

## Finding Nemo: A Psychoanalytic Study of Marlin and Nemo

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*"The child will not share the guilt of the parent,  
nor will the parent share the guilt of the child.*

*The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them,  
and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them."*

**Ezekiel 18:20 (NIV)**

### ABSTRACT

This study looks at psychological themes such as trauma, independence, and overprotectiveness in parents that are often rooted to past trauma and fear. The movie *Finding Nemo* (2003) strongly portrays them through Marlin's unresolved grief of losing his loved one and past trauma. Examining how Marlin's trauma influences his overprotective behaviour towards Nemo, how Nemo's pursuit of independence represents a child's desire for freedom from parental control, and how the opposing forces of freedom and oppression reflect the Freudian theory, *"The Unconscious"* (1957). Using Freud's concepts of the unconscious, repression, melancholia, and repetition compulsion combined with selected scenes, dialogues, and cinematography from the movie to analyze Marlin's behavior. As the results: **1)** Marlin's overprotective character stems from his past trauma of losing his loved ones, leading him to constantly monitor Nemo and undermine his confidence. **2)** Nemo's defiance of his father's warnings is an expression of a child's drive for independence and autonomy from parental supervision. **3)** This quest for freedom is intensified by Nemo's need to validate his own abilities, particularly after feeling undermined by Marlin's overprotective and restrictive language. The film effectively demonstrates how Marlin's unresolved trauma and guilt shape his parenting often manifesting as anger and prevent him from allowing Nemo the space to grow. The study concludes that by analyzing *Finding Nemo* demonstrates how trauma can drive unconscious decision making and how childhood independence grows when parents confront and overcome their own trauma. It offers insights into the impact of trauma on parenting, the development of independence, and the unconscious forces that shape relationships and personal growth.

**Keywords:** *Trauma, Repression, Melancholia, Psychoanalysis, Freudian*

### INTRODUCTION

Literature, including children shows and movies are not just for fun and entertainment, but it explores various aspects such as emotion and struggles. It reflects human life by teaching lessons from real life issues. Especially for children, studies have shown that movies are not only to entertain, but it is also a way to find out their place in the world. Greater Good Magazine (2021)

interviewed children between 4 and 15 years old and concluded that movies help children think more deeply and feel for others, inspiring them to never give up and helping them gain insights about life. In the animated movie *Finding Nemo*, it explores issues such as parenting, trauma, and growing up issues that most people and families can relate to, making children's literature important by reflecting real-life issues and teaching lessons by discussing deep topics.

In the real world, many families can relate to the issues found in the animated movie *Finding Nemo*. A common issue that comes from parents and develops from fear of losing their child is overprotectiveness. Studies done by Segrin et al. (2013) show that overprotective parents are more likely to struggle with anxiety. According to Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery (2013), researchers Rapee (2009) and Thomasgard (1998) discovered that parents with anxiety are associated with seeing children as more vulnerable, explaining why parents with higher anxiety levels are more likely to become hyperinvolved in their children's lives. Meanwhile, it is stated that "*Anxiety and regret work together to promote overparenting*" (Segrin et al., 2013). Ultimately, the overprotective behavior of parents can influence how their children cope with issues in their lives, as stated in Creveling, "*I don't feel confident about my ability to solve everyday problems.*" (Creveling et al., 2010). This struggle is shown especially in Marlin's behavior in *Finding Nemo* how he is always closely monitoring Nemo viewing him as vulnerable also due to his trauma of losing his wife, which made him act overprotective toward Nemo. Marlin's behavior toward Nemo, constantly monitoring and giving warnings that undermine Nemo's confidence, shows moments of hesitation and frustration when faced with a problem, making him believe he is incapable of doing things on his own. Both behaviors reflect the patterns identified by Rapee (2009) and Thomasgard (1998).

This connection between real-world parental anxiety and Marlin's overprotectiveness sets the foundation for understanding the film itself. The animated movie titled *Finding Nemo* is suitable for ages 5 and up, the movie having the rating of "G" rating suggesting that it is suitable for people of all ages. It is enjoyable for all ages, children, teens, adults and has genres of adventure, family, and coming-of-age. The movie was produced by Pixar Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures in 2003. The movie was directed by Andrew Stanton, who also co-wrote the screenplay with Bob Peterson and David Reynolds. According to IMDb, *Finding Nemo* won an Academy Award (Oscar) for Best Animated Feature in 2004, earning over \$940 million in box office revenue, with 40 million DVD copies sold worldwide making it one of the best-selling DVDs ever. Receiving titles and recognition such as "*Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Theatrical Feature*" and "*Outstanding Character Animation*" (IMDb, n.d.). This animated movie addresses various issues that are still often

talked about in present day, relating with many families, especially by offering the audience a parent perspective

The story offers the audience a parent perspective that follows Marlin, an overprotective father to his son, Nemo. Marlin becomes this way after experiencing an accident that kills his wife and most of his children. While Nemo longs for freedom and independence and is excited to finally get the chance to go to school. There, he experiences freedom for the first time and wants to prove that he is capable like the other kids. One day, Nemo sees a boat in the open ocean, a place his father warns him about and forbids him from going to. He watches as his classmate swims confidently toward it. Nemo rebels against his father's words and decides to touch the boat, leading to his capture by a diver. This forces Marlin to cross the ocean to rescue his son, with the help of Dory. As Nemo learns to face challenges on his own after relying on his father all his life.

*Finding Nemo*, like much of children's literature, carries symbolic representations and real-life connections. As a lens to interpret this movie, we use Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which explains why characters act as they do on both the conscious and unconscious levels, *The Interpretation of Dreams (1899)*. Marlin's past trauma and the repressed emotions of losing his family unconsciously drive his parenting, creating the illusion of safety by limiting Nemo's freedom to explore the wider ocean. This overprotectiveness reflects a hidden psychological conflict, that being Marlin's need to protect versus Nemo's need to grow. Nemo's rebellion, then, is not just a child disobeying; it shows the id's desire for freedom clashing with Marlin's superego-driven anxiety and control. Their relationship highlights how family dynamics are shaped by both surface-level behavior and deeper unconscious drives, making psychoanalysis an effective tool for uncovering the layers of meaning in the movie.

While Laurie Vickroy (*Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*, 2002) focuses on the "fragmentation of identity" in survivors and Michelle Balaev (*Trauma Studies*, 2018) examines how memory and language "reconstruct identity," a gap remains regarding the specific role of overprotectiveness as a barrier to independence. Existing research addresses how trauma isolates the self, but it rarely explores how the protective environments built in trauma's wake, often intended as safety nets, function as secondary obstacles to a character's autonomy. In contrast, this research fills this void by shifting the focus from the internal psyche to the stifling domestic dynamics that complicate a survivor's transition toward self-reliance. This paper fills that gap on how Marlin's repressed trauma led to his overprotective and controlling behavior toward Nemo, through Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory: *id, ego, superego* (Freud, S., 1923/1961)

Psychoanalytic theory, first developed by Sigmund Freud, emphasizes the role of the unconscious in shaping human behavior and relationships. Freud (1923) argued that the psyche is divided into the id, ego, and superego, which constantly interact to regulate desires and social norms. Later developments by Lacan (1977) highlighted the importance of the unconscious in identity formation, particularly through concepts such as the mirror stage and desire. In literary and movie studies, psychoanalytic criticism often examines hidden motivations, family dynamics, and symbolic representations of psychological conflict (Tyson, 2006).

Applying psychoanalytic theory to *Finding Nemo* (2003) allows for a deeper understanding of its characters beyond the surface narrative. Marlin's overprotective attitude toward Nemo, for example, can be read as a projection of his unconscious trauma after losing his family. Nemo's desire for independence reflects the tension between authority and self-identity, while Dory's memory lapses can be interpreted as symbolic of repression. By employing psychoanalysis, this study seeks to uncover how unconscious fears and desires shape the characters' behaviors and relationships in the movie.

On the surface, *Finding Nemo* might look like a simple children's story, but on a deeper level, it is a symbolic representation of these obstacles. The issues to be discussed are related to parenting, such as a guardian's overprotectiveness toward their child and how this can impact the child's psyche. In the movie, Marlin's actions have everlasting effects on Nemo, it is the same in real life. Freud's theory is very relevant to this issue because it introduces concepts namely the id, ego, superego, repression, and unconscious drives. The object of analysis is *Finding Nemo*, which perfectly aligns with these themes. Marlin's unwillingness to let Nemo go only makes Nemo's desire to explore the outside world even stronger. Therefore, Freud's psychoanalytic theory will be used to unravel Marlin's trauma and how it leads to overprotectiveness and Nemo's search for independence, all of which mirror real human struggles. Based on the above issue, this paper examines how Marlin's trauma influences his overprotective behaviour towards Nemo, the ways in which Nemo's pursuit of independence represent a child's desire for freedom from parental control, as well as how the opposing forces of freedom and oppression in *Finding Nemo* reflect the Freudian concepts of the id, ego and superego.

### Binary Opposition

Freedom	Oppression
Nemo wants to prove that he can do as well as other fish even though his fins are small and	Marlin is overly protective and restricts Nemo's movements. This further highlights the trauma

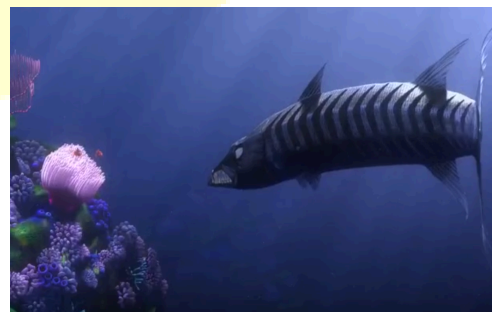
<p>deformed.</p> <p>"I can do this, Dad" - Nemo</p> <p>That was a phrase he often said when Marlin was always restraining him. Nemo tried to convince his father that he could swim as far as other fish. This symbolized the child's freedom to show that he also had the potential to grow.</p>	<p>that still lingers within him.</p> <p>"You think you can do these things, but you just can't, Nemo" - Marlin</p> <p>With the above quote, Marlin still has serious doubts about his son Nemo's abilities. This reflects the tendency of parents who are afraid of failure to prevent their children from trying to be independent.</p>
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## METHOD

A qualitative literary analysis was employed based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory: *The Unconscious* (Freud, 1957). The movie *Finding Nemo* (2003) was selected as the object of study since it portrays psychological conflicts: *trauma, fear, repression*, and *unconscious* aspects. The analysis aims to examine how Marlin's traumatic experiences affect his behavior and emotional responses throughout the movie. Using the concepts of id, ego and superego, the paper explored the emotion and repressed trauma of the characters in *Finding Nemo*. The research data were taken from the movie *Finding Nemo* (2003) by identifying and recording scenes, dialogues, and expressions that indicated Marlin's trauma, fear, and protective behavior. Each scene and dialogue selected in the movie was examined to see how Marlin's subconscious and past experiences influence his current thoughts and actions. The study highlighted how Marlin's unresolved trauma influences his relationship with his son, Nemo, and his efforts to control his emotions during the journey. The data were then analyzed using Sigmund Freud's theory. Marlin's behaviors were interpreted as a reflection of a deeper psychological struggle that many people experience in real life.

## DISCUSSION

The movie begins by showing the view of the vast blue open ocean, its dark and empty, symbolizing the unknown beyond. This also represents the *unconscious mind*, described by Freud to be filled with mystery. The scene changes as the story begins to introduce some characters, named Marlin and Carol. Who recently found a new home, the scene starts bright and off filled with joy as Marlin and Carol talk about their future kids who are yet to be hatched. Yet, this feeling is only temporary. The tone darkens as the barracuda appears representing danger. In an attempt to



protect his loved ones, Marlin charges at the barracuda but it leaves him unconscious, killing Coral and their eggs, leaving only one. At 00:03:13, It shows the previously bright and once cheerful reef that was filled with laughter suddenly turns dark, symbolizing how Marlin's life starts to fall apart as he is filled with trauma. According to Freud, *"In mourning, the world becomes poor and empty; in melancholia, it is the ego itself"* (Freud, 1917/1957). This trauma and guilt do not only shatter Marlin's inner world but also transform into fear of loss. This reaction shows his unconscious fear that defines Marlin's identity and new purpose being led from his trauma and guilt to protect what is left, Nemo. Even before his loss, Marlin shouted *"Coral? Coral! Look out!"* shows that this fear already existed beneath the surface. According to Freud's theory of the *unconscious mind* (Freud, 1915), hidden emotions and anxieties influence behavior even before we are fully aware of them.

As the story progresses, Marlin's newfound determination and purpose to protect Nemo makes him experience unresolved trauma, this shapes his behavior as a parent. At 00:10:00, the movie transitions to a bright and cheerful classroom, Nemo's eager smile is visible, after convincing his father to let him go to school for the first time. Reflects his desire for independence, and contrasts with Marlin's anxiety. Marlin stares into the distance as Nemo goes farther, despite his better judgment and the advice of other parents, Marlin follows Nemo to keep an eye on him. This does not only limit Nemo's freedom, but according to Freud, *"The superego... sets strict limits to the ego, watching over it and punishing it with feelings of fear and guilt."* (Freud, 1923/1961). Due to this unresolved trauma, his superego constantly reminds him of his past and guilt of failing to protect his loved ones. That guilt essentially punishes him with constant reminders, eventually causing him to have excessive control over Nemo. While Nemo is experiencing school for the first time, he does not know his father was watching over him. He and his classmates find a boat in the open ocean; the deep water surrounding it makes an eerie mood. The camera angle makes the distant boat huge and dangerous compared to the reef where the children are. The reef represents familiarity, while the open ocean represents the unknown that's filled with curiosity. The background sound turned silent, reflecting the pressure Nemo felt, as he saw his classmates approaching the boat with confidence. Without a second thought, Marlin confronted Nemo and scolded him. As the camera angle is focused downward on Nemo making him look small, signifying how limited his independence is under Marlin's control. *"You think you can do these things, but you just can't, Nemo!"* Marlin exclaimed. As Marlin turns back insisting that they go



home, the scene zooms into his face, indicating Marlin acted unconsciously rather than considering Nemo's feelings. Additionally, he reacts unconsciously out of fear because of his past trauma and loss. It was shown when he scolded Nemo, his trauma triggers the superego, which Freud believed punished the mind with guilt and fear. Marlin restricts Nemo's independence because he still fears losing him again.

Initially, Nemo is not going to do the dare, showing that he is not naturally rebellious. However, Marlin who is driven by his superego suddenly appears and starts scolding Nemo. This correspondence with Freud's theory of behavior: *"Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways."* (Freud, 1915). Marlin fear and guilt will always stay alive in him, resurfacing later in uglier ways, such as anger toward Nemo. This outburst is clearly shown when they exchange the line Nemo: *"I hate you."* Marlin: *"You know you can't swim well!"*



His words are not chosen consciously, but are controlled by his unconscious fear. Making him punish Nemo for danger that reminds him about his past trauma. As Marlin turns his back toward Nemo, urging Nemo to follow him home. Nemo in an act of rebellion swims alone toward the boat at 00:14:26 as marlin faces the other way. Nemo swims closer to the boat, he is surrounded by dark

lighting, the darkness surrounding the once familiar scene reflects Marlin's fear resurfacing again. Nemo's choice to swim and touch the boat represents a child who longs for independence. In this case, Nemo's acts of rebellion are driven by his desire to prove his capabilities, especially after feeling humiliated by Marlin. Marlin's words of *"You know you can't swim well!"* hurts Nemo and this pushes him to want to assert himself, mirroring a real situation amongst children who often seek independence when they feel underestimated or restricted and Nemo's action gives a clear answer *"The ways Nemo's pursuit of independence represent a child's desire for freedom from parental control."* The scene explains from the child's perspective, Nemo swims toward the boat not because he wants danger but driven from wanting to prove his capability to his parents. By choosing his own decisions, it shows how desire for freedom comes when parent control becomes excessive. Nemo's decision reflect how many children feel, and this directly answer the research question

As Nemo is about to swim back toward the familiar reef, a dark unfamiliar shadow appears behind him, he freezes in place as he is suddenly captured by the diver. Marlin screams from the reef *"Nemo! Nooooo!"* His response is immediately filled with panic. Before, his action is driven by anger, now it is replaced with fear as his super ego once again reminds him of that horrific memory.

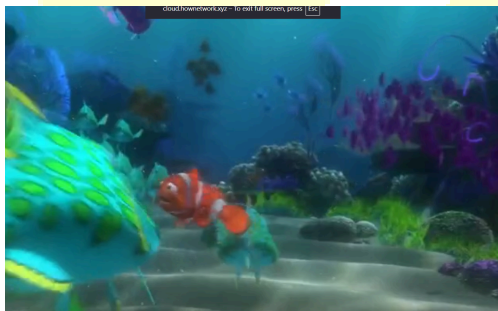
Nemo's vulnerability is shown through his small body in contrast with the large hand capturing him. Freud's idea, "*The patient repeats instead of remembering,*" this reflects Marlin's behavior. At 00:15:00, the same pattern reappears. When Marlin sees Nemo getting captured, Marlin unconsciously swims toward the danger in an attempt to save his beloved son, but another diver rises below him holding a camera and blocking his vision.

Mirroring Marlin's earlier trauma, He charges at the attacking barracuda only to be left unconscious and alone, this behavior repeats itself as Marlin tries to save Nemo but is only left helpless again. As the diver swims farther disappearing onto the boat, Marlin swims frantically trying to catch up with the boat. The camera follows him from



below, as the boat catches speed becoming faster by the second, Marlin becomes smaller and smaller in the frame suggesting how far the boat is. The moving boat disturbing the water as it speeds away, leaving a trail of bubbles and Marlin in shock overwhelmed in fear. He freezes in place, eyes wide and in a panic for he can no longer see the boat. This moment reflects how Marlin repeats his trauma by losing Nemo in the same helpless way he once lost Coral and their eggs.

As the story unfolds, the immediate impact of Nemo's disappearance is shown in the scene (00:16:35), where Marlin is desperate but refuses to give up on finding his son. He also asks the fish he encounters along the way if they have seen Nemo, but his panic obscures the beauty of his surroundings. The ocean is bright and full of beautiful life, but Marlin looks so sad and anxious,

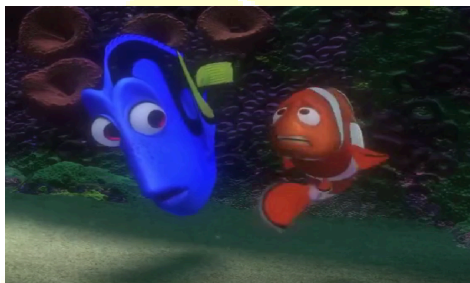


reflecting the stark contrast between the outside world and the turmoil in his heart. Moreover, the very fast camera movements during scene transitions further show how much panic and fear has taken over Marlin's mind, reflecting the fear he experiences during the barracuda attack when he loses his wife and many of his eggs.

According to Freud (1915), "*The unconscious is the true physical reality.*" In this context, "*true psychical reality*" refers to Marlin's deepest feelings and memories, which are hidden in his subconscious mind and cause him to be traumatized by the loss of them. This is what controls his actions, so his subconscious mind prevents him from thinking clearly, calmly, or logically. Marlin chose to quickly leave the safety of the coral reef not because of logic, but because of a direct and powerful urge from his deepest and most hidden feelings; as Freud said, an unconscious urge. He is driven by a primary need 'id', a necessity, to repair and avoid the disaster

he has already experienced. The way he searches frantically is an uncontrollable command from his own mind to stop the trauma from happening again. For Marlin, losing Nemo means that his identity and purpose in life, which are originally formed from sadness, is completely lost. Therefore, Marlin's actions in this scene show that unconscious fear is a force that completely controls him, turning the vast and beautiful ocean into a reflection of his chaotic and panicked struggle.

The scene where Marlin meets Dory (00:16:56) is an important part of Marlin's journey. At that time, Marlin looks desperate as he frantically searches for Nemo, and Dory appears with her bright blue color and cheerful face, which is very different from Marlin's orange color, which looks full of anxiety. Although Marlin is reluctant at first, he stays with Dory because he also needs help



and a friend to find Nemo. The conversation between Marlin and Dory shows how the human mind works according to Freud, namely the relationship and conflict between the ego, which is when Marlin is very careful and cautious because of his guilt and trauma (trying to think realistically, avoiding danger, and making decisions carefully), and the 'id', which is like Dory, who is always cheerful and spontaneous in giving advice without thinking twice (following emotions, instincts, and desires without considering the consequences). "*Where id was, there ego shall be.*" (Freud, S. (1923/1961). Usually, the 'ego' controls the 'id', but Marlin is the opposite, creating excessive anxiety. Because of the trauma he experiences, Marlin becomes more dependent on fear and is always on guard, so his ego becomes more rigid. She always rejects and resents Dory's spontaneous and emotional approach to everything, which is why she says, "*No, I don't wanna know what you gotta do.*" But because Marlin needs Dory, she continues to deal with Dory's spontaneity, bringing out her id. This relationship slowly made Marlin learn to open himself up again to the emotions and joy that he has kept hidden for so long, so he accepts Dory's impulsive ways, as Dory says, "*When life gets you down, you know what you gotta do? Just keep swimming.*" Marlin begins to soften his rigid ego and becomes healthier and more balanced.

Marlin and Dory's journey progresses quickly and becomes increasingly dangerous when they encounter three sharks named Bruce, Chum, and Anchor who live by the motto, "*fish are friends, not food.*" This occurs in the scene (00:19:21 - 00:28:00) where the atmosphere becomes tense and dangerous when Dory's nose starts bleeding and Bruce's instincts resurface. Marlin is reminded of his past trauma. The threat from these sharks brings back Marlin's fear and despair, showing how deeply the trauma still affects his mind and life. Marlin repeatedly feels this trauma



when he senses danger around him, especially when he encounters sharks and this aligns with Freud's concept of "*Repetition Compulsion*". In his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud argued that sometimes the mind forces a person to relive painful or traumatic events. "*Repetition compulsion is an attempt to master the trauma.*" (Freud, S. (1920/1955). Marlin ends up in this situation not just by chance; it is his own trauma that

drives him to a place that triggers danger. Encountering sharks makes Marlin face his fear of death and loss again. Unconsciously, his mind "*created*" this situation so that his 'ego' could begin to process his previous frightening experiences. Instead of being stuck in the past, he begins to show some progress, as he is able to move, think, and protect himself and Dori. This marks the first step in Marlin's transformation from being completely consumed by fear to becoming someone who dares to confront his fears and face the world beyond his trauma. Marlin ends up in this situation not just by chance; it is his own trauma that drives him to a place that triggers danger, (manifestation of anxiety). Encountering sharks made Marlin face his fear of death and loss again. Unconsciously, his mind "*created*" this situation so that his ego could begin to process his past terrifying experiences. Instead of being stuck in the past, he began to show a little progress, as he was able to move, think, and protect himself and Dori. This is the first step in Marlin's transformation from being completely controlled by fear to becoming someone who dares to fight his fears and face the world outside his trauma. It is deadly experiences like this that allow Marlin to slowly control the trauma and despair he feels after failing to protect his family in the past.

The encounter with Angerfish is the most psychologically terrifying point in Marlin's journey, similar to diving into the subconscious itself. In the deep sea, the surrounding environment is filled with complete darkness. Marlin and Dory's only focus is on the glowing predator bait, which they follow out of desperation and curiosity. This large and terrifying Anglerfish shows how their



curiosity has led them directly into extreme danger. Marlin is naturally afraid of this monster, but instead of being afraid, he is forced to act decisively. He says, "*You were right, Dory! We'll just keep swimming!*" (00:34:00). This is a moment where he overcomes his fear without thinking too much, which also shows a profound change in his character. The suffocating darkness and the terrifyingly

bright Anglerfish create a nightmarish atmosphere. This image reflects what Freud referred to in his dream theory, that dreams often bring up unconscious fears and inner conflicts. *“Dreams are the disguised fulfillments of repressed wishes.”* (Freud, S. (1900/1953). In this context, the darkness of the deep sea and the glowing, terrifying fish resemble a nightmare. Although it usually represents hidden desires, this “nightmare” actually depicts Marlin's unconscious drive to overcome his past trauma. The anglerfish is a predator that suddenly emerges from the darkness and symbolizes the full force of Marlin's fear after death and helplessness. Marlin's courage to keep moving and protect Dory is a hidden form of his past desire, namely the desire to be able to act when the barracuda attack occurs. By emerging from this deep-sea *“hunting dream,”* Marlin not only survives physically but also gradually sheds his psychological burdens and trauma.

The setting shifts back to Nemo where we see him waiting to execute the escape plan devised by Gill, where we see a more calm environment, that being the aquarium in the dentist's office. Nemo gets to show his courage and bravery when he has to go inside the filter tank and jam the blades with a pebble. This was to make it so that the filter stops working and the tank gets dirty, so the dentist has to clean it



and they can escape after being let out. This scene shows Nemo in the aquarium. A dim green light shines on Nemo alone inside, emphasizing his fear but also his bravery. The green color makes the atmosphere seem more cramped and isolated (00:49:40). But as Nemo finds a way to transform fear into survival instinct, he overcomes the unconscious trauma that was passed from Marlin. *“The compulsion to repeat... appears to be something more primitive than the pleasure principle.”* Freud, S. (1920/1955). His *id* breaks him free from that trauma, *“We're gonna have to figure out how to get outta here!”* Nemo sharpens his instincts whilst unconsciously picking what Marlin would not have.

Waking up on a turtle's shell after he was knocked unconscious from forcing going through the *“Jellyfish Forest”*, he finds himself in a daze not knowing what is happening. He finds out that the turtle he was on was named Crush and Crush tells him that he is on the EAC (*East Australian Current*), which makes him on the right track to finding Nemo in Sydney (00:51:31 - 00:52:56). It is here that Marlin gets to see another side of parenting that is shown by Crush. He sees him being calm about everything that is happening in the current. Be it from experience or courage, Crush seems to show no fear. He does know about dangers lurking outside,



which was shown with him acknowledging Nemo for going through the Jellyfish Forest, but he does not let anxiety take over just because of it. Which in contrast to Marlin, is always suspicious and on high alert over everything they encounter in the ocean. Crush's way of parenting is different from Marlin's, while Marlin controls Nemo and confines him into a place he thinks as safe, Crush lets his son, Squirt, roam around while keeping a watchful eye on him. Crush is not a parent that is careless, he knows that kids will be curious and roam to places that they want to just for the sake of knowing. When Squirt accidentally gets launched outside of the current, Marlin shows panic and stress, showing concern towards Squirt and almost immediately trying to rush over to him. But Crush stops

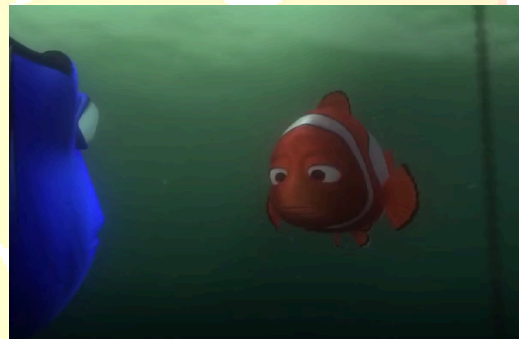


him in his tracks and says, *"Woah!, kill the motor dude, let us see what Squirt does flying solo.."* Squirt is outside for a bit, trying to think of a solution on what to do with the situation at hand, but eventually he goes right back in. After that Squirt immediately gets excited and tells his dad about it, showing the bond that they have towards one another. Crush even tells Marlin about how turtles figure out how to get to the ocean after hatching on beaches, Marlin asks *"All by themselves? But- but- but dude, how do you know when they're ready?"*, which Crush responds with *"Well you never really know, but when they know, you'll know, you know?"* (00:54:15 - 00:55:25). In this setting, bright blue light creates a calm atmosphere as Marlin talks to Crush, the turtle in the ocean. The difference in color shows their characters: Marlin is anxious, while Crush is relaxed. So in this scene Crush teaches Marlin to have more faith and let his son learn to be independent, *"The ego learns through experience."* Freud, S. (1923/1961).

As Marlin and Dory find their exit to Sydney after riding the current, they are seen to be swimming in what seems as a gray fog, most likely to be an abundance of planktons and other microorganisms, eventually they come to a stop realizing they are going nowhere, a whale gradually approaching and appearing from behind them. In the setting, Marlin and Dory encounter a large whale. The difference in their sizes is very noticeable. The lighting in this scene is soft, with the blue color of the sea creating a calm yet tense atmosphere. (1:06:45) They get eaten by the whale and get stuck in his mouth. Marlin's survival instinct goes into panic mode as he helplessly tries to open the whale's mouth by crashing into it. Eventually the whale tries to swallow the water inside, Marlin and Dory have to hold on to the tongue of the whale. As Dory tries to speak-whale again, Marlin accidentally blurted out *"You think you can do these things, but you just can't, Nemo!"* even when it is just him and Dory inside there (01:12:45). Which mirrors even more how Marlin's trauma has

affected his parenting and he himself as a whole. He thinks too much about trying to keep Nemo safe that he lacks the ability to comprehend and analyze the situation he was in. After the pause Dory then says, “He says it’s time to let go!” Marlin: “How do you know something bad isn’t gonna happen?” Dory: “I don’t!” Marlin must surrender control in that instance, letting unconscious trust/impulse (id) guide him instead of fear (ego). “The repressed does not cease to exist simply because it is repressed.” Freud, S. (1915).

In the movie, Marlin suffers severe trauma from losing his wife and eggs before raising Nemo. This led to him being over possessive towards Nemo. Because of Marlin’s treatment towards him, over time, he developed a desire to assert his autonomy to his father, to be able to make his own decisions without his father’s influence. Marlin’s sadness can be seen in a scene with him and Dory, where they are both talking (1:22:10). Marlin collapses into melancholia, repeating Coral’s loss unconsciously. This scene shows Marlin and Dory conversing in a medium close-up shot, so both Marlin and Dory’s expressions are clearly visible. The lighting is dim and greenish, creating a calm atmosphere but also conveying a deep sadness, which reinforces the emotions of doubt and exhaustion that Marlin is feeling. “I promised I’d never let anything happen to him.” says Marlin. “In melancholia, the shadow of the object falls upon the ego.” (Freud, 1917/1957). Marlin already bore such pain and loss with Coral that he does not want to repeat the same incident. His body is trapped in a terrifying maze of grief.



The object refers to Coral, someone Marlin loved and unfortunately died. According to Freud, the “object will never detach from the person who is enduring it” (Freud, 1915/1957, p. 249). Instead, the person unconsciously identifies with the object and it indirectly becomes a part of their identity. It becomes how you do your daily life, how you behave and even how you think. It becomes a negative thing because it affects other people, even though they did not do something wrong.

After a tumultuous journey of ups and downs, Marlin and Nemo finally got to reunite and reconcile their past differences. The segment displays Marlin and Nemo hugging each other, as a father and a son, an intimate moment while they are releasing their mutual longing (01:26:00). The close up camera angle shows their emotional expressions. The pitch black lighting, illuminated by only a sliver of light coming through, depicts the warm and heartwarming mood, it is a moment of relief after a lot of struggle. This adds a lot of character to Marlin, he finally breaks the chain of trauma that has frequently haunted him for years, it is an unconscious healing. “Unexpressed



*emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.*”(Freud,1920/1955). This quote tells about a core concept which is repression. Repression is a mechanism that the brain does to the body to protect itself. So when a person experiences frightening emotions such as anger and sadness, it automatically puts them deep down inside the psyche. That feeling does not die and disintegrate, it stays and

influences the person’s mind without the person realising it. Because those emotions do not get time to be resolved, it often comes out in unhealthy ways like anxiety. This correlates to Marlin perfectly, Marlin never expresses his grief as the result of losing Coral and his eggs. That takes the form of something else which is his overprotective parenting style. It re-emerges as his horror of losing his one and only son. When Nemo is captured by divers, it was like *deja vu*, him reliving the same sequence.

Near the end of the movie, there is a climax involving a fishing net (01:27:20). Dory alongside a school of fishes got caught. Nemo believes it is an opportunity to prove himself, the thing he is fighting for this entire time. Marlin, of course, being the domineering parent that he is, is not willing to let him go. Nemo insists that he is capable of doing this laborious task because he has experience with the tank gang earlier. He immediately swims to the fishnet to rescue the fishes. After some time, Marlin loosens his grip and says “*It’s okay, I know you can do this, Nemo.*” In the image, shows a scene where Nemo was trying to convince Marlin, the close up and dim lighting further emphasises this part. “*The goal of all life is death.*”

(Freud,1920/1955). Freud believed there are two opposing forces in our body, those are the life instinct (Eros) and death instinct (Thanatos). Life instinct is the drive toward survival, love, growth, sexuality and bonding. In contrast, death instinct is the drive toward, stillness, self destruction, repetition and ultimately returning to a state



of non existence. He believed that before we are alive, we are in a state of death, not in a literal sense but death in a way that means zero tension, no stress. It is the oldest and deepest instinct in the body, and in the end it wants to return to that state. It wants to survive, build relationships and live life to the fullest. Those are the eros balancing the thanatos. Freud said this because he observed soldiers that were traumatized by war were often repeating traumatic dreams and humans frequently repeating

bad habits. Before this moment, Marlin's life is dominated by fear, trauma and the act of trying to prevent something. His mind is actively forcing him to move to a state of stillness, where it is passive. When the scene goes into motion, Marlin is confronted with his biggest trauma. As said above, one of the traits of the death drive is repeating past trauma. This moment is almost the exact same as the one where He lost Coral. Instead of letting the death drive overcome him, he decisively chooses the other option, the life instinct. Despite the risk, it shows Marlin's willingness to embrace the unpredictability of nature. Nemo's heroic act is not to cause destruction, it stemmed from genuine compassion. He wants to help others. When the group of fish swim down to break free, it symbolises life pulling from the force of death. So, during his tenure before this, he spent a long time obeying that demand of lifelessness, but in this moment, he actively chooses to resist against it, finally living towards an eros life.

## CONCLUSION

Finding Nemo tells a story from the perspective of a parent and a child, following them in their journey to reconcile with their past. Pictured with how Marlin learns to settle with his past trauma and Nemo projecting a new image of his father. It shows how their unconscious mind, Nemo's 'id' and Marlin's 'ego', clash to decide upon something. In the end influencing each other in a positive way, a way where they look at the other person's perspective. Their journey both challenges them with the way they view as things be looked upon, Nemo's journey gives way to prove his bravery and independence towards the restraint of his father, which also lets him see why Marlin is so protective and fearful of the ocean, and Marlin's journey challenges his views on how he should react to a situation, it gives an explanation on why Nemo's 'id' is as is.

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