

Deconstructing modernist values through a postmodern lens: An Analysis of Ani Mikheeva in Sean Baker's *Anora*

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Abstract

Postmodernism criticizes modernism's failure to uphold human dignity in a rapidly changing world. It rejects universal "grand narratives" in favor of localized, flexible "mini narratives." Sean Baker's *Anora* reflects these ideas through its main character, Ani. This research aims to find out how binary oppositions are deconstructed using Derrida's theory and identify postmodern values represented by Ani in the film. The researcher employs a descriptive-qualitative method, further developed using Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory by reversing dominant oppositions. The results of the study revealed that deconstructing the binary opposition within Ani's character, which reflects modernist values, leads to a transformation in her traits. As a result, her initially modernist values shifted into ones that align with postmodernism. This shift allowed for a new perspective on Ani as a character who more accurately represented postmodern values. Ani's postmodern values were expressed through the "mini-narratives" she followed throughout the story. Ani sees the world as empty and meaningless. Ani embraces chaos rather than structure. Ani re-evaluates Western value systems. Ani's relationship is complicated, and Ani is a pessimistic woman.

1 Introduction

Postmodernism is a movement of thought that replaces the ideas of the modern era. Postmodernism is a philosophical movement that challenges and replaces the concepts established during the modern era (Setiawan & Sudrajat, 2018). Postmodernism challenges several key concepts established during the modernist era, fundamentally reshaping people's understanding of literature and culture. Analyzing postmodern thought can be applied across various fields, media, and works. In the increasingly advanced era of globalization, postmodern ideas can be found in films nowadays.

Films that incorporate postmodernism often exhibit characteristics that set them apart from conventional films. A straightforward example of this is the reproduction of styles; one such film that exemplifies this is *Anora*. *Anora* is a 2024 film directed by Sean Baker. The plot revolves around a young Brooklyn stripper, Anora "Ani" Mikheeva, who, after marrying the son of a Russian oligarch on impulse, causes disaster when word gets out in Russia. The Observer magazine in 2024 claimed that *Anora* is a modern twist on the Cinderella story. In this film, one can find humor, emotional depth, and a portrayal of the characters' struggles, all of which contribute to a relevant and thought-provoking reinterpretation of the Cinderella story. There are many more aspects of postmodern ideas embedded within the film. Due to the lingering influence of modernist thought, the researcher aims to analyze the binary oppositions present in modernism in order to deconstruct them and reveal postmodern values using deconstruction theory by Jacques Derrida. The choice of Derrida's deconstruction theory is because this theory can break down binary oppositions, a central feature in modernist thought. By applying this theory, the researcher can uncover the postmodern values in the

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film *Anora* and demonstrate that these oppositions are not absolute, but rather uncertain and constructed. This makes it easier to reveal the postmodern messages present in the film.

According to Lyotard, postmodernism essentially emphasizes and values “mini-narratives” about social issues, life struggles, and cultural, ethnic, and linguistic experiences at the local level (Lubis, 2016). Lyotard views postmodernism as a shift away from universal truths. His idea highlights the importance of localized and diverse perspectives, which he refers to as “mini-narratives,” that reflect the complex realities of different communities. Postmodern “mini-narratives” focus on explaining small practices and local events, rather than broad, universal, or global concepts. These narratives are always context-dependent, provisional, and temporary, making no assertions about universality, truth, reason, or stability (Nurhayati, 2012). Lyotard argued that postmodernism questions the concept of objective and universal truth as determined by reason. Postmodern individuals reject reason as the sole measure of truth, seeking something beyond it. They explore non-rational ways of knowing, relying on emotion and intuition. For postmodern thinkers, truth is relative and depends on the social context. Postmodernism seeks to re-evaluate modernism's faith in ideas and the Western value system, including concepts like love, marriage, popular culture, and the shift from an industrial to a service-based economy. With the postmodern rejection of absolute meaning, reality becomes relative. Many modernist works aimed to reclaim unity, coherence, and meaning that were perceived to be lost in modern life, with the belief that art could provide what other institutions could not. In contrast, postmodernism embraces incoherence and the idea that the world is meaningless. Rather than pretending art can generate meaning, postmodernism invites people to engage with nonsense and play.

According to one approach to deconstruction, even seemingly objective claims can be unraveled and questioned. In deconstruction, Derrida seeks to reject binary oppositions such as language/parole, presence/absence, and so on. Ultimately, this leads to a rejection of the idea of absolute meaning, truth, or logos. That captures Derrida's line of thought, where postmodernity becomes a play that thrives on uncertainty. The goal of deconstruction is to reveal the underlying hierarchical oppositions within a text. Thus, when a text is deconstructed, what is dismantled is not its meaning itself, but the assertion that one particular interpretation holds more validity than others (Sonya, 2022).

Binary opposition often grants privilege to one element while pushing the other to the margins. This separation is maintained through established boundaries that keep the two elements apart. Each side has distinct and opposing characteristics that define one another. Binary opposition plays a crucial role in metaphysics by helping to establish a stable structure. One element is positioned as dominant, while the other functions merely as a subordinate or supporting element. However, Jacques Derrida challenges the stability of these binaries with his concept known as *différance*. This is a concept that overshadows binary opposition in Derrida's theory of deconstruction. According to Derrida (1968), the concept of *différance* is broader than the term “difference.” *Différance* has two root meanings: “to differ” (be different) and “to defer” (put something off until later), depending on the context (Nurhayati, 2012). The idea of *différance* serves to destabilize the fixed nature of binary oppositions and hierarchies. The idea also reveals that meaning is not static but fluid, context-dependent, and always in motion. Through this, people can gain a more profound understanding of both the construction of language and the evolution of power dynamics within society. Through the identification and deconstruction of binary oppositions, it becomes possible to expose the implicit assumptions and hierarchies that inform an individual's perception of the world.

In *Anora*, Representation theory enables the researcher to explore how Ani's character reflects postmodern values, as revealed through her personal experiences, life challenges, and worldview. According to Stuart Hall, representation is a system in which language functions by employing “signs” and “symbols” to convey ideas, thoughts, feelings, expressions, and emotions. However, this concept goes beyond spoken or written language, as it involves broader meaning-making practices intended



to stand for or represent something (Hutasuhut, 2009). The theory of representation, therefore, encompasses an exploration of how meaning is constructed and communicated across different media and social communication practices. It also involves the process of coding, where the creators of representation select, modify, and encapsulate particular meanings in symbols and signs through social context.

Previous studies on postmodernism generally fall into two major streams. The first focuses on identifying postmodern characteristics based on Lyotard's theory in literary works, particularly novels (Trisnawati, 2021; Sabana, 2019). The second applies Derrida's deconstruction to reveal binary oppositions within literary texts (Sonya, 2022; Hamdani, 2024). Although these studies contribute to understanding postmodernism and deconstruction separately, they remain limited in three respects. First, they predominantly examine written literary texts rather than contemporary films. Second, they rarely integrate Derrida's deconstruction with Lyotard's concept of postmodernism within a single analytical framework. Third, little attention has been paid to how deconstructed binary oppositions generate postmodern values in cinematic narratives. These limitations provide the rationale for the present study.

While previous studies have examined postmodernism or deconstruction separately, they primarily focused on literary texts such as novels and rarely explored contemporary films using an integrated theoretical framework. Moreover, existing studies have generally employed Derrida's deconstruction only to reveal binary oppositions without connecting these findings to broader postmodern values. Therefore, this study offers both theoretical and methodological novelty by integrating Derrida's deconstruction with Lyotard's concept of postmodern "mini-narratives" to examine how binary oppositions are transformed into representations of postmodern values in Sean Baker's *Anora*. This integrated approach not only expands the application of deconstruction in film studies but also provides a more comprehensive understanding of how contemporary cinema negotiates modernist and postmodernist ideologies.

2 Methods

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. It would examine the film by breaking down binary oppositions and interpreting them through the lens of Jean-François Lyotard's postmodernist theory. Through a careful and critical reading, I sought to uncover the most accurate interpretation, referred to as the optimal meaning, by closely examining hidden or deliberately obscured signs and symptoms. The primary data source is *Anora* (2024), a romantic comedy-drama film written and directed by Sean Baker, with a total runtime of 139 minutes. The analyzed data consist of purposively selected visual units, which include film screenshots and textual units or transcribed dialogue scripts centered on the protagonist, Ani. These data units were specifically selected based on their deconstructive tendencies and their relevance to shifting ideological frameworks within the narrative.

Data collection was implemented by conducting multiple viewings of Sean Baker's *Anora* film via the Hulu streaming platform to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the narrative structure. Specific scenes and dialogues representing modernist ideals were then identified for deconstructive analysis to uncover their underlying postmodernist values. To document the data, relevant scenes aligning with the research objectives were screenshotted, and their corresponding dialogues were transcribed. The compiled data were subsequently organized into tabular forms for structured analysis. The data analysis proceeded through a systematic multi-step framework. First, data reflecting modernist values were identified. Second, the implicit hierarchy of binary oppositions within these data was mapped to detect embedded postmodernist values. Third, these hierarchical oppositions were categorized based on Jean-François Lyotard's postmodernist theory. Fourth, the identified binary oppositions were reversed and destabilized, highlighting the interdependent relationships



between the contrasting terms. Finally, the analysis concluded by synthesizing the findings to expose the concealed thematic layers of *Anora*, focusing specifically on the character arc of Ani. The data analysis follows a systematic two-stage operational process. First, the analysis isolates dominant cinematic and dialogue elements, including framing, facial expressions, and explicit spoken lines that construct a baseline hierarchical opposition. Second, these traditional binary hierarchies are inverted to interrogate marginal elements, such as subtle gestures or latent visual cues, that subvert the dominant portrayal.

3 Findings

This section evaluates 77 identified data units extracted from the film that signify the deconstruction of Ani's character. These data units are formulated into binary oppositions to uncover the latent, postmodern characteristics embedded within her characterization. The comprehensive distribution of these findings is systematized in the tables below.

Table 1: The Representation of Dominant Opposition in Ani's Character in the Film *Anora*

Modernist Values
1. Ani sees the world as something meaningful
2. Ani is a woman who values structure
3. Ani follows Western value systems
4. Ani has a clear and stable relationship
5. Ani is an optimistic woman

Table 2: The Representation of Second Opposition in Ani's Character in the Film *Anora*

Postmodernist Values
1. Ani sees the world as empty and meaningless
2. Ani embraces chaos rather than structure
3. Ani re-evaluates Western value systems
4. Ani's relationship is complicated
5. Ani is a pessimistic woman

Prior to the deconstructive process, Ani is portrayed as an embodiment of modernist values in both her cognitive outlook and behavioral patterns. Within this baseline framework, she perceives the world as inherently meaningful, values structured systems, adheres to dominant Western value systems, maintains stable interpersonal relationships, and exhibits a consistently optimistic disposition. A total of 23 data units support these five modernist categories. Conversely, the application of deconstructive analysis reveals a critical shift toward postmodernist ideologies within her character arc. Post-deconstruction, Ani views the world as vacant and meaningless, embraces chaos over structural rigidity, subverts and re-evaluates Western value systems, becomes entangled in hyper-complex relationships, and shifts toward a defensive pessimism. This ideological transformation is supported by 54 data units distributed across the same five analytical categories.

A "hierarchical opposition" or "dominant text" is a narrative binary structure where one concept is systematically privileged over another to guide the audience toward a singular interpretation. This study identifies five key hierarchical oppositions within the protagonist, Ani, which are subsequently deconstructed to expose their underlying binary mechanisms. In structural and cinematic analysis, binary oppositions consist of two mutually exclusive concepts where one traditionally dominates while the other is marginalized. However, by inverting these marginal elements (such as subtle cues and suppressed dialogues), this research destabilizes the absolute modernist frameworks initially defining Ani. The deconstructive reading reveals that postmodernist values ultimately subvert and

eclipse their modernist counterparts, demonstrating that Ani's character arc fundamentally represents a shift toward postmodern consciousness.

Table 3: Binary Opposition Dichotomy of Anora "Ani" Mikheeva Character

Before Deconstruction	After Deconstruction
Ani sees the world as something meaningful	Ani Sees the world as empty and meaningless
Ani is a woman who values structure	Ani embraces chaos rather than structure
Ani follows western value systems	Ani re-evaluates Western value systems
Ani has a clear and stable relationship	Ani's relationship is complicated
Ani is an optimistic woman	Ani is a pessimistic woman

3.1 Ani sees the world as something meaningful

Figure 1. Interaction Ani and Ivan



Time: 09.39 – 10.42

Dialogue:

Ani: This is a no-no. But I like you,

Ivan: (Russian) Do you work outside the club?

Ani knows what he's asking

Ani: Give me your phone.

Ivan gives Ani his phone, unlocking it as he passes it to her. Ani puts her contact in the phone. And hands it back to him.

Ani: (CONT'D) Text me.

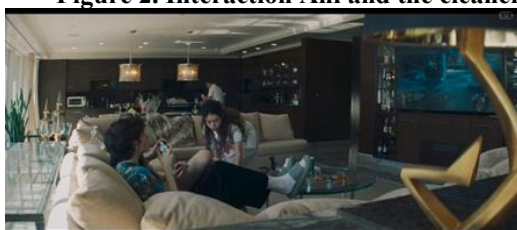
This scene illustrates a crucial shift in the relationship dynamics between Ani and Ivan (Vanya), transcending the transactional boundaries of a client-service provider paradigm when Ani voluntarily shares her personal contact information. This action reflects a distinctly modernist impulse anchored in a romanticized grand narrative. Specifically, the pursuit of emotional authenticity as an antidote to the alienation of contemporary existence. By stepping outside the commodified constraints of her professional role, Ani manifests a modernist faith in the redemptive power of genuine human connection to resist socioeconomic isolation. This behavioral pattern underscores her baseline worldview, wherein the environment is still perceived as a site of intrinsic emotional value and teleological purpose, driven by the belief that individual relationships can reconstruct a coherent sense of identity and truth.

3.2 Ani is the woman who values structure

Contextually, it is interaction between Ani and the cleaning staff at Ivan's residence highlights her adherence to structured social decorum and egalitarian respect. Her actions, offering a deliberate parting smile and seamlessly lifting her legs to facilitate the cleaner's routine, transcend mere politeness; they function as behavioral markers of an organized and disciplined subject. Rather than

disrupting the institutional flow or asserting hierarchical dominance, Ani smoothly integrates herself into the domestic labor structure, validating the functional roles of those around her. This behavioral alignment exemplifies a modernist worldview anchored in the grand narratives of social harmony, civic order, and mutual respect. By actively maintaining stability and consideration within these everyday micro-interactions, Ani demonstrates a foundational belief in a coherent, rationalized social structure where every individual contributes to systemic functionality.

Figure 2. Interaction Ani and the cleaner



Time: 30.19 – 30.21

Dialogue:

Ani: Goodbye.

3.3 Ani follows Western value systems

Figure 3. Ani claimed house as hers



Time: 1.08.33 – 1.09.05

Dialogue:

Ani: The fuck we are. And I would like you to leave my home now. Or I'll be pressing charges.

Toros laughs

Toros: This isn't Ivan's house. This is his father's. You're technically trespassing.

Ani: I'm married to Ivan, and this is our home!

Ani's assertive claim that marriage establishes absolute co-ownership over Ivan's wealth highlights her alignment with institutional Western value systems. Within this framework, marriage is conceptualized not merely as an emotional bond but as a legal-rational partnership anchored in the grand narratives of egalitarianism, mutual responsibility, and reciprocal property rights. By invoking the principle of shared domestic resources, Ani rejects asymmetric power dynamics in favor of a structured, collaborative contract wherein both spouses possess equal entitlement. Her rhetoric reflects a distinct modernist faith in institutional fairness and the legal sanctity of marriage, operating under the assumption that the marital contract acts as a universal equalizer capable of overriding preexisting socioeconomic disparities.

3.4 Ani has a clear and stable relationship

Another positive relationship is shown through Ani and her coworker, Lulu. As seen in the data, Ivan plans a New Year's party, and Ani expresses her wish to invite her friend Lulu. Eventually, Ani brings Lulu to the party, which is in Ivan's house. Ani's decision to invite Lulu to a special event highlights the authenticity and stability of their friendship. Their relationship goes beyond the

business. Ani really values Lulu enough to include into her personal life. This act not only emphasizes the strength of their relationship but also captures Ani's great feeling of connection and concern for the people around her. By inviting Lulu to the party, Ani shows that her relationships are part of a larger pattern of stability and support. Just like her bond with Ivan, this friendship grows within a space of trust and inclusion, reinforcing the idea that order and meaningful connection are central to how Ani relates to others.

Figure 4. Ani talks to Ivan about inviting her friend



Time: 21.48 – 22.42

Dialogue:

Ivan: (Russian) Hey, you should come to my New Year's party, (English) It's going to be bangin.'

Ani smiles.

Ani: I might have to work that night.

Ivan: (Russian) You might not have to work that night.

Ani: Can I bring someone?

Ivan: (Russian) Not if it's a guy. (English) I don't want a sausage party.

Ani: She's not

3.5 Ani is an optimistic woman

Figure 5. Ani is optimistic that Ivan will save her



Time: 1.02.40 – 1.02.58

Dialogue:

Ani: Just wait until Ivan sees what you did to me.

Igor: The Ivan that just left you?

Ani: He didn't leave me. He went for help.

Igor: I don't think so.

The data above shows Ani being held captive for her own safety. In that moment, she says something that reveals how strongly she believes Ivan will come back for her and make things right after everything that has been done to her. This moment represents Ani's deep sense of optimism, even in the face of fear and uncertainty. Ani does not panic or give up. Instead, she holds on to the belief that things will be made right. She trusts that the situation she is in, no matter how bad, can still be fixed as long as the people involved act fairly. Her hope is not just emotional. It is tied to the bigger idea that the world is supposed to work in an orderly and just way. Her optimism comes from the idea that fairness and order still matter and that even when things go wrong, they will eventually be set right.

3.6 Ani sees the world as empty and meaningless

When Ani introduces herself as “the lucky lady” to Ivan’s lawyer, the line comes off as cheerful and even playful, but in the context of everything she has been through, it lands with heavy irony. According to Lyotard, one of the elements that characterizes postmodernism in art is irony. Irony refers to an event that occurs that is opposite to what is expected or to the reality of the situation. The truth is, there is nothing lucky about her relationship with Ivan. What was supposed to be a loving marriage turns into a source of confusion and emotional pain. The gap between what she says and what she is actually living reveals just how disconnected language and reality have become for her. This data represents postmodern value, where the world is meaningless in the postmodern era, where love does not guarantee security, and words do not always match reality. Ani’s statement feels hollow. Lucky becomes a label without substance, a performance rather than a truth. The irony is not just for the audience to notice; it reflects Ani’s growing awareness that the world around her does not operate by the rules it once seemed to follow.

Figure 6. Ani introduces herself to Ivan’s lawyer



Time: 1.41.35 – 1.41.41

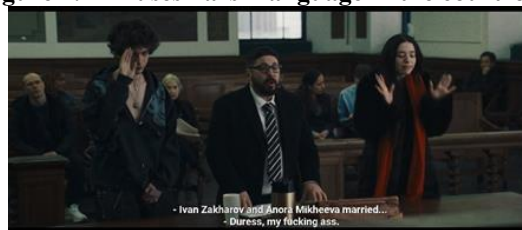
Dialogue:

Sharnov: And this is the...

Ani: The lucky lady

3.7 Ani embraces chaos rather than structure

Figure 7. Ani uses harsh language in the courtroom



Time: 1.42.25 – 1.42.38

Dialogue:

Judge: First and last warning. I hear profanity again and you’ll all be charged with disorderly conduct. Mr. Sharnov, what’s going on?

Sharnov: Your honor...

Ani: This is bullshit. My husband and I do not agree to this annulment. It is being forced upon us...

Contextually, the scene above strengthens Ani’s chaotic nature, even in a setting as formal and structured as a courtroom. Despite the judge’s clear warning against profanity, Ani does not hold back. Ani refuses to conform, no matter the setting. In moments where most people would restrain themselves, Ani does the opposite. She speaks impulsively and without filter, breaking the expectations of how someone should behave in front of a legal authority. This is not just a lack of manners; it is a sign that Ani no longer recognizes the rules of order and grace as something she needs

to follow. Her behavior reflects the postmodern embrace of chaos over structure. She is not engaging with the court as part of a larger, rational system where truth and justice are neatly defined. Instead, she responds in a way that feels true to her in that specific moment. This is a perfect example of a mini-narrative. Ani's words do not fit into a broader social script; they are shaped entirely by her own emotional reality.

3.8 Ani re-evaluates Western value systems

Figure 8. Ani shows her unusual way



Time: 03.22 – 03.32

Dialogue:

Ani: Hi. I'm Ani.
Man: Nice to meet you, Ani
Ani: Nice to meet you.
Man: I'm Rickyy.
Ani: Hi. Nice to meet you. I'll just sit right next to you right here.
Man: Oh, yeah.
Ani: Very cozy, right?
Man: Pretty serious.

The data above shows how Ani also re-evaluates how people connect with one another. For example, by casually sitting on someone's lap. While this kind of gesture might be seen as too intimate or inappropriate within traditional Western norms that emphasize personal space and formal behavior, Ani treats it as a natural and confident way to show closeness. This act represents how she questions social rules about physical boundaries, gender roles, and how people are supposed to behave in public. Instead of following the usual expectations shaped by Western values, Ani expresses herself in a way that feels genuine to her. It is a sign of her postmodern mindset as she is not afraid to break the rules and re-evaluate what intimacy and connection look like on her own terms.

3.9 Ani's relationship is complicated

Figure 9. Ani is sitting next to Igor



Time: 57.41 – 58.10

Dialogue:

Igor: (to Ani) Please sit down.
Ani: Get out of my way.
Igor: Please. Igor grabs her shoulder to stop her.
Ani: Get your hands off me.
Igor: Calm down.

Ani, don't fucking touch me.

The data above marks the beginning of Ani's complicated relationship with Igor. Although Igor treats her with kindness and speaks politely, Ani responds with aggression, cursing at him and even using physical force by pushing and slapping him. This shows how Ani struggles to maintain any kind of balanced or respectful connection, even with someone who poses no real threat to her.

3.10 Ani is a pessimistic woman

Figure 10. Ani is looking for Ivan by asking his friends



Time: 1.18.03 – 1.18.16

Dialogue:

Ani: Hey, have you seen Vanya today?

Crystal: No, why? Is everything okay?

Ani: Yeah, everything's fine. Could you give him a call for me, please?

Crystal: Okay. What's going on?

Ani: I just need you to call him. Can you do me a favor and call him?

The textual evidence demonstrates Ani's profound denial concerning her failing relationship. Her insistence on normalcy is undermined by her repetitive, anxious prompts for Crystal to contact Ivan, revealing a deep-seated pessimism and emotional instability. Rather than addressing the conflict directly, Ani internalizes her panic, projecting an inability to cope with uncertainty. This acute unease illustrates how a lack of foundational security causes immediate, localized situations to feel entirely uncontrollable.

4 Discussion

The transition of the protagonist, Ani, from an apparent embodiment of modernist ideals to a vessel for postmodern consciousness underscores a critical ideological shift in contemporary cinematic storytelling. In the initial phases of the narrative, Ani operates under the illusion of a totalizing "grand narrative," navigating her reality with an engineered optimism rooted in structural order, stability, and Western definitions of upward mobility. However, as the socioeconomic and interpersonal realities of her environment fracture, these modernist universalities collapse.

Ani represents postmodern values precisely because her character trajectory operationalizes Jean-François Lyotard's rejection of universal teleologies. Her lived experience cannot be reconciled with overarching cultural myths; instead, her agency is redefined through localized, contingent, and fragmented "mini-narratives." By navigating an existential landscape marked by structural chaos, compromised interpersonal dynamics, and defensive pessimism, Ani transforms from a passive subject of an idealized script into a realistic agent of postmodern fluidity.

This ideological transformation heavily refines and extends Lyotard's postmodern framework within visual media. While classic applications of Lyotard in literary studies often focus on thematic fragmentation in written text (Sabana, 2019; Trisnawati, 2021), these findings demonstrate how contemporary cinema translates abstract philosophical concepts into visual and behavioral syntax. Specifically, the text collapses the boundary between high cinematic art and everyday realism through

Ani's ordinary, unglamorous behavior. Furthermore, the narrative subverts classic archetypes by utilizing postmodern irony, pastiche, and kitsch through a dark, inverted parody of the Cinderella motif. Unlike traditional fairytale structures that move from suffering to universal joy, Ani's trajectory ends in emotional fragmentation and disillusionment. The findings thus validate Lyotard's assertion that the postmodern condition is defined by an incredulity toward absolute happy endings, proving that contemporary films utilize localized crises to dismantle universal cultural myths.

By utilizing Jacques Derrida's strategy of deconstruction, this study offers fresh methodological insights into how contemporary cinema negotiates competing ideologies. Previous deconstructive literary analyses frequently limit their scope to reversing binary oppositions to shift a character's traits from a negative to a positive axis (Sonya, 2022). In contrast, applying deconstruction to Sean Baker's *Anora* demonstrates a more complex utility: it strips away the dominant, polished veneer of cinematic romanticism to expose the marginalized, unstable realities underneath. Deconstruction proves that contemporary cinema does not merely reflect static ideologies; rather, it functions as a dynamic site of cultural critique.

By exposing the hidden tensions within Ani's character, the deconstructive reading proves that dominant modernist frameworks in film are structurally dependent on the very postmodern anxieties they attempt to suppress. Ultimately, this integrated approach provides a robust framework for future scholarship to analyze how contemporary cinema systematically challenges the authority of universal truths through fragmented and pluralistic modes of storytelling.

5 Conclusion

Initially, Ani symbolizes modernist ideals by operating within Lyotard's grand narratives, which adhere to cultural norms, seek linear progress, and maintain structured, rational behavior rooted in Western value systems. Her early optimism reflects a modernist faith in order, stability, and teleological purpose. However, as the narrative of *Anora* unfolds, these universal structures collapse against the volatile, fragmented reality of her experiences. To interrogate this breakdown, this study applies Derrida's deconstruction, inverting established binary oppositions to demonstrate how absolute modernist frameworks fail to address the complexities of a rapidly changing, globalized world. Through this deconstructive lens, Ani is revealed to represent the exact contrary of her initial traits. In textual evidence from 54 data, her transition into a postmodern figure defined by mini-narratives, which localized, situational truths that reject universal rules. Consequently, her character arc manifests five distinct postmodern dimensions: an existential view of the world as meaningless, an embrace of chaos over structure, a subversion of Western values, entanglement in hyper-complex relationships, and a shift toward defensive pessimism. Eventually, dismantling Ani's modernist identity exposes a radical ideological transformation. Through replacing totalizing structures with fragmented, localized postmodern values, the character arc does more than just reframe her individual agency; it serves as the primary cinematic vehicle through which *Anora* critiques dominant ideologies and validates the unstable nature of contemporary human experience.

However, this study provides critical insights; its scope is constrained by its singular focus on the character of Ani, which may limit a more expansive engagement with postmodern theory. Future research could reach greater comprehensiveness by analyzing the film *Anora* entirely, including the director's visual and cinematographic style, other symbolic elements, or secondary characters. Furthermore, scholars are encouraged to adopt an eclectic framework that synthesizes diverse postmodern theories from multiple theorists to yield a more holistic analysis. Finally, future studies should deepen the application of deconstructive mechanisms across various dimensions of the cinematic text. It is hoped that this research will serve as a methodological reference for conducting

deconstructive and postmodern analyses in literary and film studies, thereby contributing to the broader field of critical theory.

Disclosure Statement

The author(s) claim there is no conflict of interest.

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