

**THE FIXATED TRAITS IN
“KUNG FU PANDA 3” MOVIE:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERARY CRITICISM**

Dona Widiyanti .H¹, Annabelle Mathilda .C. K², Georgia Love Lee³
English Literary Criticism, Boanerges: Makarios Education Journal

Email: dona.widianti.hendrayudo@sekolahmakarios.id, annabelle.mathilda.karsum@sekolahmakarios.id,
georgia.love.lee@sekolahmakarios.id

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”
- Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the crucial childhood socio-cultural learning across the lifespan; how the affection, love, close relationships and parenting of both parents are primal that affect adulthood personality. Qualitative method was used to explain and criticize the psychological issue in this movie. Since the story is presented through moving pictures, cameraworks in cinematography were used to narrate the plot, settings, and characters. Furthermore, the theory of “*Stages of Psychosocial Development*” by Erik Erikson was applied as the approach to conduct this analysis in order to figure out what triggers Po’s anxiety related to two stages of Erikson’s *Basic Trust vs Mistrust & Autonomy vs Doubt, Shame*. As a result: **1)** Po’s anxiety is triggered by his inadequate trust at the *Basic Trust vs Mistrust* stage, making it difficult to control his dietary habit, pessimistic, dependent, and overly sensitive to rejection. **2)** The lack of parenting at the *Autonomy vs Doubt, Shame* stage makes him manifest unfavorable outcomes: a lack of self-control, disorganized, messy and careless behaviors. **3)** Po eventually manages to gain his confidence; however, his adult fixation still remains.

INTRODUCTION

Kung Fu Panda 3 is a sequel released on March 8, 2016, continuing the first and second movie. It was produced by one of the famous companies named *DreamWorks Animation* and distributed by 20th Century Fox. With the voice actors: Jack Black, Jackie Chan, Angelina Jolie, etc., it comes with an amazing plot that interests both kids and adults. Unfortunately, Kung Fu Panda 3 actually has the lowest-grossing movie in the Kung Fu Panda series. But, it also has a lot of positive responses from people around the world. This movie is about the main character known as Po who finally meets his birth father and comes back to the panda village. However, a spirit warrior named Kai wants to destroy Oogway’s legacy, and to steal all the powerful chi, so Po must learn to master Chi as soon as possible. A lot of other conflicts within the story which leads to Po wondering who he really is.

Binary Opposition

Past Cause “ <i>Stages of Psychosocial Development</i> ”	Present Effect “ <i>Adult Fixation</i> ”
Deficiency in foundational caregiving of both parents, specifically affection from his mother at the stage of <i>Trust vs Mistrust, Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt</i> .	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. Besides, he often doubts his ability and tends to be disorganized, and messy

METHOD

Conducting this analysis a qualitative method was used in which the data were explained and described in a manner of criticizing the psychological issue in the movie; therefore, *psychosocial development* by Erik Erikson was applied as the approach to psychoanalytic literary criticism. As a Freudian, influenced by Freud, Erikson developed the stages across lifespan. He believed that a person’s personality unfolds from birth through old age.

Erikson’s Stage Theory in its Final Version			
Age	Conflict	Resolution or “Virtue”	Culmination in old age
Infancy (0-1 year)	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Appreciation of interdependence and relatedness
Early childhood (1-3 years)	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Acceptance of the cycle of life, from integration to disintegration
Play age (3-6 years)	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Humor; empathy; resilience
School age (6-12 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence	Humility; acceptance of the course of one’s life and unfulfilled hopes
Adolescence (12-19 years)	Identity vs. Confusion	Fidelity	Sense of complexity of life; merging of sensory, logical and aesthetic perception
Early adulthood (20-25 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	Sense of the complexity of relationships; value of tenderness and loving freely
Adulthood (26-64 years)	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Caritas, caring for others, and agape, empathy and concern
Old age (65-death)	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Existential identity; a sense of integrity strong enough to withstand physical disintegration

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, valuing right and wrong. Erikson believed that the childhood ages are the most important and fundamental learning of how a child develops *trust vs mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt, industry vs. inferiority*; if these stages are well-developed, when a child grows up, he will be mature enough to face any challenges ahead.

DISCUSSION

The movie starts with Kai, the antagonist of the movie taking Oogway’s ‘*chi*.’ But surprisingly, Oogway does not fight back seriously. He knows that he is not destined to defeat Kai. Before Kai takes his ‘*chi*,’ Oogway says, “*When will you realize the more you take, the less it have?*” which means if focusing more on satisfaction or wishes,



the tendency to lose sight of what truly matters will manifest later. Oogway is trying to make Kai realize that taking Kung Fu masters’ ‘*chi*’ will not make anything better, or make him powerful, but Kai does not care about what Oogway says and still continues his so-called mission. Then, it changes to a scene where the Fantastic 4 and Po run around in patrol in the village. Po seems to feel like what he *thinks* is what he is meant to do; nonetheless, not too long after, Po feels insecure when he fails to teach after taking over Master Shifu’s job to teach the fantastic 4 because he may not be able to train them again. In this condition, his ‘*superego*’ keeps telling him to conduct the duty and achieve ‘*chi*’, however, ‘*id*’ wants him to just relax, and ‘*ego*’ prefers to wait and see. Here, he tries to relieve his anxiety by *denying* and *suppressing* it in the unconscious mind. In fact, Po does not know who he actually is, but Oogway sees potential in Po and believes that Po is potent to do amazing things that are beyond his imagination. Po doubts himself and he starts to lose his confidence.

It is revealed in the previous sequel that Po realizes that Mr. Ping is not his birth father. Being raised by foster care is already hard for him. It is known that he has lost early childhood experience with his real parents. Erikson divided the four early childhood stages into crucial psychosocial developmental stages in which a child should pass each stage quite well in order to be mature in adulthood. In this case, Po has lost childhood moments with his real parents. “*Parents must not only have certain ways of guiding by prohibition and permission; they must also be able to represent to the child a deep, almost somatic conviction that there is a meaning to what they are doing*” (Erikson, 1993). The roles of parents, specifically mother during the first stage is considered crucial not limited to delaying and giving

gratification of breastfeeding, but also in building close relationships in terms of *Basic Trust vs Mistrust*. Erikson believed that having the loss of this trust may result in frustration that is unconsciously repressed and may appear in the surface of consciousness in later stages in a form of anxiety. Having difficulty in managing this anxiety can cause a person to feel unconfident and lose his trust principle.

Po always needs to adapt with his new surroundings. But he is somehow satisfied with knowing who he is after becoming a dragon warrior. Then he starts questioning his identity after Shifu makes him a teacher, *“If you only do what you can do, you’ll never be more than you are, ”* Yet Po does not want to be more, he likes who he is but he also exactly does not know who he is. Here we can see how his *‘id’* is telling him and is most dominant that what he is, is the dragon warrior and that he is nothing more but the dragon warrior, what is there to wonder? Yet his *‘ego’* tells him that he is the dragon warrior, but there’s just something else he has to figure out, *“What is a dragon warrior?”* which is what Po questioned. His *‘superego’* insists and forces himself too to learn more about himself, that this is the responsibility he weighs as a dragon warrior. *“But let it be said here that the amount of trust derived from earliest infantile experience does not seem to depend on absolute quantities of food or demonstrations of love, but rather on the quality of the maternal relationship”* (Erikson, 1993) A mother has an important role in building a child’s trust in order to gain confidence and independence as the fundamental principle to face reality. In this scene, Po’s defense mechanism behaves *denial* and *intellectualization* by rejecting and complaining that he has to learn more or *“have to stay in a cave for many years”* to know about himself. Shifu tells Po that he has power anyone could ever imagine, he just has not channeled it yet. Shifu also tells Po that he is trying to turn Po into the real Po, but Po keeps complaining. He feels like he fully knows himself already when he actually does not. In his self-defense, even though he does not want to know who he really is, he wants to believe that who he is, is just the dragon warrior.

Then, it moves to a scene where Kai enters the mortal realm in the middle of a farm, making two villagers who are around them scared. The camera takes a medium shot to capture all the characters: the villain who smirks happily knowing he is back. He then makes a couple of *“Jade zombies”* to send them to find Oogway's apprentice (Also known as the Fantastic 4, Po and Master Shifu). On the other side, a mysterious man named Li Shan comes to the village, beating Po’s dumpling-eating record. This Li Shan guy makes a surprising entrance for Po because he is also a panda because it has been a long time since he is able to see someone of his kind. Li Shan claims that he is currently searching for his lost son. Po tells Li Shan that he is also searching for his father. *“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). This is the moment when they both realize they are actually searching for each other. Li Shan is actually Po’s biological father, meanwhile the foster father of Po feels left behind when he sees Po and his father getting close. He feels a bit sad and slightly mumbled, *“But I am already proud.”* Upon talking to his biological father, Po wants to show off what he has accomplished. He speaks excitedly, *“You’re going to be so proud!”* Yet his foster father is proud, but he stands there and watches as his son takes his biological father.

Po wants to make his father proud, but he does not realize that he has misused his privilege as a dragon warrior. Po gets really carried away because of his excitement from meeting his dad. He forgets that he has a big responsibility that Oogway entitles him to. Once he is found out messing with the ancient weapons, Po then changes the topic by introducing his father to master Shifu and his friends. They are quite surprised and are also happy for Po. When they are all talking with each other, the emergency bell starts ringing and that is a sign that the village is under attack. Po feels excited when he hears that bell ring. He feels like it is the chance for him to show his father that he can fight bad guys. Because of his joy and excitement, Po does not take Kai and the jade zombies seriously. He feels Overly-confident. Underestimating (again) the power of Kai’s. Po wants to show himself who he is in seeking validation. His *‘id’* drives him to gain power, just to play around and show off to his biological father, while his *‘ego’* is telling him that these weird enemies they face (Jade zombies) are quite serious, yet it is interesting seeing how the characters are heroes from the past. Meanwhile his *‘superego’* is proclaiming that he has the responsibility to be righteous and just, and that they should figure out more clues.

In this situation, again he *denies* his incompetence of fighting but underestimates his opponents. In the phase of *Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt*, Erikson (1993) argued *“To hold can become a destructive and cruel retaining or restraining, and it can become a pattern of care: to have and to hold. To let go, too, can turn into an inimical letting loose of destructive forces, or it can become a relaxed “to let pass” and “to let be.”* In this phase a child must get proper parenting from biological parents in terms of trust in holding on and letting go with discretion. He must be assured that he gains trust first that encourages him to stand on his own feet. If well-guided, then in this psychosocial development he gets the autonomy of free choice or if not, it develops doubt and shame. Erikson in Syed & Mc Lean (2017) stated, *“a specific tension will manifest prior to its primary developmental period, and will continue to be relevant after”* The repetitive inability to hold on and let go of behavior in childhood will manifest obsessiveness that enables him to manipulate things and be stubborn in adulthood or he may feel ashamed, doubtful: guilty.

In the scene at the end of the fight with the fantastic 4, Kai introduces himself, tells them that he will come for them and steal their *‘chi.’* Noticing this makes them worried, and the only way they know is to defeat Kai by being a true master of *‘chi.’* Master Shifu can barely bloom a flower, and there is not any

choice but to have Po to do the job. But he is still millions away from even mastering Chi even though long ago pandas have been the ones who master 'chi.' Li Shan, Po's biological father suddenly steps in, saying that he knows how and will teach him, but in order to do that he will have to come to the secret panda village, the place where his biological father is staying alongside with other pandas. Po starts to think about who he really is, a panda, which also in fact is correct even before he says he is a dragon warrior. "Which one is exactly correct?" With that curiosity, Po agrees to come to the panda village with his father. His father teaches him how to be a real panda. Considering he has never lived with pandas around him, he finally knows how to behave: sleep, eat, and live like a panda. Long story short, Po feels like he has fitted in with the other pandas, he feels like he has already fully become a panda now. Living with his father makes him feel even better and moreover, this is the moment he has been waiting for. Growing up differently makes him question himself; nonetheless, he tries to find an answer with the opportunity to see where he is actually from. When everything is clear, he is now finally validated that he is able to tell himself who he is: a panda. In his mental confusion, his 'id' seeks answers to his curiosity by meeting up with his biological father, but his 'ego' tells him that there must be something else, something is still missing while his 'superego' refuses to really believe he is just a panda due to the living norms taught by Li Shan. In this case, his defense mechanisms show *denial* and *repression* because he is to be said: a dragon warrior. His self-defense is that he makes himself believe that who he is, is a panda but eventually he becomes a true panda.

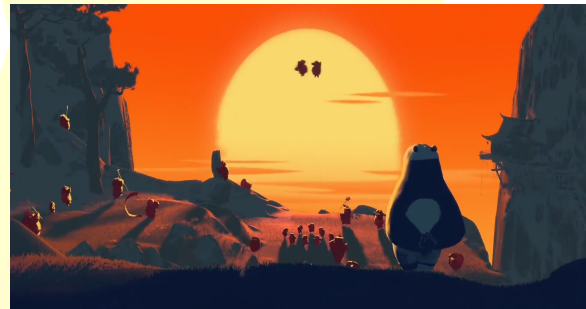
In this scene, the camera takes a long shot from a distance to show the interaction of the two characters standing on a suspension bridge with the night mountainous range background as well as creating a privacy atmosphere. Tigress goes to find Po to tell him that master Shifu and their friends have been defeated by Kai, making the whole panda village



panic because Kai is coming for them next. Po, on the other hand, feels like he is finally ready to master 'chi' and defeat Kai. But, Li Shan, in frantic panic too, tells Po the truth when Po tells him that he is ready. Li Shan tells Po that he does not know how to master 'chi' and that it has been long gone that pandas never do that anymore. Po of course is shocked and also surprised. Not to mention that this means Po just leaves his friends and also the village in great danger. He also thinks that he is the reason Shifu and the others get defeated. He is mad at his father for lying to him even after hearing his reason. Then, Po leaves his father at the bridge because he feels disappointed in his own father. Po decides to fix this problem and face the risks even though he has not mastered 'chi' yet. In his society, he feels he has the responsibility to fight and protect all the villagers. Po has finally developed his character of responsibility.

Yet a dangerous sense of responsibility knowing the risk to fight Kai without mastering 'chi.' It can be seen that he manifests retentive compulsiveness, *doubt and shame*; doubting his ability at the same time feeling ashamed. His 'id' is a reckless self saying that he has no choice but to fight Kai, masters or not. His 'ego' on the other hand tells him he is not exactly ready and that fighting him may lead to dangerous risk. While his 'superego' wants to prepare as much as possible to fight Kai, he believes he is not ready. His defense mechanism is to face Kai, not caring about the risks or how he has not mastered 'chi' yet. He wants to fight Kai, to take care of his responsibilities. Po realizes that being a dragon warrior is a very big title and Shifu has trained him hard so that he can protect the village. It is a turning point for him to take matters into his own hands.

In this scene in the panda village, the camera shoots a long shot to show the entire view of the pandas with the sunset background, comforting the audience to tell them how beautiful the village is. But when Po is preparing himself for battle, the pandas along with his biological father and foster father come to him, telling him that they want to help too. Po



knows they do not know how to fight yet the pandas tells him he can try teaching them. *"I can't teach you kung fu! I couldn't even teach Tigress and she already knows kung fu!"* Po exclaims and points at tigress who cannot help but agree at how bad he is teaching the fantastic 4. But still, his father pleads, *"Po, I know I'm the last guy you wanna trust right now. But you gotta believe me. We can do this. We can learn Kung fu. We can be just like you!"* The last sentence strikes Po. He finally realizes what Shifu meant. A flow of joy and confidence flows in his veins and now he is able to teach. *"I don't have to turn you into me, I have to turn you into you!"* In this situation, Po's psyche conflict starts to calm after he understands Oogway's statement; however, it is not settled yet, until the next circumstance occurs. *"It is the free choice that counts and the conviction that nobody can either "fence you in " or "push you around" (Freud, 1993).* These symbolize two aspects: holding on or letting go, freedom to choose, good and evil and self-control. This fundamental personality is believed to be obtained at the stage of *Autonomy vs Shame* when a child gets potty trained by parents to learn to hold on and to let go of his secretion. The roles of parents, affection, love, interaction, close relationships are considered crucial from which a child receives trust. Having this childhood experience disrupted during this stage may result in an unconfident, disorganized, messy personality or an aggressive, stingy, perfectionist personality. With this he finally teaches the people in the panda village. He helps develop what he is good at and to use it as a weapon to fight Kai. Soon, not long after that Po finally feels they are ready, and just in time Kai comes. This one

particular scene is the major turning point for po, where he becomes mature but he has not realized it yet. Only then in the upcoming scenes will he realize it.

In this scene, the camera shoots in a *bird's eye view* to show the interaction between individuals and the environment, specifically the condition in the spirit realm. The spirit realm and the '*chi*' energy are two unconditional aspects that are shown to the audience to create vivid pictures in the mind of the viewers. This scene symbolizes duality: fantasy vs reality, good vs evil, chaos vs order. Having his psyche conflicted, his



'id' demands the urgency to master '*chi*,' to find his true identity; however, his '*superego*' keeps reminding him of the responsibility and duty given by Oogway and accepting his birth parents. Eventually, his '*ego*' manages to learn acceptance, trust and potential content after the experience of getting along with his birth father and Mr. Ping. Facing this, his defense mechanism occupies fantasy to relieve the tension of his anxiety in his preconsciousness. A massive fight eventually takes place, the panda's fighting the Jade zombies, including the two fathers who finally talk things out before. In reality, the foster father at first feels that Po's biological father will take Po away from him. *"Through the course of the first attachment (i.e. to the principal caregiver) the infant also begins to formulate an internal working model of what a relationship involves"* (Bowlby in Hewstone, M., Fincham, F. D., & Foster, J, 2005) He believed that the close relationship of a child to his parents is the most important attachment that has a long term implications of trust to face strangers in the rest of life's challenges.

But he soon realizes that having Po's biological father does not mean less for him, it means more for Po. *"Sometimes we do the wrong things for the right reasons."* Po's foster father is comforted, *"Look, he's hurt, he's confused and he still has to save the world. He needs both his dads."* And with this they team up to fight the jade zombies calling themselves the *double dad defense* Seeing all the Jade zombies get distracted, Po comes to Kai and fights him one on one. Yet sadly he loses, he cannot bring him to the spirit realm. Kai laughs at Po while Po is looking at the pandas, seeing them all frightened that they might lose. But an idea comes into his mind that sending someone to the spirit realm only works on mortals, and so he decides to *take* him to the spirit realm which means for Po to come into the spirit realm himself too. And again he has to fight one on one with Kai, this time in the spirit realm, unfortunately Po is about to lose. At this moment, the pandas want to help, they gather around trying to use their '*chi*.' *"Po, you taught us who we were meant to be."* Po's father speaks. A father, a friend, a dumpling-kicker, a lethal fighting machine, a hugger, a family, all of those are helped and touted by Po. With this they want to help Po. And miraculously they are able to use their '*chi*' and help Po. Po breaks free before his '*chi*' can be

stolen with the help of the pandas and his family and friends. “*Who are you?*” Asked by Kai, Po in full confidence answers, “*I’ve been asking the same question, am I the son of a panda? A son of a goose? A student? A Teacher? Turns out I am all of them I am the dragon warrior*” Here, we can see that Po has finally found his true self. He is able to develop because of his family, both his foster and biological one. He becomes more mature, he finally understands himself, and also masters Chi.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Po finally finds his true self. He also learns about how to be responsible and never underestimate problems. Not only that, he learns to never be afraid to do new things and adapts easily with new surroundings. He was able to help the people around him to understand themselves and even teach them kung fu. The story ends with Po, in the village with the pandas, the fantastic 4, master shifu, his two fathers and other people of the village, channeling their ‘*chi*’, giving life to the place around them. It is found that he has the absent years of being with his birth parents during his childhood: at the stage of *Basic Trust vs Mistrust*, he has a problem with his confidence and often feels insecure. Meanwhile, at the stage of *Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt*, he faces too many doubt challenges that make him feel ashamed. Therefore, it can be concluded that close relationships between a child and birth parents are the most crucial aspects to build the fundamental trust and independence in the rest of life’s challenges. The pre-social learning (*Trust vs Mistrust, Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt*) that is obtained by parents will shape a child’s personality in the future. In the end of the scene, it is shown that he manages to settle his psyche conflicts; however, adult fixation may reappear when it is triggered by his past experience memories that are hidden or repressed in the unconsciousness.

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift... that's why they call it present”

- Master Oogway -

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