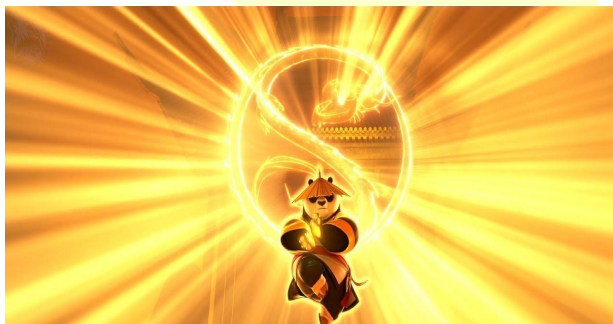
Li Shan starts to rethink what he has just done, him lying to Po makes him lack confidence especially because Po says he is not in Po’s life anymore just because Li shan has been lying about

knowing chi. Po runs down to kick down a few bamboo trees, with the wood he creates a wooden training dummy that looks like Kai. Here his defense mechanism ‘*displacement*’ works to alter his feelings and emotion to a particular object in order to relieve his psyche tension. While Li Shan and Mr. Ping are having a conversation. Mr Ping admits he has lied to Po for 20 years and Po still thinks he comes from an egg. Mr. Ping: “*Sometimes we do the wrong things for the right reasons.*” What it means is that in life, people do false, unpredictable things for the right reasons, right things just so they could protect what they love, who they love. In terms of unconditional love, “*unrelated family members (parents and their adopted children) show no similarity in personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism*” (Loehlin in Hewstone, 1992). This suggests that similarities in personality amongst family members are not caused by the family environment in and of themselves. Here again, Po’s psyche meets a conflict again regarding his identity which causes anxiety. *Denial* is used to reduce his psyche tension as a defense mechanism; in this case, his repressed memory in the ‘*id*’ about the past comes up to the conscience mind, annoying his ‘*ego*’ but he is eventually able to willingly accept it.

In the village, Po finally finds his real dad, meeting with all other relatives, but at the same time the encounter is also with his foster dad, the goose. In this scene, the camera takes a medium shot to show the intimacy among all of the three characters that fit together into a frame. This dramatic moment shows how Mr. Ping looks jealous due to the encounter with Po’s real dad.



This time, again Po has his psyche conflicted and anxiety rises. When his delayed gratification of ‘*id*’ is fulfilled, but at the same time, ‘*superego*’ tells that Mr. Ping has been looking after and raising him like his own son. Fortunately, his ‘*ego*’ manages to weigh the virtue of both dads; he finds out the reason why his real dad leaves him is for his safety due to the evil Kai’s movement against his parents. Moreover, Mr. Ping has been considered as his dad too. Noticing this, he tries to channel the unacceptable urges to practicing ‘*chi*’ as his defense mechanism.



The encounter between Po and his dad has made him not only have a strong bond of relationship, but also he has his psyche conflicts at peace. Having a battle with Kai, Po finally gets his psyche climax contemplated; it is shown from the ‘*chi*’ which is projected as a vivid picture of a ‘*yin-yang*’ and ‘*dragon*’ In this scene, the camera

shoots Po at medium shot to focus only on himself and the Chinese chi yin-yang dragon which can be symbolized dualism as harmony or peace between the negative and positive energy. *“The dragon, as a part of the Tao, also had the ability to either become one with greater energy of the Tao or exist as an individual entity within the Tao,”* Tueller, Evan (2013). The concept of Yin and Yang, or the contrasting source of power, is used in the Chinese Taoism philosophy to create a vivid picture of how two different forces coexist and how they interact with each other. As they interact; meanwhile, the dragon symbol shifts and dissolves. In this scene the ‘chi’ energy can be symbolized as his psyche force which becomes balance where ‘id’ symbolizes the dark force, ‘superego’ symbolizes the white force and ‘ego’ symbolizes the dragon which neutralizes them all. The mise-en-scène during this action is dominated by the yellowish aura of the ‘chi’ which symbolizes victory, glory, sovereignty, dignity, and nobility; as this color as well as symbol belongs to the ancient Chinese emperor. At last, he has his psyche conflicts recovered after he makes peace with himself, the goose, and his real dad.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, Po's anxiety stems from insufficient fulfillment of the 'id' during the oral phase, leading to challenges in managing his eating patterns, displaying pessimism, dependence, and heightened sensitivity to rejection. The lack of parenting at the *anal stage* makes him manifest a lack of self-control, disorganized, messy and careless behaviors. As a result: **1)** Po experiences anxiety due to the insufficient fulfillment of his 'id' during the oral stage, resulting in challenges in regulating his eating behavior, displaying pessimism, dependence, and heightened vulnerability to rejection. **2)** The lack of parenting at the *anal stage* makes him manifest a lack of self-control, disorganized, messy and careless behaviors. **3)** Po eventually manages to gain his confidence. In the end of the scene, Po looks like he is able to manage his psyche conflicts quite well. It can be seen when the desire to meet his parents is fulfilled and all of his curiosity is answered.

All in all, it can be concluded that affection as well as the role of the parents in terms of parenting during the early stages of development is crucial. Freud (2005:317) said, *“the early relationship between the child and the primary caregiver is crucial to the development of the self-concept, concepts of others, and the quality of relationships throughout life.”* It gives the idea that internal relationship between parents, caregiver and child during the early childhood period will result in a great impact on the child's personality, moreover at the age of adult fixation which can create a psychological problem.

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