CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Literature constitutes a diverse and expansive collection of works that recount the narratives of humanity, civilization, and culture. It serves as an artistic medium for expressing the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of individuals and continually adapts to changing times and cultures. In this study, the author intends to examine one specific form of literary expression, namely, the medium of film.

Film, regarded as a cultural creation, represents an artistic amalgamation of fine arts, architecture, and music, as outlined by Effendi (1986). It serves as a visual and auditory platform for presenting narratives, visuals, and sounds in a sequential series of movements that together create an immersive audiovisual experience. Film, functioning both as an art form and a source of entertainment, holds the power to influence and mirror our culture.

Psychoanalysis refers to a psychological framework introduced by Sigmund Freud in the early 20th century. This approach emphasizes the effort to comprehend the hidden aspects of human thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that reside in the subconscious. Additionally, psychoanalysis posits that past experiences, especially during childhood, significantly impact the development of an individual's personality and behavior in adulthood.

Sigmund Freud, born in 1856, was an Austrian neurologist credited as the pioneer of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, founded by Freud, is a therapeutic approach aimed at addressing psychopathology through dialogues between a patient and a psychoanalyst. Central to Freud's theory was the belief that a significant portion of human behavior is shaped by unconscious thoughts, desires, and memories.

In the practice of psychoanalysis, Freud employed various techniques, notably free association and dream analysis, to delve into the recesses of the patient's unconscious mind. Free association encouraged patients to express thoughts and feelings without censorship, allowing the psychoanalyst to uncover hidden aspects of the psyche. Dream analysis involved interpreting the symbolism and content of dreams to reveal underlying unconscious conflicts.

Freud's structural model of the mind included the id, ego, and superego, each contributing to the complexities of human behavior. His emphasis on the role of early childhood experiences in shaping personality and the concept of libido as a driving force behind behavior were groundbreaking ideas.

Despite facing criticism and challenges to empirical validation, Freud's work significantly influenced the field of psychology. His theories on psychosexual development, the Oedipus complex, and the unconscious mind laid the groundwork for psychodynamic psychology. Freud's legacy remains prominent, shaping not only clinical psychology but also impacting literature, art, and cultural studies.

Through the eyes of its protagonist, Mei Lee, the animated feature "Turning Red" delves into the complex web of coming-of-age, individuality, and discovery. The film explores the life of Mei, a thirteen-year-old girl who, whenever she feels strong emotions, magically transforms into a gigantic red panda. It takes place in the background of a lively and culturally diverse Toronto. This humorous concept sets the stage for a more in-depth examination of Mei's inner turmoil as she faces the difficulties of puberty, society expectations, and the fight to be true to herself while yet conforming to them.

Mei's internal struggle is made more complicated by her roots in a traditional Chinese-Canadian household. traditional motifs are subtly interwoven throughout the film to highlight the tension between Mei's own goals and the traditional norms enforced by her family. As Mei faces the intricate relationship between her own goals and the cultural standards in her environment, this interaction provides a fertile ground for psychoanalytic analysis.

Psychoanalysis of Mei's inner turmoil reveals the complex workings of her subconscious mind, illuminating the ways in which family influences, social pressures, and cultural norms impact her sense of identity. As a visible reflection of her inner turmoil, Mei's repressed emotions and wants are symbolised by her red panda change. The video encourages viewers to contemplate their own inner struggles and the common obstacles of coming into their own as they watch Mei negotiate her twin identities as a red panda coping with the pressures of society and as a young girl facing puberty.

"Turning Red" delves deep into the human mind while also providing an enthralling animated adventure. As they follow Mei on her journey, viewers are prompted to contemplate their own struggles inside and the profound impact of accepting and loving one's own identity. By analysing Mei's psychoanalytical challenges, the film offers a perspective on identity, societal expectations, and the common desire for becoming oneself during the turbulent adolescent years.

Mei Lee faces a complex emotional tension as a Chinese-Canadian teenager who undergoes a unique physical transformation. This tension arises from the conflict between her desire to have fun, socialize, and pursue her interest in dancing, and the cultural expectations and pressure from her mother who wishes her to be polite and controlled. In dealing with this emotional tension, Mei employs various psychological defense mechanisms. Initially, she tends to suppress her feelings and strives to maintain an outward appearance that aligns with her family's expectations. This creates increasing emotional tension, especially when she undergoes the transformation into a red panda as a response to the pressure and her emotions. However, as the story unfolds, Mei learns to be more open in expressing her emotions. She realizes that emotional expression is a natural way to deal with tension and to express herself.

Because we can now communicate visually via movies and other forms of art, we can experience literature more fully than in the past. With the advancement of technology, the subject of literary studies is also expanding. An Introduction to Literary Studies was published in 2004 by Mario Klarer, who is a professor of English and American studies at the University of Innsbruck. In

it, he argues that early 21st-century literary studies must take the cinema into consideration. He classifies the film as belonging to a literary criticism and literature-influenced subgenre.

Literary techniques not only shape cinema, but also influence how certain characteristics are portrayed onscreen. Cinema is an art form that has the power to reflect and shape society views via the tales it tells. "Turning Red," a screenplay and feature film by Domee Shi and his collaborators in 2022, makes good use of this.

Focusing on the events depicted in the screenplay for the film "Turning Red," this thesis aims to examine the protagonist's psychoanalytic inner struggle.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

The research limitation in this focusing only on the internal conflict and physical changes of the main character in the film Turning Red.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the main internal conflict that the character Mei faces in the film Turning Red?

2. How does Mei deal with her emotional tension?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

The objective of this research is to identify and analyze how cultural influences, including traditions, rituals, and beliefs, shape the characters' psychology, and how these factors contribute to their emotional and cognitive development.