

SELFISHNESS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL DIRECTED BY PAUL FEIG

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Abstract. This study analyzes the selfishness of the main character in the movie of *The School for Good and Evil*, directed by Paul Feig. The study is limited into (1) Categories of selfishness from Erich Fromm and (2) Cause of selfishness from Ryan W. Carlson. This study is arranged by using qualitative methods. Finally, the results show there are two categories of the main character's selfishness namely healthy selfishness and unhealthy selfishness. While, the main character dominates unhealthy selfishness she puts her goals ahead of those of others. Next, the causes of the selfishness in this movie are situation, desire, mind, and expectation. It reflects that Sophie's selfishness affects her relationships, particularly with her friend, as well as broader social and psychological issues.

Keywords: Movie, Selfishness, Character

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is commonly utilized as a tool to express societal values through communication between the writers and their audience or listeners [1]. Literature plays a significant influence in human life, particularly in spiritual life. Literature can express everything, no matter how intricate, that related to human life [2]. Humanity is represented in literature. Every nation is unique, whether it be in terms of politics, economics, ideology, or lifestyle, among other aspects. Literature can be expressed through a variety of artistic mediums, including movies, novels, poetry, and music [3], [4]. Movies become more prevalent in modern literature because of their ability to convey stories through strong visual and sound [5]. Movie adaptations of many literary works make the stories easier to comprehend and allow for new interpretations. Movie is a sequence of pictures of moving objects that lead to a sequence of events. Movies serve as a medium for education, entertainment, and communication. Color and music are used to make the movie more realistic and to help the audience understand the message and influence their behavior [6]. Another way to think of movie is as an audio-visual method that works really well to influence its viewers. A movie combines drama with sound and music, as well as behavior and emotions, so that viewers can enjoy it simultaneously with their eyes, ears, and in both light and dark areas [7], [8]. Movie serves as a communication tool that is not only entertaining but also instructive and illuminating. Many messages can be conveyed through movies [9].

Fantasy is a movie genre that features unexpected storylines. Fantasy genre is characterized by their fantastical setting and magical elements. Magical creatures (dragons, fairies, and witches), magical features, and magical skills are all examples of things that are not realizable in the actual world yet are found in fantasy literature. Fantasy became a distinct genre in European writing in the middle of the 20th century. This new genre gained popularity swiftly after capturing the attention of readers, particularly young people. Europe was looking forward to a significant change and new opportunities for creative expression. New literary genres were shaped by the desire to escape reality, go back to one's roots, and resurrect fictive concepts in the 20th century [10], [11]. Characters are recognized as an intrinsic component of a movie since they are essential to the artistic and narrative structure that creates the plot. Character is the thought and behavior patterns that define each person's ability to interact and collaborate with others in the context of the family, community, country, and state [12], [13]. Because it has a more expansive definition, character is literally different than behavior and qualities. Everything referring to the characters' identities, traits, and the story's illustrations is included in their characterization.

In this research, the authors use "*The School for Good and Evil*" movie, directed by Paul Feig, as the main data. This fantasy film represents the story of Sophie and Agatha, two friends who enroll at a magical school with two sides: *the school for good and the school for evil*.

Sophie, the main character in the film "*The School for Good and Evil*," is a complicated character with a variety of qualities that make her both fascinating and multi-faceted. As

a character, Sophie is presented as ambitious, conceited, and obsessed with her status and attractiveness. She aspires to be a princess. Even in her friendship with Agatha, she frequently acts in her own best interests, which betrays a selfish and egocentric personality. Sophie is a complicated character because she represents the contradiction between good and evil, displaying both dark and kind traits. She is both adored and despised due to her captivating personality. She battles darker inclinations but also exhibits acts of generosity, which shows the complexity of her morality. Moral values are included in the content. Value is anything that serves as a standard by which societal norms are measured. Values are items or characteristics that are highly beneficial and significant for the values that society upholds [14], [15]. These qualities are perfectly portrayed by Sophie, who becomes a memorable and interesting character in the movie.

The authors of this study highlight Sophie's selfishness. This trait can be seen in Sophie's tendency to put her own desires over the feelings or needs of those around her. Sophie's selfishness is seen in a variety of scenarios throughout the movie, ranging from minor decisions to large ones. Through the intersection of literature and psychology, Sophie's character can be better understood as a reflection of complicated and actual human nature, rather than just as a fictitious character. Psychology sheds light on Sophie's selfishness, including whether it stems from her surroundings, past experiences, or selfish traits in her personality [8], [16]. Selfishness is defined as behavior that prioritizes personal desires and needs over the needs of others. Healthy and unhealthy selfishness are the two primary categories of selfishness that can be distinguished in this context [17]. Erich Fromm's book *Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into The Psychology of Ethics*, in the chapter on selfishness and self-love, explains the difference between healthy and unhealthy selfishness using the concept of healthy self-love and selfishness that is more of a dysfunctional selflessness. Fromm states that the opposite of self-love is the kind of selfishness that society condemns, which includes the incapacity to give freely and to respect the integrity and dignity of others.

Healthy selfishness is when people prioritize their own needs in order to preserve their well-being [18]. Unhealthy selfishness happens when someone focuses solely on themselves, causing harm to others. Unlike selfishness, altruism is one of the most healthy defensive mechanisms, and it has been discovered that altruism can predict positive long-term relationships and personal pleasure. On the other hand, pathological altruism is more self-centered and may cause harm to others. While pathological selfishness concentrates on achieving personal benefit at the expense of others, healthy selfishness fosters relationships and personal development. According to Fromm, establishing healthy self-love allows us to avoid unhealthy selfishness and form stronger relationships with others that are not motivated by a desire for acceptance or dominance. Situation is the term used to describe the situations that lead to selfish action, which frequently occurs when there are more kind possibilities. Desire involves self-centered motivation, where an individual puts their own wants

ahead of those of others. Mindfulness is the ability to grasp the views and needs of others, and selfishness is demonstrated when this is ignored. Expectations refer to social standards or anticipated actions in a context, and selfishness occurs when a person violates these norms, particularly when it damages others [19]. This study aims to analyze Sophie's selfishness into; healthy selfishness and unhealthy selfishness, along with its underlying causes, which can be further classified as situation, desires, minds, and expectations factors by examining how it influences her social interactions, choices, and how it represents the social and psychological dynamics of her own life.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The authors use qualitative methods in this research. Qualitative methods are used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions; they produce non-numerical data; and the quality of qualitative research is heavily based on the methodological skills, sensitivity, and honesty of the researchers, as the researchers are their own tool. Qualitative research focuses on understanding research questions as a humanistic or idealistic approach. The School for Good and Evil movie provided the data for this study by capturing multiple scenes pertaining to the main character's selfishness. Watching films to uncover instances of selfishness, evaluating data according to research issues, giving thorough justifications of research findings, and drawing conclusions are the next steps in the research process [20], [21].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through a variety of situations, desires, minds, and expectations, the character Sophie in the film *The School for Good and Evil* demonstrates the intricate relationship between unhealthy selfishness (UHS) and healthy selfishness (HS). Eight cases were classified as UHS, compared to one case of HS. Sophie, a character in *The School for Good and Evil*, represents both healthy and unhealthy selfishness, illustrating the complex ways in which ambition and self-interest can either promote personal development or have negative effects. Although she shows healthy selfishness in some of her behaviors, such as how she tries to better herself and blend in at the School of Good, many of her decisions show a more harmful, unhealthy kind of selfishness. This darker side of her ambition reveals itself in manipulative and exploitative behaviors, in which she disregards the well-being of others in order to achieve power and position.

The underlying reason behind Sophie's selfishness is her intense need for approval, authority, and fame. Sophie has always had a strong desire to rise beyond her humble beginnings and become someone who is liked and praised, ideally a princess in the School of Good. Her actions are motivated by this, and she becomes ignorant to the needs and feelings of others, particularly her friend Agatha. Sophie's obsession with this ideal causes her to treat everyone around her as only tools to further achieve her goals. Her ambition

turns her moral and compassionate sensibility, as evidenced by the willingness to put at risk relationships and even do harm to others.

A. Types of Sophie's Selfishness in *The School for Good and Evil*

1) Unhealthy Selfishness (UHS)



Fig. 1 Manipulating Tedros

In this situation, Sophie manipulates Tedros, the prince of the School of Goodness, to win his heart by using her beauty and good looks. Sophie only seems interested in Tedros's status as prince and what she seeks to gain from the relationship, despite his initial attraction in her. As Sophie uses Tedros to satisfy her own needs without considering Tedros' feelings or welfare, this scene exemplifies unhealthy selfishness.

Instead of developing an emotional bond, she uses Tedros as a tool for achieving her goals, and manipulation becomes her technique of control. Her strategy shows her obsession with getting approval from others above being sincere, as she tries to fit into an idealized position rather than seeking love for its own purpose.

Some of Sophie's scenes that involve unhealthy selfishness happen when she puts her personal desires over the interests of others. First, she aspires to be a princess in the School of Good and even looks down on her best friend, Agatha, whom she believes is better suited to the school of evil merely because of her appearance. Sophie doesn't care about Agatha's desire to live a quiet life in the village.

Sophie also often manipulates things for her own benefit, especially in her friendship with Agatha. Sophie decides to use her abilities at the School of evil after being rejected at the School of Good, ignoring the consequences for others around her, including Agatha, who tries to save her. She actually competes with Agatha, prioritizing her ambition over friendship.

Sophie uses the other people at the School of evil to raise her position, unconcerned about how they are doing as long as her ambition is reached. She also betrays Lady Lesso, the school's dean, by using and dismissing her when she is no longer needed. Lastly, Sophie seeks to become queen by approaching Tedros, not for love, but for power. Sophie's attitude represents her excessive self-centeredness, as she emphasizes her own desires over others.

2) Healthy Selfishness (HS)



Fig. 2 Sophie decided to change her appearance

In this situation, Sophie manipulates Tedros, the prince of the School of Good, to win his heart by using her beauty. Sophie only seems interested in Tedros's status as prince and what she seeks to gain from the relationship, despite his initial attraction in her. As Sophie uses Tedros to satisfy her own needs without considering Tedros' feelings or welfare, this scene exemplifies unhealthy selfishness.

Healthy selfishness is shown in this situation where Sophie changes her behavior and looks in order to gain acceptance in the School for Good. As a kind of self-care, Sophie shows her willingness to satisfy her own need to feel competent and accepted in her new place. Although her choice may come across as self-serving, she is genuinely defending her comfort and self-assurance. Sophie acts to satisfy her wants without causing direct harm to others since she understands that these changes are necessary for her own growth and wellbeing.

In order to be respected and accepted in the social setting of School for Good, Sophie made the decision to change her look. Sophie feels she needs to be validated and recognized, therefore she wants to change because she thinks it would help her fit in and make her presence noticed in a place that used to feel foreign and challenging to her. Her decision shows both her insecurity and her will to take charge of her image and standing in the school community.

B. Classification the Causes of Selfishness

1) Situations



Fig. 3 Switching to the dark side

Sophie immediately moves to the school of evil and makes use of her newly discovered power there when she feels ignored or doesn't achieve what she wants at the School of Good. This behavior demonstrates her selfish behaviors, as she puts her own needs ahead of those of others, even her friend Agatha. Sophie's behavior here is characterized as a

situation because it shows how she manipulates situations to achieve her own goals, showing a lack of moral care.

We also found 2 other scenes that classified as situations. As an illustration of her willingness to adapt and take control over situations in order to achieve her goals, Sophie manipulates her relationships with Agatha and other students at school in order to secure achieving her goals. This strategic approach shows how she actively manipulates her surroundings to obtain a benefit, using people around her as tools in her quest for achievement. Sophie uses her power over the other students at the School of evil in a similar way, using them to support her beliefs in any way that might harm them. It shows how Sophie exploits her surroundings by including people only for her own purpose. These scenes are classified as situations because they demonstrate Sophie's manipulation of the environment and the people around her to achieve her goals.

2) Desires



Fig. 4 Desire to control both schools

Sophie's ambition to rule both the School of Good and the school of evil demonstrates her steady desire for power. She wants to go far beyond what is reasonable or moral in order to gain the greatest amount of power. Because it demonstrates her strong desire for authority and status, which drives her to cross moral lines in order to achieve her goals, this is categorized as desire.

In other scene Sophie shows her obsession with being a princess and attending the School of Good shows a profound longing for an idealized being filled with beauty, status, and power. She looks down on her friend Agatha because of her ambition, claiming that Agatha belongs in the School of evil because of her unique appearance. Sophie shows that her personal needs come before empathy and respect for her friend's decisions by ignoring Agatha's wish for a peaceful, simple life. Sophie's choice to change her appearance and behavior in order to earn acceptance at the School of Good demonstrates her self-centered desire for recognition and influence. Her obsession with being liked and accepted, even at the expense of her honesty, is highlighted by her desire to manage her image in fame. These behaviors indicate how Sophie's thoughts and actions are driven by her selfish wants rather than by a sincere desire for connection or honesty. These scenes are categorized as desires because they reveal Sophie's intense, self-centered yearning for a specific identity and status that drives her actions.

3) Minds



Fig. 5 Betrayal of Lady Lesso

The way Sophie manipulates Lady Lesso, the dean of the school of evil, shows how she takes advantage of other people. Although Lady Lesso believes Sophie has the potential to be a great villain, Sophie betrays her when she no longer needs her. This behavior is classified as mind because it demonstrates Sophie's capacity to strategically manipulate and deceive people, using her intelligence to take advantage of relationships for her own purpose.

Also, in another scene Sophie manipulates Tedros by using her beauty and charm to win his heart, despite the fact that she only cares with his status and what she may gain from the relationship. This strategic approach shows that she uses Tedros as a tool to gain power rather than having a sincere relationship. In the same way, Sophie betrays Agatha, her close friend who is always trying to help her. Sophie's intention to get rid of Agatha in order to maintain her relationship with Tedros serves as an illustration of this. Sophie puts her goals ahead of her friendship in this act of betrayal, demonstrating her readiness to cut ties with those she cares about when they become obstacles to her goals. These scenes demonstrate Sophie's cunning mentality, in which she sees relationships as means to an end, demonstrating a lack of loyalty and sincere love.

4) Expectation



Fig. 6 Trying to become the Queen

Sophie's efforts to marry Tedros and become queen reflect her expectation of gaining power and social status. She sees Tedros as a tool for achieving her goals, not as a partner in an actual relationship. Sophie's actions are characterized as expectation because she believes that gaining power and recognition will fulfill her goals, indicating that she expects to be validated through external status rather than inner value.

Sophie puts her own goals ahead of their friendship in another moment where she competes with Agatha, assuming

that her goals are more significant than her friendship. Sophie's expectation that reaching power is worth any sacrifice, even breaking her friendship, as demonstrated in the scene where she tries to kill Agatha in order to gain power. These moments show how Sophie prioritizes her own goals over relationships and morals, highlighting her belief that her goals justify harming others. These scenes are categorized as expectations because they show Sophie's belief that her desires and ambitions should come first, no matter the consequences.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to the study, Sophie's character exhibits both healthy and unhealthy selfishness, which is caused by situational needs, individual ambition, manipulation, and her expectations of power and prestige. Her unhealthy selfishness is seen in how she manipulates relationships and ignores the needs of others to achieve her ambitions. Sophie's actions reveal a complex understanding of selfishness, highlighting how ambition and selfishness can distort relationships and values. This analysis highlights how individuals like Sophie represent real-life social and psychological issues, where the pursuit of personal ambition can affect integrity and ethical relationships.

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