

**IMMERSIVE TRANSFORMATION IN *BROTHER BEAR*:
EXPERIENCING LIFE THROUGH A BEAR'S EYES**

Submitted to English Letters Study Program of Universitas Ma Chung in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the Undergraduate Degree of English Letters



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2025**

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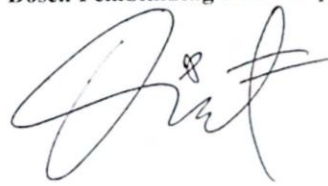
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ABSTRACT

Immersive Transformation in *Brother Bear*: Experiencing Life Through a Bear's Eyes

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This study analyzes the film *Brother Bear* (2003), a Disney animated movie that follows the story of Kenai, an adolescent who desperately wants to become a man, and his transformative journey after being turned into a bear. The focus of this study is on Kenai's characterization and character development. The objectives are to explore: (1) why Kenai transforms into a bear, (2) how the transformation changes his previous beliefs and perspectives, and (3) how the film portrays the relationship between humans and animals. This research uses a descriptive qualitative methodology, examining key scenes and dialogue from the film. To support the analysis, the writer applies several relevant theories, including characterization theory, mise-en-scène theory, empathy theory, immersive transformation theory, the five stages of grief theory, violence theory, and human-animal bond theory. The findings reveal that Kenai transforms into a bear after experiencing the first two stages of grief, denial and anger, following the death of his brother and kills the bear that he thought responsible. His actions are driven by a desire for revenge and to restore social order, aligning with theories of violence. Initially, Kenai is portrayed as an immature and arrogant adolescent who views bears as emotionless and violent creatures. However, through his immersive transformation, his perspective shifts, and his empathy deepens. As a result, he matures into a responsible and compassionate individual. The film presents the human-animal relationship as one of spiritual and emotional equality, reflecting mutual respect. However, it also acknowledges moments of fear and conflict between the two groups. This tension is ultimately minimized by the end of the film, as Kenai and Koda, despite being bears, are accepted into the human tribe, symbolizing reconciliation and the possibility of harmonious coexistence.

Keywords: immersive, perspective, empathy, transformation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord for His guidance throughout every stage of my life, especially from the beginning of my studies at Universitas Ma Chung until the completion of this thesis. I believe that everything in my life has happened according to His will, and without His grace, I would not be where I am today.

Next, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family for always being there for me. Thank you to Papa and Mama for your endless prayers and unwavering support. To *Papacece, Mamacece, Ce Mel, Mon*, both sides of *Emak*, all of *my Ik, Wak, Engku*, and, of course, all of my cousins, thank you for your kindness, encouragement, and advice throughout my academic and personal journey. And to Ponyo, thank you for being such a good girl, patiently waiting for me at home, always approaching me, and keeping me company even late at night when I returned.

I am also incredibly thankful to all of my lecturers who have shown kindness and provided guidance, helping me grow both academically and personally. I am especially grateful to Pak Dono and Pak Ou, my thesis advisors, for their invaluable help, advice, and constructive feedback throughout the writing process.

I would also like to thank my friends who have been with me even before I entered university. To my boyfriend, Jojo, thank you for always being by my side and giving me strength. To my bro, Jill, thank you for always having my back. And to all my Sasing '21 friends, Ghania, Janice, Icha, Poppy, Steven, Alice, Angel, Devara, Sopi, Vania, Amanda, Hanny, Ami, Sam, Chacha, Nathan, and Ratih, thank you for all the laughter, shared moments, and invaluable lessons we've experienced together.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of my favorite people on the internet. Thank you for your late-night streams that kept me company and entertained me throughout the early days of

my studies and during the challenging process of writing this thesis. I am forever grateful for the happiness, laughter, and unexpected lessons you have brought into my life.

Malang, July 10th, 2025

Keiko Shelomitha Hosana



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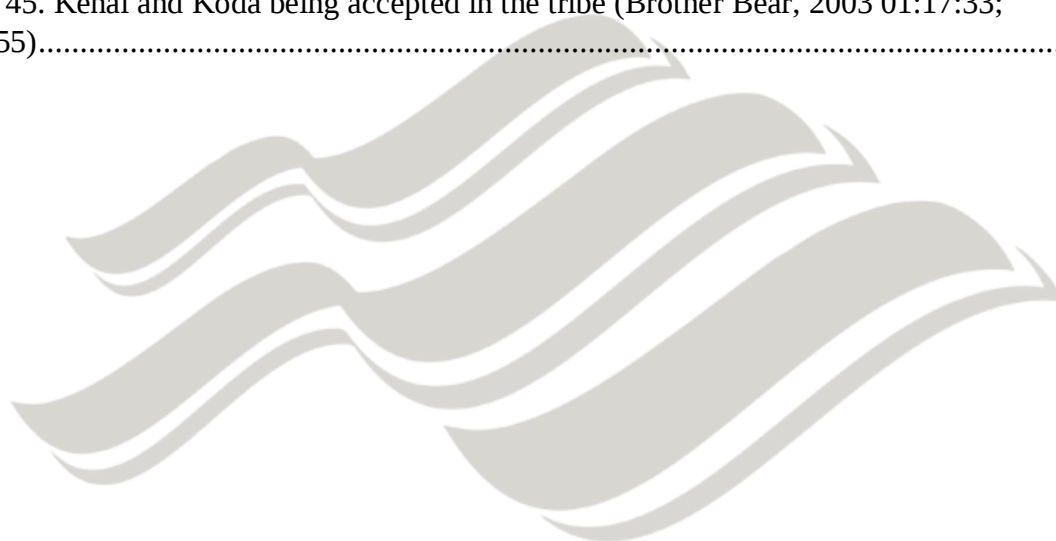
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Humans are inherently social creatures, deeply influenced by the relationships and interactions we form within our communities. From birth, we are embedded within a network of relationships that help shape our sense of self and our place in the world. These relationships play a crucial role in shaping our social nature, including the norms, values, and behaviors of our culture. As we grow, we learn from those around us, absorbing the rules and customs that govern social life, which in turn guide how we relate to others and our surroundings.

Social interaction is the foundation upon which communication, understanding, and cooperation are built. It is through social exchanges that we not only convey our thoughts and emotions but also develop the ability to understand the circumstances of someone, or something known as empathy. Empathy is a complex behavior that facilitates the formation of social connections through interpersonal socialization and aid (Venniro & Golden, 2020). It involves recognizing and understanding the feelings, thoughts, and perspective of others, allowing us to comprehend not just the visible actions of others but also the underlying emotions and motivations that drive those actions, letting us step into the experiences of others, as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the “as if” condition (Rogers, 1959). For example, when someone close to us behaves foolishly in public, we may experience second-hand embarrassment, an emotional response where we feel embarrassed for someone else after witnessing (verbally and/or visually) that another person experiences an embarrassing event (Lifari, 2024).

While empathy is generally viewed as a positive trait that fosters kindness and understanding, in reality, it is accompanied by certain challenges. One of the primary

issues with empathy is that it can be biased and selective. According to the research done by Gutsell and Inzlicht (2012), people tend to empathize with those they perceive as similar to themselves, for example such as in terms of background, beliefs, or group affiliation. This tendency can lead to in-group favoritism, where individuals are more emotionally attuned to the suffering of those within their own social circle or cultural group, while minimizing or overlooking the distress of those considered outsiders which potentially could lead to marginalization. Social media can also play particular role in terms of biased empathy. In social media system, there is a design where people can watch content based on personal preferences, engagement history, and shared interest called algorithms. While this design enhances user's experiences, it can also reduce the users' opportunity for exposure to diverse perspectives. As a result, users may develop empathy primarily toward people and viewpoints that align with their own, while ignoring or minimizing the empathy toward different experiences or opinions. This can lead to biased empathy.

But as technology advances, we now have the ability to explore and enhance empathy through virtual reality (VR). According to Dede (2009), a virtual immersive experience is based on design strategies that combine actional, symbolic, and sensory factors, the greater the participant's suspension of disbelief that they are "inside" a digitally enhanced setting. These experiences, commonly referred to as immersion or immersive experiences, is the subjective impression that one is participating in a comprehensive, realistic experience (Dede, 2009). Through VR, someone can step into another person's perspective, fostering a deeper understanding of emotions, challenges, and experiences in ways that traditional empathy alone may not fully capture.

The immersion itself has been adapted as the main theme of various work of literature and film, where the protagonist directly experiences immersion, either by

physically entering and become part of a new world or fictional space or transforming into a different form. A movie titled “*Brother Bear*” (2003) from Disney is an example of a movie that adapts immersion as its main theme. The story follows an Inuit boy named Kenai, who kills a bear to avenge the death of his older brother, Sitka. Angered by this unnecessary killing, the Great Spirits transform Kenai into a bear as punishment. To become human again, Kenai embarks on a journey with Koda, a bear cub he meets along the way, traveling to the mountain where the Northern Lights touch the earth. Throughout his journey, Kenai is forced to view the world through the eyes of a bear, offering him a unique and transformative perspective.

Kenai’s physical transformation mirrors the emotional progression described in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s *On Death and Dying* (1969), which introduces the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the movie after Sitka’s death, Kenai initially enters denial, refusing to accept his brother’s death and blaming the bear instead of his own actions. This quickly shifts into anger, as Kenai hunts and kills the bear, acting out of rage. His journey with Koda brings moments of bargaining and depression, as he begins to question his actions, face guilt, and confront the emotional weight of his loss. Ultimately, Kenai reaches acceptance, not only of Sitka’s death, but also of his own growth. The immersive transformation, thus, becomes not only a literal journey, but a metaphorical one through the stages of grief, empathy, and self-discovery.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

There are three questions that the writer discusses in this research. They are:

1. Why does Kenai change into a bear?
2. How does Kenai’s transformation into a bear change his previous perspective on his belief and nature?

3. How does the story of *Brother Bear* influence the relationship between humans and animals in the film's narrative?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its ability to address the three research questions above. This study focuses on how immersive transformation changes the main character's perspective and fosters his understanding of empathy. By analyzing the movie's plot, characterization, and setting through the lens of the five stages of grief, the research aims to present Kenai's character development and the factors influencing his transformation. Additionally, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights to discussions on similar topics, providing a deeper understanding of empathy and perspective-taking in immersive storytelling.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

To ensure the relevance and clarity of the analysis, this study will establish clear scope limitations. To maintain a consistent direction throughout the research, the focus will be solely on the main character, Kenai. This report will explore how Kenai's transformation into a bear influences his character development and examine the portrayal of human-animal relationships in the film, using relevant studies and literature to support the analysis.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

There are several key terms that used to enhance the understanding of this research.

1. Immersive

According to Dede (2009), immersion is the subjective impression that one is participating in a comprehensive, realistic experience. It is a digital experience that involving all of participants' senses, attention, and emotions, making it feel as if they are inside or part of an environment.

2. Perspective

A particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view. Robinson (1996) explained perspective as a complex concept that shapes how individuals process and interpret information. It encompasses past experiences, knowledge, goals, and values that influence one's point of view.

3. Empathy

According to Decety and Lamm (2006), empathy is the ability to experience and understand what others feel without confusion between oneself and others. It involves recognizing others' experiences or feelings and responding with care or concern.

4. Transformation

According to Montgomery (2003), transformation means molding an existing underperforming entity into something entirely new and better. It refers to changes or shifts in form, character, or behavior.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Literary Theory

In this study, the researcher focuses on how immersive transformation alters the main character of *Brother Bear*, Kenai, particularly his perspectives and empathy towards animals, specifically bears. At the start of the film, Kenai is portrayed as an arrogant, immature, and emotionally driven adolescent. Unlike his two older brothers, Sitka and Denahi, who exhibit maturity, wisdom, and composure, Kenai struggles with his emotions and sense of identity. This contrast is made more apparent during the movie's pivotal coming-of-age ceremony, where Kenai receives his totem. To his dismay, Kenai's totem is a bear, a symbol of love, a concept he associates with weakness and something unworthy of a warrior. He is upset and disillusioned by this, feeling that love is a sentiment that doesn't align with his masculine ideals, and he perceives bears as monstrous rather than affectionate creatures. The character's personality, point of view, and actions are called characterization.

After a confrontation with a bear that results in the death of his brother Sitka, Kenai develops a deep hatred for bears and seeks revenge, despite warnings from the tribe's shaman and his other brother, Denahi. Driven by anger, Kenai kills a bear atop a mountain. In response, the Great Spirits transform him into a bear, initiating a transformative journey. To return to human form, Kenai must travel to the mountain where the Northern Lights touch the earth. Along the way, he encounters various animals, including Koda, a bear cub who becomes his companion. Through Koda's guidance, Kenai gradually adapts to his new life and begins to empathize with bears and other creatures. This narrative illustrates the application of empathy theory, as Kenai learns to see the world from another's

perspective. Furthermore, immersive theory is reflected in Kenai's transformation into a bear, forces him to see the world from the perspective of those he once sought to harm. The movie also employs *mise-en-place*, with carefully arranged settings, symbols, and spiritual elements that support the progression of Kenai's inner change and moral development. Additionally, the movie also reflects the five stages of grief as Kenai experiences denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and, ultimately, acceptance throughout his journey. Violence theory is evident in Kenai's initial use of violence as a response to grief and a means of reclaiming honor. Meanwhile, human-animal bond theory is used to determine the relationship between humans and the animals inside the movie.

2.1.1 Characterization

According to (Pöllänen, 2023), Characterization often appears to generally be defined as a myriad of personality traits or qualities that a character can possess and that shape the audience's perception of a character. Characterization helps audiences to understand more deeply about characters' personalities, motivations, and relationships. There are two types of characterization, direct and indirect characterization.

In direct characterization, the author explicitly tells the reader what they want us to know about the character (Putri, 2018). The author would provide readers with clear insight into a character's personality, background, or physical traits. In a fable called *The Lion & the Mouse*, a clear example occurred when the author explicitly mentioned in the story, "... A timid little mouse... and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the Lion's nose." This line explicitly reveals the Mouse's timid nature, helping readers to understand her personality.

In indirect characterization, the author shows us things about the character to help us to understanding the character's personality and their effect on other characters (Putri,

2018). Rather than directly stating traits, the author shows them through context and nuance. For example, a character's hesitation before speaking, their internal conflicts, or the way others respond to them can all subtly reveal important aspects of who they are. Burroway (2000) established four different methods of indirect characterization in literary work: 1) speech, 2) thoughts, 3) action, and 4) looks.

1. Speech

Speech refers to what a character says and how they say it. For example, a character who speaks in formal language may seem educated or distant, while one who speaks in foul or vulgar language may seem rebellious or it can reflect to character's upbringing or environment.

2. Thoughts

Thoughts provide insight into a character's internal world. This help readers understand more about the character's motivations, values, and the thought complexities. Usually, this technique can be found in third-person limited narration.

3. Action

Sometimes, action could reveal far more of what kind of personality the character has more than what they claim to believe. For example, a character might say they are committed to change and becoming a better person no matter what. However, when a crisis occurs, they may fall back into old habits and return to their former way of life. This contrast between words and actions shows that actions often speak louder than intentions.

4. Look

This includes physical appearance, clothing, posture, and facial expressions. Look can provide some understanding into character's personality, social status, and sometimes emotional state.

2.1.2 Mise-en-scene

Mise-en-scene is a French term that translates to “placing on stage.” In film studies, it refers to everything that appears in a scene and how those elements are arranged to create meaning. According to Bordwell et al. (2004), there are four aspects of *mise-en-scene*, which are setting; costumes and makeup; lighting; and staging.

1. Setting in *mise-en-scene* refers to the physical location and environment where a scene takes place. It includes the geographical location, time period, weather, and objects present in the scene. The setting plays a crucial role in shaping the film’s atmosphere, mood, and themes, helping to tell the story visually. For example, in *Hansel and Gretel*, the story mostly takes place in a forest where Hansel and Gretel live with their parents. Starting from the beginning of the story, from their warm and humble house to the dark and deeper part of the forest where their parents abandoned them. The atmosphere becomes eerie and threatening as the children walk further into the woods. Eventually, they discover the witch’s house that are made out of sweets to lure the lost children. Each setting in the story plays a key role in advancing the plot of the story.
2. Costumes and makeup are essential elements of *mise-en-scene*, helping to define characters, their backgrounds, personality traits, and transformations. They provide visual clues about character’s status, age, and profession. For example, a villain might be portrayed with dark, exaggerated makeup and clothing to empathize danger.
3. Lighting in *mise-en-scene* plays a crucial role in shaping the mood, atmosphere, and storytelling of a film. It highlights key moments, emphasizes character emotions, and even symbolizes deeper meanings. For example, in a

movie, a happy scene is often portrayed with a bright and warm, sunny tone to create a cheerful atmosphere. On the other hand, a sad scene tends to use dim or muted lighting with darker colors to portray melancholy or suspense.

4. Staging in *mise-en-scene* refers to how characters and objects are positioned within a scene to create meaning, emotion, and focus. It includes blocking (character placement and movement), depth, and spatial relationships to guide the audience's attention and reinforce themes. For example, couples are usually shown to stand close to each other to convey intimacy and connection. In contrast, enemies are typically positioned with a distance between them to emphasize tension and conflict.

2.1.3 Empathy Theory

According to Wondra and Ellsworth (2015), empathy occurs when we feel an emotion because something happens to someone else, and it is the same emotion that they are experiencing. Empathy enables individuals to connect with others on an emotional level, fostering compassion, kindness, and the development of stronger social bonds. It plays a vital role in human relationships by helping people understand and respond to one another with care and sensitivity. Through recognizing and sharing the emotions of others, empathy facilitates meaningful connections, promotes cooperation, and enhances communication in various social contexts.

Beyond its interpersonal significance, empathy is a foundational element of emotional intelligence and moral reasoning. It allows individuals to step outside their own experiences and imagine what others may be feeling in a given situation. This imaginative capacity is essential not only for building close relationships but also for functioning in diverse societies, where people regularly interact with others who may hold different

values, backgrounds, or perspectives. Empathy enables individuals to approach these differences with curiosity rather than judgment, promoting tolerance and mutual respect.

However, individuals tend to feel more empathy towards members of their own social groups (Masten et al., 2010). This tendency, often referred to as empathy bias or ingroup favoritism, shows that people are more likely to empathize to those that they share a perceived connection, such as cultural background, ethnicity, or community membership. This bias can lead to stronger emotional responses toward the struggles and suffering of group members, while often diminishing the capacity to empathize with outsiders or individuals from different backgrounds. As a result, empathy becomes selective, with individuals more likely to offer support, understanding, and concern to those who are part of their social circle, whether defined by familial ties, national identity, or even shared interests.

2.1.4 Immersive Theory

Immersive theory explores the ways in which individuals become deeply engaged in an experience, often to the extent that they feel as if they are part of a different reality. In real life, the concept of immersive is often found through a lot of media such as storytelling, virtual reality (VR), movies, theatre, literature, and even art to create an environment where audiences feel like they are experiencing the world inside the narrative. For example, Walt Disney Animation Studios offered an attraction called “Disney Animation: Immersive Experience” where audiences can experience to step into the world of Disney films. Another example is “Immersive Van Gogh Exhibition” by Lighthouse Immersive where audiences experience to be inside the painting of Van Gogh.

According to Dede (2009), immersion occurs when an experience effectively engages an individual’s sensory, emotional, and cognitive processes, leading to a

heightened sense of presence in a constructed or imagined environment. This sense of presence plays a crucial role in how the mind interprets and emotionally responds to an experience. When a person is fully immersed, they may not only understand the narrative or artwork intellectually but also feel emotionally involved, as if the events or emotions are happening to them personally.

There has been increasing research on how immersive experiences can be used to enhance empathy. According to a study conducted by Bunn and Terpstra (2009), medical students participated in an auditory hallucination simulation while undergoing a psychiatric interview and a cognitive test. This immersive exercise was designed to help students better understand the experiences of individuals living with mental illness. The results of the study indicated that this method was effective in increasing the students' empathy toward people with mental health conditions. By temporarily placing participants in the shoes of those they will serve, the simulation fostered a deeper emotional and cognitive understanding, demonstrating the power of experiential learning in cultivating empathy.

Another example of immersive theory can be seen in the teaching program organized by the English Letters Department at Universitas Ma Chung, held in Kucur Village. In this program, students are sent to teach at a local school in the village for roughly around six months back in 2023. This experience serves as a strong application of immersive theory, as it allows participating students to step directly into the lives of the local community. By working in Kucur, they gain firsthand insight into the daily realities of village life, understand the social and cultural context of the area, and experience what it truly feels like to be a teacher. This form of experiential learning not only deepens empathy and awareness but also enhances their professional and personal growth through direct involvement.

Immersive experiences can serve educational, therapeutic, artistic, and even ethical purposes. In art and entertainment, immersion fosters deeper emotional resonance and empathy by allowing individuals to view the world from different perspectives. This emotional proximity can lead to greater understanding of others, especially when immersive experiences are designed to highlight marginalized voices, unfamiliar cultures, or non-human perspectives.

2.1.5 Five Stages of Grief Theory

Death is something that we, as humans, cannot avoid. However, no matter how often death surrounds us, it remains something we struggle to accept easily. Each person mourns in their own way, but their emotional responses often follow a similar pattern. In *On Death and Dying* (1969), Kubler-Ross introduced the concept of the five stages of grief. This model was based on her observations and interviews with patients who were dying of terminal illnesses which later she modified that this theory applies not only to people who are dying, but also to those who experience grief and loss from a close relationship. In the book, she explains that humans typically go through five emotional stages when dealing with loss: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

1. Denial and Isolation

The first stage is denial and isolation, where individuals may struggle to accept the reality of what has happened. People often experience shock and disbelief after a loss, refusing to acknowledge their grief. Denial serves as a defense mechanism, helping to protect them from being overwhelmed by intense emotions and giving them time to gradually process the painful truth. During this stage, individuals may also withdraw from others and isolate

themselves. Kubler-Ross (1969) mentioned that denial is usually a temporary defense and will soon be replaced by partial acceptance.

2. Anger

The next stage is anger. When the first stage of denial cannot be maintained any longer, it is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment (Kubler-Ross, 1969). In this stage, individuals may project their anger onto others, whether people, objects, or even abstract ideas, regardless of whether they are truly responsible. This anger often masks the pain beneath and can manifest in irrational blame, jealousy, or frustration toward anything that seems connected to the loss.

3. Bargaining

According to Nurjanah (2023), bargaining comes after people succeed in managing their anger. People may feel remorseful and encourage themselves to change or negotiate with others, such as with people around them, their environments, and their deceased loved ones to return to their normal lives.

4. Depression

This stage happened after a person begins to realize and feel the weight of their loss. Depression stage is divided into two types: reactive depression and preparatory depression. Reactive depression involves reactions triggered by a recent or minor loss while preparatory depression is the emotional response of those approaching the expected loss (Nurjanah, 2023).

5. Acceptance

If a patient has had enough time (i.e., not a sudden, unexpected death) and has been given some help in working through the previously described stages, he will reach a stage during which he is neither depressed nor angry about his "fate." (Kubler-Ross, 2023). In this stage, individuals begin to accept their fate and no longer try to reject or change it.

2.1.6 Violence Theory

Violence is an intentional but unwanted infliction of physical harm on other humans (Eisner, 2009). While violence is often perceived as impulsive or emotionally driven, Eisner argues that it is frequently a goal-directed behavior, meaning it serves specific purposes for those who commit it. There are three themes that are likely to be implicated in the goal directed use of violence.

1. Revenge

Eisner (2009) emphasize that one of the most common motivations for violence is revenge. According to Oxford Languages, revenge is the action of inflicting hurt or harm on someone for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands. However, revenge is not an automatic reaction to injustice; rather, it is influenced by several factors, including the persistence of anger, perceived costs and benefits, cultural values, and the presence or absence of external justice systems (Schumann & Ross, 2010). In contexts where justice systems are lacking or perceived as unfair, individuals are more likely to take justice into their own hands. Eisner (2009) further explains that those who commit acts of revenge are often motivated by a strong sense of moral obligation to right a perceived wrong. This wrong could take many forms, such as a prior

attack, a public insult, unpaid debts, disobedience, sexual infidelity, or physical assault.

2. Protection and Deterrence

According to Eisner (2009), acts of violence can serve as a protective mechanism and a form of deterrence. When an individual retaliates, it sends a signal that aggression will be met with consequences, which can deter both the original aggressor and potential future offenders. Aggressors must weigh the risk of injury, death, or loss of social status before choosing to harm someone. Additionally, retaliatory behavior can influence how others perceive and interact with the individual who fights back, making people more cautious in future encounters. Experimental studies support this dynamic; for example, Kim et al. (1998) found that victims tend to retaliate more strongly when an audience witnesses the provocation. The presence of witnesses raises the stakes, as public retaliation helps defend one's reputation and deter further threats.

3. Retaliation and Social Orders

One important function of retaliatory violence is the maintenance of social order (Eisner, 2009). In many traditional societies, acts of violence are not only accepted but expected as responses to transgressions such as insults, adultery, sorcery, or prior attacks. These responses serve to reinforce social norms and assert communal values. In such contexts, there is often little distinction between retaliatory violence and formal systems of justice, such as capital punishment. Retaliation becomes a mechanism through which communities regulate behavior, uphold honor, and deter future violations.

Rather than being seen as chaotic or unlawful, these acts of violence function as culturally sanctioned tools for preserving order and enforcing moral codes.

2.1.7 Human-Animal Bond Theory

Human and animal have coexisted side by side since the beginning of time. Throughout history, animals have played significant roles in human societies, either as companions, workers and even as spiritual beings. However, perceptions of animals vary across cultures, with some societies viewing them as equal beings or "other-than-human persons" (Schmölcke and Grimm, 2021). According to Bulliet (2005), there are three stages in the history of human-animal relationships.

The first one is the predomestic era, in which human societies were hunter-gatherers who did not perceive a difference between themselves and other animals. In this era, humans relied on animals not only for food, clothing, and tools but also for symbolic and spiritual purposes. Schmölcke and Grimm (2021) argue that certain species held special status in prehistoric European societies. For example, the brown bear was both feared and respected, and may have symbolized strength, protection, or a connection to the spiritual world. Because of this symbolism and spiritual reasons, killing of a bear was only allowed when it involved the performance of complex rituals before and after the hunt. The Sámi bear ceremony consisted of three key elements: the bear hunt, the bear feast, and the bear grave. On the other hand, the Finns and Karelians bear ceremony consisted of a bear hunt, bear feast, and bear skull tree where the bear's skull was placed to a certain tree as part of the ritual instead of a grave.

The second is the domestic era characterized by the development of beliefs in the difference and superiority of humans. During this period, humans began to recognize and emphasize the differences between themselves and other animals, leading to the domestication of certain species for food, labor, and companionship.

The third is the postdomestic era, where most of the population have little direct experience of animals, particularly the animals we eat. As industrialization and urbanization have advanced, humans have become increasingly distanced from the everyday use of animals. We no longer need to feed, raise, or care for the animals we consume, as this process is now handled by industrial systems largely hidden from public view.

In addition to these historical frameworks, human-animal interactions today can be broadly categorized into positive and negative experiences. According to Thirgood et al. (2005), positive interactions occur when humans gain material benefits by harvesting species for food or other animal products. In some cases, animals may also benefit from living in close proximity to humans, such as when they are domesticated or receive food and protection from predators. These mutual benefits can foster a form of coexistence between humans and certain animal species.

On the other hand, negative interactions occur when humans and wildlife compete for natural resources, such as wild prey populations. This competition can lead to conflict, sometimes resulting in injury or even death for either party. One of the contributing factors to this growing conflict is the continuous expansion of the human population, which often results in habitat destruction. As a consequence, wild animals are forced into closer contact with humans more frequently than in the past. They must now avoid being hunted or persecuted, make foraging decisions in the presence of humans, and choose breeding sites within human-dominated landscapes (Goumas et al., 2020).

Recent research also shows that animal behavior can be significantly shaped by human behavior. Goumas et al. (2020) argue that wild animals face a unique challenge because humans are not consistent in their behavior. While some people ignore wildlife

entirely, others may harm or kill animals, and some actively feed or interact with them. This inconsistency forces animals to assess risk and adapt their behavior accordingly.

Goumas et al. (2020) describe three different roles that humans may take on, each of which influences animal behavior in distinct ways:

1. Dangerous humans, where people act as predators, killing animals for food, sport, or out of fear. In other cases, humans behave as competitors, killing animals to prevent or reduce damage to crops, livestock, or other resources. This force animals to modify their natural behavior to avoid humans, altering their feeding patterns, habitats, or activity times to reduce the risk of encountering threats.
2. Neutral human, who does not present any direct threat to wild animals. These individuals typically ignore wildlife or observe animals from a distance without interfering in their behavior. From the animal's perspective, neutral humans are generally predictable and non-threatening, allowing the animals to continue their natural activities without disruption.
3. Rewarding humans, who purposefully provide care or resources to wild animals, most commonly by offering food. This type of interaction can sometimes lead to a mutually beneficial relationship, where animals receive sustenance or protection, and humans may gain enjoyment, companionship, or a sense of connection to nature. However, such interactions can also alter animal behavior, potentially increasing dependency on humans or reducing their natural fear of people.

2.2 Earlier Studies

The researcher uses several studies related to the topic. The study helps the researcher to identify the character, and it came from different studies. The first study is entitled “The Characterization of The Main Character In *Gone Girl* Film” by Putri, C. (2018). The second study is “Taking Action: Empathy And Social Interaction In Rats.” by Venniro, M., Golden, S.A. (2020). The third study is “Exploring Virtual Reality for Quality Immersive Empathy Building Experiences.” by Young, G. W., O’Dwyer, N., & Smolic, A. (2021). And the fourth study is “Five stages of grief in CS Lewis’ Novel *A Grief Observed*.” by Nurjanah, H. (2023).

The first study is entitled “The Characterization Of The Main Character In *Gone Girl* Film” by Putri, C. (2018). In the study, it is stated what kind of characterization and the five dominant characteristics of Amy, the main character of the *Gone Girl* film. The study concludes that Amy is intelligent, perfectionist, insecure, liar, and vengeful. But she is also an expert at mind games, manipulations, lying, blackmailing, and faking murder. This study will help the researcher on analyzing Kenai’s character in the movie.

The second study is “Taking Action: Empathy and Social Interaction in Rats” by Venniro and Golden (2020). This study explored how rats exhibit empathic behavior toward other rats in distress. The study found that rats demonstrated empathy by helping distressed peers, by opening a door to release them from a confined space. Additionally, rats with prior experience of distressing situations were more likely to help others, suggesting that empathy in rats may be influenced by personal experiences. This finding could be used to analyze how Kenai, the protagonist in *Brother Bear*, develops empathy for other bears, particularly Koda, as he goes through his own transformative and emotional journey.

The third study is “Exploring Virtual Reality for Quality Immersive Empathy Building Experiences” by Young, G. W., O’Dwyer, N., and Smolic, A. (2021). In this study, the authors conducted an experiment to examine whether immersive experiences through virtual reality (VR) can foster empathy. The study concludes that more immersive and realistic first-person narratives significantly enhance a user's ability to empathize with others, as they allow users to step into someone else’s shoes and view the world from that person’s perspective. This finding can be applied to the analysis of *Brother Bear*, as it supports the idea that Kenai’s immersive transformation into a bear enables him to shift perspectives and develop a deeper sense of empathy, particularly through experiencing the world from another being’s point of view.

The fourth and final study is “Five stages of grief in CS Lewis’ Novel A Grief Observed.” by Nurjanah, H. (2023). In this study, the author analyzes the main character, Lewis, and his grief following the death of his wife. The study reveals that the main character goes through all five stages of grief as outlined by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. In the first stage, denial and isolation, the main character refuses to accept the reality of his wife’s death. In the second stage, anger, he criticizes and blames God for his loss. This is followed by the bargaining stage, where he attempts to negotiate with his grief and find a way to deal with the loss. In the depression stage, he becomes hopeless, mournful, and emotionally numb. Finally, in the acceptance stage, Lewis reaches a point where he can accept his wife’s death and begins to move forward with his life.

The four studies discussed above are relevant to the researcher’s topic of interest, as they provide theoretical and empirical support for understanding empathy, immersive transformation, character development, and five stages of grief, all of which are central to the analysis of Kenai’s journey in *Brother Bear*.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Studied Material

This study focuses on the movie *Brother Bear*, produced by Walt Disney Pictures and directed by Aaron Blaise and Robert Walker. It was produced by Chuck Williams under Walt Disney Feature Animation and released in 2003. The story is set in a pre-historic land, where nature and the spiritual world are deeply connected. Three brothers, Sitka, Denahi, and Kenai, return to their tribe from a hunting trip to prepare for Kenai's coming-of-age ceremony. During the ceremony, Kenai receives a totem representing his guiding virtue in life: the Bear of Love. Disappointed, he resents the totem's meaning, as he perceives bears as selfish and aggressive creatures. Soon after, Kenai's reckless actions lead to a confrontation with a bear, resulting in Sitka sacrificing himself to save his brothers. Overcome with grief and anger, Kenai seeks revenge and hunts down the bear, killing it. However, the Great Spirits, who watch over all life, intervene and transform Kenai into a bear as a lesson for his unnecessary violence. Now living as the very creature he once despised, Kenai embarks on a journey to regain his human form, accompanied by a lively bear cub named Koda. Along the way, he learns about empathy, the true meaning of love and sacrifice.

3.2 Study Design

In this study, the researcher conducts the research using a descriptive qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about a participant's condition, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions and others (Moloeng, 2018). According to Awasthy (2019), qualitative research involves

variety of methods of data collection such as interviews, observations, focused group discussions, projective tools, drawings, narratives, biographies, videos, and anything which helps to understand world of participants.

The researcher chooses this method because the study aims to describe a phenomenon in depth, with a focus on understanding the meanings, experiences, and interpretations underlying the research questions. Specifically, the study seeks to answer how immersive transformation changes Kenai's perspective, the role of Kenai's transformation in challenging his beliefs and nature, and how the movie reshape the relationship between humans and animals in the movie's narrative, the researchers will rely on characterization theory, *mise-en-scene* theory, empathy theory, immersion theory, five stages of grief theory, violence theory, and human-animal bond theory.

3.3 Data Gathering

In order to collect the data, the researcher decides on the movie to analyze and watch the movie several times to analyze and find the important details related to characterization of the characters, summary of the scene, picture, and take notes on the dialogs on several important scenes to use as evidence. After that, the researcher finds several studies and theories related to the researcher's concern and the movie. The related studies help the researcher to achieve better knowledge and understanding.

3.4 Data Analysis & Interpretation

After the data has been gathered, the researcher will use it to analyze the problems of this study. The data will be derived from various elements of the film, such as dialogues, pictures, and scene summaries, which will serve as evidence for the analysis. The researcher will begin by identifying and categorizing scenes that reflect key aspects

of Kenai's characterization and will use picture evidence to analyze the visual elements, such as facial expressions, for the mise-en-scène theory. The dialogues will be used to analyze how the characters express their thoughts and emotions. The data will help the researcher in identifying and answering the questions from the statement of the problem.



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CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the three problem statements mentioned in the first chapter of this study. In analyzing these problems, the theories outlined in Chapter II will be applied to support the researcher's interpretation of the film. Several key scenes from the movie will be used as evidence to strengthen the analysis.

4.1 Kenai's Transformation into a Bear

Kenai's transformation into a bear is not something that happened without any reasons. The main reason of why the Great Spirit wants to change him into a bear is to teach him a lesson about life. The movie started with telling us that the world was full of magic, which come from the ever-changing lights in the sky. These lights represent the ancestors, who possess the power to changes the world and guide the living.



Figure 1. The Great Spirit in form of northern lights (Brother Bear, 2003 00:01:24)

As shown in Figure 1, the film presents a belief that after death, someone becomes the spirit of the animal totem they received during their coming-of-age ceremony. This later will be backed up by a few scenes after the death of Sitka, where his spirit is visually represented through the presence of an eagle, which is his totem. These scenes emphasize the deep connection between human, nature, and spiritual

world in the film. This connection is also reinforced from the lyrics in one of the soundtracks of the movie, *Great Spirits*. A line that said, “*Great Spirits of all who lived before, take our hands and lead us, fill our hearts and souls with all you know, show us that in your eyes, we are all the same*” reflect the connection between all living beings and the spiritual world.

Kenai’s transformation into a bear begins when he was still a human. Before his coming-of-age ceremony, Kenai and his two older brothers, Sitka and Denahi, go fishing together. After their successful catch, they return to their tribe to place the fish into a woven basket, which is then tied to the top of a tree, to keep the fish away from the bear and other carnivores. But due to Kenai’s recklessness, the basket was not tied up properly to the tree, causing it to fall back to the ground, to which Kenai noticed, but choose to ignore it instead and go to his coming-of-age ceremony which located on the tribe’s ceremonial site on top of a cliff.

After the coming-of-age ceremony, Kenai returns to the village and expresses his dissatisfaction to Sitka with the totem he received which is a bear that symbolize love. Shortly after, Denahi and other members of the tribe confront Kenai about the fish basket, which was found stolen by the bear. Feeling cornered, Kenai then suggested that he will retrieve back the basket from the bear. But later, he found that the basket is already destroyed on top of a cliff.



Figure 2. Kenai found the basket destroyed (Brother Bear, 2003 00:11:27)

After observing the destroyed basket, Kenai is about to give up and return to his tribe. However, he suddenly hears the grunt of a bear and spot the animal that stole the basket. Filled with anger and a desire for revenge, he decides to confront and attack the bear. At the same time, Sitka and Denahi are going after Kenai. They arrive just in time to see Kenai fall down the cliff. Sitka rushes to help Kenai climb back up, but before he can reach safety, the bear attacks. Denahi quickly intervenes by distracting the bear, giving Sitka the chance to pull Kenai back up. Denahi then lures the bear toward the top of the icy mountain. As the bear follows, Sitka and Kenai hurry to join Denahi.

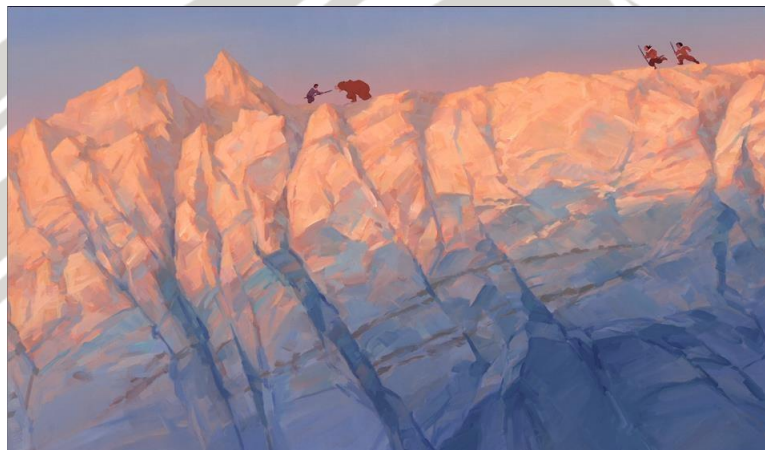


Figure 3. Sitka and Kenai running to help Denahi from the bear attacks (Brother Bear, 2003 00:12:23)

Denahi is then attacked by the bear and nearly falls into a hole in the icy mountain. Kenai rushes to help him, while Sitka steps in to confront the bear. However, Kenai is not strong enough to pull Denahi and Denahi struggles to find anything to step on. Both of them start to panic as the situation becomes more dire. Sitka, momentarily distracted by the sight of his distressed brothers, is attacked and wounded by the bear. The bear then starts to approach Kenai who is still trying to pull Denahi. Sitka, despite his injuries realizes the danger they are in. He notices growing cracks in the ice between the bear and his brothers. In a desperate act to protect them, Sitka drives his spear into the ice, widening the cracks and creating a separation between himself, the bear, and

his brothers. The ice begins to give way, and the mountain starts to collapse into a lake underneath them.



Figure 4. Sitka and the bear falling down the icy mountain (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:13:12)

Seeing the mountain collapse, Denahi and Kenai run to the edge, trying to find Sitka. However, all they see is the bear, who survived the fall and is now running away from the scene. The brothers quickly rush down the mountain in hopes of finding Sitka. Instead, they come across his broken spear and a torn piece of his clothing. From this moment on, Kenai's behavior begins to reflect the five stages of grief. According to Kübler-Ross (1969), humans typically go through five emotional stages when dealing with loss: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

4.1.1 Kenai's Denial

Realizing the reality, Denahi gives up the search, accepting that Sitka is gone. Kenai, however, remains in denial. He frantically calling out for Sitka, unwilling to believe the death of his brother.



Figure 5. Kenai being in denial after finding Sitka's belongings (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:14:14)



Figure 6. Denahi accepts the fact that Sitka is dead while Kenai is still in denial (Brother Bear, 2003 00:14:27)

People grieve in different ways. While Denahi silently accepts Sitka's death, Kenai displays the first stage of grief: denial. According to Kübler-Ross (1969), People often experience shock and disbelief after a loss, refusing to acknowledge their grief. In this stage, individuals may refuse to accept the reality of what has happened as a way to protect themselves from the immediate pain of grief. Kenai's refusal to believe that Sitka is gone and kept calling desperately for his brother is clearly the sign of the first stage of grief, where he is still emotionally processing the reality.

4.1.2 Kenai's Anger

During Sitka's death ceremony, Kenai is visibly angry and overwhelmed with emotion. Unable to contain his frustration and grief, he leaves the ceremony before it ends, walking away and leaving Denahi alone with the village shaman. In the following scene, Kenai is shown picking up stones and clutching a spear, clearly preparing to seek revenge on the bear he holds responsible for Sitka's death.



Figure 7. Kenai is angry during Sitka's death ceremony (Brother Bear, 2003 00:15:04)

After the ceremony ends, Kenai approaches Denahi and asks him to join in hunting down the bear that killed Sitka. However, Denahi refuses, stating that he does not blame the bear for what happened. Kenai, still consumed by anger and grief, insists on going anyway. Despite Denahi's attempts to stop him, Kenai pushes forward, determined to take revenge. Worried about his brother's, Denahi eventually follows after him, hoping to prevent him from doing something reckless. This shift in Kenai's behavior shows his transition from being denial to the second stage of grief, anger, where individuals may project their anger onto others they associate with the loss (Kübler-Ross, 1969). In Kenai's case, he directs his rage toward the bear, blaming it entirely for Sitka's death.

Kenai then begins his journey to track the bear, eventually arriving at an area filled with berry bushes where he finally encounters the bear. As soon as the bear sees him, it runs off toward the mountains, with Kenai chasing after it. He continues to chase the bear through the rugged terrain until they both end up trapped on a narrow cliffside. Meanwhile, Denahi, still following Kenai's trail, stumbles upon fresh bear tracks and begins tracking them as well. Back on the cliff, Kenai attacks the bear where he almost got overpowered a few times by the bear.



Figure 8. Kenai and the bear fighting (Brother Bear, 2003 00:19:33)

Denahi, who finally manages to catch up to Kenai, sees his brother being overpowered by the bear and rushes in to help. In the struggle, Kenai manages to kill the bear just moments before Denahi arrives. Surprised by the sudden silence and no

longer hearing the sounds of the fight, Denahi becomes even more alarmed and quickens his pace toward the scene.



Figure 9. Kenai killed the bear (Brother Bear, 2003 00:20:13)

4.1.3 Kenai's Immersive Transformation

After the bear's death, the sky begins to darken, creating an eerie and otherworldly atmosphere. Suddenly, a stream of blue light descends from the sky and flows toward the cliff like a waterfall made of glowing energy, startling Kenai. When Kenai reaches out and touches the light, it suddenly burst and change into shades of yellow, orange, and red. From it, the spirits of animals begin to appear, revealing the presence of the Great Spirits.



Figure 10. Blue lights pouring from the sky (Brother Bear, 2003 00:20:50)



Figure 11. Kenai touches the blue light (Brother Bear, 2003 00:21:18)



Figure 12. The Great Spirit revealing themselves to Kenai (Brother Bear, 2003 00:21:32)

Among those spirits, Kenai is approached by the spirit of an eagle which then transforms into Sitka. Sitka's expression reflects disappointment, silently conveying his sorrow over Kenai's decision to kill the bear. In the next scene, the Great Spirits lift the bear's lifeless body and transform it into a spirit, returning it to the spiritual realm. As Kenai watches, he is suddenly lifted into the sky by Sitka, still in his eagle form. Surrounded by light and the presence of the spirits, Kenai's body transforms into a bear.

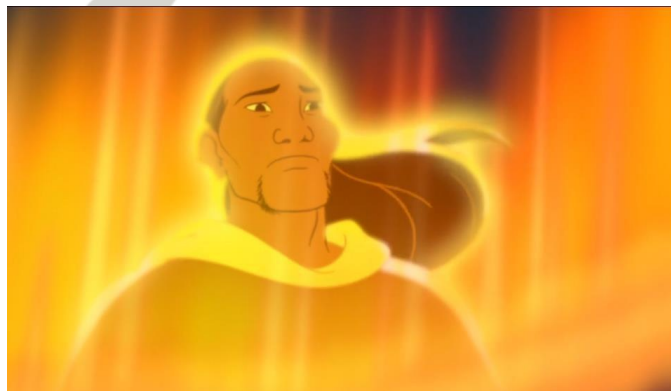


Figure 13. Sitka disappointed in Kenai (Brother Bear, 2003 00:21:55)



Figure 14. The Great Spirit transforms Kenai into a bear (Brother Bear, 2003 00:22:21)

After the transformation, the Great Spirits disappear, leaving Kenai in the form of a bear alone on top of the cliff. At the same time, Denahi finally arrives at the cliff's peak. When Denahi reaches the spot where Kenai had been standing, he finds only Kenai's torn clothes on the ground. Believing the bear had killed his brother, Denahi is devastated and now desperate for revenge. Meanwhile, Kenai, still unaware of his transformation, sees Denahi's shocked expression. Confused and frightened, Kenai loses his balance and falls from the cliff into the river below where he is brought by the current.

In the next scene, Kenai regains consciousness and meets Tanana, the tribe's shaman, on the riverbank. Still unaware of the full extent of his transformation, Kenai, now in the form of a bear, tries to share his experience with Tanana, speaking in what he believes is his normal, human voice. However, the point of view then shifts to Tanana's perspective, where Kenai is only heard grunting and growling like a bear.

A. Dialogue 1:

Kenai: Nana, you won't believe this. I was at the top of this rock, and all of a sudden...

(Point of view changes to Tanana's point of view)

Kenai: (GRUNTING, GROWLING)

Tanana: Kenai, honey. Shh-shh-shh. I don't speak bear.

That moment signals a shift in the film, revealing that from this point onward, the story will be told from two perspectives: one from the animals and the other from

the humans. This dual perspective reinforces the film's central theme of understanding others by seeing the world through a different point of view.

After Kenai realizes that he has transformed into a bear, he begins to panic, overwhelmed by confusion and fear, while Tanana tries to calm him down. Once he's settled, Tanana explains what has happened and how Kenai can change back to human. Just as Kenai begins to ask more questions, Tanana mysteriously disappears, leaving him alone to face the beginning of his journey.



Figure 15. Panicked Kenai and Tanana (Brother Bear, 2003 00:25:35)

B. Dialogue 2:

Tanana: Kenai, listen to me. Sitka did this.

(Tanana starts observing Kenai's body)

Tanana: Strange. Spirits don't usually make these kind of changes. Oh. Oh, my, my, my, my. (GASPS)

Tanana: Sitka must have something really big planned for you. Yep, yep. You are going to get a whole new perspective on things.

Tanana: (GASPS) Oh! Do you see in black and white or colour?

(Kenai starts growling at Kenai and Tanana punches him on the nose)

Tanana: Hey. Listen to me. You got yourself into this mess. If you want to change, take it up with your brother's spirit. (pointing at the sky)

(Kenai started whining and grunting)

Tanana: (drawing on the soil) You'll find him on the mountain where the lights touch the earth. He'll help you make up for what you've done wrong.

(Change to Kenai's point of view)

Kenai: But I didn't do anything wrong. Tanana? Tanana! (looking around for Tanana)

(Tanana is gone)

Kenai: Wait. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't even know how to get there.

From the dialogue above, it becomes clear that the Great Spirits transformed Kenai into a bear to teach him an important lesson about perspective and empathy. Learning empathy involves stepping outside of one's own experiences and imagining

what others may be feeling in a given situation (Wondra & Ellsworth, 2015). There are many ways to learn empathy, and in Kenai's case, the Great Spirits choose to teach it through direct experience, by putting him in the shoes of the creature he once blamed. According to Dede (2009), immersion occurs when an experience effectively engages an individual's sensory, emotional, and cognitive processes, creating a strong sense of presence in a constructed or imagined environment. In Kenai's case, his transformation into a bear serves as an immersive transformation. Research has shown that immersive experiences can enhance empathy and deepen one's understanding of others (Bunn & Terpstra, 2009).

From the analysis above, we can conclude that Kenai is transformed into a bear after he kills a bear in revenge for his older brother's death. The Great Spirits, angered by Kenai's unnecessary act of violence, decide to transform him into a bear as a way to teach him a lesson and to help him see the world from the perspective of the very creature he once despised.

4.2 Kenai's Perspective on His Belief and Nature

4.2.1 Before His Transformation to a Bear

At the beginning of the movie, Kenai is portrayed as a young adolescent from an Inuit-inspired culture. The Inuit are an Indigenous people who primarily live in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. Traditionally, the Inuit survived by relying on land and sea animals, which they used not only for food but also for clothing, tools, and other necessities of daily life. This cultural background is reflected in the film through the traditional tribal attire worn by Kenai and other members of his community, indicating their deep connection to nature and their environment. The film often uses indirect characterization to reveal the characterization of its characters. Kenai is

depicted as immature, short tempered, and impulsive, often acting without fully considering the consequences of his actions. Despite this, he is also shown to be enthusiastic and eager about his coming-of-age ceremony. These shown in an early scene when he attempts to milk a caribou, resulting in him and both of his older brother, Sitka and Denahi, almost got trampled by a stampede of caribou. Following the incident, Kenai almost gets into a fight with Denahi, but they are separated by Sitka, the eldest brother.



Figure 16. Kenai and his brothers hiding from a stampede of caribou (Brother Bear, 2003 00:02:22)



Figure 17. Kenai and Denahi separated by Sitka (Brother Bear, 2003 00:03:06)

Dialogue 1

Sitka: Hey. Will you two knock it off?

Kenai: That's all right, Sitka. After today, he won't treat me like that.

Denahi: Oh, right, the big manhood ceremony. Doesn't matter what the spirits say, you'll always be our baby brother.

Kenai: Well, wait till I get my totem.

Denahi: Baby brother.

Sitka: Hey, I said knock it off. The quicker we get these fish, the faster we get to your ceremony. Let's all just try and get along for a few hours. Okay, Denahi?

Denahi: Whatever you say.

Sitka: Okay, Ken...

Kenai: So, what are we waiting for?

In the dialogue, Kenai showing a short temper and engages in playful, childish banter with his brothers. Despite this, it is also evident that he is eager for his coming-of-age ceremony. The interaction also highlights the closeness between the brothers, which is further emphasized in the song *Great Spirit*, where there is a line, “lived three brothers bonded by love,” which shows how deep their family bond. The film visually reinforces their closeness through scenes of the brothers fishing together, showing moments of warmth and togetherness.

Kenai is eager for his coming-of-age ceremony because he wants to receive his totem. In the movie, each person will receive a totem during the ceremony as a spiritual guide for what they are meant to become in life. Those who fulfil the role given by their totem earn the honor of placing their handprint on the wall alongside their ancestors. Kenai believes that becoming a “true man” means following his totem, and because he sees himself as strong, brave, and destined for greatness, he expects a totem that reflects those traits. However, when he receives the totem of the bear, which symbolizes love, he is deeply disappointed. During the ceremony, his dissatisfaction is evident when he jokingly asks if anyone wants to trade totems. Later, he vents his frustration to Sitka, who gently encourages him, saying that one day he will understand the true meaning of his totem.



Figure 18. Kenai is disappointed when his totem was revealed (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:8:15)

Dialogue 2

Kenai: I just want to get my handprint on that wall.

Sitka: Just be patient, Kenai. When you live by your totem, you will.

Kenai: Really?

Sitka: Guarantee it.

Kenai: But come on, the bear of love? I mean, a bear doesn't love anyone. They don't think. They don't feel. I mean, they're... They're thieves.

This part of the dialogue also serves as foreshadowing, revealing how Kenai sees love as something that does not align with his idea of what a “real man” should value. From his words, it is clear that he does not associate bears with love. He views them as thoughtless, emotionless animals, unlike human.

After the death of Sitka, Kenai asked Denahi to go with him to hunt the bear as a revenge for the death their older brother, Sitka. However, Denahi refused, leading to them having a small argument.



Figure 19. Kenai and Denahi's argument (Brother Bear, 2003 00:16:05)

Dialogue 3

Kenai: You ready?

Denahi: For what?

Kenai: For going after the bear.

Denahi: I know what you're feeling, but killing that bear is wrong.

Kenai: Wrong? Our brother is dead and it's because of that monster.

Denahi: I don't blame the bear, Kenai.

Kenai: I see.

Denahi: Killing the bear won't make you a man.

Kenai: Now you're trying to be wise.

Denahi: I'm trying to follow my totem. Why can't you?

Kenai: You really think love has anything to do with being a man? A man wouldn't just sit here and do nothing.

Denahi: Kenai. Don't upset the spirits.

Kenai: (SCOFFS) Spirits. Thanks for your wisdom.

From the dialogue above, we gain deeper insight into Kenai's view of manhood and love, especially in the line, "*You really think love has anything to do with being a man? A man wouldn't just sit here and do nothing.*" This reveals that Kenai equates manhood with action, strength, and retaliation, rather than emotional understanding or compassion. It also shows that he is still immature and blinded by his grief and desire for revenge, unable to see the value of love as a strength rather than a weakness, despite Tanana's earlier explanation during the coming-of-age ceremony about the importance of love.



Figure 20. Tanana explains the meaning of Kenai's totem (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:08:23)



Figure 21. Kenai following the bear's footprint (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:17:41)

Kenai's decision to go after the bear aligns with Eisner's (2009) theory of violence, which suggests that two of the main reasons people resort to violence is revenge and to maintain social order. According to Eisner (2009), individuals who feel wronged or perceive an injustice are more likely to respond with violent behavior as a way to restore balance or assert control. In Kenai's case, he blames the bear for the death of his brother and chooses to hunt it in an attempt to reclaim what he has lost.

This reaction reflects the idea behind the saying “an eye for an eye,” suggesting that revenge can be seen as a justified response to grief. Kenai’s actions can also be understood through the lens of Kübler-Ross’s (1969) five stages of grief, particularly the second stage: anger. At this stage, individuals often express emotional pain by blaming others, which in Kenai’s case leads to the act of killing the bear. Additionally, Eisner’s theory also explains that violence is sometimes used to maintain control or enforce social norms. In some cultures, violence is considered acceptable, especially when tied to proving dominance or fulfilling traditional expectations of manhood. This belief is something Kenai initially internalizes, as he equates violence and action with masculinity.

4.2.2 Kenai as a Bear

After being transformed into a bear, Kenai speaks with Tanana and the two moose brothers, Rutt and Tuke, who encourage him to begin his journey to find "the place where the lights touch the earth." However, not long after setting out, Kenai gets caught in an animal trap. As he struggles to escape, a bear cub approaches and offers to help him. However, Kenai refuses the cub’s help, unwilling to accept assistance especially from another bear.



Figure 22. Kenai tries to reach for a stick to free himself (Brother Bear, 2003 00:29:56)



Figure 23. Kenai meets a bear cub who offered to help him (Brother Bear, 2003 00:30:21)

Dialogue 4

Bear cub: You need to get down. Let me help.

(the bear cub holds the stick and then starts to hit Kenai with it)

Kenai: Oh, wait. Ow!

Bear cub: Hold still. (still hitting Kenai)

Kenai: Just... Stop that. Ow! If you just... Stop it!

Bear cub: (stops hitting Kenai) It's no use. The only way to get down is to chew your own foot off.

Kenai : I don't need some stupid bear's help. I just need the stick.

Bear cub: Okay, here. (handing the stick to Kenai)

Kenai: No, I'll do it myself. Put it back.

(the bear cub puts down the stick near Kenai)

Kenai: No, where you found it.

Bear cub: Oh.

Kenai: To the left. By the little rock.

Bear cub: Here?

Kenai: Yes.

(the bear cub sits next to the sticks eating berries and watching Kenai trying to reach the sticks)

Kenai then tries to reach the stick on his own, but even as the sun begins to set, he is still unable to grab it. Quietly, the bear cub pushes the stick closer, allowing Kenai to finally reach it. In the scenes above, and especially when Kenai proudly says, “*Ha! See? It's all about using your head,*” after he finally reaches the stick, it becomes clear that he still holds a high opinion of himself and believes he succeeded without help. He remains unaware that it was actually the cub’s quiet act of kindness that enabled his escape, showing that Kenai is still stuck in a mindset of independence and pride.



Figure 24. Kenai tries to reach for the stick himself (Brother Bear, 2003 00:31:02)



Figure 25. The bear cub helps Kenai (Brother Bear, 2003 00:31:14)

However, even after obtaining the sticks, Kenai is still unable to free himself. The bear cub then proposes a deal: if he can help Kenai get down, Kenai must accompany him to the Salmon Run. Kenai, still dismissive, raises the stakes, if the cub fails, he must leave and never look back. Both agree to the terms, and Kenai scoffs, saying something along the lines of, *“But this is a human trap, and you’re just a dumb little bear. There’s no way you’re going to be able...”* clearly expressing his belief in the inferiority of bears and their lack of intelligence. Yet, in an instant, the bear cub successfully frees Kenai, proving him wrong. When the bear cub proposes their way of travelling, the bear cub suddenly started to smell the air and bolted away, telling Kenai to run. Kenai being confused with why the bear cub’s running away, starts to smell around the air, showing that his smelling senses sharpens as a bear.



Figure 26. Kenai sniffing the air, noticing an unfamiliar smell for the first time as a bear
(*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:32:21)

After escaping from Denahi, who is now hunting him, Kenai begins to reflect on his transformation into a bear and struggles to understand why Denahi would attack him. When he asks, the bear cub simply responds, “*That’s what they do.*” This brief exchange reveals the stark contrast between how humans and bears perceive one another. As a former human, Kenai is surprised by Denahi’s aggression, believing that his brother would not normally hunt bears without reason. In contrast, the bear cub, who has only ever seen the world as a bear, accepts human violence as a given, viewing humans as natural predators. This moment emphasizes the difference in perspective between the two species and marks the beginning of Kenai’s realization about the consequences of human actions from a bear’s point of view.



Figure 27. Kenai is confused after being chased by Denahi (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:33:46)

Realizing the urgency of his situation, Kenai initially attempts to leave, abandoning the deal he made with the bear cub. However, the cub explains that he was

separated from his mother and, with a hunter nearby, he's unsure whether he can make it to the Salmon Run on his own. He pleads with Kenai to help him, trying to convince him to stay. Kenai remains hesitant until the cub mentions that he knows the location of the place where the lights touch the ground. Hearing this, Kenai finally agrees to keep his promise, not out of compassion just yet, but because the cub might lead him to the place he's been seeking. From this we can see that Kenai is still self-centred but he starts to accept help from other bear, something he initially resisted. Shortly after, the bear cub introduces himself as Koda, after a moment when Kenai refers to him as "kid" and tells him to keep some distance.



Figure 28. Kenai pushing Koda away from him (Brother Bear, 2003 00:35:57)

The next day, the two begin their journey together. Kenai quickly becomes annoyed with Koda, who talks nonstop and tries to engage him in conversation. Kenai repeatedly tries to quiet him, but eventually gives up. In turn, Koda begins to feel irritated by Kenai's cold and dismissive attitude. This mutual frustration highlights the tension between them and shows that they have not yet formed a bond. In the following scenes, Koda repeatedly tries to connect with Kenai, but Kenai remains distant and cold, consistently trying to keep his emotional and physical distance. This behavior reflects Kenai's ongoing reluctance to accept his new identity as a bear and to form any real connection with someone from a species he once saw as inferior.



Figure 25. Kenai and Koda start their journey together (Brother Bear, 2003 00:35:17)



Figure 30. Kenai and Koda being annoyed with each other (Brother Bear, 2003 00:39:24)

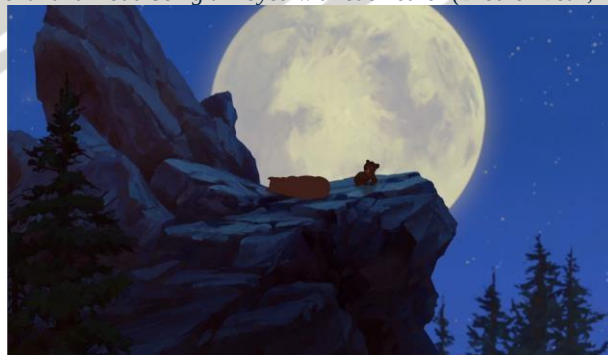


Figure 31. Koda tries to sleep near Kenai, but then Kenai moves away (Brother Bear, 2003 00:40:09)

However, the tension between them begins to shift during a playful moment on a hill. As they stand in the wind blowing up from below, both Kenai and Koda lose their balance and tumble down the slope, landing in a mud pool. Koda bursts into laughter at Kenai's muddy hairstyle, and in response, Kenai playfully reshapes Koda's fur into a silly style as well. This lighthearted moment marks the beginning of their bond and suggests that Kenai is slowly starting to accept his new identity, not just as a bear, but as someone capable of connection, joy, and companionship.



Figure 32. Kenai and Koda playing on top of a hill and fall to the mud pool (Brother Bear 00:40:28 ; 00:40:41)

As they continue their journey, Kenai and Koda are stopped by Rutt and Tuke, the moose brothers, who are fleeing from Denahi and ask to join them. Kenai tries to reassure them by saying that they lost the hunter back at the glacier. However, the moose point out the trail of footprints behind them, implying that the hunter may still be following their path. Kenai then suggest them to ride a herd of mammoths to move faster, which is a strange and unusual idea for the moose brothers and Koda, who, as animals, aren't accustomed to using other animals for transportation. This suggestion reflects Kenai's lingering human mindset, revealing that he has not yet fully adapted to seeing the world through the eyes of a bear.



Figure 33. Kenai and Koda riding mammoths (Brother Bear, 2003 00:41:24)

That night, as they rest under the stars, Koda begins telling Kenai some stories. Suddenly, the Northern Lights appear in the sky, which Koda calls “the night rainbow.” Curious, Kenai asks if Koda knows about the Great Spirits. Koda replies that his mother told him the spirits are responsible for all the changes in the world. Kenai, still burdened by grief and confusion, responds, “*You know, for a change, maybe they could just leave*

things alone.” When Koda asks what he means, Kenai reveals that his brother is now one of the spirits. Surprised, Koda says he didn’t know Kenai had a brother “up there,” and Kenai explains that his brother was killed by a “monster.” Koda, unaware of the full truth, asks for his brother’s name. When Kenai tells him, Koda softly says, “*Thanks, Sitka. If it weren’t for you, I would have never met Kenai,*” which leaves Kenai stunned. Koda then cuddles close to him and gently says, “*I always wanted a brother.*” This moment marks a deep emotional connection between the two, showing the beginning of a brotherly bond between the two, especially as Kenai looks up at the sky, as if he is starting to understand Sitka’s decision to transform him into a bear.

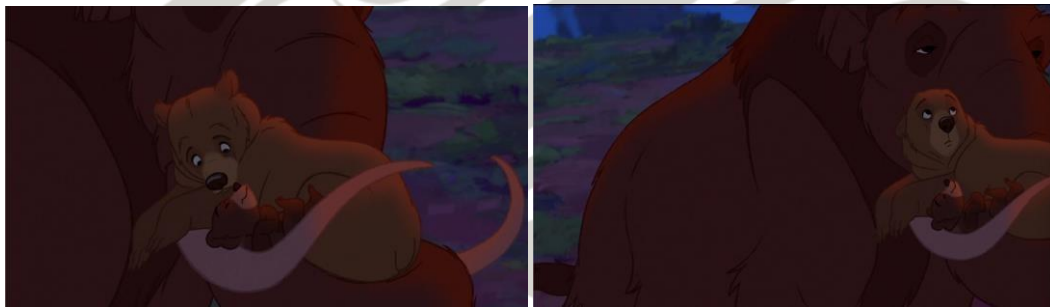


Figure 34. Kenai didn't push Koda away for the first time (Brother Bear, 2003 00:43:59 ; 00:44:02)

When they finally decide to get off the mammoth, it turns out that Koda doesn’t actually know the way to the Salmon Run, which frustrates Kenai. Disappointed and irritated, Kenai expresses his anger, feeling misled. The two then leave the moose brothers behind, who are still riding the mammoth, struggling to figure out how to get off.

Dialogue 5

Koda: I'm sorry we're lost, okay? Even though it's your fault.

Kenai: My fault? (GROANS) That's it.

Koda: Just remember, if it weren't for me, you'd be hanging upside down.

Kenai: Better than being stuck nowhere with you and your blabbering mouth.

Kenai: (mocking voice) "I'm lost. I can't find my mommy. Will you take me to the salmon run?"

Kenai: Why don't you just grow up?

Koda: Fine. I'll go on my own then.

Kenai: Fine. Go ahead.

Koda: Fine.

Kenai: Fine.

Koda: Fine.

(Koda starts to walk away from Kenai)

Kenai: (sighing, starts following Koda) Koda? Koda?

The dialogue above shows that, despite their argument, it is Kenai who approaches Koda first when the cub walks away. This small but meaningful gesture reveals that Kenai has begun to truly care for Koda, even in moments of frustration. Kenai follows Koda into a cave, where he discovers ancient drawings left by humans on the walls. Among them, he notices an image depicting a human and a bear together, which catches his attention.

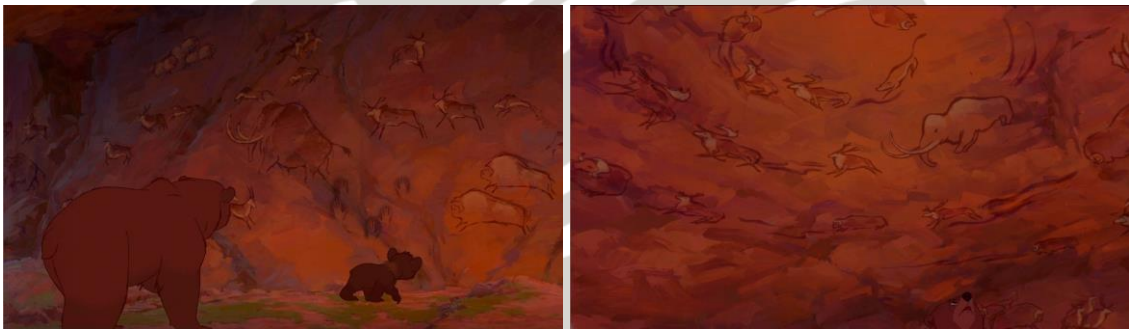


Figure 35. Kenai and Koda looking inside the cave (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:47:34 ; 00:48:03)



Figure 36. A drawing of a bear and human (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:48:19)

Drawn to the illustration, Kenai approaches it and focuses on the image of the bear, his face hardening with anger. At that moment, Koda, noticing what Kenai is looking at, hides behind him and quietly says, “*Those monsters are really scary. Especially with those sticks.*” Kenai is stunned by Koda’s words.



Figure 37. Kenai focuses on the bear (Brother Bear, 2003 00:48:22 ; 00:48:24)



Figure 38. Kenai focuses on the human drawing after what Koda said (Brother Bear, 2003 00:48:44 ; 00:48:48)

This moment reveals the empathy gap between them: Kenai, as a former human, has always seen bears as the monsters, while Koda, who has only known life as a bear, sees humans as the true threat. Both perceive the other side as the “monster” because neither has fully understood the other’s perspective. However, now that Kenai is living as a bear and has experienced being hunted by his own brother, he begins to understand what Koda means. This scene marks a crucial turning point, highlighting the importance of empathy and the consequences of seeing the world through a single lens.

Kenai and Koda continue their journey, now joking and playing along the way, showing that a genuine bond has formed between them. Eventually, they arrive at a volcanic area filled with hot steam vents. As they attempt to cross it, they are suddenly stopped by Denahi, who has continued to track them. A tense chase ensues, but the two manage to escape after Kenai bravely saves Koda. As they cross a tree that serves as a makeshift bridge, it collapses behind them, cutting Denahi off and allowing them to reach the other side safely.

Dialogue 6

Koda: Why do they hate us, Kenai?

Kenai: We're bears.

Koda: So?

Kenai: So, you know how they are. They're killers.

Koda: Wait a minute, who's the killers?

Kenai: Bears.

Koda: What? Which bears? I'm not like that, and you're not like that.

Kenai: Well, obviously not all bears. I mean, you're okay. Most bears will look for any excuse to attack a human.

Koda: But, Kenai, he attacked us.

Kenai: (frustrated) You're just a cub. When you're older, you'll understand.

The dialogue above highlights the difference in perspective between Kenai and Koda. Koda's innocent question, "*Why do they hate us, Kenai?*" reflects his struggle to understand the fear and violence directed toward bears. As the conversation unfolds, the contradiction in Kenai's thinking becomes clear. He refers to bears as "killers" and generalizes their behavior, despite the fact that he is now a bear himself and that Koda, clearly gentle and kind, does not fit that stereotype. Kenai tries to justify his belief by saying, "*Most bears will look for any excuse to attack a human,*" but Koda quickly challenges this by pointing out, "*But Kenai, he attacked us.*" This simple yet powerful line reminds Kenai that, in their case, the human (Denahi) was the aggressor. Kenai's frustrated response, "*You're just a cub. When you're older, you'll understand,*" reveals his internal conflict and the difficulty he faces in letting go of old beliefs. This moment exposes the lingering empathy gap within Kenai, as he continues to wrestle with the identity shift from human to bear.

Kenai and Koda soon arrive at the Salmon Run, where they are welcomed by a group of other bears. After a brief introduction, Kenai plans to leave and head toward the mountain beside the Salmon Run, still focused on his original goal. However, he is stopped by the other bears, who gently remind him that this place belongs to all bears. This moment emphasizes the sense of community among the bears, something that

Kenai is still learning to be part of. As he observes and interacts with the other bears, Kenai begins to learn what it means to live as a bear. Slowly, he starts to enjoy this new life, recognizing how different it is from his life as a human. This emotional shift is underscored by the film's soundtrack, particularly the song "Welcome", where the lyrics *"It's nothing like I've ever seen before"* highlight Kenai's experience of wonder and transformation. The song reinforces how he is beginning to see the bear world not as something foreign or threatening, but as something beautiful, warm, and worth belonging to.



Figure 39. Kenai watching the other bear (Brother Bear, 2003 00:59:11)



Figure 40. Kenai laughing alongside other bears (Brother Bear, 2003 01:00:09)

At the end of the day, after the salmon hunt, all the bears at the Salmon Run gather together to share stories about the most interesting events that happened to them that year. When it's Koda's turn, he begins to tell the story of how he and his mother were attacked by a hunter and how he became separated from her. As Koda recounts the event, Kenai's expression slowly changes. He begins to realize, with growing horror and guilt, that the bear he killed in revenge for Sitka's death was actually

Koda's mother. This devastating moment marks a turning point for Kenai, as he is suddenly forced to confront the consequences of his actions, not just from the perspective of a human seeking justice, but now from the perspective of a bear who has bonded with someone directly affected by his violence.

Overwhelmed with guilt, Kenai distances himself from the group and begins pacing back and forth, visibly tormented. He struggles with the weight of the truth, uncertain whether he should tell Koda what really happened between him and Koda's mother. This internal conflict reveals the depth of Kenai's remorse and the emotional maturity he is beginning to develop, as he wrestles with the responsibility of owning his past mistakes.



Figure 41. Kenai decides to tell Koda the truth (Brother Bear, 2003 01:05:49)

Dialogue 7

Kenai: There's something I, uh... You know that story you told me last night?

Koda: Yeah.

Kenai: Well, I have a story to tell you.

Koda: Really? What's it about?

Kenai: Well, it's kind of about a man, and kind of about a bear. But mostly it's about a monster. A monster who did something so bad...

The dialogue above marks a deeply emotional and vulnerable moment for Kenai, as he finally decides to confess the truth to Koda. The line, “Well, it's kind of about a man, and kind of about a bear. But mostly it's about a monster. A monster who did something so bad...” is especially significant because Kenai does not begin by making excuses or shifting blame. Instead, he refers to himself as a “monster”, and

admits, *“Koda, I did something very wrong,”* fully acknowledging the gravity of his actions. This moment later reinforced in the lyrics of one of the soundtracks called *“No Way Out”* and echoed again when Kenai says a similarly heart-wrenching line after the song ends: *“Koda, I wish I could... If there was just some way... I'd give anything if... If I could just... (sighs) I'm sorry, Koda. I'm so sorry.”* This moment reflects a huge transformation in Kenai's character. From someone who once acted out of anger and vengeance to someone who now chooses honesty and accountability, even if it means destroying the bond he has come to cherish with Koda.

After telling Koda the truth, Kenai walks toward the mountain, at the same time, Denahi is being guided there by an eagle, whom we believe to be Sitka. When Kenai finally reaches the top of the mountain, he calls out to Sitka. However, instead of Sitka, he is confronted by Denahi, who is still determined to kill him. Kenai tries to defend himself and pushes Denahi away while pleading with Sitka to change him back into a human. However, from Denahi's point of view, Kenai, still in bear form, appears to be growling like any other bear.

The struggle intensifies as both brothers fall down a cliff. Just as Denahi is about to kill Kenai, Koda, who had earlier left after learning the truth, returns and knocks Denahi aside. Koda then grabs the spear and runs off with it, pursued by Denahi. Kenai chases after them, begging Denahi to leave Koda alone. As Denahi finally catches up and points the spear at Kenai, Sitka suddenly appears, and the Northern Lights blaze across the sky, stunning not only Denahi but also the bears at Salmon Run. Sitka then appears and transforms Kenai back into a human. He briefly shows himself in human form, calming Denahi, and hands Kenai his totem from the spear and Denahi's coat. Now human, Kenai sees Koda hiding, no longer able to understand him. Despite the

change, they hug each other. The scene shifts to Kenai's perspective, his bear totem in one hand, and a confused Koda beside him.



Figure 42. Kenai chooses to become a bear (Brother Bear, 2003 1:15:09)

Dialogue 8

Kenai: (looking at Sitka) He needs me

Denahi: You know, he did look better as a bear

(Sitka looks at both of his brothers, smiling)

Kenai: (laughs, then becomes serious) But, Denahi...

Denahi: It's all right, Kenai (he approaches Kenai)

(Kenai put Koda down and walks toward Denahi, while Koda notices something else in the distance)

Denahi: No matter what you choose, (put's Kenai's totem necklace around his neck) you'll always be my little brother.

(Kenai and Denahi hold hands while Sitka watches them with proud smile)

(Kenai starts to transform into a bear while hugging Denahi)

Denahi: Did I say little?

(Kenai, Denahi, and Sitka hug each other, laughing)

From the dialogue above, we see that Kenai has truly changed. Once a boy who hated bears, he is now a man who chooses to remain a bear, despite being given the chance to return to human form just so he can care for Koda. His transformation reflects deep personal growth and empathy. He has evolved from someone who had no compassion for bears into someone who now empathizes not only with humans but also with animals, especially bears.

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that Kenai's immersive experience as a bear profoundly transforms his character. Initially portrayed as arrogant, prideful, and filled with hatred toward bears, Kenai goes on a significant personal journey. Through his transformation and close bond with Koda, he begins to see the world from

a different perspective. As a result, he becomes more mature, responsible, and empathetic, especially toward animals, and bears in particular.

4.3 Human and Animal Relationship in *Brother Bear*

The movie *Brother Bear* explores various aspects of the relationship between humans and animals throughout its storyline. A clear example of this connection is reflected in the lyrics of the soundtrack "*Great Spirits*", which includes lines such as "man and nature lived side by side" and "we are all the same." These lyrics highlight the film's core message: that humans and nature, especially animals, are meant to coexist in harmony. Schmölcke and Grimm (2021) mentioned that perceptions of animals vary across cultures, with some societies viewing them as equal beings or "other-than-human persons". In the world of *Brother Bear*, most human characters do not view themselves as inherently superior to animals. This perspective is especially embodied by the Great Spirits, who treat all living beings as equals and interconnected.

This belief is further illustrated in the coming-of-age ceremony, a significant cultural event in the story. During the ceremony, each individual receives a totem in the shape of an animal, symbolizing a specific virtue that is meant to guide them through life, such as wisdom, bravery, or love. The animal totems serve as spiritual representations of the values that connect human beings to the natural world. This practice suggests that animals are not just physical creatures but are seen as teachers, protectors, and companions, emphasizing the deep respect and bond between humans and wildlife in the film's cultural setting. This portrayal closely aligns with what Bulliet (2005) describes as the predomestic era of human-animal relationships. In this period, humans interacted with animals not solely for material needs such as food, clothing, or tools, but also engaged with them in symbolic and spiritual ways.



Figure 43. Totems shown in the movie (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:08:20; 00:10:21)

However, even though the humans in the movie appear to view animals as equals, it does not eliminate the presence of negative relationships between the two. Despite the cultural respect for animals, tension and conflict still exist. Humans and animals that share the same habitat often compete for resources, such as food, territory, or safety. This is illustrated early in the film, when a bear steals the fish that Kenai, Denahi, and Sitka had caught. This incident leads to a confrontation that ultimately results in Sitka's death. Following this event, Kenai's initial frustration with bears turns into deep hatred, fuelling his decision to kill the bear in revenge.

The dynamic of animal is scared of human and tend to avoid them for their safety is also evident when Denahi encounters the moose brothers, Rutt and Tuke. Although Denahi was originally only hunting bears, the moose immediately flee at the sight of him. Their reaction suggests that wild animals, regardless of species, often perceive humans as a threat.

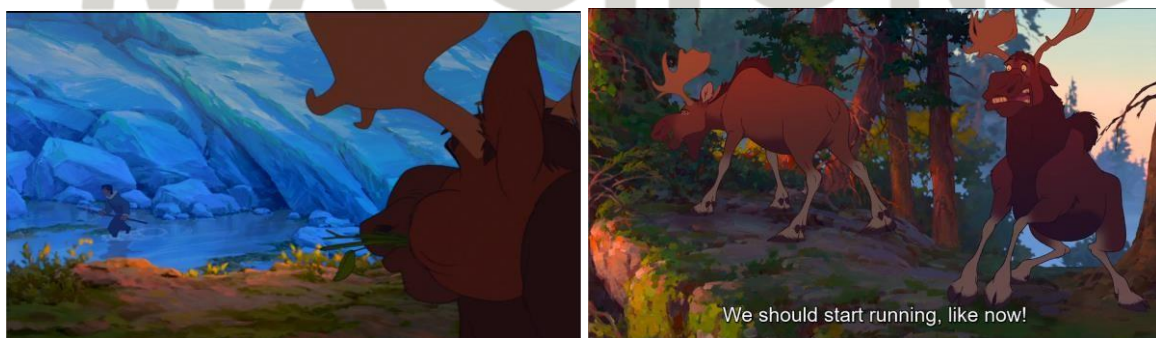


Figure 44. The moose brothers scared at the sight of Denahi (*Brother Bear*, 2003 00:37:58; 00:38:08)

Another example that highlights the complexity of human-animal relationships is when both Kenai, a human, and Koda, a bear, refer to the other species as “monsters.” This moment emphasizes how fear and misunderstanding exist on both sides. From the human perspective, animals, especially large predators like bears, are often seen as threats and may be attacked out of fear or for protection. However, from the animal’s perspective, humans can also appear as dangerous intruders, leading them to react defensively. Bears, like Koda’s mother, may attack humans not out of aggression, but because they are scared or trying to protect their young. This mutual fear shows how conflict between species is often based on survival instincts rather than malice, and it reflects the film’s theme of empathy and understanding are needed to bridge the gap between humans and animals.

However, by the end of the film, we see that the negative relationship between humans and wild animals is resolved, or at least significantly minimized. Despite Kenai remaining in his bear form, he is still accepted as a full member of the tribe. This is symbolized by his handprint being placed on the wall alongside those of his ancestors, representing not only his inclusion but also the tribe’s recognition of his growth and connection to the natural world. Likewise, Koda, a bear, is shown sitting peacefully among the tribe’s children, highlighting a moment of unity and mutual acceptance between species. In the final scene, Denahi, Kenai, and Koda are seen playing together in front of the tribe, emphasizing the harmony that has been restored.



Figure 45. Kenai and Koda being accepted in the tribe (*Brother Bear*, 2003 01:17:33; 00:17:55)

From this analysis, it is evident that the human-animal relationship in *Brother Bear* is portrayed with both negative and positive aspects. On the negative side, there is a clear sense of fear and misunderstanding between the two species, humans fear bears, viewing them as dangerous, while animals are equally wary of humans due to their violent tendencies. However, by the end of the film, this relationship transforms into a more harmonious and empathetic connection. This positive shift is symbolized by Kenai's decision to remain a bear and his close bond with Koda, as well as their acceptance by the human tribe, who welcome them during the tribe's ceremonial gathering. Another positive representation of this relationship is seen in the tribe's use of animal totems, which reflect the tribe's belief that animals hold moral and symbolic significance in human life. Through this, the film emphasizes a worldview where humans and animals are interconnected, and where animals are not only respected but also serve as sources of wisdom and personal growth.

4.4 Summary of Discussions

In this sub-chapter, the writer aims to summarize the entire discussion presented in the previous sections. Kenai is initially portrayed as an adolescent boy from an Inuit tribe. After receiving his totem, which is meant to guide his actions in life, Kenai becomes disappointed because the totem he receives, a bear symbolizing love, is not what he had expected. As Kenai views bears as creatures incapable of love or emotion, reflecting his limited and prejudiced understanding of other beings. This demonstrates what Masten et al. (2010) refer to as biased empathy which is a tendency to empathize primarily with individuals who belong to one's own social group or share a similar background, such as culture, ethnicity, or community membership. Kenai's inability to

relate to the bear as a living being with emotions shows that his empathy is restricted to humans, particularly those within his own tribe.

Kenai's perception of bears worsens after a tragic encounter with one that leads to the death of his oldest brother, Sitka. Immediately following this loss, Kenai exhibits the first stage of grief, denial, and almost immediately progresses to the second stage, anger. In his grief, Kenai begins to hunt down the bear he believes is responsible for Sitka's death. According to Kübler-Ross (1969), individuals often channel their anger toward someone or something they associate with their loss, regardless of whether the target is truly to blame. In Kenai's case, this manifests as a desire for revenge. Eisner (2001) identifies three main motivations behind violent behavior: revenge, protection and deterrence, and the maintenance of social order. Kenai's actions are primarily driven by revenge, but they also reflect a need to restore a sense of balance or justice, an impulse that, in certain societies, justifies the use of violence.

After he manages to kill the bear, Sitka, who has become one of the Great Spirits upset and transforms Kenai into a bear himself to teach him a lesson about perspective and empathy. This transformation serves as an act of immersive transformation, where Kenai is placed directly into the experience of the "other" in order to confront his own prejudice and limited understanding. By living as a bear, Kenai is given the opportunity to learn about their nature, emotions, and way of life. Through this immersive experience, he gradually begins to develop genuine empathy toward bears and recognize the consequences of his earlier actions.

At the end of the movie, Kenai, who was shown as immature, emotional, full of pride, and arrogant, has transformed into a responsible individual who cares not only for humans but also for the bears he once hated. This transformation is fully realized when he chooses to remain a bear in order to take care of Koda, even though he is given

the option to return to his human form. This selfless decision reflects his emotional growth and the deep empathy he has developed. He begins as a boy who desperate to become a man, but ultimately, he truly becomes one by becoming a bear, embracing compassion, responsibility, and selflessness.

The human-animal relationship portrayed in the movie aligns with Schmölcke and Grimm (2021) and Bulliet's (2005) concept of the predomestic era, in which some societies view animals as equal beings or "other-than-human persons." This is reflected in the film through the tribe's use of animal-shaped totems, each symbolizing a person's life purpose and spiritual guidance. However, this does not invalidate the theory proposed by Thirgood et al. (2005), which categorizes human-animal interactions into two types: positive and negative. In the film, although animals are spiritually respected, humans remain wary of them, especially bears, and this fear is mutual, as animals are also cautious of humans. Nevertheless, by the end of the movie, this negative perception is at least partially resolved through the bond formed between Kenai and Koda, symbolizing a more harmonious and empathetic connection between species.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In this chapter, the writer aims to conclude the study by addressing the research questions outlined in the first chapter, supported by the theories discussed in the findings. The analysis includes Kenai's transformation into a bear, examined through two of the five stages of grief and the theory of violence; the shift in Kenai's beliefs and perspective on nature, analyzed through the lens of characterization, immersive transformation, and empathy theories; and the influence of the film's narrative on the portrayal of human-animal relationships, explored through the human-animal bond theory. Additionally, the mise-en-scène theory is applied across all aspects of the analysis to support the interpretation of visual storytelling elements within the film.

In response to the first problem statement, why Kenai transforms into a bear, the researcher found that Kenai, who was originally human, transforms into a bear after taking revenge for the death of his older brother by killing the bear he believes is responsible. Following his loss, Kenai experiences denial and then shifts to anger, which aligns with Kübler-Ross's (1969) first two stages of grief: denial and anger. His act of revenge reflects Eisner's (2001) theory of violence, which suggests that individuals may resort to violence as a means of seeking revenge and restoring a sense of social order.

To answer the second problem, which explores how Kenai's transformation into a bear changes his previous perspective on his beliefs and nature, the researcher found that the transformation acts as a catalyst for Kenai's self development. At the beginning of the movie, Kenai is portrayed as an immature, prideful, and arrogant adolescent who

harbors hatred toward bears. He views them as emotionless and violent creatures, especially after one is seemingly responsible for the death of his older brother. This negative perception stems from biased empathy, where individuals tend to empathize primarily with those who belong to their own social group or share a similar cultural or ethnic background (Masten et al., 2010). However, after being transformed into a bear and meeting Koda, Kenai begins to see the world from a new perspective. By the end of the film, despite being given the opportunity to return to his human form, he chooses to remain a bear because Koda needs him. This decision reflects his growth into a responsible and mature individual. Kenai's transformation represents a form of immersive transformation, an experience that deeply engages an individual's sensory, emotional, and cognitive processes, creating a strong sense of presence within a constructed reality (Dede, 2009). Several studies have shown that such immersive experiences can effectively foster empathy and shift personal perspectives.

To answer the third and final problem, how the story of Brother Bear influences the relationship between humans and animals in the film's narrative, the researcher found that the human-animal relationship in the film is portrayed as one of equality, where animals are seen as beings with emotions and value, similar to humans. This aligns with Schmölcke and Grimm's (2021) and Bulliet's (2005) concept of the predomestic era, in which animals are regarded as equal beings or "other-than-human persons." However, this idealistic view does not eliminate the presence of conflict, as Thirgood et al. (2005) argue that human-animal interactions can also be negative. In the film, humans and animals often view each other with fear and suspicion. Nevertheless, by the end of the story, this negative relationship begins to heal. The acceptance of both Kenai and Koda, who are bears, into the tribe symbolizes a step

toward reconciliation and a more harmonious coexistence between humans and animals.

5.2 Suggestions

The writer would like to provide some suggestions for various parties in this section, which include:

5.2.1 For General Readers

This study provides valuable insights into Kenai's immersive transformation into a bear and his character development. It highlights how immersive transformation can significantly enhance empathy, offering a deeper understanding of others' experiences. Readers may also gain an appreciation for the importance of perspective and become more aware of the harmful effects of biased empathy through Kenai's journey.

5.2.2 For Future Researchers

Future researchers can build upon this study by applying additional theories or further exploring the ones used here. By examining more deeply the interactions between humans and animals, or by focusing on other characters and their development, future studies may uncover new perspectives on empathy, transformation, and cross-species relationships in the film.

5.2.3 For English Letters Study Program

In the English Study Program, students can further explore Kenai's transformation into a bear to gain a deeper understanding of immersive transformation and empathy theory, along with their application in literature and real-life contexts. This topic can also help students develop greater awareness of the importance of perspective and empathy.

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