

EXPLORING THE ADVENTURE GENRE WITHIN THE MULTIVERSE DIMENSION IN *EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE* (2022)

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Abstract

Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022) offers an innovative reinterpretation of adventure genre conventions by integrating elements of science fiction, absurdist comedy, and existential inquiry. The film reframes adventure not solely as a physical journey across dimensions, but as an emotional and psychological odyssey, centered on the protagonist Evelyn's internal transformation. Drawing upon John G. Cawelti's theory of adventure narrative structure, this paper examines how traditional genre patterns are reshaped within a chaotic multiverse framework. Evelyn's "verse-jumping"—depicted as more than spatial traversal—functions as a symbolic mirror of self-reflection, exposing multiple unrealized paths within her fractured identity. Employing a qualitative research approach and content analysis methodology, the study reveals that the film transcends the conventional 'save-the-world' trope to explore deeper themes of self-acceptance, existential pressure, and meaning-making within ordinary life. Ultimately, *Everything Everywhere All At Once* revitalizes the adventure genre, presenting it in a form that resonates with contemporary narrative complexity and emotional depth.

Keywords: Adventure genre, multiverse, film analysis, genre theory, *Everything Everywhere All At Once*.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure genre has long been a popular film genre characterized by physical travel and heroic research. In recent years, it has begun to evolve this formula by incorporating speculative factors such as time travel. The film simultaneously exemplifies and challenges conventional adventure storytelling. This analysis considers how the film represents adventure in context as well as providing a new frame for the genre.

The film *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022) by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert is one of the contemporary film works that has attracted widespread attention, both in visual aesthetics and depth of theme. The film also won many awards, including 7 Oscar Awards in 95 at the Academy Awards in 2023, which makes it one of the most popular films in modern history.



Although this film is often classified as part of the science fiction genre or comedy, the adventure element in it provides an interesting narrative aspect to analyze more. As the story of this movie will be the main character Evelyn Wang faces the Multiverse experience.

By writing this scientific Journal, the author connects one of John G. Cawelti's adventure theories as the basis for analysis. In his book *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (1976), Cawelti defines the adventure genre and the author quotes "*A story where the hero confronts dangerous and exciting situations in pursuit of a goal, typically involving a journey, struggle, or quest.*"

The purpose of this analysis is to consider the elements of the adventure genre that are constructed and described in the movie *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022). Thanks to this analysis, the author wants to show the journey of the main character which not only represents how physical adventures through various universes, but also reflects the process of finding identity and changing emotions are characteristic of adventure stories.

This analysis method uses a qualitative approach which uses the content analysis technique. The author observes and interprets the narrative elements in the movie *Everything Everywhere All At Once*, also always associated with the adventure and transformation of the experience of traveling through various universes. The main data is taken from dialogue, scenes, and film structure, then analyzed based on John G. Cawelti's theory of adventure theory. Therefore, the author seeks to understand some elements of this film because it is an element of adventure through scenes, as well as to see the cultural values contained in it.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This movie is not just about time and space, it is also about identity, life choices, and everyone's personal business. Evelyn not only moves between universes, but also pushes her limits to find the meaning of her life and her relationship with others. This journey follows the archetype of a classic adventure story, where the main character (Evelyn) changes after facing various obstacles and challenges. The development of the adventure genre in modern movies is also getting richer. Not only presenting heroic stories and linear explorations, but often incorporating philosophical, experimental, and

even absurd elements, as the audience sees in *Everything Everywhere All At Once*. Therefore, it is important to analyze this film from the perspective of the adventure genre. The goal is to understand how the structure of adventure is shaped, modified, and presented in a modern, multi-genre narrative. (John G. Cawelti, 1976)

The adventure genre in *Everything Everywhere All At Once* exists not in its traditional form, such as map-physical travel to exotic places or open-ended combat, but rather as a complex existential and emotional journey. The main character, Evelyn, is no ordinary heroine, but rather a laundry-coin-owning mom caught in a multiverse situation. Her adventure begins in a very common and familiar place, such as the tax office, then turns into an inter-dimensional leap full of risk, mystery, and strangeness. In this film, the element of adventure is strongly felt because Evelyn transforms from an ordinary person to an individual who must recognize and face various versions of herself in other universes, each with its own conflicts and consequences. On her journey, she not only fights external enemies, but also deals with fear, regret, and self-discovery. The adventure in this movie is a search for the meaning of life, family values, and acceptance of the absurdity of reality. So, although the movie seems to contain quirks and comedy, there is a strong adventure genre structure behind it. There, the protagonist is portrayed as an individual who must evolve through extraordinary challenges that not only change his life but also his perspective on the world.

The Quest In The Multiverse

Evelyn realizes she has to explore countless realities. The scene where Evelyn suddenly realizes that she has to explore many parallel realities represents the transformation of an ordinary character into another individual in the adventure narrative. Although Evelyn is very confused because she sees Mr. Waymond's husband who behaves strangely in a matter of seconds becomes another version of Mr. Waymond. The sudden change of Mr. Waymond into a different version of himself creates a dissonance of reality that puts Evelyn in a threshold position as part of the main transition in the adventure narrative structure. With a sense of confusion, Evelyn is suddenly awakened by Waymond by giving a very noble mission such as saving something not only one world, but all of them. This is no longer just an ordinary hero adventure story, but an extraordinary cross-dimensional adventure.



Picture 1. Evelyn's initial confusion and sudden transition into a multiversal quest. (Kwan & Scheinert 2022)

Based on picture 1, in Cawelti's theoretical framework regarding the adventure formula, the movie *Everything Everywhere All At Once* clearly embellishes the adventure structure where Evelyn is faced with an extraordinary event and forces her to leave the ordinary world to enter a new world full of challenges. Cawelti explains that in the adventure genre, "the hero is thrust into a world of danger and must undergo a journey which provides excitement through novelty and surprise." (Cawelti, 1976: p. 39).

In addition, the cross-dimensional adventure in this movie can also be related to the concept of multiverse in speculative fiction, which according to Everett (2003) reflects "*a narrative device that amplifies the existential uncertainty of modern life, portraying identity as multiple, unstable, and always in flux.*" We can see that in this context, the mission to save "all the worlds" is not just a heroic mission, but a representation of the complexity of human existence in the postmodern era.



Picture 2. Evelyn confronting chaotic imagery across realities (Kwan & Scheinert 2022)

Everything Everywhere All At Once is a story of self-discovery wrapped in a mess of exciting multiverses, intriguing comedy, and deep emotional touches (Peng, 2023). As Evelyn begins to feel herself adrift in the sea of the multiverse, the audience sees her thrown into various absurd worlds, from being someone with kung fu skills to being a hunk of rock, or even a world inhabited by humans with sausage fingers. But more than just action, this cross-universe journey is Evelyn's self-reflection in search of the meaning of life. Who is she really? What is truly important in her life? And how can she make peace with herself and the people she loves? (Base on picture 2)

This adventure is not just about saving the world or defeating enemies like in a typical action movie. Rather, the challenges come from the pressures of everyday life, as well as having strained relationships with her children and husband, plus the burden of work, and an identity crisis when life feels like a complete failure. Through the multiverse, Evelyn encounters different versions of herself, such as the successful, lonely, happy, or even never-married self. All these experiences made her realize that it's not about being the "best" of all possibilities, but about accepting what you have right now and living life with love and happiness. (Peng, 2023)

Cinematic Transformation While Verse-Jumping

The audience can understand that verse-jumping is not only about moving from one world to another, but also describes how a person can "jump" to a different version of themselves. In the movie *Everything Everywhere All At Once*, the verse-jumping style of

transformation refers to Evelyn's process of changing or transitioning from one version of herself to another in a different reality. This spatial disruption represents emotional recalibration and narrative reorientation; it involves the ability to access the skills, memories, and emotions of her otherworldly self. In this movie, verse-jumping is done in ways that are considered strange and unusual (such as consuming lipstick, singing a strange song, or performing an unexpected action), which successfully opens a portal to another world and connects her mind with a different version of Evelyn.



Picture 3. Referenced in the second body section about Evelyn's transformation via verse-jumping (Kwan & Scheinert 2022)

Evelyn, the main character, is an ordinary housewife who faces a lot of pressure from various aspects; her disorganized laundry business, her home life that almost fell apart because her husband asked for a divorce, and a bad relationship with her son. However, after she starts verse-jumping, she finds herself able to experience life as Evelyn in another dimension, such as being a movie star, a kung fu expert, a great chef, even as a version that lives as a rock. This transformation takes place in two aspects of action, namely physically and technically; Evelyn suddenly became proficient in kung fu, could cook like a chef, or had acrobatic skills. More important, however, is the psychological and emotional transformation. (Base on picture 3)

By exploring so many possible versions of herself, Evelyn slowly moved from a jaded and hopeless person to someone who realized her great potential, not because she had to be all those versions, but because she could choose to accept and integrate all parts

of herself. So, you could say that the process of transformation through verse-jumping was not just about gaining new skills or moving to different places, but more about changing Evelyn's perspective on herself and her life. In the beginning, Evelyn felt her life was unsuccessful and meaningless, but after seeing many possible versions of herself in other dimensions, she began to understand that life is not about achieving greatness or extraordinary success.

It's about learning to accept what is and learning to love the version of ourselves that exists in the real world. Verse-jumping is not just an interesting visual effect or a narrative tool for action, but a symbol of how humans can look at the various possibilities in life, face the pressure of all those choices, and then finally try to make peace with reality and accept the complexity of themselves. That is exactly the transformation that Evelyn undergoes. So, you could say that verse-jumping in this movie is a unique and unusual way to depict one's inner journey. The transformation takes place slowly, until finally Evelyn realizes that her greatest strength does not come from another dimension, but from herself who chooses to survive, understand, and love, even though life sometimes seems absurd.

CONCLUSION

Everything Everywhere All At Once changes the way how the audience views the adventure genre by expanding space and emotion through the concept of the multiverse. The film criticizes the traditional form of adventure by combining elements of entertainment and reflection, creating a genre hybrid that reflects the complexity of identity, reality, and human interaction in modern narratives. "Adventure" in this movie is not just about finding something valuable such as treasure or a mysterious location, but rather the process of self-discovery amidst the infinite chaos one is experiencing. In that uncertainty, the main character Evelyn realizes that togetherness, the courage to make choices, and acceptance are the things that make life meaningful.

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