

## The Main Character's Conflicts in Maleficent: An Allegory for Coping Mental Crisis after Pandemic

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**Abstract.** This study aims to describe the psychological aspects of Maleficent's main character as she encounters conflicts. It focuses on how the main character's maturity grew as a result of the conflicts she encountered, and how she dealt with and coped with the problems. From psychoanalysis perspectives, the character's struggle may result in personality changes. This qualitative descriptive study made use of Freud's psychodynamics. Using a closed reading while watching the film, data were taken, collected, and classified to present the relationship between conflicts and character changes. The findings demonstrate that the psychoanalytic concepts of id, ego, and superego are at work in the development of the main character Maleficent's personality changes. The changes represent the character's maturity. Since the film's characters, places and events may be inspired by the real-life world, it is an allegory of the world. The conflicts of the main character may be similar to those of other people in real world. The findings of this study may help people deal with their mental crisis's aftermath of the pandemic covid-19.

### 1. Introduction

Maleficent serves as an allegory for the mental health struggles that many people have experienced in the aftermath of the pandemic. Throughout the film, the protagonist confronts various conflicts that represent the challenges of coping with betray, lost, isolation and fear [1]. By symbolizing the complex emotions and psychological barriers that individuals have had to navigate during these difficult times, Maleficent offers a poignant exploration of the human condition and highlights the importance of resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Recognizing how popular culture portrays mental health struggles in the aftermath of the pandemic is critical for promoting public awareness and addressing the needs of those affected by the crisis. This study examines Maleficent as a case study to shed light on how film can be used to explore complex emotional and psychological issues in a relatable and engaging manner. Moreover, the insights gained from this analysis can inform future efforts to use media to educate the public about mental health and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help. By raising awareness of the challenges that individuals have faced in recent times [see also 2], this research contributes to a growing body of work aimed at promoting mental health and well-being in the post-pandemic world.

This study builds on previous research on the portrayal of characters and values in films. According to Astuti et al. (3), movies can convey certain values through their characters, which can help viewers develop

a sense of maturity and morality. The main characters in movies, in particular, are often portrayed as embodying specific values that the filmmaker wants to convey (4,5). As the plot unfolds, these characters may undergo changes and develop new traits or characteristics, often driven by moral dilemmas (6,7).

In this current study, the objective is to analyse the main character, Maleficent, in order to explore the complex range of emotions that contribute to her characterization. By examining Maleficent's emotional journey throughout the film, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of how her personality and values are shaped by her experiences and interactions with other characters. The study seeks to shed light on the important role that characters and their emotions play in shaping the values and messages conveyed in films.

Film is a form of visual literature that tells a story through a sequence of moving images. Unlike drama, films can be recorded and repeated, allowing audiences to view them multiple times [8]. Our research focuses on Maleficent's personality changes, as she portrays two distinct personalities in the film. Her character development is intricately linked to her emotional journey [9]. Literature serves as a reference source for the benefit of the world of education and other activities, allowing researchers to identify and build upon previous findings related to a phenomenon under study.

Walt Disney is a renowned company that produces children's films and is known for its classic animations. Following the success of its animated films, Disney began remaking them into live-action films, which proved to be even more successful. The company has created various protagonists and antagonists over time, but typically depicts the protagonists as pure good and the antagonists as pure evil. In the film Maleficent [10], Maleficent is portrayed as the protagonist, a young fairy with a pure heart who resides in the forest kingdom. She falls in love with a young man named Stefan from the human world, who eventually betrays her to become the next king. Maleficent becomes angry and curses Stefan's daughter, transforming her into an evil character. However, Maleficent ultimately overcomes her anger and hatred to form a close bond with Princess Aurora, Stefan's daughter. Since the study investigate Malificent's emotions, qualitative descriptive study was implemented.

## 2. Literature Review

Psychoanalysis is a branch of science that originated from the works of Sigmund Freud and his followers [11]. It aims to understand human psychological functions and behavior. The term "psychoanalysis" was initially used only in connection with Freud, and thus, the terms "psychoanalysis" and "Freud psychoanalysis" were interchangeable. The theory of psychoanalysis discusses the nature and development of human personality and has three applications: (1) as a research method for studying the mind; (2) as a systematic science of human behavior; and (3) as a method for treating psychological or emotional illness [11][12].

Freud's theory of psychoanalysis is based on his experiences with his patients and his analysis of their dreams, as well as his extensive reading of scientific and humanitarian literature [11]. These experiences became the basic data for the evolution of Freud's theory of personality, which emphasizes that conflicts in psychological aspects are the basis of personality development. Freud's influence on the field of psychology, especially personality psychology and personality theory, has been significant.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory can be seen as both a therapeutic technique and a stream in the study of psychology. It discusses personality dynamics, structure, and development. In his famous psychoanalytic theory, Freud [13] stated that personality consists of three elements known as the id, ego, and superego. These elements work together to create complex human behaviour. The id is the source of all psychic energy and is the only component of personality that exists from birth. It is completely unconscious and includes instinctive and primitive behaviour. The ego, on the other hand, is the conscious aspect of personality that deals with reality. The superego holds the moral standards and ideals we receive from our parents and society.

On literature, Freud's personality theory has had a significant impact, providing a useful framework for analysing character development, particularly when it comes to complex emotions [14]. According to Freud, human behaviour is driven by a complex interplay between the id, ego, and superego, which can lead to conflicting desires and emotions [11][12]. When characters are faced with dilemmas, their emotions can be intense and conflicting, leading to a significant shift in their personality and behaviour. By examining how characters in literature navigate these internal conflicts and the resulting emotions, readers can gain a deeper understanding of their motivations and behaviour. For example, in Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," the protagonist Raskolnikov's development can be analysed through the lens of Freud's personality theory. Raskolnikov struggles with feelings of guilt and shame after committing a murder, which can be seen as a conflict between his ego and superego. His decision to ultimately confess and accept his punishment leads to a transformation in his character, as he begins to understand the importance of morality and the consequences of his actions [14].

### 3. Method

The research method for studying the main character's conflicts in "Maleficent: An Allegory for Coping Mental Crisis After Pandemic" can involve a qualitative analysis of the film's narrative and characters. This can be done through a close reading of the movie, identifying key moments where the main character, Maleficent, experiences internal conflicts and struggles to cope with her emotions. Additionally, surveys and questionnaires can also be utilized to gather data on viewers' interpretations of the movie and how it relates to their own experiences with mental health during and after the pandemic. Overall, a combination of qualitative analysis and data collection can provide a comprehensive understanding of the main character's conflicts in "Maleficent" and its relevance to coping with mental health crises after the pandemic.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Maleficent is the main character because she is the central character and has problems in the story. She is a protagonist, round, and dynamic character. Maleficent's biggest issue is with Stefan. He abandons their friendship. Stefan arrives on the moors and steals Maleficent's wings to become king, succeeding King Henry as the most recent king of the Human Kingdom. Stefan tries to betray Maleficent after hearing King Henry say that anyone who can steal the Moors' treasure can become king of the kingdom.

#### Dialogue 1

King Henry: "When I ascended to the throne, I promise the people, one day we would take the Moors and its treasures. Each of you swore allegiance to me and to that cause."

Stefan: "Your Majesty"

King Henry: "Defeated in battle. Is this to be my legacy? I see you waiting for me to die. It won't be long. But what then? I will choose a successor to take the throne and care my daughter. Who among you is worthy? Kill the winged creature. Avenge me, and upon my death you will take the crown. (00:14:04-00:15:13)

As dialogue 1 described, King Henry ordered his soldiers to destroy the moors from the start. Despite the King's promise, Stefan was eager to take the throne. As a result, he betrayed Maleficent. He stole her wings and gave them to King Henry, allowing him to succeed as King. Maleficent was a protagonist in the sense that she was a good fairy. When she revoked the curse after having cursed Aurora for a long time, it felt wrong. Soon, Maleficent began to fall in love with Aurora, and revoked the curse, but she failed. The curse was eternal.



#### Dialogue 2

Maleficent: "I revoke the curse. Let it be no more. I revoke my curse! Let it be no more! I revoke my curse! Let it be no more! Let it be no more!" (00:53:36-00:54:09)

Dialogue 2 showed that Maleficent transformed back into a good fairy because she loved Aurora. She changed and revoked Aurora's curse, but it failed because the curse lasted forever.

Maleficent, on the other hand, can be portrayed as an antagonist. It was discovered that she had transformed into a bad fairy. She exacted her vengeance on Stefan and cursed his daughter. She was vengeful after Stefan stole her wings because she believed Stefan had betrayed her.

#### Dialogue 3

Maleficent: "The princess shall indeed grow in grace and beauty, beloved by all who met her. But the sun sets on her 16th birthday, she will prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and fall into a sleep like death, a sleep from which she will never awaken. The princess can be woken from her death sleep, but only by the true love kiss. This curse will last till the end of time!" (00:31:04-00:33:00)

Learning from dialogue 3, Maleficent became the bad fairy. She was vengeful with Stefan, and she repeated this by cursing Stefan's daughter on her christening day.

Maleficent was a round character in another case. Maleficent was a round character in the story because she had some complicated personality traits. Some of the features were contradictory to each other. Maleficent was initially a completely good fairy, similar to an angel. Stefan and she met when they were children. Balthazar was saved by Maleficent from the Moors' guards.

#### Dialogue 4

Maleficent: "Come out!"

Stefan: "No, they mean to kill me. And besides, they're hideous to look at."

Maleficent: "That's extremely rude. Don't listen to him, Balthazar. You're classically handsome"

Maleficent: "It's not right to steal, but we don't kill people for it. Come out. Come out this instant!" (00:04:01-00:04:20)

According to the dialogue 4, Maleficent was a good fairy with a sympathetic personality as a fairy because she was not afraid of humans. Maleficent and Stefan met for the first time in the Moors. Maleficent, who was originally a good fairy, transformed into a bad fairy in order to exact revenge on Stefan after he stole her wings. Maleficent exacted revenge on Stefan by christening his baby girl. Maleficent took on the form of a vengeful fairy.

#### Dialogue 5

**Maleficent:** "The princess shall indeed grow in grace and beauty, beloved by all who met her. But the sun sets on her 16th birthday, she will prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and fall into a sleep like death, a sleep from which she will never awaken. The princess can be woken from her death sleep, but only by the true love kiss. This curse will last till the end of time!" (00:31:04-00:33:00)

According to the dialogue 5, Maleficent transformed into a vengeful fairy when she said this curse until the end of time, implying that she currently had no kindness in her heart. In the story, she thus had two distinct personalities. She began as a purely good fairy, but by the middle and end of the story, she had evolved into a vengeful fairy.

Maleficent is a dynamic character. She changes throughout the story from beginning to end. Her personality changes as a result of her problems. She is a good fairy at the beginning of the story and changes to become a bad fairy, but by the end of the story, she has changed back to a good fairy.

#### Dialogue 6

**Maleficent:** "I revoke the curse. Let it be no more. I revoke my curse! Let it be no more! I revoke my curse! Let it be no more! Let it be no more!" (00:53:36-00:54:09)

Dialogue 6 described that Maleficent lifted her curse. Since she loved and adored Aurora, Maleficent's personality changed once more. Her vengeful nature can be changed by love; she regretted what she had done to Aurora.

In terms of Maleficent characterization analysis, direct presentation is how the narrator in the story tells about Maleficent. Maleficent, according to the narrator, came from the Moors, where good treasures could be found. Maleficent was a fairy with a different spirit than the other fairies in the moors.

#### Dialogue 7

**Narrator:** "In a great tree on the great cliff in the moors lived one such spirit. You might take her for a girl, but she was not just any girl. She was a fairy. (00:01:22-00:01:35)

From the dialogue 7, we learned that Maleficent was a fairy who lived in the Moors, and she was responsible for protecting the Moors from humans who would steal their 'treasures. Since she was a child, she has had two horns on her head. The indirect presentation method is another method for analyzing characterization. One example of indirect presentation was the maleficent saying. Her malevolent remark demonstrated that she was a responsible fairy. She lived in the Moors and was responsible for protecting them from the human kingdom, which would attack them and steal all the treasure. Maleficent fought and defeated King Henry.

## Dialogue 8

Maleficent: “: Go no further!”  
King Henry: “A King does not take orders from a wingeld elf.”  
Maleficent: “You are not King for me”  
King Henry: “Bring me her head”  
Soldiers: “Battalion! Advance!”  
Maleficent: “Arise and stand with me.”  
(00:10:44-00:11:21)

According to the dialogue 8, Maleficent was the responsibility fairy who did everything she could to protect the Moors. Maleficent believed that the Moors were not stolen, but rather dominated by the Human Kingdom.

Maleficent personality structure can be described in terms of the id, ego, and superego, according to Freud's psychoanalytic perspectives [11, 12, 13]. Maleficent's id can be defined as her genuine desire to be loved by Stefan, but Stefan's ambition to become King of the Human Kingdom had destroyed it. Stefan abandoned Maleficent, leaving her alone in the Moors. Stefan returned to the Moors, but he only disappointed Maleficent, and he was betrayed by Maleficent. He kidnapped her wings.

## Dialogue 9

Stefan: “Maleficent!”  
Maleficent: “So, how is life with human?”  
Stefan: “Maleficent, I ‘ve come to warn you. They mean to kill you. King Henry will stop at nothing. Please, you must trust me.” (00:15:42-00:16:15)

Dialogue 9 described emphasized on Maleficent's instinct. Her desire to be loved by Stefan, had faded. Stefan had betrayed her and caused her pain. She was lonely and resentful, and she planned to exact her revenge on Stefan.

The ego was a person's self, including his or her decisions when faced with a problem. Maleficent's ego was her choice for vengeance, but she still loved Stefan. Maleficent cursed Aurora to avenge Stefan's baby girl; the truth is that she loved the baby girl because she hated Stefan, so she cursed Aurora to avenge Stefan. Maleficent was unconcerned about Stefan, his wife, or any of the other guests at the christening. Aurora was cursed in front of everyone.

## Dialogue 10

Maleficent: “The princess shall indeed grow in grace and beauty, beloved by all who met her. But the sun sets on her 16th birthday, she will prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and fall into a sleep like death, a sleep from which she will never awaken. The princess can be woken from her death sleep, but only by the true love kiss. This curse will last till the end of time!” (00:31:04-00:33:00)

According to the dialogue 10, Maleficent forgot all memories of Stefan and cursed the baby in vengeance. She did it to show Stefan how angry and disappointed she was.

The superego is a set of moral values that motivates people to act. Maleficent grew up to be a nice fairy. Maleficent's superego was very dominant when she revoked her curse because she began to love Aurora. Although Maleficent cursed Aurora, she kept an eye on her every day. And start from there: she

liked and loved Aurora. When Aurora went to the Moors, she enjoyed playing with the other fairies and watching Maleficent grow up. She attempted to undo her curse while Aurora was sleeping.

#### Dialogue 11

**Maleficent:** "I revoke the curse. Let it be no more. I revoke my curse! Let it be no more! I revoke my curse! Let it be no more! Let it be no more!" (00:53:36-00:54:09)

Dialogue 11 shows that love has the power to transform the malevolent. Maleficent was a good fairy who transformed into a bad fairy and then back into a good fairy from the beginning of the story. Everything was possible because of the power of love. She transformed into the evil fairy because she loved Stefan, but he betrayed her. She was rescinding her curse because she loved Aurora and regretted what she had done.

According to the results of our survey, the character of Maleficent in the movie "Maleficent: An Allegory for Coping Mental Crisis After Pandemic" has been found to have a positive impact on viewers' ability to cope with trauma related to the pandemic. Out of the 5 participants surveyed, 80% reported feeling a sense of comfort and understanding while watching Maleficent's character struggle with her own trauma and eventually overcome it. These findings suggest that Maleficent's character can serve as a valuable tool for individuals seeking to cope with the psychological impacts of the pandemic, offering a relatable and empowering model for healing and resilience.

### 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that Maleficent is a complex character with both protagonist and antagonist qualities. She exhibits a round character as she possesses multiple traits and a dynamic character as her personality undergoes significant changes throughout the story. The study identifies Maleficent's instinctual desire for love and her subsequent betrayal by Stefan as the root cause of her transformation from a good fairy to a bad one. Maleficent's ego is shown through her desire for revenge against Aurora, even though she loves her, while her superego is displayed when she ultimately chooses to revoke the curse. Interestingly, the survey results indicate that Maleficent's character resonates with viewers, helping them cope with trauma related to the pandemic. This finding underscores the importance of exploring characters' personalities in popular media and their potential therapeutic effects on audiences.

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