

## The Analysis of Main Characters in Michel Gondry'S Movie Eternal Sunshine of Spotless Mind ( 2004 ): Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis Approach

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### ABSTRACT

*This research is entitled about analysis of main characters in Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind movie by Michel Gondry and uses Sigmund freud's psychoanalysis approach. This research aims to analyze the personality dynamic and how they solve their problem with using the defense mechanism by Sigmund freud's psychoanalysis in main characters. The results show that there are life instincts and death instincts (personality dynamic) that exist in the main characters. In this study, the main characters have changed in feelings that exist in him or her commonly referred to the psychoanalysis theory is the life instinct (Joy, motivating people to create and maintain new life, positive emotions such as love and affection) and the death instinct (Fear, anxiety or instincts that lead to not wants someone to live). In this movie, most of the death instincts that occur in the Joel and Clem as main characters. This movie also explains about 2 people who fall in love and have different characters and at the end of the story they want to forget all the memories in their brains and souls by using a tool called mapping (a tool that is placed in a person's head to erase the memories in their brain). The main character uses the defense mechanism of repression. In other words, repression is a defense mechanism that a person uses to forget or eliminate various thoughts that exist in their soul.*

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Published March 31<sup>th</sup> 2024



### KEYWORDS

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind; Movie; Psychoanalysis.

### ARTICLE LICENCE

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### 1. Introduction

Literature is the imaginative work that pictures the human life in society which can be enjoyed, understandable, and used by the society too. The author will write the result of this imagination in a form of literary works (Rahman, 2018; Jumriati et al., 2021; Junaid et al., 2023). Literary works also divided into two separate categories, fiction (literary works that based on the author's mind and imagination) and non-fiction (literary works that based on the real events that converted or adapted into written works). There are also different types of literary works such as novel, poem, drama, and short story (Fowler, 2022). The development of literature continues to change with the times, starting from the periodization of literature, to the forms and types of literature. This allows literature to develop rapidly and form new periodizations that give birth to new forms and types. Some people consider movie to be a form of digitization of literary works.

Movie is included in literary works, namely works through visual media. Movie is a tool to convey various messages to the general public through the medium of stories, and can also be interpreted as a medium of artistic expression for artists and movie-makers to express their ideas and story ideas. Movie have character, setting, roles, plot, and dialogues (Habibullah et al., 2022; Andini, 2017; Astiantih et al., 2017). Many objects can apply in psychoanalysis approach especially in movie. Moreover, this research applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis approach of personality dynamic exist in main characters and defense mechanism to solve their problems. The analysis aims to elaborate how the movie depicts Joel and Clem anxiety in accordance with Freud's theory as well as the defense mechanism that their performs. In this research, The writer uses Michel Gondry's movie to analyze about psychoanalysis in the main characters. Michel was born 8 may 1963, He is a French filmmaker noted for his inventive visual style and distinctive manipulation of mise en scène. Along with Charlie Kaufman, he won an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay as one of the writers of the 2004 film Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, which he also directed. The film Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind premiered in Los Angeles on March 9, 2004 and was released in the United States on March 19, 2004.

## 1. Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. Freud's theories revolutionized the understanding of human psychology and greatly influenced various fields, including psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and literature.

Psychoanalysis is a flow of psychology pioneered by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Psychoanalysis, which is also known as deep psychology, systematically describes the soul as an iceberg. The part that appears on the surface of the water is the smallest part, namely the conscious mind. Freud is the founding father of psychoanalysis; he made presentation in December of 1908. He gets invitation from American Psychologist G. Stanley Hall. He is ordered to deliver a series of lectures his novel view about abnormal psychology in Clark University in Worcester, Massachusset. Psychoanalytic theory (Saleh & Dabbagh, 2021). Psychoanalysis has function as three types of methods, they are theory of personality, 2) theory of personality analysis, and 3) method of therapy (healing)

As a theory of personality, psychoanalysis explains that the soul consists of three systems, namely the id, superego and ego. Freud uses physics and physiology theory to understand the system human energy in carrying out life. He explained that human energy differentiated from its use; for physical activity and psychological activity. In fact, human energy is viewed from the theory of internal energy continuity physics, the continuity of energy is that human energy can be changed from one state or form to another state, but will not disappear from the system cosmic as a whole (Koswara, 1991, p. 35-36). Personality dynamics will discusses instincts and anxiety or fear, as mentioned in the following:

It is about instinct, Freud used the subconscious to explain behavior patterns human behavior and deviations (Minderop, 2010, p. 23). Instinct is a source of deep somatic stimulation that is innate from birth (Suryabrata, 2001, p. 129). According to Freud, instincts are psychological representations congenital of excitation (a state of tension and arousal) in the body caused by the emergence of a bodily need. Additionally, Freud reveals about instincts, that instincts will accumulate a certain amount of energy psychic when a need arises, and in turn this instinct will encourage individuals to act towards future need satisfaction can reduce the tension caused by psychological pressure (Koswara, 1991, p. 36)

### a) Life Instinct

The function of life instincts is to serve the individual to stay alive and

prolonging the race (Suryabrata, 2001, p. 131). life instincts Eros) which is manifested in sexual behavior, supports life as well growth (Minderop, 2010, p. 27). Apart from that, according to Freud (in Koswara, 1991, p. 38) that the life instinct is the instinct shown in ego maintenance (the conservation of the individual) and maintenance continuity of the species (the conservation of the species). In other words, The life instinct is an instinct shown to maintain life humans as individuals and as a species. Examples of life instincts it is hunger, thirst, and sex.

### b) Death Instinct

Death instincts are also called destructive instincts. These instincts function less clearly compared to living instincts, therefore they are not well known. However, it is a reality It cannot be denied that each person will eventually die (Suryabrata, 2001, p. 132). Apart from that, according to Freud (in Koswara 1991:39), that the death instinct is an instinct aimed at destruction or the destruction of what already exists (the organism or individual itself). Freud proposed the idea of the death instinct based on facts that the discovery that the purpose of all living things or organisms is to return to an inorganic state.

In addition to the theory of anxiety, the writer will put defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud as a further discussion of psychoanalysis theory. The idea of defense mechanism stated by krech as follows: A defense mechanism in which a drive or feeling is shifted to substitute object, one that psychologically more available (Minderop, 2016, p. 29). Defense mechanism uses to fix the problem which is caused by anxiety. Freud divided defense mechanism into eight kinds. They are:

### c) Repression

It is an unconscious mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious.

d) Moving Object

This defense mechanism explains how to delegate anxiety to other people who are lower in position (inanimate objects). It is similar to displacement, but takes place when we manage to displace our emotions into a constructive rather than destructive activity.

f) Denial

It involves blocking external events from awareness. If some situation is just too much to handle, the person just refuses to experience it. As you might imagine, this is a primitive and dangerous defense - no one disregards reality and gets away with it for long.

g) Regression

It is a movement back in psychological time when one is faced with stress. When we are troubled or frightened, our behaviors often become more childish or primitive.

h) Rationalization,

It is the cognitive distortion of "the facts" to make an event or an impulse less threatening. We do it often enough on a fairly conscious level when we provide ourselves with excuses.

9) Reaction formation

It is where a person goes beyond denial and behaves in the opposite way to which he or she thinks or feels.

There are several studies that are used as references and references by this research, previous research are: 1) The first research entitled "Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind and the morality of memory" by Christopher Grau from Florida International University. This research explains us about erasing memory between Joel and Clem, and they use technology to erase it even though in their conscious they do not want to forget it. The writer found similarity between this research and previous research which is they use technology to forget their memory but actually in their conscious they can not to forget it. The second research relate with this thesis is from Riyanti (2009) in research entitled Psychological Conflict in the main character of the novel "Lip Merah by Achmad Munif" discusses the main character's psychological conflict in the form of types and factors causes and consequences arising from the psychological conflict experienced the main character. The research above has similarities with research conducted by researchers do.

This research uses a qualitative approach and uses the theory of psychoanalysis by sigmund freud. The writer analyze the selected text and images that related to personality dynamic and defense mechanism exist in the main characters.

## 1.2. Literature

Literature is a broad and multifaceted domain encompassing a wide range of written works, including novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, and more (Suma et al., 2023). As an AI language model, I can provide insights into how literature is often analyzed and understood. Furthermore, literature is a dynamic and evolving field that reflects the diversity of human experiences, emotions, and thoughts. Analyzing literature allows readers to engage with complex ideas, explore different perspectives, and appreciate the artistry of language (Kraus et al., 2022; Jauss, 2022).

## 2. Methodology

In analyzing the data, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method. based on the description of qualitative method the researcher collected and analyzed data and drew conclusions. There are two types source of data in this study, Primary data was taken from the movie of Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind. Primary data includes dialogues, visual, and duration of movie. Supporting data was taken from other books to substantiate the fact or information of the primary data. The researcher collected, read and found information of some related research from a variety of sources, journals, theses, Internet, and other relevant sources to complete the primary data. All of the collected data, the researcher applies Sigmund frued's psychoanalysis approach to analyze the dynamics personality and defense mechanism in the main characters. Then finally the researcher can write the conclusion for this research.

## 3. Result and Discussion

This research aims to analyze the personality dynamic and defense mechanism to solve their problems that characters have in this movie.

### 3.1. Profile of the Movie



Figure 1. Movie Cover

Legend = Year of Release: March 09, 2004, Genre: Romance, Duration: 1,47 Minutes, Production House: Anonymous Content, Producer: Steve Golin, Directed: Michel Gondry

### 3.2. Division of Roles and Characters

1) Jim Carey as Joel is a person has a character of introvert, 2) Kate Winslet as Clem is a person has a character of extrovert, 3) Kristen Dunst as Mary is a physician assistant at Lacuna company, 4) Mark Ruffalo as Stan Fink is a physician assistant at Lacuna company but he accompany Joel to erase all his memories with the tools in Joel's house, 4) Elijah Wood as Patrick is a physician assistant at Lacuna company, and 5) Tom Wilkinson as Dr. Howard is a doctor of the Lacuna company which handle the memory erasing process.

### 3.3. Personality Dynamic

Table 1. Data in Scenes Description – Life Instinct

No	Personality Dynamic	Object	Interpretan
A.	Life Instinct Exist in Main Characters		
1.		Joel asks Clem to stay with him because only Clem knows Joel's inner introvert.	The scene shows that Joel as a main character meets Clem in the library, he wants to save his life again in their relationship. Based on Joel's words it can conclude that he has life instinct ( having inner joy and hopefull ).

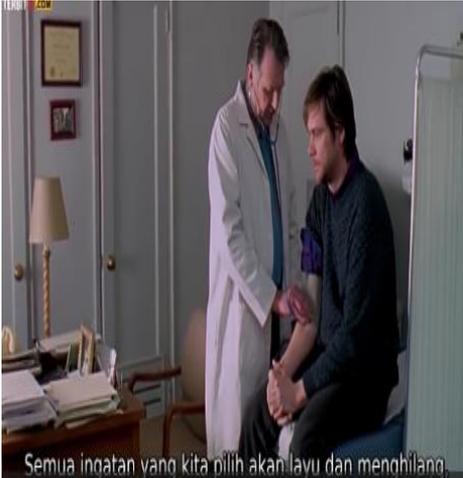
<p>2.</p>		<p>Clem is in Joel's memory. "You want me to wake up? Ok!" Joel said</p>	<p>Clem asks to Joel that he should stop to erase memory in his brain, and Joel tries to open his eyes slowly and successfully even in a few seconds.</p>
<p>3.</p>		<p>Scene in ( 0:57:28 ) Scene shows Joel feels comfort with Clem " I am where I want to be " Joel said</p>	<p>This scene tells us about the plot is back and forth. Joel feels comfortable when he sit beside Clem, even though this scene still shows us in Joel's dream.</p>
<p>4.</p>		<p>Clem reassures Joel that everything will be okay " Let me come again. I will make you happy " " Clem said</p>	<p>Clem asks Joel to forgive her and promise to make him happy again as before.</p>
<p>5.</p>		<p>Scene in ( 0:54:18 ) describe Joel wants to wake up from the process of erasing his memory and tries to open his eyes. Joel said " Can you guys hear me? I don't want this anymore, I want to call it off "</p>	<p>Lacuna company provide a mapping tools. In this scene shows us about the process of erasing the memories using a mapping tool. Moreover Joel wants to stop it and cancel all of the process.</p>

6.		<p>Scene in ( 0:57:28 ) tells Joel feels comfortable with Clem. " I am where I want to be " Joel said</p>	<p>The main characters fall in love each other and feel comfort, even though in this scene only in Joel's dream or fantasizing.</p>
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Life instincts are instincts that relate to basic survival, pleasure, excess hope. in this movie, the main characters have life instincts can make them happier and love each other. These instincts are essential for the survival of the individual as well as the continuation of the human being.

**Table 2. Data in Scenes Decription – Death Instinct**

No.	Dynamics Personality	Object	Interpretan
<b>B.</b>	<b>Death Instinct Exist in Main Characters</b>		
1.		<p>Scene in ( 0:02:15 ) shows at the beginning of the film Joel says he feels afraid but doesn't know why. "I feel like I woke up this morning with fear "</p>	<p>Joel has death instinct exist in his life because when the beginning of the movie there is a scene about the main character just woke up and he says feeling scared.</p>
2.		<p>Scene in ( 0:30:30 ) tells Joel goes to the Lacuna company to forget about Clem, full of disappointment. "And I came here to forget Clem"</p>	<p>The scene tells us about Joel feels angry because Clem has forgotten and delete all the memories in her soul about Joel, so Joel goes to Lacuna company to forget about Clem too.</p>

<p>3.</p>	 <p>Semua ingatan yang kita pilih akan layu dan menghilang.</p>	<p>Scene in ( 0:31:22 ) shows that Doctor at Lacuna says all memories that will be deleted permanently with using mapping technology. "all the memories we choose will wither and disappear"</p>	<p>This scene shows that Joel arrives in the Lacuna company and asks the doctor to delete the data in his brain. Joel has a death instinct he feels so hopeless and disappointed.</p>
<p>4.</p>	 <p>Aku seperti anak kecil yang ketakutan. Aku seperti--</p>	<p>Scene in ( 1:29:37 ) shows that Joel feels afraid when he was child " I was like a scared child "</p>	<p>Joel as a one of main character feels scared when he was child, this movie also shows several scenes of Joel when he was little, he feel discrimination from his friends.</p>
<p>5.</p>	 <p>aku ga suka ketika bersamanya. Aku ga suka diriku lagi</p>	<p>Scene in ( 1:37:48 ) Joel feels disappointed with the situation of separating from Clem because the memory erasure has already occurred. " I don't like being with her, I don't like myself anymore "</p>	<p>This scene describe Joel feels that Clem has made himself a closed person again and does not like the person he is now.</p>

Personality dynamic emerge due to system changes Id,Ego, and Superego personalities that cause main characters always feel anxious, afraid, and finally having the instinct always feels afraid. Based on what the writer has explained, it is clear there are personality dynamic in main characters. Personality system in main characters changed due to prolonged conflict so Joel constantly feels fear and anxiety of the death instinct.

### 3.4. Defense Mechanism to Solve their problems

Anxiety has an important meaning because its function is to help individuals become aware of the danger that is threatening them. However, anxiety will become a nuisance that the individual does not expect to appear if this anxiety is excessive, and the level of tension it causes is relatively high. And if this happens, the individual's ego will carry out a defense mechanism.

### **a. Repression**

In this defense mechanism, Joel and Clem as a main character will repress or try to forget painful memories about their selves.

#### **Data 1**

(And I come here to forget Clem ) Scene ( 0:30:30 )

It is an unconscious mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. This method aims to forget anything in someone's soul. Joel feels sad and disappointed with Clem because he erases all memories of Joel in his soul, therefore Joel feels a little frustrated. This dialogue also tells us about Joel goes to Lacuna company and brings some pictures, books, and things about Clem or his girlfriend. Joel as a main character mostly has defense of mechanism in repletion, he wants to solve his problems with this method to forget anything in his brain and soul. In this type of representation defense mechanism, Joel feels that he is very disappointed with Clem because he has erased all memories of Joel, and Joel feels a little frustrated. Mostly the main character has repression to solve their problem slowly.

### **b. Sublimation**

Sublimation is a form of ego defense aimed at preventing or alleviating anxiety by changing and adapting the impulses and primitive id that become anxiety into behavior that can be accepted and even appreciated by society.

#### **Data 2**

(I'm a person who can't make eye contact with women ) Scene ( 0:03:20 )

it is similar to moving object, but takes place when we manage to displace our emotions into a constructive rather than destructive activity. This might for example be artistic. Sublimation for Freud was the cornerstone of civilized life In the dialogue above, Joel has an introvert character, he never makes eye contact with a woman before, but when Joel meets a girl named Clem at the station for the first time. He feels comfortable with Clem and makes some jokes with her, even though they have a highly different character. Joel has introvert character it means he can not easy communicate with each other and Clem has different character from Joel, Clem has extrovert character, she can adapts or communicate with someone else and easy to get some new friends. When they meet each other for the first time Clem say hello to Joel in the station and sit side by side and also chit chat like they ever meet before.

### **c. Projection**

Projection allows people to express threatening impulses disguised as self-defense. projection on the characters of Joel and Clem in the following scene.

#### **Data 3**

(Confused ? what's confusing? Everything is alright )Scene ( 0:47:27 )

it involves individuals attributing their own thoughts, feeling and motives to another person. Thoughts most commonly projected onto another are the ones that would cause guilt such as aggressive and sexual fantasies or thoughts. Projection allows people to express threatening impulses disguised as self-defense. projection defense mechanism when Joel feels confused about Clem because Clem asks Joel to come on Valentine's Day but on Valentine's Day Joel finds Clem with his old man, this scene has a back and forth plot, the forward plot shows that Joel feels confused, and the backward plot shows that The director shows a scene where Joel meets Clem with another man. But on the other hand, Joel's friend told him that everything was fine. Joel feels confuse about why Clem suddenly forget about him and delete all memories in her brain, he feels hopeless and disappointed when he listens about the information in the yellow letter from Lacuna company, when someone comes to joel. But, Joel's friend says everything is fine. They reassure that Clem will not leave or forget him.

### **d. Moving objects**

This ego defense mechanism, delegates the anxiety that befalls a person to other people of lower status (inanimate objects) or the process of transferring feelings (usually anger) from the original target object to a substitute object.

#### **Data 4**

(Collect objects related with clem and we will do mapping ) Scene ( 0:28:29 )

This defense mechanism explains how to delegate anxiety to other people who are lower in position (inanimate objects). It is found in this film, Joel feels disappointed and angry because he received a letter from someone that Clem had erased his memory. Joel goes to the company and bring all the things that relate to Clem, he meet the doctor who treat patients to erase their memories. After he gives some photos of Clem to the doctor, the process of erasing memories in brain will start, but before the mapping tools will put on Joel's head, the doctor should check Joel's health.

#### e. Rationalization

In this defense mechanism, it refers to an individual's attempt to distort reality, in this case a reality that threatens the ego.

#### **Data 5**

(I've never felt this before ) Scene ( 0:57:26 )

It is the cognitive distortion of "the facts" to make an event or an impulse less threatening. We do it often enough on a fairly conscious level when we provide ourselves with excuses. But for many people, with sensitive egos, making excuses comes so easy that they never are truly aware of it. In other words, many of us are quite prepared to believe our lies. The dialogue above, Joel feels cheerful and comfort when he meets Clem but it happens only in his dream. Clem is Joel's first love and never with another girl before, so he always wants to spend his time with Clem. Rationalization is the creation of falsehoods or looking for reasons that make sense as reasons to justify unacceptable behavior. In this movie there is a scene that has a rationalization defense mechanism, when Joel feels very happy when he meets Clem in dreamland, but the erasure process is still taking place in a forward plot.

#### f. Reaction Formation

Aims to hide thoughts and feelings that can cause anxiety.

#### **Data 6**

(I am where I want to be ) Scene ( 0:57:28 )

Reaction formation is when a person goes beyond denial and behaves in the opposite way to which he or she thinks or feels. By using the reaction formation the id is satisfied while keeping the ego in ignorance of the true motives. Conscious feelings are the opposite of the unconscious. Love - hate. Shame - disgust and moralizing are reaction formation Aims to hide thoughts and feelings that can cause anxiety. Joel felt that something changed inside him when he was with Clem in his dream. He felt that when he met Clem he became someone who could adapt to other people. This scene depicts Joel's impulse control when he realizes the differences in himself, he accepts this and even enjoys spending time with Clem. Clem makes Joel's days with joyful and colorful. Since Joel and Clem in the relationship, Joel feels the introvert exist in him is changing.

#### g. Regression

An individual who is similar to a child who is spoiled and tries to gain a sense of security.

#### **Data 7**

(I still hope you save my life ) Scene ( 1:22:09 )

It is a movement back in psychological time when one is faced with stress. When we are troubled or frightened, our behaviors often become more childish or primitive. In the dialogue above, Joel begs Clem to stay with him even though their relationship is almost broke up. Joel has a introvert character, when he meets Clem he becomes a happy person, can adapt with others and Joel thought he could with Clem forever in his relationship. Joel tries to save himself from feeling disappointed to Clem because she has forgotten and erased the memory from her memory with mapping tool in Lacuna company. In this scene has a life instinct which means that Joel has hope for Clem to continue to be together even though one of them has changed feelings and traits. Joel has a very closed character and he meets Clem who has a cheerful personality therefore he asks Clem to stay with him.

#### 4. Conclusion

After conducting an analysis using the methods and techniques that have been chosen by researcher, the researcher get the following conclusion: Based on research conducted by the author, it can be concluded that the main characters in the film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, named Joel and Clem, have personality dynamics. Joel is an introverted, and rarely make eye contact with women, but after meeting Clem, he feels like he had risen and his life becomes happy, but when in the middle of the movie the director shows a backwards plot that Clem has erased the memories in her brain, then the director starts again with a forward plot by showing someone bringing a letter to Joel that Clem or his girlfriend has erased all about Joel. Joel feels disappointed and angry. Then, he goes to the Lacuna company, and goes to meet the doctor in the the company. Joel erases his memory using a mapping tool and the process takes an overnight at Joel's house. Moral value of this movie is people can take a lesson to be a better person with better communication. The researcher finds some moral values such as loyalty, disappointed, angry, work team, regret, miss communication that occurs around us.

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