



"UNVEILING THE SHADOWS: A PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA IN *SECTOR 36*"

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Abstract : In today's OTT platform, many movies, series, documentaries, live talk shows etc. is made available at the click of a button. There is huge surge in moviemaking and publishing it on OTT platform making it accessible to anybody, around the globe anytime. Makers are making movies with different themes appealing to different demography. Incidentally, it is observed that 'violence' and 'investigation' seem to be taking a spotlight in the entertainment industry. Furthermore, a chilling investigation drama inspired by true events, *Sector 36* is set in a seemingly ordinary urban district where multiple young women and children have mysteriously vanished followed by an investigation by a seasoned detective. More than the plot it is the representation of the crime is a topic that needs attention. Through unflinching realism and meticulously detailed scenes of graphic violence, the film forces viewers to confront the horrifying reality of human depravity existing in plain sight. This movie makes one wonder how an individual gains affinity towards killing. The present paper investigates what circumstances led the protagonist to commit the brutal murders i.e. serial killing. Further, an attempt is made to understand the post crime behaviour of the protagonist. There seem to be a seemingly unsympathetic, plain emotions as if these crimes were just like any other day to day activity like having food when one is hungry. The present research examines the life and trauma of the protagonist which apparently is the main reason for all the crimes committed by him. Through the theory of Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud life of the perpetrator is examined. The paper identifies that the childhood trauma when not addressed has resulted in creating what the entertainment industry calls 'monster.'

Keywords - Psychoanalysis, Trauma, Violence, Human Depravity, Systemic Corruption, Psychological Complexity.

Introduction

Sector 36 deconstructs the myths of security in the urban realm, telling a horrific tale of institutional violence against the most vulnerable members of society. Drawing its lead from actual criminal cases, this is detailed research of an investigation into a series of disappearances concerning women and children who, inexplicably, vanish in an apparently ordinary neighbourhood. The cinematic work of *Sector 36*, which comes from a young filmmaker, opens a disturbing storyline that explores the psychological mind of its protagonist, delving into the ideas of repression, emotional turmoil, and the unconscious mind. This film deserves a study through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytic theory as a rich context for exploring the essential psychological conflicts that lead the characters' behaviours and feelings. Freudian theory based on human sub and

unconscious motivations along with the formative childish experiences of repression and Oedipal complex, is enlightening enough to explain the complicated interactions going on in *Sector 36*.

The film painstakingly delves into the orchestrated attempts of a detective riddled with violence he cannot help but find-atrocious crimes that finally expose a twisted network of exploitation behind the ordinary suburban façade. Using stark documentary-style imagery and meticulous forensic detail, the narrative reveals the modus operandi of predators who function within plain view, exploiting established social frameworks to mask their illicit activities. From a Freudian perspective, the film's principal character represents an amalgamation of the id, ego, and superego, each vying for supremacy within the psyche of the individual. The id, motivated by base instincts and desires, is uncovered in the unconscious fears and repressed desires of the character, while the superego is the moral restriction and expectations on society that slowly strangle the hero's ability to self-express. In the middle lies the ego, which attempts to find a middle ground between these often-opposing forces. The attempt of the protagonist to bring these aspects of his psyche into a synthesis reveals the complex dimensions of human experience Freud explored in his discussions on neurosis and repression.

As layers of institutional failure and societal indifference peel away, *Sector 36* forces viewers to confront uncomfortable truths about urban safety and violence against vulnerable populations. This work goes beyond that of a typical crime thriller. It serves as a reflection on real atrocities that often remain hidden or go uninvestigated. The movie's unvarnished portrayal of the crimes, and the plea for the cause of victims, is both an invitation to awareness and a criticism for system failures in protecting potential victims. Further, *Sector 36* captures the quintessential theme Freud discussed endlessly: the intricate link between trauma and memory. A succession of disquieting flashbacks and troubling current interactions reveal the trauma of the protagonist, together with repressed memories and the associated emotions of guilt and shame. All these aspects are very resonant with Freud's theories on repressed desires and the return of the repressed, in which overlooked memories or suppressed instincts emerge, often manifesting in distorted or symbolic forms that strive for recognition. This significance to film exploration, therefore, extends similar value to that of Freud's notion regarding talking cure, which suggests in one way, somehow that voicing repressed thoughts or memory, the individual manages to find catharsis and rehabilitation, but less often by such a bloodless method.

Sector 36 takes the form of psychological drama with charged atmosphere and mental tension, representative images that dissolve the lines between conscious/unconscious, reality/fantasy, giving expression to the continued influence of the concepts by Freud on modern-day film. Under this approach, *Sector 36* prompts viewers to reflect not only on the internal conflict of characters but also on the greater implications of Freud's psychoanalytic theory wherein unresolved traumas and conflicts in the past constantly echo through to affect current identity and destiny. This analysis of the film with Freudian psychoanalyses enables a more profound understanding of the forces behind human behaviour, more precisely those hidden and, most of the time, disturbing components that inhabit the obscure recesses of the unconscious mind.

Literature review

The exploration of violence and its societal implications has been a significant focus in both psychoanalysis and criminology. Sulloway (1991) critically reassesses Freud's case histories, arguing that they are not merely objective observations but are influenced by social and cultural contexts, which challenges the traditional view of psychoanalysis as a purely scientific discipline. This perspective is echoed by Seltzer (1995), who discusses the pathological public sphere surrounding serial killers, emphasizing how societal narratives shape public perception and understanding of crime. Fox and Levin (1998) further contribute to this discourse by analysing patterns of serial and mass murder, highlighting the psychological and social factors that drive such behaviours. Conrath (1994) examines the portrayal of serial killers in American culture, suggesting that these representations reflect deeper societal anxieties and moral conflicts. Mohamed (2015) adds to the conversation by addressing the trauma experienced by perpetrators and victims alike, underscoring the complex interplay between individual psychology and broader societal issues. Together, these works provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological underpinnings of violence and the societal narratives that shape our perceptions of crime, making them essential for analysing the themes presented in the film *Sector 36*. By integrating these insights, the research aims to illuminate the impact of true crime narratives on public awareness and the psychological ramifications of violence on both individuals and communities.

Violence And Bloodshed in *Sector 36*

The movie *Sector 36* portrays violence and bloodshed in it very effectively. The audience will not feel obnoxious about the scenarios happening in the movie, it was somewhat kept or the film was shot in a way so

that the audience can watch the movie without turning their heads elsewhere. The movie depicts violence in a gritty and raw manner, highlighting the consequences of crime, power struggles, and the desperate actions of individuals in a corrupt society. In *Sector 36*, violence is portrayed as both physical and psychological, with characters using brutality as a means of survival, control, and revenge. The film explores a dark underworld where moral boundaries are often blurred, and violent acts become the norm rather than the exception. The violence in the film isn't just about physical harm—it also reflects the internal emotional and psychological toll that the characters endure.

One of the major aspects to be considered is the extent to which the movie is real and raw in its depiction of brutality. The movie confronts the harsh realities linked with violence head-on. Often, these harsh realities are mostly found in Hollywood movies, just like in the Amazon Prime series *The Boys*. In those cases, visual effects are used, but such scenes are hardly ever seen on the Indian subcontinent. Most Indian television serials and movies do not usually feature graphic intense scenes, like fights, shootings, and psychological manipulation used to maintain power and control over the characters. The depiction of violence is stark and inflexible, forcing the audience into an unfiltered reality, where the actions of its characters and the consequences of leading such a harsh life apply. The movie is very much character-driven. The violence is highly related to the personal motives of the characters and their emotional state. The violence and bloodshed that takes place is mostly based on personal motives. There might not be any actual issues with the people they are killing, it is just their longing for the adrenaline rush of psychological pleasure. The violence, therefore, remains an externalization of the internal conflict characterizing the characters. This element adds greater depth to the plot from what otherwise would remain a bare sequence of violent events toward becoming a commentary on harmful effects of unchecked emotions and powers.

Ultimately, it depicts the symbolic power of corruption. The violence also serves as a symbol of the widespread corruption along with the lack of law in the cinematic universe created. A case in point is provided in Anurag Kashyap's film, *Gangs of Wasseypur*. This film illustrates that those looking for change, who get involved in the underworld or the broken system, resorted to violence to gain control or seek justice. This is portrayed through Kashyap's protagonist Faizal. He was displaying a God Complex as seen in one of the dialogues when he was claiming he would take revenge on behalf of all. Apart from that, he showed to much of the world how corrupted practices exist. This portrays violence and bloodshed as such a dominant influence that could mould the environment and shape lives in *Sector 36*. This is not just here to shock but is one of the necessary components for looking at the large themes of survival, power, and morality in the dystopian context.

Elementation Of Realism

The realism factor in *Sector 36*. The injection of realism in *Sector 36* goes a long way to give the film its present narrative structure, which lends it a believability in a rather dystopian and crime-ridden setting. This realism comes from the visual aesthetics to the characters, societal challenges depicted, and the repercussions that violence has. The movie to a larger extent is filled with gritty and raw cinematography. To that end, the film direction was realistic, and dimmed lighting, muted colours, handheld cameras created such an effect. This approach helps create a sense of immersion in a harsh world, where the environment itself feels oppressive and unforgiving. By using a grounded cinematographic style, *Sector 36* reflects the bleakness of the society it portrays, making the audience feel as though they are amid the action, sharing the characters' intense experiences. This can also be seen in other crime or murder documentaries. Like for example, in the crime documentaries we have seen how the crime scenes before and after are shown to be oppressive, congested and a place with no escape. *Sector 36* touches upon issues of corruption, power imbalances, and system failure. Characters live in a world where all forms of institutions, legal, political, or social, are grossly failing, and violence can be a part of daily life. It goes without saying that the presentational state of a disjointed society, in which people must carry out extreme acts to stay alive, is really true and more than what happens with marginal groups around the world.

The characters in *Sector 36* are complex and multi-dimensional, with motivations that stem from personal experiences and societal pressures. Their actions, especially when they resort to violence, feel justified and believable within the context of their circumstances. This integration brings in the aspect of realism because the decisions they make depend on the unforgiving nature of their environment and not as a result of pursuing dramatic impact. For instance, even when their moral dilemmas, conflicting emotions, and mental anguish are written in humanly relatable terms, still their actions do not align with ethics if they undertake ethically grey activities; their choices fit within the logic of the universe that they inhabit.

The violence in *Sector 36* is not glorified but instead depicted as a brutal, inevitable part of the world the characters live in. The physical and emotional consequences of violence are shown with stark realism. Even though, we think that crime just affects the victim and the people associated with the victim. But we forget that the neighbours and all who see or hear the truth about the situation go through a mental turmoil. With every case being shown or broadcasted into something fictionally has a mental repercussion towards the viewers. The constant state of fear and struggle to survive, or thinking if we are next victim. Characters who engage in violence often face repercussions, whether through injury, guilt, or the destruction of their relationships. This shows the true costs of living in a violent world and keeps the film grounded.

The movie also explores the psychological effects that come with life in a brutal world. The characters experience trauma, paranoia, and ethical dilemmas, all of which are portrayed in a subtle manner. This psychological reality makes the audience empathize with the characters and understand the internal conflicts that make them take extreme measures. The presentation of these psychological and emotional effects of living in a violent world gives the movie immense depth and reality. The authenticity presented in *Sector 36* is achieved through a synthesis of unrefined cinematographic techniques, accurate representations of violence and its repercussions, well-founded character motivations, and the illustration of social issues that resonate in real dilemmas. The overall film in question is therefore a severe yet plausible realization of a reality where survival and moral concerns along with distribution of power influence all the aspects of life.

Freud's Psychoanalysis in *Sector 36*

Freud's Psychoanalysis with the Indian Netflix movie *Sector 36* involves examining how the film's characters, themes, and narrative can be understood through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, especially in terms of unconscious desires, internal conflicts, and the dynamics of power and identity. The characters and actions can then be employed to connect theories from Freud's psychoanalytic theories towards explaining the psychological underpinnings in the film itself. In *Sector 36*, individuals tend to act out on unconscious impulses set by repressed traumas and unmet desires. For instance, there are numerous characters that are fuelled by the emotions of rage and fear, and other deep wounds which they cannot even understand how to communicate with others. These pent-up desires or suppressed emotions manifest their way in violent acts they commit as an act-out of inner turmoil. Freud would say that these film characters, who are repressing memories of past trauma such as childhood abuse, betrayal, or failure, may act out in violent or irrational ways. The motivations of the protagonist for revenge or aggression might be a deep unconscious urge to exercise control in an uncertain setting, in accordance with Freud's understanding of the expression of suppressed desires in inappropriate action. This could also be because he wanted to purify the world of such individuals who cannot succeed. The interactions between the id, ego, and superego can be clearly observed in the behaviour of the characters, especially in moments of conflict.

The Id: Many characters in *Sector 36* are driven by the id, which seeks immediate gratification and power. The primal urges for survival, dominance, and revenge dominate their actions. In a crime-ridden, dystopian society, characters often choose to act on impulse, without considering the moral consequences. We can see it when in the movie one girl came to the protagonist's house and behaved badly with him, he took the path of revenge and dominance. And how he repressed the lady, just because she belittled him.

The Ego: The ego is seen in characters who try to balance these primal urges with reality. For instance, the protagonist might struggle between violent revenge (id-driven) and the necessity to survive in a harsh society (ego-driven), attempting to make rational decisions while being pulled in different emotional directions.

The Superego: The superego can be seen in the occasional moments where characters confront their own morals or guilt. For example, the character might be aware that their violent actions contradict their own internalized societal norms or values but may still engage in violence because the survival instinct (id) outweighs moral restraint.

Sector 36 is filled with signs of repression, trauma, and conflict. The characters in the film carry out intense emotional and psychological misery, which is primarily induced by past traumatic experiences. As per Freud, repressed memories about childhood or early years of life considerably influence how a person is going to act after that. This can also be studied in the case of many other serial murderers. Child trauma or any important experience during their lives is deeply responsible for their psychological setup. For instance, the notorious American serial killer Edmund Kemper had quite a belligerent childhood and was very dysfunctional with his mother, too. She had affairs running into several dozen outside his father's marriage. In addition, she physically maltreated him. So, he became rather anti-women who looked like his mother in many ways and

whose violent tendencies were mainly projected upon them. They often hide unknown and recurring feelings of guilt, trauma, or even history of loss that may reside but always affect their action-calculation processes. Their anger can be an expression of failure at being able to impose themselves into situations they perceive as worsening, a way of managing their turbulent emotions.

Psychosexual Development in *Sector 36*

While *Sector 36* does not overtly focus on the psychosexual stages of development, aspects of Freud's theoretical framework can still be used to analyse the emergence of characters' desires and behaviours. Freud argued that formative childhood experiences play a crucial role in shaping an individual's behaviour and sense of self, often related to unresolved psychological conflicts. A character's desire for power, control, or revenge may be a result of past experiences of vulnerability or neglect, thus guiding their actions in later life. This relates to Freud's hypothesis that unresolved conflicts from childhood continue to influence adult behaviour, especially when trauma or adversity is experienced. It is a somewhat similar previous discussion made about Edmund Kemper and how his trauma or behaviour led to those events.

These behaviours are generally considered to be the defence mechanisms by the perpetrator. Many of the characters in *Sector 36* use defence mechanisms to cope with the constant stress of their environment. These mechanisms—such as denial, projection, or displacement—help characters manage their unconscious anxieties and fears. A character might engage in violent behaviour (displacement) to take out their frustrations or fears that they cannot express in a socially acceptable way. Alternatively, they might use projection to blame others for their failures or traumas, rather than acknowledging their own role in causing or perpetuating another American serial killer; David Berkowitz aka. Son of Sam. He during his confession told the officers that a possessed Labrador dog made him do all the killings. And that the dog was possessed by Satan himself, as he was a part of a satanic cult and used to worship Satan.

Conclusion

Sector 36 offers a deeply unsettling exploration of violence, trauma, and human depravity, set against the backdrop of an urban dystopia. The film's raw portrayal of crime, psychological distress, and systemic failure not only shocks but also serves as a critical examination of societal neglect and institutional corruption. By incorporating elements of Freudian psychoanalysis, the narrative uncovers the unconscious desires, repressed traumas, and internal conflicts that drive the characters' actions. Freud's theories, particularly the concepts of the id, ego, superego, repression, and the Oedipal complex, provide valuable insight into understanding the psychological complexity of the characters, especially the perpetrator, and how their unresolved pasts shape their present behaviour.

The meticulous realism in *Sector 36*, marked by its graphic depiction of violence, trauma, and psychological turmoil, amplifies the themes of survival, power dynamics, and the consequences of unchecked emotions. This approach forces audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about the human condition, illustrating the long-lasting impact of trauma and the depths of moral conflict within individuals. The film not only challenges our understanding of violence but also urges a deeper reflection on societal issues such as the safety of vulnerable populations, the systemic failures that protect criminals, and the trauma endured by those investigating heinous crimes.

Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of realistic crime depictions in cinema, as they shape public perception and contribute to discussions about crime prevention, victim protection, and societal awareness. By connecting these cinematic elements to Freudian theory, this paper has highlighted how the unconscious mind, repressed memories, and internal psychological struggles contribute to the broader narrative of *Sector 36*. Through its compelling integration of these psychological concepts with crime thriller elements, *Sector 36* offers a chilling examination of both the personal and societal impact of violence, ultimately challenging viewers to reconsider their perceptions of crime, morality, and the psyche. Through the lens of Freud's psychoanalysis in the film's portrayal of human behaviour, it becomes clear that while the external environment plays a significant role, the internal conflicts and repressed desires of the characters also significantly shape their actions. While the film does not explicitly explore all of Freud's theories, such as psychosexual development, its focus on trauma, repression, and the role of the unconscious mind provides a meaningful intersection between theory and cinematic portrayal. *Sector 36* serves as both a powerful crime thriller and a psychological drama that continues to resonate with contemporary audiences, offering a deeper understanding of human behaviour through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis.

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