

UNCHARTED POWER OF BELIEFS, BESOIN (NEED), AND DEMAND IN DEFYING CONVENTIONAL NORMS THROUGH LACANIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS IN ELEMENTAL (2023)

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Abstract

The writer chose "Elemental: Forces of Nature" to analyze using Lacanian psychoanalysis, focusing on the power of belief experienced by the main characters. The study is an in-depth analysis of how a couple overcame challenges in a forbidden relationship against conventional norms through the power of belief. The research explores how the characters' beliefs shape their behavior and affect their forbidden relationships. It highlights how their needs and demands help them overcome barriers such as parental approval, cultural superstitions, social status, family expectations, and moral beliefs. Applying film studies, the data are collected by identifying emotional signs through the movie's mise en scene. The study found that the character's strong belief in love and partners can defy conventional norms and greatly influence their behaviors. The uncharted power of beliefs found in the movie is love can outnumber all things, shape character behavior, and make someone believe in something contrary to the conventional norms.

Key terms: *Power of Belief, Besoin, Demand*

Abstrak

Penulis memilih film "Elemental: Forces of Nature" untuk di analisis menggunakan teori Psikoanalisis Jacques Lacan yang berfokus pada kekuatan kepercayaan yang dirasakan oleh karakter utama film. Studi ini menganalisis secara mendalam bagaimana pasangan kekasih menghadapi tantangan di dalam hubungan terlarang melawan norma tradisional. Penelitian ini mencari tahu bagaimana keyakinan seorang karakter membentuk perilaku dan mempengaruhi hubungan terlarang mereka. Hal tersebut menyoroti bagaimana kebutuhan dan keinginan mereka membantu dalam mengatasi hambatan seperti persetujuan orang tua, kepercayaan takhayul, status sosial, harapan keluarga, dan kepercayaan moral. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kepercayaan karakter yang kuat terhadap cinta mereka satu sama lain bisa melawan norma tradisional dan mempengaruhi perilaku mereka secara signifikan. Kekuatan keyakinan yang belum dipetakan dalam film ini termasuk cinta bisa mengatasi semuanya, membentuk perilaku, dan membuat seseorang bisa percaya dengan hal yang melawan norma tradisional.

Key terms: *Power of Belief, Besoin, Demand*

1. INTRODUCTION

The thesis analyzed a movie from the Walt Disney Studio entitled *Elemental: Forces of Nature*. The topic chosen from this movie is to uncover the power of beliefs in breaking conventional norms to drive an impossible desire to be possible. Moreover, the thesis also included a detailed part of symbolic order which is

besoin (need) and demand in the main characters against the conventional norms. The study used psychoanalysis theory from Jacques Lacan to discover the phenomenon that happened in the movie. The writer applied some concepts inside Lacanian psychoanalysis theory to reveal the truth behind the power of beliefs in breaking boundaries between the main character. Love can outnumber all things including color-blind, race-blind,

and gender-blind as stated by (Tharanya et al., 2020) in their paper entitled "Love as the Phenomenal Power in Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*." The problem underlies this research is because the movie did not reveal the reason behind the success of the main character's forbidden relationship.

The writer breaks down the problem using the power of belief concepts. Also, This issue has frequently sparked controversy throughout history. For instance, cross-religious marriages were traditionally forbidden. However, in current conditions, there is growing acceptance of it because of the modern norms development. This topic remains relatively under-researched. The relationship between the main characters, Wade and Ember, is impossible since it is forbidden according to conventional norms. However, it is explained in the movie that they can go through their relationship even though it seems impossible. Hence, this thesis wants to considered a question of How uncharted power of beliefs behind the main character's forbidden love is represented in the movie?

The research is purposed to investigate the uncharted power of beliefs represented by the main characters in the movie. The study will expose the uncharted power of beliefs that happened between the main characters. This insight can give insight into how a psychological event is represented in a movie.

A study from (Sulistiani & Pardede, 2022) entitled "Forbidden Love In Nizami Ganzavi's *Layla Majnun* And William Shakespeare's *Romeo Juliet*–A Comparative Literature". The objective is to explore and analyze the theme of Forbidden Love in the social settings depicted in Nizami Ganjavi's "*Layla Majnun*" and William Shakespeare's "*Romeo and Juliet*," examining how characters in both literary works navigate and cope with the challenges posed by Forbidden Love.

Another study came from (Tampubolon & Arianto, 2022) in their work entitled "The Fulfillment of Main Character's Desire Through Distruction Actions in *Joker* Movie: Psychological Approach". The study explains the main character's destruction as a result of the main character's desire for fulfillment. The study indicates the three sets of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic (real, imaginary, symbolic) concepts through the main character's series of destruction.

METHOD

A crucial tool in literary interpretation, psychoanalysis is a theory of personality organization and dynamics that enable the exploration of the writer's personality as well as the discovery of a literary work's hidden meanings, (Hossain, 2017). Moreover, he also adds the psychoanalysis theory serves as a tool to analyze one

or more characters and provides an explanation for their behavior and motivations. The psychoanalysis study is combined with a qualitative approach to answer the research questions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This part contains findings of the power of belief that underlies the success of Wade and Ember's forbidden romantic relationship. Three power of beliefs scopes in this movie are previously mentioned including love can outnumber all things, belief power that can shape character behavior, and believe in something contrary to the conventional norms. This section explained how the movie "*Elemental: Forces of Nature*" represents the power of beliefs in detail.

3.1.1 Wade's Point of View

Wade Ripple is introduced as the main character in the movie. He is introduced by Disney as a man that made out of water. He plays an important role as a person who is involved in a forbidden love with another main character called Ember, a young girl that made out of fire. He was described as a man who worked as a city inspector.

Wade's feeling goes over time and become romantic feelings after he helps Ember save the Fireplace from closure. His personality represents his appearance. He has a sensitive and sympathetic heart to other's feelings. Throughout the movie, the audience could describe Wade as kind, sweet, caring, and loyal to others, especially to his partner, Ember. He is portrayed as a blue man made out of blue water and has a slender body. His hair illustrated a wave on top of his head like in the **picture 1**.



Picture 1
*Wade's
Appearance*

Power of beliefs is stated as emotional feelings that shape a character's behavior and change people themselves. The way the power of belief changes the character's behavior is all close to the personal expectations and psychological needs. In a romantic

relationship, a couple has their own personal expectation and psychological need to fulfill.

Hence, a person will look for emotional fulfillment from their partner. In this case, Wade looking for his inner fulfillment from Ember. Wade is described as a big-hearted and kind man that used to love Ember very much. However, since their family is made out of the opposite element. Their romantic relationship became forbidden. Hence, they only have one absolute wish, to live together peacefully.



Picture 2
Wade and Ember First Meet
(16:37)

Picture 2 is a scene of Wade and Ember's very first meeting.

Ember : Who are you? What are you doing here?
Wade : I don't know, I was searching for a pit on the other side of the river and sucked in. This is bad I can't lose another job.

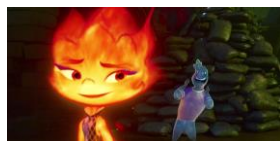
Their meeting is an accident, not something on purpose because Wade is a water inspector that accidentally sucked in Ember's water pipe because it's broken.

3.1.1.1. Love Can Outnumber All Things

Love can outnumber all things as previously stated by (Tharananya et al, 2020) in previous study. Wade's initial romantic feelings for Ember happen in picture 3 where he asks her to hang out together the next day after he helps her to stop the flow of water toward Ember's store "The Fireplace". Wade's invitation is a way for him to fulfill his desire after earning an achievement because he successfully helped Ember stop the water flow.



Picture 3
Wade asking Ember to hangout
together



Picture 4
Ember smiling after
Wade asked her to
hangout

Wade : Any chance you're free tomorrow? To hang out with a water guy?

Ember : With a water guy? My dad will boil you alive.

Wade : He doesn't have to know! We can meet in the city, I promise nothing weird. Maybe a little burning?

Ember : Sorry, that's not going to happen.

Wade : You smile, I saw it! Tomorrow, I'll be in the Alcala theater, 3 o'clock.

Ember realizes that they cannot go together because they are opposite and her Dad going to be upset. However, Ember indirectly accepts the invitation by giving a slight smile to Wade. A smile indicates warmth and interest. When someone starts smiling after they are invited by someone to hang out, mostly they will say "yes" because it indicates their interest and willingness to spend time.

The next proof of love's power in breaking boundaries on Wade can be seen in this scene where Wade asks Ember to have dinner together at the Water's family home as can be seen in picture 5. He introduced Ember to all of his family members including, his mother, brother, nephew, and siblings.



Picture 5
Wade bring Ember to meet his mom
(52:49)

Wade's mom : Wade hasn't stopped talking about you since the day you met. The boy is smitten.

Wade : Oh mom

Wade's mom : Oh, come on I'm your mother, I know something's enlightened you up.

Surprisingly, Wade's family warmly accepts Ember without any argument against their relationship. Even, Wade's mom explicitly stated that she accepts Ember in her family, in contrast to Ember's family who clearly stated that Ember could not have a relationship with a water guy.

Their family's different perspective of a relationship is caused by an important factor that is put

by the author inside the movie which is education. The audience is supposed to feel that there are different levels of education and class between these two families, where Wade's family has more access to education, professional relationship, and money compared to Ember's family.



Picture 6
Wade's house first
appearance
(51:36)



Picture 7
Wade's family
(54:50)



Picture 8
Ember's house
(05:33)



Picture 9
Ember and her father
(07:07)

The element composition, props, and setting are used in different ways to portray the class differences between the two families. Wade's family is categorized as middle-upper class (pictures 6 & 7) while Ember's family is in middle class (pictures 8 & 9). Hence the knowledge that they get is different between both families. It has made Wade's family more open to difficult romantic relationships compared to Ember's family which still maintain their ancestral and traditional values.

The deepest feeling of love in their relationship makes them change each other's chemical reactions. Technically fire and water cannot be together. However, their power of belief generate a power that make their body can adjust to each other's characteristics as can be seen in **picture 10**.



Picture 10
Wade and Amber make a physical contact without hurting each
other
1:11:45

It is a result of the desire fulfillment between Wade and Ember. He needs Ember as his life partner who takes care of him and loves her wholeheartedly. He needs a life partner, which drives him to seek someone who can fulfill her needs for love and belonging.

3.1.1.2. Shaping Character Behavior

As explained by (Afni & Taja, 2022) the power of beliefs has a significant role in shaping character behavior to reflect their beliefs. Character behavior is very dependent on the environmental and emotional development of an individual. Wade was very versatile in every situation and challenge he faced in his relationship with Ember.



Picture 11
Wade unconsciously protect Ember's body
(39:46)

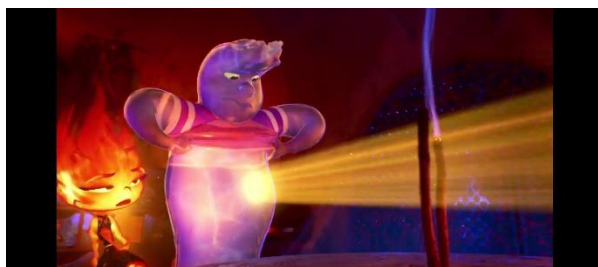
As can be seen in **picture 11**, Wade's body makes an unconscious movement as a result of the current situation that makes a possible threat to Ember. Hence, his subconscious creates a signal to move his body to protect Ember from danger. From the scene, various elements that can spark a danger to Ember are close to her. There are water, clouds, earth, and wood that can trigger a danger to fire. Such as water can shut down the fire, fire can burn wood and earth, and clouds can blow the fire. Wade's protection movement is a result and prevention to save Ember's life.



Picture 12
Wade impress Ember by create a rainbow
(41:57)

The audience will feel the significant changes in Wade's personality throughout the storyline. Initially, he is a sensitive and fragile person who always easily

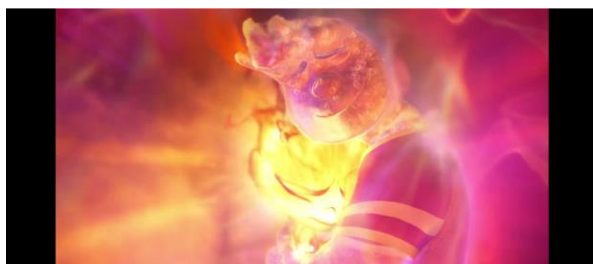
touches his heart with anything that can make him sad. After he met Ember he wanted to impress her by drawing her attention with creating a rainbow as can be seen in **picture 12**. The Rainbow itself can be translated to a love and acceptance in a romantic relationship. The character choice to create this symbol to represent love is suit since water can create a rainbow after the rain stops. Impressing a partner in a romantic relationship can keep a romantic relationship alive and show each other that a person cares for their partner.



Picture 13
*Wade try another way to make a fire
(1:02:16)*

Picture 13 is a scene where Wade is predicted by Ember's mom to see their relationship harmonious in the future. Ember's mom gives a test for Wade to make a fire in the tip of twigs. Technically it is impossible since he is water which cannot make a ray or increase the temperature of something. However, he finds another way by placing his body in front of Ember and making a ray to light a fire. Here, He became a more mature man who can protect someone else compared to his previous version.

Picture 14 is a scene where an embankment that created by Ember to protect water and flood flowing towards the river city is broken. As a result, there is a big flood disaster occurs because of the broken embankment. It flows towards the fire town and destroys all buildings that pass by the flood. Ember tries to save the holy blue fire together with Wade. However, they are trapped in a small ruins. Hence, Ember can heat the temperature and make Wade boil away.



Picture 14
*Wade give a hug to Ember before he boil away
(1:24:16)*

Wade is mushy initially at his first appearance. He is constantly quick to weep and terrified of everything. However, he underwent a significant transformation after meeting Ember and the fire family. He adores Ember and, as a result, constantly believes in her abilities. In this scene, Wade even gives his life to save Ember from a disaster. Wade's facial expression is a resigned smile, indicating that he has accepted his fate.

3.1.1.3. Believing in Something Contrary to The Conventional Norms

The scene in **Picture 15** shows Wade being asked by Ember's father to inspect their food. Wade is technically unable to eat it because the foods will cook him alive. Wade intentionally eats fire food to establish that he is a legitimate municipal food inspector and to trick Ember's father. Ember's father dislikes water and does not believe Wade is a legitimate municipal inspector.



Picture 15
*Ember's father ask Wade to inspect fire food
(45:21)*

Water and fire are opposing elements, hence the conventional norm in this picture is that they cannot make physical contact. Wade is forced to taste the fire foods in order to convince Ember's father. However, Wade believes that he will be fine because he is already close to Ember. As a result, the food does not cook him alive even though he still has an abnormal reaction such as an allergic reaction in humans if they are forced to eat something forbidden.

Picture 16 is a scene where Ember's mom tries to predict their future harmony in this forbidden relationship. Ember's mom is a fortune-teller from the fire family and her prediction on everything is accurate according to the fire's family. the properties used in picture 16 can tell that Ember's mom is a famous and great fortune-teller from the fire family.



Picture 16
Ember's mom trying to predict their fate
(1:01:35)

No fire and water can be together, otherwise one of them has to sacrifice themselves. In this case, they can hurt each other if they make physical contact. However, their unconscious mind says that they have to try because if they do not, they will never know the predicted result.

They are optimistic about the prediction result. The power of their belief in each other and a positive affirmation make the universe support them. The prediction result is as Wade expected that they are in harmony. Ember's mom was also surprised with the prediction result.

Picture 17 is a scene where Wade wants to try to touch Ember's hand but she is afraid to touch Wade's hand. Wade tries to convince Ember hard that they will be okay. Ember wants to touch Wade's hand also however she is too scared. Wade believes that they will be okay and nothing will happen.



Picture 17
Wade want to try touch Ember
(1:10:05)

After a long disagreement, Wade's faith in the power of love causes them to modify each other's chemical reactions after making physical contact. Ember does not cook Wade, and Ember does not die aftershe touched Wade. The lighting composition is meant to be gentle and inviting at night to depict love scenes. This scene is a key moment of truth, thus the viewer must understand its feel.

Picture 18 depicts a scene after Wade is vaporized by Ember. She felt bad since she couldn't do anything other than cry. Ember thinks deep down that Wade is always on her side and will never forsake her,

even when he is gone. Ember finally regrets not saying she loves him in front of her parents because Wade has passed away. Ember eventually gains the courage to express her feelings to Wade because she believes something contradictory to conventional conventions. However, someone who has died cannot be resurrected.

Everyone immediately remembers Ember's mother's prediction regarding their harmony because they are the true love. There is a fact if water droplets united they will create a bigger droplets, and will turn to some water. Hence Ember has an idea to tell sad story to provoke Wade back again. Ember and everyone try to give Wade a tragic story to make him cry and make sure that he is still alive. After everyone tell sorrowful stories, water pours from the ceiling, reviving Wade. Because the audience consists mostly of children and teens, happy endings are prevalent in animation and cartoon films.



Picture 18
Everyone tell sad story to make Wade cry
(1:27:08)

3.1.2 Ember's Point of View

Another main character in the movie is called Ember Lumen. She is the main character who is involved in a forbidden romantic relationship with Wade because Ember is made out of fire. In the movie, Ember is described as fire young woman who is moved from the land of fire to Element City. The elemental choice is suited to Ember's personality. She has a bad temper when she faces a complicated situation and something that makes her upset. She will turn purple and create explosions.



Picture 19
Ember Lumen appearance

As can be seen in the **picture 19**. She is a young Attractive woman who is completely made out of bright flames. She has a petite, horn-shaped nose, thin fire-orange lips, and hooded eyes featuring irises with a red-orange gradient and dark wine-red pupils. Her eyelashes are fairly thick, carmine-red, and have distinct purple tips.

3.1.2.1. Love Can Outnumber All Things

Previously, the power of love, which can outnumber anything, was explained from Wade's perspective. Now, let's look at the power of love, which can outnumber everything, through the eyes of Ember, the other main character who is in a prohibited romantic connection with Wade Ripple. First, let's watch how Ember meets Wade for the first time.



Picture 20
Ember meet Wade for the first time

Picture 20 depicts the identical thing that occurred to Wade on their first meeting it was an accident. From Ember's perspective, before she meets Wade at the water pipe. She became angry as a result of the pressure she felt to run her father's shop, which eventually prompted her to explode. Her explosion accidentally broke the water pipe, and Wade, who was

still monitoring the pipe's flow, got pulled in and ended up in Ember's place.



Picture 21
*Wade surprised because
 Ember really come
 39:13*



Picture 22
*Ember secretly come
 without her parents'
 permission
 39:12*

Pictures 21 and **22** depict a situation in which Ember discreetly arrives after rejecting Wade's request to hang out with him. Previously, she said "Sorry, that's not going to happen" However, Ember's unconscious desire told her to come. Ember answers by expressing a wish to spend time with Wade to satisfy her lack of desire. She disobeyed her parents' rules about not getting too close to water because they were opposed.

Looking for desire fulfillment might drive someone to act without thinking twice or caring about the consequences. As a result of Ember's conventional norms, they are hesitant to meet. As shown in picture 22, Ember is covering her head with a sweatshirt to prevent anyone from finding out about her and informing her parents that she has met Wade.

Once again, Ember cross the line by go to the water cafe as can be seen in picture 23. In the movie, it is not mentioned what place is that but the characteristic is similar to cafe because it has table, sell some drinks, and so many people going there to enjoy a drink.



Picture 23
*They go to Water cafe for a date
 40:44*

Nobody except water enjoys their moment in that cafe. Ember dares to come there because she is accompanied by Wade, which makes her feel more safe. From here, Ember is more often crossing the line from the rules that are already told by her parents. Ember thinks she always feels safe when it comes to going out together with Wade.

In **Picture 24**, Ember receives a mysterious flower vase from an unknown sender containing flowers and water. The water in the vases is Wade who disguised because he doesn't want Ember's father to know about his existence.



Picture 24

*Wade secretly meet Ember to tell about the water barrier
 43:38*

Wade was hiding on purpose to tell Ember about the water barrier's condition that might have a possibility to be broken again. Ember was in a panic after she received the flowers because she didn't even know who sent her flowers at first. Gladly she quickly realizes that the flower is a Wade who is hiding in the vases. Ember's reaction to Wade's sudden emergence is a response to her worries about her store's condition if the water barrier breaks again. Ember directly takes the flower and hides it to talk with Wade. This moment also highlights that Ember moves as a result of her psychological condition that needs fulfillment.

Picture 25 is a scene where finally Ember's parents accept their relationship. In the movie, it is said that Ember didn't want to take over her dad's store. She wants to do something by herself and do what she wants. Previously, Wade's mom wanted to introduce Ember to a person from the famous and the best glass company in the world because she wanted Ember to take an internship there. Ember agrees and thinks about the offer to make a decision. Finally, she wanted to take the internship.



Picture 25

*Ember's parents give her permission for her internship
 1:29:46*

After their meetings, they struggled because Ember's parents didn't allow them to be together. Finally, Ember can say what she wants to her dad because she is already fed up with her condition. She didn't want to do something that she didn't like. Her relationship with Wade helps her to reveal her desire around the time. Wade gives her moral support by always being on her side and convincing her that she should do something that she likes. Not to follow her parent's desire but to find her desire. Her relationship brings her to be more confident and state what she wants. Finally, she got permission to leave and start her internship together with Wade.

3.1.2.2. Shaping Character Behavior

As previously stated, the power of belief and love can deeply influence character behavior and shape their identity through the psychological condition of each individual. In contrast to Wade who is very versatile in handling situations around him. Ember is stiffer, is not well-adapted to her surroundings, and is easily triggered by little things that spark her bad temper.



Picture 26

*Ember has a bad temper
 15:13*



Picture 27

*Wade give Ember moral support
 35:46*

Ember has a very bad temper that sometimes explodes unexpectedly if she meets situations that make her angry. The reason why she has that bad temper is because fire is a representative of anger, power, and danger. Hence, it is plausible for Ember to have such a bad temper.

Picture 26 is a scene where Ember is trying very hard to control her bad temper to not explode. She was triggered by the store's condition which is very crowded and messy because the Ember store conducts a special event on that day.

Gladly she meets Wade who is versatile to adapt in any situation. Wade also gives Ember some suggestions on how to control her bad temper and connect more with people in her surroundings.

In **picture 27**, Wade gives her moral support on how to open up and connect more with people since Ember is mad because she can't even get close to anyone because of her bad temper.

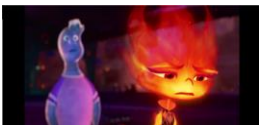
As a result of Wade's assistance and moral support, Ember slowly changed her behavior and had better control of herself when she had to face a difficult situation. In picture 28, there is a scene where Ember serves her irritating customer who suddenly takes a firework from the store and sets it off inside her store without pay at first.



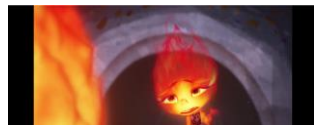
Picture 28
Ember's bad temper slowly change
40:28

At that moment, Ember suddenly thinks about how Wade always stays calm in difficult situations. With Wade's support, her bad temper slowly improves. As she spends more time with Wade, her personality gets better, though the slowly changes.

Ember also has another bad behavior which is she cannot express herself well because of her family upbringing. Her father wants her to take over the Fireplace and she thinks that it is a must to obey her parent's rules because the store is her father's dream.



Picture 29
Ember hopelessly tell her staory to Wade
1:00:30



Picture 30
Ember tells her father that she don't want to take over the store
1:25:23

In **picture 29** is a scene where Ember hopelessly telling Wade about her story of why she cannot pursue her dream to work on something she likes. She tells Wade that she think her father's store is everything for her family but she never ask herself what she actually want to do.

Finally, Ember finds the courage to tell her father that she doesn't want to take over his store because it's not what she really wants. She gets this bravery from Wade, who has always supported her.

In **picture 30**, Ember expresses all her feelings to her father right after Wade gets boiled out from being

trapped in a hot room with her. She feels she can speak honestly because she believes Wade is no longer there to back her up, so she needs to be clear with her father.

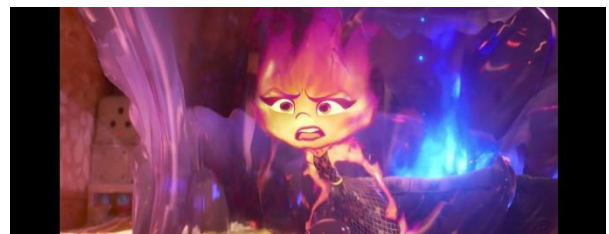
3.1.2.3. Believing in Something Contrary to The Conventional Norms

Believing in something contrary to the conventional norms as previously explained can empower individuals to give them confidence and power in the process of pursuing their want. A scene in picture 31 is a scene where Ember imagines what will happen if she can be together with Wade. However, the conventional norms say that fire and water cannot be together.



Picture 31
Ember's imagination if she can be together with Wade
57:27

Ember's imagination is her natural response to what she believes. This scene is portrayed using their soul to represent what happened in Ember's unconscious mind. It is also a response to her lack of something. However, after she realizes and thinks back more about the conventional norms, her imagination disappears suddenly.



Picture 33
Ember believe if the blue fire is out, it is a disgrace for her family
1:22:07

Picture 33 is a scene where Ember trying so hard to protect the blue fire as a heritage from her family. There is faith in her family that blue fire is the strongest symbol of the fire and has an important meaning for the fire families. Hence, she is trying very hard to protect it even though it can put her life in danger. Believing in the

blue fire's holiness was the fulfillment of her family's tradition which was preserved continuously.

CONCLUSION

The movie "Elemental: Forces of Nature" by Disney has achieved global success due to its engaging storyline and compelling visuals, which captivate the audience's curiosity. This research explores the uncharted power of belief within the main characters' forbidden relationship. The uncharted power of belief in the film is closely related to the power of love and character development. As discussed previously, the core elements contributing to the success of Wade and Ember's relationship include the idea that love can outnumber everything shape character behavior, and inspire to believe in something contrary to the conventional norms. Those elements have different perspectives from Wade and Ember as individuals who can feel it in their relationship.

SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings, the writer recommends that other researchers search more deeply related to psychoanalysis, particularly focusing on the topic of the power of beliefs. It is suggested that future researchers examine the impact of beliefs on romantic relationships more thoroughly, as forbidden romantic relationships are increasingly happened in current society.

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