

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

B.1 Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the movie *The Idea of You*, the researcher needs a theory related to the topic and the object. In this research, the researcher aims to analyze how the negative stigma surrounding age-gap relationships is portrayed in *The Idea of You* and how the main character struggles to challenge the societal stigma associated with these relationships. The researcher enriches the discourse on Freud's psychoanalysis and Foucault's theory of sexuality, particularly in the context of age-gap relationships, and Cinematography as supporting elements.

B.1.1 Psychoanalysis Theory

Psychology initially focused on understanding human consciousness. In the early 20th century, Sigmund Freud introduced psychoanalysis, emphasizing the unconscious mind's influence on human behavior (Melia, 2013). Freud widely accepted the distinction between the conscious and unconscious minds. According to his theory, the preconscious mind is what works closely with the conscious mind, or it is the memories that remain unconscious but can be easily accessed by the conscious mind. The conscious mind, on the other hand, is what one is aware of at any given time, such as one's current perceptions, memories, thoughts, fantasies, feelings, etc. These two are the smallest areas of the brain,

whereas the unconscious is the largest. According to Freud, human drives like cravings for food, sex, and other things originate from this unconscious level of the mind (Ahmed, 2012).

Freud defines psychoanalysis into three aspects:

1. Id: The biological aspect of personality that exists from birth is known as the id. It operates on the pleasure principle, disregarding reality and social propriety in the pursuit of instant satisfaction for primal emotions like hunger, violence, and sexual desire (Freud, 1923).
2. Ego: The ego evolves to act as a mediator between the exterior, real world, and the unrealistic id. Based on the reality principle, it seeks to satiate the id's cravings in ways that are both reasonable and acceptable in society. According to Freud (1923), the ego is both partially unconscious and conscious, yet logical.
3. Superego: Instilled by parents and other authority figures, the superego integrates societal ideals and morality. When rules are breached, it frequently results in guilt since it strives for perfection and evaluates activities according to right and wrong. The id and superego clash, causing tension that the ego must overcome.

The theory of psychoanalysis aims to define personality and explain its development. This idea states that motivation, feelings, and other internal

factors are crucial. According to this view, conflicts arising from these psychological features occur as the personality develops, often throughout childhood or early childhood (Helaeluddin, 2018). Psychoanalysis is not just a tool for psychological therapy. Freud linked his theories to famous works because of his interest in literature and history. For instance, he named a key concept in his theory of sexuality the "Oedipus complex," inspired by the tragedy "Oedipus Rex." This illustrates the connection between Freud's psychoanalytic ideas and other fields, such as literature, art, and philosophy (Melia, 2013).

The Oedipus complex, a core concept in Freud's psychosexual development theory arises during the phallic stage (ages 3-6). At this stage, a boy's libido focuses on his genitals, leading to unconscious sexual attraction toward his mother and rivalry with his father. This intense conflict, fueled by fear of castration, is resolved through identification with the father. The boy represses his desires, internalizes his father's traits, and develops his gender identity and moral conscience (Youvan, 2024).

Psychoanalysis stresses the significance of healthy sexual development and the possible repercussions of unresolved sexual conflicts, even though many people misinterpret its theories as encouraging unfettered sexual expression. It draws attention to the conflict that exists between individual preferences and social norms, as well as the necessity for people to learn how to manage their sexual urges. Psychoanalysis ultimately supports the notion that parents should

help their kids develop a healthy and satisfying intimate relationship by guiding them toward a balanced integration of sexuality into their lives (Hoffman, 2005).

Freud (1905) believed that life was built around tension and pleasure. Freud also believed that all tension was due to the build-up of libido (sexual energy) and that all pleasure came from its discharge. Sigmund Freud proposed that personality development in childhood takes place during five psychosexual stages, which are the oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital stages

1) Oral stage

According to Sigmund Freud's theory of psychosexual development, the first stage, known as the Oral Stage, lasts from birth to about 18 months. A baby's libido, or natural need for pleasure, is concentrated on the mouth during the oral stage.

2) Anal Stage

The second stage of psychosexual development, known as the anal stage, occurs between the ages of 18 months and 3 years. The youngster enjoys defecating a lot during the anal stage, when their libido is concentrated on the anus.

3) Phallic Stage

The third stage of psychosexual development is the phallic stage, which lasts from the ages of three to six. During this time, the child's libido (or desire) is centered around their genitalia as the primary source of pleasure. Children at

this period show a greater curiosity in both their own and others' sexual genitalia as they grow more conscious of their bodies. In this stage, Freud divided it into two stages as follows:

a. Oedipus complex

One of Freud's most controversial theories is outright rejected by many. The Oedipus complex is the most significant element of the phallic stage. The Greek myth in which Oedipus, a young man, murders his father and weds his mother is the source of the term "Oedipus complex." He pokes his eyeballs out and goes blind after learning this. The generic (i.e., broad) name for the Oedipus and Electra complexes is the Oedipal. The young child's sexual (pleasurable) yearning for his mother gives rise to the Oedipus complex or struggle. He wants to get rid of his father so that he can have his mother all to himself.

b. Electra complex

According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the Electra Complex, a girl involuntarily develops a sexual desire for her father during the phallic stage of psychosexual development (approximately between years 3-6), seeing her mother as a rival. Basically, the girl wants her father but knows she does not have a penis, which causes what Freud called "penis envy" and a consequent desire to be a man. By suppressing her love for her

father and substituting her desire for a baby for her penis, this girl supposedly finds a solution to her predicament.

4) Latency Stage

The latency period is the fourth stage of psychosexual development, six years before puberty. During this phase, there is no additional psychosexual development, and the libido is dormant (latent, meaning veiled). According to Freud, sexual urges are suppressed throughout this stage, resulting in a time of comparatively peaceful conditions. Children's sexual urges are repressed at this stage (the libido is dormant), and no additional psychosexual development takes place (latent implies hidden).

5) Genital Stage

The Genital Stage is the fifth and last stage of Freud's psychosexual development hypothesis, starting at puberty and continuing into adulthood. At this point, mature adult sexuality begins when the libido resurfaces from its latent state and is focused on peers of the opposite sex. In this phase, people begin to mature sexually and explore their sexual impulses and sensations in a more responsible and adult manner. Intimate relationships are formed during this time when romantic and sexual feelings begin to emerge.

Gender double standards are perpetuated by the media's frequent portrayal of age-gap relationships with older women as questionable or exploitative. This stigma is addressed explicitly in *The Idea of You*. The older

female lead is not depicted as predatory or desperate. Instead, she is portrayed as self-aware, emotionally stable, and capable of making her own decisions. Her younger partner is portrayed as emotionally competent and considerate, rather than infantilized. However, the film defies accepted interpretations by removing familial ties and emphasizing emotional maturity and consent. Contrary to Freudian ideas that such urges are harmful or aberrant, the relationship is portrayed as pleasant and healthy rather than sick.

In Western nations, where age-gap relationships involving older women have traditionally been more scrutinized and socially disapproved of, this representation holds significant importance. Even though Western society has been progressively more accepting of different kinds of love and relationships, long-standing stereotypes continue to portray older women dating younger men as strange or improper; these labels are rarely used when the genders are switched (Chrisler & Ghiz, 1993; Montemurro & Siefken, 2014). While older women in comparable professions are regularly ridiculed or questioned, older males dating significantly younger women are routinely glamorized or accepted in Hollywood and other mainstream Western media (Wood, 2006). This double standard reflects larger cultural concerns about women's autonomy, desirability, and aging. As a result, *The Idea of You* is a cultural intervention that not only dismantles these prejudices but also supports more progressive initiatives that support sexual freedom and gender equality.

Based on this explanation, the researcher applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory in analyzing the age-gap relationship in *The Idea of You*. This theory can help this research analyze and explain the negative stigma faced by the main character for dating a younger man who has an attraction to an older woman or the same age as his mother.

B.1.2 Sexuality Theory

Historically, discussions about sex and sexual relations have often been marked by a complex interplay of repression and liberation. On one hand, there is a strong tendency to silence and control sexual discourse, treating it as taboo. On the other hand, there is also a counter-trend towards sexual liberation, which can sometimes involve the normalization of vulgar and taboo sexual behaviors (Al Chumairah, 2019). The idea that sex exists beyond the realm of open discussion, and that only by breaking the silence surrounding it can we truly understand it, is a concept worth exploring. According to the new pastoral teaching, sex must be spoken about with care; however, its various aspects, correlations, and impacts must be explored down to the finest detail: a sexual image in a dream, a fantasy that refuses to fade away, a difficult-to-avoid connection between bodily movements and spiritual pleasure: everything must be confessed (Foucault in Hurley, 1998).

In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault challenged the conventional idea that Western societies have historically suppressed sexuality. Instead, he

argued that these societies have increasingly scrutinized and controlled sexual behavior through powerful institutions like medicine, law, and psychiatry.

Here are the key points of Foucault's theory of sexuality:

1. The Repressive Hypothesis: Sexuality has been repressed. He contended that there has been a surge in discussions and regulations surrounding sex, rather than its suppression.
2. The Power of Discourse: The influential role of language and discourse in shaping our understanding of sexuality. Power is not just about oppression but also about shaping desires and identities.
3. Bio-power and Social Control: The concept of bio-power, which refers to the state's ability to regulate the population by controlling bodies and behaviors, including sexual practices.
4. Medicalization of Sexuality: Medical institutions have defined and controlled sexual norms, often labeling non-traditional sexual behaviors as pathological.
5. The Social Construction of Sexuality: Sexuality is not a fixed, natural category but a social and historical construct influenced by various cultural practices and discourses.

In *The Idea of You*, the heteronormative and patriarchal control over who is permitted to desire whom is subverted by challenging prevailing narratives that characterize such interactions as inappropriate or abnormal. In other words,

this relationship challenges societal norms about age and gender roles. By depicting the connection as emotionally meaningful and voluntary, the film highlights how age and gender intersect in controlling sexual standards.

In Western society, sexual norms and expectations have long been shaped by patriarchal structures that privilege male desire and youthfulness, particularly in women. Older women who express sexual agency, especially with younger partners, are often subject to moral judgment and ridicule (Montemurro & Siefken, 2014). These social taboos are not natural or universal, but instead constructed through cultural discourse and historical regulation of sexuality—what Foucault refers to as “bio-power,” or the regulation of bodies and desires by societal institutions (Foucault, 1978). From this perspective, age-gap relationships involving older women are stigmatized not because they are inherently problematic, but because they disrupt dominant power structures concerning gender, aging, and desirability.

The adverse societal reaction to Solène’s relationship with Hayes can therefore be read not simply as a personal struggle but as a broader social mechanism of control—one that defines and punishes sexual behavior that defies norms. In Western media and public discourse, older women’s sexuality is often either invisibilized or pathologized, reflecting deep-seated cultural anxieties about aging and gender (Chrisler & Ghiz, 1993). The film’s refusal to depict Solène as predatory or desperate directly confronts these stereotypes,

offering an alternative narrative in which an older woman's desire is normalized and valued.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher draws on Michel Foucault's theory of sexuality to analyze the main character's struggles to overcome the negative stigma in *The Idea of You*. Foucault's theory helps frame the adverse societal reaction as a culturally created instrument of control, rather than as a natural or moral response. This theory can help inform this research by analyzing the struggles of the main character in breaking the negative societal stigma associated with dating a younger man who is attracted to an older woman or the same age as his mother.

B.1.3 Cinematography

Cinematography involves the techniques and processes used to capture and arrange images to tell a story. These images must be visually compelling and effectively convey the film's narrative. Cinematography plays a crucial role in the overall filmmaking process (Semedhi, 2011).

In his book entitled "Five C's Cinematography", Joseph V. Mascelli A.S.C. (2005) said that "There are things that must be considered in order to have good cinematic value in taking film techniques. The filmmaker not only captures each scene but also how he directs and controls each shot, including angle, height, duration, and other elements.

1. Angle Shot

The angle at which the camera captures an object is known as a shot angle. In addition to taking pictures, we also use angles when shooting, which naturally affects the camera's capture. Angles allow us to capture visually appealing and captivating photographs. The camera angle is divided into three types. They are high-angle, eye-level, and low-angle. The high angle is a type of camera angle that raises the camera above the object's eye line. The eye angle is a type of camera angle that aligns the camera with the object's eye line. The low angle is a type of camera angle that puts the camera below the object's eye line.

2. Shot Size

The shot size is divided into three types. They are close-up shots, medium shots, and long shots. Each of them is divided into several types:

a. Close-up Shot

The close-up shot is the most detailed shot, intended to show the object's facial expression in great detail. Close-up shot is divided into three types:

1. An extreme close-up displays the mouth or eyes of the object.
2. Medium close-up, the medium close-up displays the object from the top of the hair to the chest.
3. Close-up displays the object from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin.

b. Medium Shot

The medium shot displays the gestures of the object's body. The medium shot is divided into two types:

1. The medium shot displays the object from the top of the head to the waist.
2. Knee shot, the knee shot displays the object from the top of the head to the knee.

c. Long shot

The long shot is the smallest shot that displays the situation around the object. The long shot is divided into four types:

1. An extremely long shot displays the environment, making the displayed object appear small and insignificant.
2. A very long shot displays the metropolitan city, introducing elements such as the actor and the place.
3. The full shot displays the object from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet.
4. Medium long shot, the medium long shot displays the object from below the knee to the top, which balances with the surrounding environment.

4. Composition

The composition is a technique of placing objects within the frame so that they appear aesthetically pleasing and help to convey the story. The composition

is also called framing. The composition consists of two elements. They encompass symmetry, asymmetry, and depth.

a. Symmetry and Asymmetry

Symmetry refers to the placement of objects in the center of the frame or on both sides of the frame, resulting in a balanced appearance. Meanwhile, asymmetry is vice versa. Asymmetry refers to the placement of objects on the frame in an unbalanced manner.

b. Depth

Depth is the illusion of three dimensions in a two-dimensional picture. It helps create a sense of distance in the frame. The depth is divided into three. They are the planes of depth, including shallow depth of field and deep depth of field.

1. Plane of depth

The plane of depth places objects in various planes.

- a) Foreground: placing an object in front of various planes.
- b) Middle-ground: placing an object in the middle of various planes.
- c) Background: placing an object in the back of various planes.

2. The shallow depth of the field is focused on one object.

3. A deep depth of field is focused on several objects.

5. Continuity

A well-produced film must show events that are coherently captured and make sense, as well as a continuous, flowing, logical, and audible visual image. This is a recurring theme in the movie. Mascelli (1983). An image-merging technique called continuity unifies the visuals for every frame, preventing the viewer from being distracted by sudden changes in view. The goal of continuity is to combine pictures to create a clear, fluid, and seamless scene. You need to be able to show a continuous series of images when making a movie. A film's continuity must also be carefully considered and prepared to make it authentic and more convincing, drawing viewers into the plot.

6. Cutting

According to Joseph, cutting might be seen as a metaphor for the editing procedure. This concept of thinking might be referred to as editorial thinking, rather than the responsibility of the editor or the post-production process. To be successful in the production process, directors, directors of photography, and even sound engineers need to be sensitive to editorial ideas. Mascelli (1983).

B.2 Review of Related Research

This research requires a number of relevant research articles or other academic papers to support and enhance its value. Without additional relevant research, the strong argument of the analysis is pointless. As a result, this research requires them to reinforce this research.

First, Mohammed Ahmed Abou Adel (2023) conducted research titled "The Oedipus Complex in Fiction." This study aims to know The Bookseller's Notebooks intersects with The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Oedipus Rex. We analyze the novelist's proficiency in expressing contemporary human issues in an innovative and artistic manner, with a focus on the emotional struggle between parents and children. In particular, the study sheds light on the emotional and social struggles suffered by a marginalized, despised, and rejected societal group, namely illegitimate children (foundlings). The study's findings suggest that more comparative studies of intertextuality between non-local works of literature should be attempted. This way, literature and literary criticism can enhance our understanding of other cultures, facilitating acceptance and peaceful coexistence.

Second, Joko Santoso (2019) conducted research titled "Body, Sexual Subjects, and Power in Kedung Darma Romansha's Novel Telembuk: Dangdut dan Kisah Cinta yang Keparat." This study aims to illustrate how women (Diva and Mak Dayem) compete with power by trying to make their bodies as sexual subjects in the novel Telembuk. The theory used in this study was the Power of Discourse theory proposed by Michel Foucault. According to the type of data, this study employed a qualitative research approach. The results of this study were 1) the metaphysical body becomes the strategy of telembuk women to utter anti-power, and 2) telembuk as a woman's strategy to be a sexual subject.

Third, Aquarini Priyatna (2016) conducted research titled "Women Out of the Line: Women's Sexuality in Two Short Stories" by Suwarsih Djojopuspito. This writing examines the issues of sexuality in two short stories by Suwarsih Djojopuspito's "Seruling di Malam Hari" and "Artinah". This research situates sexuality within the framework of gender and feminist studies, examining it in the context of two short stories. In the two short stories discussed in this article, Suwarsih elaborates on the bias against women in the everyday practices of intimate relations between women and men, particularly in marital relationships. Through the narrative and the portrayal of the characters, the short stories show that the ideology of patriarchy as manifested in the heteronormative values have established men's sexuality as normative and acceptable, while female sexuality is only as peripheral to men's sexuality. Likewise, the two short stories also show that patriarchal values apparent in personal relationships have put women in an inferior position. However, the two short stories articulate feminism by giving the women's characters the agency to articulate their bodies and sexuality as important parts of their subjectivity, just as they are for men.

Fourth, Lehmilller and Agnew (2011) conducted research titled "May-December Paradoxes: An Exploration of Age-Gap Relationships in Western Society. "The goals of this chapter is to account for this seeming paradox—that is, why heterosexual age gaps only seem to be socially acceptable when the older partner is a man in *The Graduate*, 21-year-old Benjamin Braddock is seduced by

the much older, but lovely Mrs. Robinson. Ultimately, this research examine various social psychological theories relevant to romantic relationships that address the circumstances under which people are more likely to desire younger or older romantic partners. In addition, this chapter explore the relatively limited body of research on age-gap (also known as age-discrepant or 'May-December') romances, giving due consideration to other interesting paradoxes that have emerged, as well as discussing the general effects that being in such a relationship has on various romantic outcomes. Finally, we present an agenda for future research on this topic.

The studies cited in this research provide a deeper understanding of the topic. While these studies may have different focuses, they collectively contribute to the overall framework and support the findings of this research.

B.3 Synopsis of the movie

This narrative centers on Solène Marchand, a nearly 40-year-old divorced art gallery owner residing in Los Angeles. The storyline begins when Solène's ex-husband, Daniel, cancels his plans to accompany their teenage daughter, Izzy, and her friends to the Coachella music festival due to a professional obligation. Solène reluctantly agrees to chaperone the group in his place, foregoing her initial plan for a solitary camping retreat. During the event, Daniel's prior arrangements include a meet-and-greet with the British boy band August Moon. While waiting in the VIP area, Solène accidentally enters what she believes to be

a restroom, but instead, she encounters Hayes Campbell, a prominent member of the band. This unplanned meeting results in a brief flirtation. Although Solène is acutely aware of their sixteen-year age difference, she is visibly affected by their interaction. Later, during the band's performance, Hayes diverges from the expected setlist and dedicates a song to her, signaling a deeper interest.

At her subsequent birthday celebration, Solène expresses disappointment with potential suitors of her age. Shortly thereafter, Hayes unexpectedly visits her gallery under the pretense of purchasing art. After acquiring all of the displayed pieces, Solène invites him to a friend's studio, where they engage in a meaningful conversation about life and artistic passion. During a follow-up visit to her home for lunch, Solène shares personal insecurities linked to her past marital betrayal. At the same time, Hayes discloses his desire to be recognized beyond his fame as a pop star. Although they share a kiss, Solène initially resists the idea of a romantic progression.

Hayes later contacts Solène after discovering her phone number on an invoice. With Izzy away at summer camp, Solène accepts his invitation to visit him in New York, where they consummate their relationship. Hayes persuades her to join August Moon's European tour, a decision she keeps private from both her daughter and social circle. Throughout the tour, their relationship deepens, though it remains hidden within the confines of hotel rooms. In the south of France, Solène begins to experience insecurity due to the evident age gap

between herself and the younger women in the band's entourage. Her discomfort intensifies upon learning that Hayes's romantic gestures—such as onstage dedications—are commonly used with other women, particularly older ones.

Disheartened by this revelation, Solène abruptly returns to Los Angeles. When confronted by Daniel, she denies the nature of her relationship with Hayes. Soon after, paparazzi images exposing their intimacy circulate online, subjecting her to intense public scrutiny and criticism. This media exposure creates tension at home, particularly with Izzy, who feels betrayed by Solène's secrecy. Although initially hurt, Izzy eventually forgives her mother, and Solène rekindles her relationship with Hayes during a visit to his recording studio. As media attention escalates, Solène and her family withdraw from social media platforms to protect their privacy.

However, as Izzy experiences bullying and social challenges due to her mother's high-profile relationship, Daniel voices concerns about its long-term impact. Following a brief trip to New York with Hayes, Solène ultimately decides to end the relationship once more. Hayes later visits her and proposes that they revisit their relationship in five years, once Izzy has graduated and the social consequences have subsided. He leaves behind his watch—symbolic of his enduring affection.

In the film's final act, five years have passed. Izzy has moved to Chicago, and Solène watches Hayes perform on The Graham Norton Show, where he announces plans to visit Los Angeles. The narrative concludes with his return to Solène's gallery, culminating in an emotionally charged reunion that suggests the possibility of a renewed future together.

