Attachment Transformation in *Aloners* (2021): A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Jina's Isolation and Reconnection

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Abstract

The previous studies mostly focus on individuation archetype and role of attachment from the psychological perspective. This study examines the psychological journey of the character Jina in the film *Aloners* (2021) to explore how her attachment patterns evolve. The findings of this study reveal that Jina's rejecting and avoiding attachment style functions as a repressed "shadow," which, when confronted through a series of external and emotional triggers, facilitates her psychological growth. The film portrays Jina's journey from an emotionally isolated figure to an individual who begins to confront the hidden sides of herself. This study aims to analyze how her psychological journey triggers changes in her attachment patterns and interactions with others. The author employs a literary psychological approach, incorporating John Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Carl Jung's Individuation Theory, with a particular focus on the shadow archetype, as well as Semiotics by Peirce and Film Study Theory by Boggs and Petrie. Using a qualitative descriptive method, it examines characters dialogue and visuals in the film. Analysis reveals a gradual transformation from emotional repression and isolation toward vulnerability and a desire to connect, marked by key scenes such as her emotional outburst with her father, her honest confession to a coworker, and symbolic actions like opening her window curtains. This study offers a new perspective in understanding character's emotional development in modern cinema as well as social isolation, loneliness, attachment, and the process of individuation. This study will contribute to build empathy and encourage viewers to better understand themselves and others.

Keywords: Avoidant attachment; Shadow archetype; Individuation; Psychological; Growth; Aloners

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, social isolation and loneliness have become significant issues, particularly in urban environments. This phenomenon, often exacerbated by technology that facilitates virtual but not emotional connections, is becoming increasingly common. As Smith and Alheneidi (2023) point out, loneliness stems from an unmet need for fulfilling social relationships, leading individuals to avoid interaction and intensify their feelings of isolation. This trend is vividly reflected in the South Korean film *Aloners* (2021), which explores the phenomenon of "honjok." The term "honjok," or "the tribe of the solitary," refers to a lifestyle characterized by self-imposed physical and psychological boundaries, ranging from solitary recreational activities to limited social circles (Ann, 2020). The prevalence of this lifestyle is evident in South Korea, where one-person households accounted for 31.7% of the population in 2020, with the 20-30 age group being the largest demographic (Rashid, 2022).

This social phenomenon has serious psychological consequences, as it profoundly impacts mental health and the ability to form meaningful relationships. Research by Gong (2024) highlights the growing issue of social isolation among South Korean youth, with a 2019 study estimating that 3% of individuals aged 19–34 experience a lack of meaningful interaction. The longer someone remains isolated, the higher the risk of developing physical and mental health issues, a finding supported by a 2022 Seoul government survey, in which 8 out of 10 isolated young people reported experiencing depression (Gong, 2024). Additionally, a study by Myung Kim et al. (2021) of 1,700 participants confirmed that social isolation and loneliness are common in South Korea and have a significant negative impact on mental health, increasing the risk of depression and social anxiety. The study highlighted that the quality of relationships, not the number of acquaintances, is a key factor in overcoming loneliness (Myung Kim et al., 2021).

One film that addresses this theme is *Aloners* (2021), a South Korean film directed by Hong Sung-eun. This film stands out for its portrayal of characters struggling with psychological isolation in the modern era. The main character, Jina, lives in extreme isolation, meticulously avoiding all forms of social interaction, which can be analyzed through attachment theory, particularly the avoidant attachment type. This attachment type is characterized by individuals who have a strong desire for independence, tend to distance themselves from others, and avoid feelings associated with conflict (Bistricky et al., 2017). Although Jina's initial state is a case of deep separation, the film's narrative focuses on her transformative journey, triggered by a series of emotional confrontations.

To understand Jina's character transformation, this study employs two primary psychological frameworks: Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Jung's Individuation Theory, which focus on one of the individuation processes, specifically the shadow archetype. These theories were chosen as analytical approaches in this study because both can help understand the psychological development of Jina's character in the movie *Aloners* (2021). Aside from that, to analyze the attachment pattern and shadow confrontation in Jina's character, this study is also using the principles of semiotics, as developed by Charles Sanders Peirce, and film analysis concepts from "The Art of Watching Films" by Boggs and Petrie to interpret the symbolic meaning of the visual and cinematic elements.

Theory of Attachment

Attachment, a concept first introduced by John Bowlby, refers to the emotional bond between a child and their primary caregiver (Xu, 2022). On the other hand, Ainsworth categorized attachment into three main types, namely secure attachment, ambivalent-insecure attachment, and avoidant-insecure attachment. (Xu, 2022). Secure attachment is an individual who typically feels safe in their relationships, trusts their partners, and isn't afraid to ask for help when needed. People with an anxious-preoccupied attachment style usually feel a lot of uncertainty and anxiety in their relationships (Sharma and Kaushik, 2024).

Avoidant attachment is a form of insecure attachment that develops when the caregiver rarely responds to the child's emotional needs and fails to show sympathy or comfort when the child exhibits signs of stress or affection. This can result in a child having learned not to rely on the caregiver due to an emotionally absent response. A person who grows up with these feelings will suppress their emotional needs and appear independent, even though they still experience psychological distress internally (Xu, 2022).

Research conducted by Ainsworth using the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) found that children with disorganized attachments typically have parents who are experiencing unresolved emotional issues. Therefore, although children attempt to seek protection and closeness from their caregivers, they often do not receive sufficient

attention and care. As a result, the baby will lose trust in relationships with others. Babies with this attachment often feel confused and afraid of their caregivers (Xu, 2022).

According to Holmes (p. 101-102, 2017), Bartholomew (1990) developed the theory by adding a fourth attachment style and modifying its measurement. He proposed that instead of being described along a single dimension (secure/insecure), attachment should be viewed along two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. Secure: low anxiety and avoidance -> comfortable with closeness. Preoccupied/ambivalent: high anxiety, low avoidance -> wants to be close but often worries. Fearful avoidant: high anxiety and avoidance -> wants to be close but is afraid of being hurt. Dismissive avoidant: low anxiety, high avoidance -> more independent and doesn't care about closeness.

Based on the explanation of attachment theory and the four attachment types, 'insecure' can be understood as one of the attachment styles that develops into avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized. Meanwhile, dismissive-avoidant and fearful-avoidant are developed by Bartholomew's theory of adult attachment.

Individuation and the Shadow Archetype

On the other hand, Carl Jung's theory of individuation describes the psychological journey toward self-unity by integrating various aspects of the inner self. A key component of this process is the recognition and assimilation of the archetype. According to The Handbook of Jungian Psychology (2006, p. 85), Carl Jung, in his 1927 essay "Mind and Earth," described archetypes as systems of readiness for action that are also images and emotions. They are an innate part of the human psyche, inherited with our brain structure, and can be considered its psychic aspect.

Ultimately, archetypes are a combination of an innate readiness to act, specific images, and accompanying emotions that influence how humans feel, imagine, and behave from the moment they are born. According to Ayuningtyas & Jatmiko (2021) These archetypes include the persona (the mask an individual uses to interact with the outside world), the shadow (the dark side of the personality that is often ignored or rejected), the animus/anima (a representation of feminine traits in men and masculine traits in women), and the self (a symbol of psychic unity and wholeness).

The concept of the shadow in Jungian psychology refers to the darker, hidden, and often repressed side of the human psyche. This aspect of the self includes traits or desires that individuals may find unpleasant, unacceptable, or incompatible with their conscious self-image, such as anger, jealousy, selfishness, weakness, or other negative impulses. Often, people are unaware of their shadow, or they actively avoid acknowledging it due to moral discomfort or fear of what they might discover (Depci and Erkin, 2020). The process of confronting the shadow can reveal unresolved issues and hidden aspects of the self, indicating a journey towards self-realization (Ayuningtyas & Jatmiko, 2021).

In simple terms, the shadow can be understood as the darker side of the self that people either ignore or suppress. Jung believed that to grow and achieve genuine self-awareness, one must face and integrate this shadow. The more we accept and understand these hidden parts of ourselves, the better we can control our actions, live more consciously, and develop a more balanced personality.

Semiotic Approach by Charles Sanders Peirce

In semiotics theory, Charles Peirce classified signs into three basic types based on the relationship between the sign's form (representamen) and its object: symbolic, iconic, and indexical. Symbolic signs, such as language or numbers, have an arbitrary relationship with their objects, which can only be understood through convention. Iconic signs, such as portraits or cartoons, resemble their objects through visual, auditory, or other forms of similarity.

Finally, indexical signs have a direct, causal, or existential relationship with their referents, such as smoke indicating the presence of fire or footprints indicating the presence of a person (Chandler, 2017, p. 41). Using Peirce's semiotic framework, this analysis will explore how the film *Aloners* (2021) employs expressions, visuals, and dialogue as signs to identify and analyze the patterns of attachment exhibited by the main character, Jina, which influence her interactions with people and objects in her environment.

The Art of Watching Films by Boggs and Petrie

In cinematography, camera angles are intentionally chosen to provide dramatic information and convey specific emotions. A Low-Angle Shot places the camera below the subject, making them appear larger and more powerful, while a High-Angle Shot is positioned above the subject, making them seem smaller or more helpless. The Medium Shot is set at eye level for a neutral perspective. For heightened focus, a Close-Up or Extreme Close-Up brings the audience very near the subject, eliminating distractions. Additionally, the Wide-Angle Shot enlarges perspective and increases the perceived distance between objects in the background. According to Boggs & Petrie (p. 133, 2008), camera work can also establish a point of view: an Objective shot observes from a detached distance, a Subjective shot shows what a character sees, an Indirect-Subjective shot focuses on a character's reaction to something, and a Director's Interpretive shot conveys the filmmaker's specific feelings about a scene.

Beyond camera angles, lighting is a crucial and often magical tool used by directors and cinematographers to create atmosphere and dramatic effects. Low-key Lighting is characterized by dominant shadows and dark areas, creating a tense, mysterious, or spooky mood often seen in horror or thriller films. In contrast, High-key Lighting produces an overall bright image with minimal shadows, suitable for a cheerful and light atmosphere found in comedies or musicals. Lighting texture also plays a significant role: hard light is bright and sharp with clear, high-contrast shadows, while soft or diffused light is more gentle, with softer shadows, ideal for romantic or calm scenes. By manipulating the intensity, direction, and type of light, a director can add depth, emphasize emotions, and shape the visual appearance of faces and objects within a scene (Boggs & Petrie, 2008, p. 114).

Previous studies have successfully applied these psychological frameworks to analyze fictional characters. Research by Kılıç (2020) on "*A Jungian Hero's Journey as Individuation Process in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,*" and Depci and Erkin (2021) on *"Individuation Process and 'Shadow' in Murakami Haruki's Dance Dance Dance"* both highlight how protagonists confront their "shadow" as a crucial part of their journey toward self-realization. Similarly, Rahayu and Suprayogi's (2023) study on *"The Portrayal of Persona and Shadow in Normal People by Sally Rooney"* supports the view that repressed emotions, or the "shadow," influence a character's external behavior. On the other side, research conducted by Widiyanti et al. (2022) on *The Element of Archetypes that Focused on The Character of The Film Encanto (2021)* finds several types of archetypes in the characters in the film, one of them included shadow archetype.

In parallel, psychological studies, such as those by Henschel et al. (2020) on *"Emotion Regulation and Empathic Abilities in Young Adults: The Role of Attachment Styles"* and Maranges et al. (2021) on *"Insecure and Insensitive: Avoidant and Anxious Attachment Predict Less Concern for Others in Sacrificial Moral Dilemmas,"* shows a clear link between avoidant attachment and emotional struggles, including lower empathy and difficulty regulating emotions. These findings collectively establish that both Jungian and attachment theories are valid frameworks for analyzing character psychology and emotional development.

While these studies have explored the theories individually, a significant gap remains in their combined application. No prior research has explicitly examined how an

avoidant attachment style can function as a character's "shadow" or how confronting this suppressed emotional state can lead to a fundamental shift in attachment patterns. This study aims to fill that void by providing a novel perspective on a character rarely discussed in existing literature.

Focusing on the character of Jina in *Aloners* (2021), this study examines the question of how her psychological journey triggers changes in her attachment patterns and interactions with others. The aim of this article is to analyze Jina's transformative process by applying a combined framework of Bowlby's attachment theory and Jung's individuation theory. The study demonstrates how Jina's rejecting and avoiding attachment patterns function as a "shadow" that, when confronted, facilitates her psychological growth and enables her to form more meaningful relationships. This approach not only contributes to the field of literary psychology but also deepens our understanding of emotional development in the context of loneliness and powerlessness in modern cities.

METHOD
Research Design
This study employs a descriptive qualitative study to analyze the psychological journey of Jina's character and its effect on her attachment patterns in the film *Aloners* (2021). This approach is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth interpretation of the film's narrative, dialogue, and visual elements, providing a comprehensive understanding of the character's development (Creswell, 2009, p. 165). The analysis is guided by psychoanalytic literary criticism, specifically integrating John Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Carl Jung's Individuation Theory. Bowlby's theory is used to identify Jina's avoidant attachment style, while Jung's theory, particularly the concept of the shadow archetype, is applied to analyze her journey of self-realization through confronting her hidden emotional struggles.

Data Source and Data Collection
The primary data source for this study is the 2021 South Korean film *Aloners* (2021), directed by Hong Sung-eun. The film was carefully and repeatedly watched to ensure an in-depth understanding of its themes and narrative. The research data consists of the film's storylines, visuals, and dialogues that depict Jina's avoidant attachment patterns and her process of individuation. All the data was carefully coded on the basis of its context and they are decoded based on the interpretation of semiotics and literary perspectives. Specific scenes, expressions, visual symbolism, and cinematography were identified and classified to understand how Jina's psychological journey is portrayed through her interactions and evolving behavior.

Data Analysis Procedure
The data analysis follows a structured procedure. First, the identified data from the film is categorized in a structured manner based on the theories of Bowlby and Jung. The classified data is then analyzed using the principles of semiotics, as developed by Charles Sanders Peirce, and film analysis concepts from "*The Art of Watching Films*" by Boggs and Petrie to interpret the symbolic meaning of the visual and cinematic elements.

The analysis proceeds by applying Bowlby's attachment theory to examine the type of attachment pattern displayed by Jina. Subsequently, Jung's individuation theory, with a specific focus on the shadow archetype, is used to explore her internal psychological journey. The final stage involves interpreting the findings to connect the relationship between Jina's attachment issues and her confrontation with the shadow, ultimately drawing a conclusion that directly addresses the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analysis of Jina's psychological journey in the film *Aloners* (2021), focusing on her transformation from a dismissive-avoidant attachment pattern to a more secure attachment pattern. These findings are based on key scenes that serve as triggers and markers of Jina's progress through Jung's process of individuation.

Table 1. Jina's Psychological Transformation Stages

Jina's Stage of Transformation	Psychological Change (Attachment Pattern & Individuation)	Corresponding Cinematic Cues
Initial Trigger	From Dismissive-Avoidant to Shadow Confrontation: Jina's isolated state is challenged by external events that leads to her first signs of emotional outburst.	Scene where the beeping sound in her head and visible distress on her face during a customer call. This is an indexical sign of internal chaos.
Emotional Outburst	Confrontation with the Shadow: Jina's directly faces her repressed pain and anger by confronting her father, a crucial step toward psychological wholeness and self-acceptance.	The use of close-up and medium-close up camera angles highlights the emotional impact. Jina's dialogue, teary eyes, and trembling voice are a direct index of her anger and hurt.
Honesty and Vulnerability	Breakdown of Emotional Barriers: Jina admits her loneliness and that her independent persona was a defense mechanism, as a step toward developing a secure attachment.	Low-key lighting and a blurry background create an intimate and somber mood that reflects her inner chaos and sadness.
Opening the Curtain	Welcoming New Experiences: This action symbolizes her decision to drop defenses and open herself to new relationship, a main part of her individuation process.	The visual shift from closed curtains to sunlight entering her room, along with her shirt color change from cold, dark tones to a warmer brick-brown.
Quitting Her Job	Major Transition: This action signals her shift from a dismissive-avoidant style by eliminating a major defense mechanism (work) to create a space for self-reflection and growth.	The scene of her packing her belongings and leaving the office is an index of her decision to change her life. Her new openness to her boss and a desire for future social contact are direct indicators of this change.
The Progress with Her Father	Reconciliation with the Past: Jina shows the emotional control and newfound maturity by calmly answering her father's call, signaling a partial break in her emotional wall.	The scene is set on a bus with brighter, more natural lighting, creating a calmer and more neutral atmosphere. Her small, controlled smile is a visual index of her progress.
Final Glimpse	Embracing Secure Attachment: Jina consciously engages with the world, leaving her self-imposed isolation behind and moving toward a more secure, integrated self.	Her reflection in the bus window, her lack of wired earphones, and a shift in her gaze from her phone to her surrondings symbolize her new self-awareness and integration of her 'shadow'.

Through a layered analysis of character actions, dialogue, and cinematic elements such as lighting and symbolism, this study identifies how Jina's confrontation with her

repressed emotions, or "inner shadow," facilitates a profound shift in her attachment patterns. As each point is supported by empirical evidence from the film and the psychological theory, it illustrates how the narrative journey can reflect processes of complex emotional and psychological growth.

The Initial Trigger of Jina's Psychological Journey

The analysis reveals that Jina's psychological transformation is not a sudden event but a gradual process triggered by external pressures and emotional confrontation. The first major trigger is the abrupt disappearance of her coworker, Sujin, and the sudden memory of her father laughing with others on CCTV. These external stimuli manifest internally, causing Jina to become visibly emotional and unfocused at work for the first time, as evidenced by the beeping sound ringing in her head and her distress during a customer call.

The scene marks a crucial moment where her previously flat and cold demeanor gives way to signs of stress and emotional turmoil. Using the triadic model, the beeping sound, Sujin's disappearance, and her father's image function as an index of Jina's internal turmoil, signaling that her suppressed emotions are being brought to the surface. This marks the beginning of her entering the shadow confrontation stage.

The beeping sound, a literal and symbolic representation of her inner chaos, is a prime example of this. The dissonance between Jina's repressed self and her controlled external reality creates a breaking point, a phenomenon often observed in individuals with dismissive-avoidant attachment styles who rely on emotional suppression as a coping mechanism. The inability to maintain this defense when faced with overwhelming stimuli highlights the fragility of her self-imposed isolation.

The Emotional Outburst and Shadow Confrontation

A significant moment in Jina's transformation is her emotional outburst during a phone call with her father, where she expresses years of repressed pain, anger, and disappointment. This scene is presented as the climax of her suppressed emotions, with Jina yelling at her father and asking him to apologize to her and her deceased mother.

The film uses close-up and medium close-up camera angles to intensify the emotional impact of this scene. As said by Boggs & Petrie (p.130, 2008), close-ups of faces grimacing in pain make us feel the pain more clearly than shots taken from a greater distance. In addition, this dialogue is the climax of Jina's anger that she has been suppressing, as the sentence spoken by Jina,

"Out on the town, are you? Enjoying yourself?"

It can be interpreted that Jina feels that her father can live as if nothing happened after her mother's death, while she herself is still trapped in hurt and trauma.

"Why are you still using Mom's phone?"

The above sentence, spoken by Jina, also shows that from the beginning, her father always called Jina using her late mother's phone. This allows Jina to feel anxious or hurt because it can remind her of old wounds. Therefore, Jina muttered something like that. Finally, in a sentence,

"Say you're sorry. Apologize to me and apologize to Mom! Just say you're sorry!"

Jina's teary eyes, trembling voice, and repeated pleas for an apology are a direct index of her anger and hurt. The repeated phrase, *"Say you're sorry,"* signals her need for recognition of the pain she has been carrying and an acknowledgment of her father's guilt. This confrontation is the beginning of her facing her inner "shadow".

This finding is consistent with the principles of both attachment theory and Jungian individuation. From an attachment perspective, Jina's anger and frustration stem from her father's failure to provide a secure emotional base, leaving her feeling hurt and trapped by trauma. Her outburst is a desperate attempt to gain the emotional validation she has been denied. This is a departure from the typical behavior of someone with a dismissive-avoidant style, who would normally suppress such emotions to maintain emotional distance. From a Jungian perspective, this phone call represents the confrontation with the shadow. The shadow, in this case, consists of her unexpressed pain, anger, and feelings of abandonment. By confronting her father, she is, in effect, confronting her own suppressed self, which is the first crucial step toward psychological wholeness and self-acceptance.

Honesty and The Breakdown of Emotional Barriers

Following her emotional outburst with her father, Jina's transformation continues with a pivotal phone call to her coworker, Sujin, where she finally becomes honest with herself and others. The scene is marked by low-key lighting and a blurry background, creating an intimate and somber mood that reflects Jina's inner chaos and sadness. In this moment of vulnerability, she admits to Sujin, *"I'm no good on my own. I just pretend to be"*. This confession is a direct admission that her independent, strong persona was merely a defense mechanism.

Jina's emotional honesty, expressed with a trembling voice and teary eyes, marks a crack in the emotional wall she has built. This is the first time she acknowledges her true feelings of loneliness and her desire for a deeper, more meaningful human connection. This confession is a sign that she is beginning to confront her shadow and the reality she had been denying.

This revelation demonstrates a significant shift in Jina's character, moving away from a dismissive-avoidant attachment style. Individuals with this attachment style tend to hide their vulnerability and emotional needs, fearing rejection or hurt if they reveal their true selves. By admitting her loneliness and expressing the truth about her struggles, Jina is engaging in a process of self-acceptance that is fundamental to developing a more secure attachment. This vulnerability is a crucial step in the individuation process, as it involves integrating her repressed, lonely self into her conscious identity. The act of apologizing and expressing feelings to Sujin also signifies a newfound desire to improve her emotional relationships with others, a hallmark of moving toward secure attachment.

The Indexical Sign of Opening the Curtain

The film uses the visual of Jina opening the curtains in her room as a powerful symbol of her internal change and willingness to engage with the outside world. Throughout the film, her curtains remain closed, symbolizing her emotionally distant and closed-off character.

In the final act, the act of opening them and allowing sunlight to enter her room is an index of her psychological shift. The sunlight illuminating her face and room represents new beginnings and her decision to open herself up to life. This is a clear visual representation of her transformation from a closed-off, isolated state to a more open and receptive one. This visual change is further emphasized by the shift in her costume color from cold, dark tones to a warmer, brick-brown, signaling a corresponding change in her inner emotional state. As stated by Boggs & Petrie (pp. 299-231, 2008), colors convey a sense of temperature. The warm colors are red, orange, yellow, and lavender, while the cool colors are blue, green, and beige.

The act of opening it symbolizes her decision to drop these defenses and begin the process of individuation by welcoming the "light" of new experiences and relationships. This is a common cinematic technique to portray a character's internal journey. The visual shift from shadows and darkness to light and warmth reflects her progress in confronting

her inner "shadow" and her move towards a more complete, conscious, and reconciled version of herself.

The Act of Quitting Her Job as a Major Transition

Jina's decision to quit her job is a significant step that signals a major transition in her life. The scene where she packs her belongings and leaves the office serves as an index of her decision to change. This act is not simply about changing careers; it signifies her need for time for self-reflection and her quest to find new meaning in life. When her boss asks her what she plans to do, she responds with newfound honesty, *"I just need some time to myself"*. This is a stark contrast to her previous rigid and guarded behavior. Furthermore, her final words to her boss, *"Let's get dinner once I figure things out,"* signal a desire to build and maintain relationships, something she previously avoided.

This finding supports the idea that Jina is actively shifting from a dismissive-avoidant to a more secure attachment style. A key characteristic of dismissive-avoidant individuals is their fear of commitment and their tendency to avoid deep emotional connections, often by dedicating themselves to work or other distractions. By quitting her job, a source of her extreme isolation, Jina is eliminating a major defense mechanism and creating space for self-reflection and emotional growth.

Her openness with her boss and her invitation to dinner are direct indicators that she is no longer rigidly avoiding relationships and is actively seeking to build new ones. This action-oriented change demonstrates that she has truly begun to confront the "shadow" of her anger, loneliness, and emotional wounds, and is now ready to build a life based on emotional honesty rather than suppression.

Jina's Progress of Attachment Pattern with Her Father

The film's ending reveals significant progress in Jina's relationship with her father, although it is not a complete reconciliation. When her father calls, Jina answers calmly, no longer avoiding or exploding with anger as she did before. The scene, set on a bus, uses a medium close-up shot and brighter, more natural lighting, which signifies a calmer and more neutral atmosphere compared to previous scenes. A key line, *"I'll be checking on you from time to time. Let's keep it that way,"* shows that she has not fully forgiven him and is still maintaining some distance. However, this action is a sign that she is no longer rejecting her father completely, but instead is showing her concern from afar, which represents a partial breakdown of her emotional wall.

This scene is a clear demonstration that Jina has moved past the initial confrontation stage with her shadow. Her ability to answer her father's call calmly indicates a newfound emotional control and maturity, a sign of her individuation process. She is no longer in a state of outright denial or explosive anger but has begun to accept her past wounds. The fact that she still keeps her distance indicates that her transformation is a gradual process, rather than a complete, instant recovery.

This reflects a key aspect of individuation, which, as Ayuningtyas & Jatmiko (2020) stated, is not a process that can be completed in a short period but can take a lifetime to achieve complete psychological unity. The small, controlled smile on her face and the calmer lighting are all visual index of her progress towards a more reconciled and conscious version of herself.

The Final Glimpse of Transformation Towards a Secure Attachment

The film's final scene depicts Jina sitting on a bus, reflecting on her life and her connection to the outside world. The shot, which shows her reflection in the bus window, effectively doubles the visual information, allowing the audience to see not only her surroundings but also her internal state.

She is no longer looking at her phone or using wired earphones, which previously served as a barrier, but is instead looking out the window, signaling a change in her perspective and her willingness to be open to her surroundings. The softer, brighter lighting indicates a lack of pressure and a reduction in the excessive fear she had felt before. The ending of the film serves as a powerful summary of her journey, showing that she is in the process of transformation toward a secure attachment pattern. This final scene provides a concluding statement on Jina's journey of individuation. The reflection symbolizes her new self-awareness and the integration of her previously repressed "shadow," which includes her anger, loss, and guilt. Her shift from being enclosed in her own world (symbolized by the headphones and phone) to observing her surroundings indicates that she is now consciously engaging with the world, a key step away from her dismissive-avoidant style.

Her transformation is portrayed not as a final state of complete healing, but as a continuous process, which aligns with Jungian theory. The film's conclusion successfully illustrates that Jina has completed the crucial stage of confronting her inner shadows, leaving her on a path toward a more complete, conscious, and psychologically secure life.

CONCLUSION

This study examines how Jina's psychological journey in the film *Aloners* (2021) triggers changes in her attachment patterns, thereby fulfilling the research's primary objective. The analysis, which combines Bowlby's attachment theory with Jung's individuation theory, proves that Jina's rejecting and avoiding attachment style functions as a repressed "shadow," which, when confronted, facilitates her psychological growth. The research findings reveal a clear and gradual transformation process triggered by external events such as the loss of her coworker and her father's actions. These events force Jina to confront long-suppressed emotions, including pain, loneliness, and anger.

The main findings of this study highlight Jina's behavioral shift from emotional suppression and isolation toward genuine vulnerability and a desire to connect. Her defining emotional outburst during a phone conversation with her father marked the beginning of her engagement with her inner shadow. Her later actions, such as her honest conversation with Sujin and her decision to resign from her job, serve as empirical evidence of her progress toward a more secure attachment style.

In the movie, the visual and symbolic elements, such as the lighting and the curtain opening, effectively convey how Jina's inner world evolves from being emotionally closed off to being open to new relationships. Although Jina's journey is not depicted as a perfect recovery, the film's conclusion shows that she has successfully surpassed the crucial stage of confronting her shadow self, leading her on a path toward a more integrated, conscious, and psychologically secure self. This study offers a new perspective in understanding character's emotional development in modern cinema as well as social isolation, loneliness, attachment, and the process of individuation. This study will contribute to build empathy and encourage viewers to better understand themselves and others.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research should expand this study by conducting comparative analyses across different cultures and film genres. This will enable a deeper understanding of how themes of social isolation and avoidant and dismissive attachment patterns are depicted and resolved globally. Additionally, integrating broader psychological theories is essential. One of the main limitations of this study is the subjective nature of film analysis and the lack of empirical data on fictional characters, which can be addressed by maintaining a rigorous and layered theoretical framework.

This research also offers valuable recommendations for filmmakers and writers. By consciously integrating psychological principles such as attachment and individuation, storytellers can create more authentic and emotionally resonant character arcs. The film *Aloners* (2021) serves as a strong example of how a deep understanding of these theories can produce narratives that resonate deeply with audiences, offering a blueprint for future works that explore human connections and personal growth.

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