

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN *OPPENHEIMER* (2023) MOVIE

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Abstract

*The exploration of human psychological aspects is essential to understanding character development, particularly within cinematic narratives. Although previous psychological studies on film characters have extensively examined internal mental conflicts, they frequently overlook how these dimensions interact with broader narrative contexts, ethical dilemmas, and institutional power dynamics. To address this gap, this study aims to analyse the psychological aspects of the main character in Christopher Nolan's film *Oppenheimer* (2023) through the lens of Bernhardt's (1953) theory of human motivation. Employing a qualitative method with non-participant observation techniques, this research examines dialogues, scenes, non-verbal expressions, and actions based on five motivational classifications: appetites, wants, emotions, feelings and attitudes, and social motives. The analysis was validated through researcher triangulation during the data grouping and psychological interpretation stages. The findings reveal that while all classifications within Bernhardt's framework are present, the emotional aspect emerges as the most dominant. This dominance directly reflects the intense inner conflict triggered by the moral pressure, scientific responsibility, and political power dynamics faced by the protagonist. In conclusion, these findings indicate that character development in films is profoundly driven by ongoing emotional struggles, thereby enriching literary and film psychology by integrating character analysis with complex historical and ethical contexts.*

Keywords: *Psychological Aspects, Human Motivation, Film Analysis, Main Character Psychology.*

INTRODUCTION

Film is not merely a form of entertainment; it also reflects human psychological conditions. Through visual, dialogue, and storytelling techniques, films show conflicts, social relationships, and emotional pressures experienced by the characters. Those elements give an illustration to the audiences to understand the psychological experiences of characters in a relatable way. In line with that, Tan (2018) argued films engage viewers by activating their cognitive and emotional responses through narrative structure and character representation, making the

psychological dimension of characters central to how meaning is constructed. In this sense, film can be understood as an artistic form that symbolically and emotionally records human experience. In a story, internal conflict and emotional experiences usually centre upon the main character. This character acts as the main focus and the driving force that keeps the plot moving forward. This view is consistent with Eder et al. (2022), who state that the main character operates as the psychological core of a film narrative, connecting internal conflicts with broader social dynamics. Therefore, psychological analysis of the main character becomes interesting to study, since it could reveal how a character's mental is expressed through literature work. One psychological representation of the main character appears in the film *Oppenheimer* (2023).

Oppenheimer (2023), directed by Christopher Nolan, illustrates the construction of the main character's psychological aspects through narrative progression. The *Oppenheimer's* main protagonist was a man who lives in a setting that is emotionally. The Character portrayed as a the one who experiences deep psychological conflict, particularly in dealing with moral responsibility to the work on nuclear weapons, which had serious effects on humanity. The scenes shown how a person feels when they are broken between idealism and ambition. It shows the character *Oppenheimer* who is trying to survive under a lot of stress and moral strain. In Addition, this film is considered relevant for analysis not only because of its critical recognition, but also due to its complex portrayal of psychological and moral conflicts. *Oppenheimer* (2023) received significant recognition, including being awarded Best Picture at the 96th Academy Awards (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2024), which reflects its strong narrative construction and character development. Such recognition indicates that the film presents rich and complex representations of human experience, making it a valuable subject for psychological analysis within film studies. The *Oppenheimer's* main protagonist was a man who lives in a setting that is emotionally. Furthermore, in analyze the psychological of the main character, this study applies the theoretical framework proposed by Bernhardt (1953).

The theoretical framework that underlies of this research was based on the viewpoint of psychology that considers character behaviour as the result of the character's experience. In film analysis, this methodology enables the researcher analyse characters through the character's behaviours, feelings, and social interactions. Bernhardt (1953) states that psychology is the science of human behaviour, which can be understood through the observation of actions and the underlying mental processes. Although this theory is primarily developed to explain human behaviour, it can also be applied to fictional characters, as film characters are constructed to reflect realistic human experiences through their actions, dialogue, and interactions. Therefore, this framework is relevant for analysing how characters in films represent psychological processes similar to those found in real life. Within this framework, motivation, emotions, and thought are viewed as interrelated components that explain how an individual adapts to their environment and copes with events as they occur. In addition to this theoretical framework, a number of relevant previous studies were also used as key references to strengthen the analysis in this study

Previous studies, such as done by Rengganis Wijayanti et al. (2018), Aryani & Sugiyo (2023), and Lingga Afrili et al. (2024) have explored psychological aspects of characters in literary works and films using psychological approaches. For instance, Amnesi and Skolastika

(2023) analysed the psychological aspects of the main character in *Cruella* using Bernhardt's (1953) theory, showing that elements such as wants, emotions, and attitudes influence character behaviour. Similarly, Fitriani (2019) examined the main character in *Joker* based on Sigmund Freud's theory, focusing on unconscious drives and mental conflict. However, these studies mainly emphasise internal psychological aspects and do not fully relate them to the broader narrative and contextual background. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analysing psychological aspects in relation to the narrative and contextual dimensions of the film. These studies, however, tend to focus mainly on internal psychological issues without clearly relating protagonist's psychological aspect to plot, gestures and background sounds, that describe the main character's experience. In *Oppenheimer*'s case, there are still few psychological studies that thoroughly and contextually analyse the main character. This is significant because the movie has a protagonist who faces complicated psychological pressure as a result of his strategic involvement in a state driven enterprise, power dynamics with political institutions, and ethical quandaries brought on by technological advancements.

This research lies in its focus on examining the psychological aspects of the main character through the application of Bernhardt's (1953) theory of human motivation within a complex and contradictory context. This research highlights a main character who is positioned in a psychologically demanding situation, where the main character was required to fulfil professional responsibility while simultaneously confronting the moral consequences of the actions. This condition creates a dynamic tension between duty and ethical responsibility, which is analysed through the framework of human motivation. By applying this theory to characters in dynamic historical contexts, this study provides a perspective on how a character's motivations play out amid internal conflict, especially when their personal values clash with institutional demands and the weight of history. This research contributes to psychological film studies by extending the application of motivation theory to the analysis of complex character psychology in historically grounded narratives. Thus, based on the background, this research was examining the psychological dimensions of the main character in *Oppenheimer* (2003), specifically to (1) identify the types of psychological aspects that are depicted throughout the narrative, as well as to (2) determine which psychological aspects most dominantly influence the development of the main character's personality over the course of the story.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method to examine the psychology of the main character through the film's narrative. As explained by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research focuses on how individuals interpret their personal experiences in specific situations. This study then draws on Bernhardt's (1953) psychological theory to identify aspects of the main character's psychology.

The data in this study are sourced directly from the film *Oppenheimer* (2023) directed by Christopher Nolan. The data were collected through repeated viewing and careful observation of the film. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that qualitative data collection involves identifying and recording relevant information from the research object through observation and documentation. Therefore, important data related to the character's psychological state were selected and documented as primary data such as dialogues, significant scenes, facial

expressions, gestures, and actions that reflect the character's psychological condition throughout the film.

The data analysis was conducted through several steps. Initially, the data were collected by focusing exclusively on the main character, particularly through his dialogue and action. Subsequently, data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on specific dialogues and scenes that represent aspects of human motivation, as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), who emphasize the importance of reducing data to maintain relevance and focus. Furthermore, the selected data were categorized based on Bernhardt's (1953) theory, particularly in terms of human motivation, emotional responses, and behavioural patterns. In addition, the data were interpreted by connecting the psychological aspects of the character with the narrative context and social background of the film. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn to explain how the main character's psychological aspects are represented throughout the film.

Data Source

The main data of this study are the scenes of the main character, J. Robert Oppenheimer, in Christopher Nolan's film *Oppenheimer* (2023). based on Bordwell and Thompson (2020), the main character is the central figure who drives the plot through their actions and decisions. As the character who drives the plot, Oppenheimer experiences the greatest psychological tension, making the character relevant subject to analyze the clash between duty and ethical responsibility. This focus aligns with the objective of the study to explore how human motivation operates under conditions of moral dilemma and historical pressure. The focus was specifically placed on scenes in which the main character appears and demonstrates psychological responses through verbal and nonverbal expressions. The data consist of dialogues, significant scenes, facial expressions, gestures, and actions that reflect the character's psychological condition throughout the film. This was supported by Bordwell and Thompson (2020), who state that characters can be understood through their actions, speech, appearance, and interactions, as well as by Eder (2022), who emphasizes that characters are constructed through verbal, visual, and behavioural cues.

Research Techniques

Collecting Data

Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation of the movie *Oppenheimer* (2023), with special attention paid to scenes containing the main character. The film was watched several times in order to gain a good understanding of the narrative and to find relevant data in the form of dialogues, important scenes, facial expressions, gestures and actions that reflect the psychological condition of the character. This procedure is consistent with Rose's (2016) idea that visual data, including film, can be systematically analysed through close and sustained observation of its visual and narrative elements. The process of observation focused especially on scenes that witness the psychological tension, emotional reactions and motivational conflicts of the main character, especially in the context of moral dilemmas and professional responsibilities. These criteria were applied to ensure that the data selected are directly applicable to the analysis of human motivation. Identified data were recorded through documentation of the context of each scene including the situation,

interaction, and narrative background. The data was then organised and grouped into initial categories based on Bernhardt's (1953) psychological framework with particular focus on aspects of motivation, emotion and behavioural response.

Analysing Data

The data analysis in this study was conducted through several systematic procedures to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of the main character's psychological aspects. The analysis started with a categorization of the selected data that had been reduced by focusing on particular dialogues and scenes that represented aspects of human motivation based on Bernhardt's (1953) theory. Bernhardt's theory of practical psychology holds that human behavior is caused by underlying motivations, emotional responses, and behavioural tendencies that can be identified by observing actions and reactions. The framework is applied in the study to determine the psychological state of the character by analyzing the motivation in the dialogue, actions, and responses of the character to various situations. Chatman (1978) argues that characters are agents of action within the narrative, and their traits are revealed through what they do and say, further justifying the use of dialogue and action as primary units of analysis in this study. At this stage, each unit of the selected data, such as dialogues, gestures, facial expressions, and actions was carefully examined and assigned to specific categories according to its relevance to the psychological framework. Following this, the categorized data were further analysed by linking the identified elements with concepts from practical psychology. This process involved looking at how the character's motivation was reflected in the character's responses to different situations, especially in moments of moral dilemmas, professional responsibilities, and internal conflicts. The analysis was performed by analyzing the meaning of each scene selected in relation to the psychological state of the character.

Trustworthiness

In this study, the researchers collaborated as the major instrument in the data interpretation process. The first researcher is in charge of gathering data and doing the first analysis, which includes finding the dialogue, scenes, nonverbal expressions, and actions of the main character in the movie *Oppenheimer* that show the characters psychological. On the other hand, the second researcher acts as an independent investigator who reviews the analysis process, checks the fit between the data and psychological categories, and validates the interpretation of the findings based on the theoretical framework used. This process facilitates critical discussion and clarification of differing interpretations, ensuring that the analysis results do not just rely on the perspective of a single researcher. The application of investigator triangulation aligns with Denzin (1978) assertion that the involvement of several researchers in the research process facilitates cross-verification of data and interpretations, hence enhancing the objectivity and credibility of qualitative research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The film *Oppenheimer* (2023) was analyzed and a complex stratification of the protagonist's psyche was revealed by the distribution of data across the five psychological classifications of Bernhardt (1953). As we can see in Table 1, the most frequent aspect is Emotions (35%), followed by Wants (23%) and Feelings and Attitudes (20%). This numerical preponderance implies that the narrative arc is motivated primarily by internal affective disturbances and not by mere external plot points.

Table 1. Frequency of Psychological Aspects of the Main Character

No	Psychological Aspects	Number of scenes	Percentage
1	Appetites	5	13%
2	Wants	9	23%
3	Emotions	14	35%
4	Feelings and Attitudes	8	20%
5	Social motives	4	10%
	total	40	100%

The analysis of the film *Oppenheimer* (2023) reveals that the psychological aspect that is most frequently and dominantly present throughout the film is emotion. The emotions of the main character are demonstrated in many scenes showing the consequences of his scientific discoveries. Oppenheimer's emotional state continues to experience intense dynamics since the early stages of his development as a scientist, through his involvement in the Manhattan Project and the aftermath of the atomic bomb explosion. These emotions appear frequently in non-verbal expressions, in reflective monologues and in the psychological reactions of the character to the social, political and moral pressures that he suffers. The prevalence of these emotional aspects suggests that the main character's psychological experience is rooted in an inner conflict, which serves as the main driver of character development through the plot.

Discussion

Types of Psychological Aspects of the Main Character

Bernhardt (1953) stated that human motivation may be classified into five general classes, namely the appetites, the wants, the emotions, the feelings and attitudes, and the social motives. Based on this classification, the representation of the psychological aspect of Oppenheimer's (2023) main character is analysed as follows.

Appetites

Based on the analysis, this aspect appears 5 times, or around 13% of the total data. One representation of this aspect was shown in Data 6, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Scene of Oppenheimer Driven by Intellectual Curiosity

This scene started when the main character decided to move to the University of Göttingen. This move was triggered by the main character's failure to adapt to the experimental lab at Cambridge, where the main character feels isolated and frustrated because the practical work did not match the main character's interest in theory. In this new environment, the movie showed a dynamic sequence of scenes backed by fast tempo music to describe how fast the physicist's thoughts were moving. Figure 1 is a snapshot from this visual montage, showing the main character writing complex formulas on the blackboard with a serious expression.

Although this scene had no dialogue, the visuals show the main character's psychological aspect. The use of dynamic scenes and fast music in this scene helped explain that the main character's intellectual appetite had finally found its outlet. This aligns with Gorbman (1987), who states that film music acts as a "signifier of emotion" to give narrative coherence to a character's unspoken mental changes. In this case, the progressive music shows that Oppenheimer's intellectual energy is no longer trapped, but is now in sync with his new surroundings. Looking at the main character's calm yet deeply focused facial expression, this scene shows a strong sense of inner satisfaction in the main character.

Theoretically, this condition reflects a basic appetite in an intellectual form. This matches Bernhardt's (1953) explanation that basic drives function to sustain activity and give a specific direction to human behaviour. In this regard, Oppenheimer's intense concentration at the blackboard is not an academic routine but the expression of a deep internal need to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Furthermore, the visual satisfaction depicted in this scene is linked to the concept of Cognitive Fulfilment by Feist (2023). Feist (2023) suggested that finding a space that aligns with one's cognitive interests results in psychological satisfaction similar to the satisfaction of basic biological needs. This indicates that the character was experiencing the fulfilment of a fundamental psychological drive, where the need for intellectual stimulation operates in a similar way to a basic appetite that demands satisfaction. More importantly, this moment suggests that the character's behaviour was not merely driven by academic interest, but by an internal necessity that compels him to seek environments capable of sustaining his cognitive engagement.

Wants

Within Bernhardt's (1953) psychological framework, this aspect appears 9 times, or around 23% of the total research data. This aspect represents learned motives that come from the accumulation of personal ambition, one of which was identified in Data 16 through

Figure 2. The context of this scene focuses on the intellectual confrontation between the main character and character named General Groves.



Figure 2. Scene of Oppenheimer's Urgency to Complete the Project Before Germany

Figure 2 showed the main character stepping forward and making a deliberate pointing gesture as an aggressive persuasive effort to convince General Groves of the authority and urgency of his thoughts. This is consistent with a body language study by Pease & Pease (2004) that found that pointing gestures and moving into the listener's personal space are ways of asserting status and controlling the communication situation. The main character, in dominating this space, eventually translates his learned motives into actual recognition of his absolute managerial control over the project.

The main character's desires become clear when he reacts to General Groves' taunt that "Oppenheimer couldn't run a hamburger stand." The protagonist responds with a powerful statement that acknowledges his own limitations: "I couldn't. But I can run the Manhattan Project," a reply that demonstrates his awareness of his own scientific leadership capacity. The main character further states, "We'll lose the race if we're inefficient," suggesting that his interests have shifted from pure academic research to a highly calculated, result-driven national mission. In this scene, when Groves says, "Who have a twelve-month head start," the main character sharply corrects him with "Eighteen," indicating his confidence and precision. This correction reflects not only professional competence but also a strong internal drive to maintain intellectual authority and accuracy.

This indicates that the main character's behaviour was driven by a developed psychological need for recognition, control, and impact, which has been shaped through his prior experiences and intellectual identity. More importantly, this moment reveals that his motivation is no longer limited to understanding knowledge, but has evolved into a desire to assert dominance within a high-stakes socio-political structure. In this sense, the character's actions reflect a learned appetite, where ambition, competition, and responsibility converge to form a persistent internal drive that pushes him to claim authority and influence outcomes. According to Feist (2023) scientists often showed personal dominance when professional competition intersects with historical stakes, in accordance with this. The action proves the want of the main character, as the synchronization between the pointing gesture, the movement to the blackboard and the dialogue that challenges the military authority. The main character did not want to know any more, but he wants to show the ability to syncretize science and war strategy.

Emotion

The category of Emotions is the most prominent with 14 appearances, representing roughly 35% of the total research data, according to statistics. Emotion is a disturbance or interruption of normal activity caused by obstacles to strong wants or appetites, according to Bernhardt (1953). This is deeply attested in Data 40 in the last conversation of the protagonist with character named was Einstein, which opened with a heavy confession of guilt "Albert? When I brought those calculations to you?", "We were afraid we would cause a chain reaction that would destroy the whole world..." This dialogue was the final result of main character's dormant intellectual fears, which had once been buried beneath the height of the project's triumph. Finally, the main character admitted in a low but heavy voice "I believe we did" confirming that the calculation the main character feared was no longer a physics phenomenon, but an unstoppable political and moral destruction.



Figure 3. Scene of Oppenheimer's Reflection on Consequences of His Actions

The visual analysis, through a slow zoom on the protagonist's face, reveals a psychological stress laden expression, while Einstein was silent, not saying a single word, a silence that actually increases the emotional atmosphere of the scene. The dynamic scenes of rockets and nuclear weapons in a visual montage externalize the main character's fear, as the main character no longer just thought, but visualized the destruction of the world as a real consequence of the main character's actions. The impressionistic visual effects and the manipulation of tempo at the end of the film, as Gorbman (1987) explained, were an effort to impart narrative coherence to the mental transformation of a character in the grip of paralyzing moral despair. This emphasizes a destructive emotional condition, where ironically the intellectual success of the main character became the source of emotional interruption which stops main character's whole life orientation.

Moreover, the confession dialogue of the main character resonates with Feist's (2023) concept of cognitive fulfilment from a tragic standpoint, where the intellectual bliss that the main character found was a moral burden that surpasses his human capacity. However, the cognitive break-through he strove for in his youth brings him severe psychological shock as he discovers that the world, he saved was actually on the brink of total destruction. The main character's stillness before Einstein was theoretically proof that his essential intellectual drive has come up against a terrifying wall of reality, which produces an emotion which no longer serves to sustain activity, but instead paralyses the subject in an eternal guilt, in keeping with Bernhardt's (1953) definition of emotion as an interruption of activity.

Feeling and Attitudes

In Bernhardt's (1953) theory, Feelings & Attitudes reflect a lasting subjective evaluation of experience, where feelings are long term affective states and attitude is a stable tendency to respond to something. Based on the number, this aspect appears 7 times, or about 18% of the total data, with one of the most representative examples found in Data 35, as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Scene of Oppenheimer's Regret

The context of this scene took place after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when the main character was invited to meet President Truman. In the middle of the grand presidential office, the main character actually showed physical restlessness that contrasts sharply with the atmosphere of wartime victory.

The visual analysis of D35 records the moment when the main character was wringing his hands, a gesture that reveals profound psychological discomfort and lingering guilt. A key dialogue spoken in a low, strained voice "Mr. President, I feel that I have blood on my hands.". This statement, however, was not a simple emotional outburst, but a sign of a change in the attitude of the protagonist, who no longer considers science a neutral entity, but a force to be ethically controlled. This suggests that the character's feelings of guilt are not temporary, but develop into a stable moral attitude that redefines how he perceives science and its consequences. In this process, the character moves from an initial emotional disturbance toward a more structured ethical position, where scientific work is no longer viewed as neutral, but as something that carries moral responsibility. This transformation marks a critical psychological shift in which personal emotion evolves into a guiding principle for future judgment and behaviour.

According to Pease & Pease (2004), wringing the hands is a common indicator of internal anxiety and an unconscious attempt to regulate emotional tension. Furthermore, Feist (2023) explains that a new moral orientation often emerges when scientists recognize the destructive consequences of their intellectual work. These perspectives support the interpretation that the character's guilt functions as a catalyst for the formation of a new ethical stance. In line with Bernhardt's (1953) framework, this moment illustrates how enduring feelings can reshape attitudes, transforming internal conflict into a stable moral commitment.

In addition, the shift from guilt to an oppositional position against further nuclear development related to Feist's (2023). Feist (2023) wrote, a new moral orientation often emerges when a scientist sees that his 'intellectual product' has destructive human consequences. The analysis of D35 proves that the main character's feelings had bridged the

gap between his personal internal conflict and his public moral stance. Theoretically, this matches Bernhardt's (1953) principle that the guilty feelings haunting the main character effectively break down the scientific neutrality he held before, replacing it with an ethical commitment. Importantly, this aspect is closely related to the character's cognitive awareness and sense of responsibility, as the emotional burden he experiences directly influences his evaluative judgment and future decisions. Therefore, this moment does not merely represent regret, but signifies a deeper psychological reorientation in which the character redefines his identity from a scientist driven by discovery to an individual constrained by ethical accountability.

Social Motives

Based on Bernhardt's (1953) theoretical framework, Social Motives are learned drives to gain recognition (Social Approval) and avoid rejection from the social environment. In this study, social motives were identified 5 times, or about 13% of the total findings, with a very clear representation in Data 5 (D5) through Figure 5. The context of this scene shows the early phase of the main character building his academic career at Berkeley, where the main character had to face an initial situation of social disapproval in the form of an empty classroom. This situation created an obstacle to his social motives, prompting the main character to make a proactive effort to attract a single student who was initially textually apathetic and wanted to leave the room.

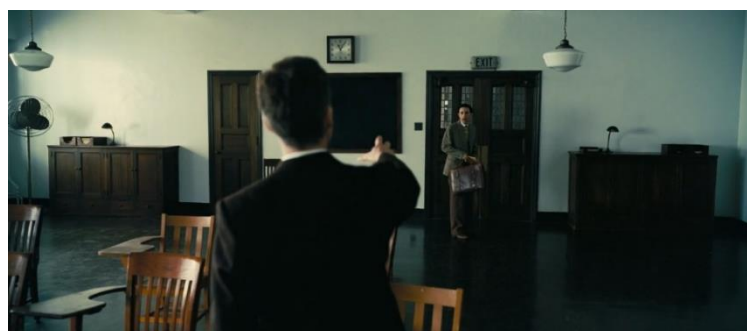


Figure 5. Scene of communication between Oppenheimer and Lomanitz to gain early Social Approval.

The visual analysis of Figure 5, captures a crucial moment when the main character used his intellectual authority through an interactive dialogue that challenges Lomanitz's (one of character in this film) basic understanding. When Lomanitz tries to answer a question about light, the main character cut in with a rapid dialog "Quantum mechanics says it's both—how can it be both?". The flow of the dialogue reached its peak when the main character explained the paradox with the line, "It can't. But it is. It's paradoxical and yet... it works." The visual response from Lomanitz, who started to smile and sat down calmly, showed that the main character has successfully gained an early form of Social Approval, where his ideas begun to be accepted and validated by the audience.

This suggests that the main character does not passively wait for recognition, but actively constructs it through strategic intellectual performance. The shift from an empty classroom to an engaged interaction reflects a psychological process in which initial rejection triggers adaptive behaviour aimed at gaining social approval. More importantly, this moment indicates

that recognition from others functions as a reinforcing mechanism for the character's identity, where intellectual display becomes a tool to secure social validation and establish authority.

In line with Pease & Pease (2004), the use of intense eye contact and a dominant standing position in front of the class is a form of asserting status to win attention while forcing the social environment to recognize his existence. Furthermore, the fact that the protagonist had managed to keep the student until the classroom finally filled up was proof that the need for Social Approval has been collectively satisfied. This is consistent with Feist's (2023) assertion that for a scientist, a recognition from intellectual followers is an important type of social success to maintain their self-confidence. In line with Bernhardt's (1953) theory that the receipt of Social Approval provided the individual with a sense of security and direction for behaviour in a new environment. The main character, with his stunning stage presence, transforms from a neglected teacher into a respected hub of social gravity, showing that his intellectual authority has gained the social recognition he was seeking.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that the character of the film *Oppenheimer* (2023) had a dynamic psychological aspect, which was interpreted through the theory of motivation by Bernhardt (1953). The development did not take place linearly, but was formed as a result of the interaction of various motivational aspects: appetites, wants, emotions, feelings and attitudes, social motives. Among these aspects, emotion appears as the most dominant driving force influencing the transformation of the main character. This indicates that psychological tension, moral burden, and internal conflict play a more significant role than purely intellectual ambition or social recognition. The character's journey illustrates how the pursuit of success and recognition gradually leads to ethical dilemmas, particularly when the consequences of scientific achievement conflict with humanitarian values. This tension is clearly reflected in the interplay between the character's desire for social approval and his growing awareness of moral responsibility, ultimately shaping his internal struggle and identity reconstruction.

Furthermore, the study highlights that social motives and appetites also function as important supporting factors, particularly in the early stages of the character's development, where the need for recognition and acceptance drives his professional actions. However, as the narrative progresses, these external motivations are increasingly overshadowed by deeper emotional and ethical considerations, reinforcing the idea that human motivation evolves depending on situational and psychological pressures.

From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms the relevance and applicability of Bernhardt's (1953) motivation framework in analyzing complex characters in contemporary film. The findings extend the use of classical psychological theory into modern cinematic discourse, demonstrating that film characters can serve as rich representations of layered human motivation. In addition, this study contributes to the field of psychology of literature and film studies by emphasizing that the strength of biographical films lies not only in historical accuracy or visual representation, but also in their ability to externalize internal psychological conflicts through narrative and visual elements.

Finally, this study suggests that future research can further explore the integration of motivational theory with other analytical approaches, such as critical discourse analysis or multimodal analysis, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of character construction in film. By doing so, scholars can gain deeper insights into how psychological, social, and ideological dimensions interact within cinematic narratives.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization, Writing—Original draft preparation, Validation and Reviewing;

Author 2: Collecting the data, Writing, Methodology, and Editing

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