



VILLAINY OR MISAPPREHENSION: THE FREUDIAN IMBALANCE IN EDMUND PEVENSIE

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Abstract: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is one of the best known of the seven novels in the series *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S Lewis which was later adapted into a film titled *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, directed by Andrew Adamson. Edmund Pevensie being one of the major characters has been portrayed from the beginning to be spiteful, traitorous and selfish persona due to his betrayal and joining hands with the evil side, but later on transformed into a hero. This paper intends to focus on the Freudian imbalance present in the characteristic traits of Edmund Pevensie by using the concepts of id, ego and super ego, in the light of psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud, which led him to make error in his judgements and thereby betray his siblings by using descriptive analysis method and a comparative study. It moreover will try to highlight the imbalance present in his character by comparing him with another major character and would try to show if at all his betrayal towards his loved ones was intentional or a result of his Freudian imbalance.

Keywords- *Imbalance, error in judgements, villainy, traitorous, anti-hero, comparison.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the 19th century, having its roots in the epic poems of the Greeks, Germans, Romans and other cultures, mythologies and fairytales, Fantasy literature evolved as the literature of the imaginary universe having imagination as its focus and mostly involving people, settings and events which are not from any real world. Magic, supernaturalism and magical creatures form the basis of this world of imagination. Being a sub-genre of speculative fiction, it can be directed not only to children but also to adults as well. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is one of the best known of the seven fantasy novels in the series *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S Lewis published by Geoffrey Bles in 1950 and was later adapted into a film titled *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, directed by Andrew Adamson released on 8th December, 2005. The story line explores the adventures of the four siblings in an imaginary world which must be set free from the bondages of an evil queen. The themes of betrayal and forgiveness are the main focus.

The four siblings being the major characters exemplify one quality each contributing to the theme of betrayal and forgiveness. Edmund Pevensie, one of the four siblings is viewed as traitorous and in a negative light in the beginning when he betrays his dear ones. Betrayal gives him the tag of an anti-hero, but Edmund Pevensie at a certain point has a change of heart and mind in the course of the novel/movie. A traitor can be viewed as a villain. But the question here is, was he really an anti-hero or was it his insecurities or Freudian imbalance that led him to take such drastic steps as betraying his loved ones and join hands with the evil company. This paper will explore the workings of his mind by using the concepts of id, ego and super ego.

II. BACKGROUND

Fantasy Fictions act as a respite from the mundane world, a sort of escapism needed to cope up with the day-to-day adversities. The fictions take us to a fantasy world of wonders, away from the humdrums of daily life. The beautiful scenarios, magical creatures, fight of dragons are a sort of an entertainment itself, enough to calm a busy mind. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* provides a roller coaster ride into a world away from reality where we can experience the highs and lows of emotions, excitement and witness some of the most touching examples of love, friendship and also betrayal.

This paper will explore the psychology behind the betrayal through a Freudian study using the concepts of id, ego and super ego to identify the Freudian imbalance. Further by doing a comparison with a positive character, it will highlight the Freudian imbalance as well as the mental workings of the traitor which led to his error in judgement.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The book *A Theological Journey into Narnia: An analysis of the message beneath the text* by Markus Muhling is an interpretation of the novel and the movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* from a theological perspective shading light to the deeply woven Gospel message in the story. This book satisfies the curiosity of those children, parents and adults who question the background of the novel and the film. It brings to fore the message of love and forgiveness- the basis of Christianity. It interprets the adventure of the four siblings in an imaginary world in the captivity of the white witch which can only be freed with the help of Aslan- the one having Christ like qualities. It establishes each of the four siblings- the major characters in the story in different lights from a Christian perspective. It mainly delivers the doctrine of Christianity through the part where Aslan forgives Edmund even after his betrayal and also chooses to die for him as Jesus forgave and gave His life for the mankind who sinned against Him. Edmund here signifies the mankind who have sinned. Every chapter is analysed, followed by a theological and a philosophical explanation.

A Redeemed Life: Edmund Pevensie as an Example of Lewis's 'new kind of man' by Pamela L. Jordan traces the development and redemption of Edmund Pevensie from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to *Prince Caspian* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Trader*. The article specifically establishes Edmund Pevensie as the character who mostly showcases the theme of the imaginary world Narnia: one can be more than what he is in Narnia. The character Edmund Pevensie reaches this epiphany after meeting Aslan, the Christ like character. His redemption thus takes place in the book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He transforms from an anti-hero to a hero. The paper moreover displays the results of his redemption and transformation in *Prince Caspian* by referring to certain incidents where he showcased his leadership qualities in difficult times, was patient and willing to listen to others, was willing to be directed and guided and instead of prioritizing himself, chose to honor his brother Peter, the king, before him.

The article *Edmund Pevensie and the Character of the Redeemed* by Jill Oglie focuses on Edmund Pevensie's redemption from a Christian point of view. At first, he is established as a sinner representing the sinners of the world. His turning away from the goodness, joining hands with evil, turning a deaf ear to the truth depicts the qualities which a sinner sinning against God will have. As a result of his drastic actions, he moves away from righteous and at a point he even gets scared of Aslan, the righteous, just as the people who choose evil over goodness are afraid of justice. When the witch, the epitome of evil understands that Edmund will no longer be of any use to her, she gets ready to execute him. But Aslan, the just, forgives him showing Godly love and rescues him from the clutches of the witch. He even chose to die for the boy bearing witness to the event of Christ dying for the sinners. The early morning walk of Aslan with Edmund Pevensie marks the change, the redemption in Edmund's character shading light upon the process of redemption in Christian light which a sinner must undergo to receive salvation. According to Christianity, this process takes place in silence and privacy between the sinner and the Lord where the sinner repents his sins and receives forgiveness and thereafter is redeemed. The early morning walk of Edmund and Aslan marks Edmund's walk of redemption, after which Edmund is changed forever and starts living his redeemed life.

The Analysis of Edmund Pevensie's Characteristic in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe's Movie viewed from Personality Traits Theory by Sri Junafiah and Tryanti R. Abdulrahman focuses on the character development of Edmund Pevensie using personality trait theory. The research paper focuses on Edmund Pevensie's character only in the movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It explores the transition of Edmund Pevensie from a selfish and immature person to a heroic, cooperative and responsible one. It explores his change of personality in the course of the movie and thereby highlights his good qualities after his transformation like fair-minded, admirable and brave.

The Analysis of the Characterization of the Pevensies in the Novel of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by Made Vera Yanti explores the four major characters namely Peter Pevensie, Susan Pevensie, Edmund Pevensie and Lucy Pevensie in book 1 *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The paper in details does a character study of each major character separately analyzing the qualities

they had which helped in plot development. It focuses on each character singularly and shows how it developed and helped in the development of the story line thereby showing differentiation in the qualities between each and every character.

Spring Again: The Problem of Evil and the End of Winter in C. S Lewis's Narnia by Octavia Cade equates the disgracefulness of Edmund Pevensie with the enchanted winters of Narnia. It externalizes the evil present in Edmund in the land he inhabits. The paper in a way shows that it was the spitefulness, selfishness and immaturity of Edmund Pevensie which was one of the reasons of the enchanted winter in the land of Narnia. It thereafter focuses on his self-realization, epiphany and the atonement of his sins which help in breaking the spell of the winter. Therefore, Edmund's epiphany and atonement bring about the much-awaited spring in Narnia thereby ending the tenure of evil. Thus, it is the willingness of Edmund to confess and repent for his mistakes that marks the end of the enchanted winter brought about by the white witch in Narnia.

Children Empowerment in C.S Lewis' novel "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by Adi Irma Suryadi, Dariyana focuses on the issue of children empowerment in order to enrich the emotions and intelligence of children while they grow up. To show the empowerment of children, the paper focuses on the character of Lucy Pevensie, the youngest of all the major characters to highlight the issue. The paper uses four important criterias namely confirmability, credibility, dependability and transferability to explore the character of Lucy and establish her in a positive light as a sensible and matured persona despite being so small. As a result of using the important criterias, Lucy is established as someone who reflects all situations through her ideas and knowledge, tries to understand each and everyone's feelings through unselfishness and empathy which ultimately makes her a brave character and highlights the theme of children empowerment well.

The above-mentioned papers and book mostly focus on the aspect of character development of the siblings as a whole which adds to the plot of the movie/novel. It goes to the crux of the story line to explore the various themes hidden in the novel/movie especially from a Christian perspective and tries to trace the character development in a theological light. But the papers generally do not focus on the psychology of a single character nor does it try to understand the reasons behind the choices made by the same.

The aim of this paper is to specifically do a Freudian study of Edmund Pevensie's character in the light of psychoanalysis theory using the concepts of id, ego and super ego to understand his mental workings and the Freudian imbalance present in him which led to his downfall and to answer if at all he should have been viewed as an anti-hero at the beginning of the movie/novel.

IV. ANALYSIS

Gateway to the world of imagination and deception

Narnia, the world of fantasy takes its readers and audience to a journey of discovering the best in themselves. Showcasing the wonderful adventures of the four siblings, their bravery, betrayal and their mutual love and respect, the starting of the movie/novel goes back in time during the World War II where living in own houses became life threatening. People were forced to abandon their house due to frequent bombarding. The gateway to the imaginary land lies in a wardrobe of Professor Kirke's house. The four Pevensie siblings, playing the major roles were bound to leave their own house due to excessive bombing in London. In order to survive, they move into the country house of Professor Kirke where they find the enormous wardrobe which takes them to a completely new world.

The character of Edmund Pevensie is equivocal. Introduced to be traitorous, selfish and filled with pride, Edmund prioritized the witch more than his family over a cup of Turkish delight. He enters Narnia for the first time following Lucy, his sister and ends up meeting the white witch who tries to impress him with a cup of Turkish delight and a false dream of making him the prince with the promise of bringing his other 3 siblings in turn. Even after hearing about the real identity of the witch from his sister Lucy, self-centered Edmund conceals the incident of meeting the white witch from his siblings. He already chose to satisfy his greediness at the cost of the safety of his siblings. Therefore, when all of them enter the magical kingdom, Edmund betrays his siblings and embarks on his journey of finding the white witch.

The sweet temptation

A glass of Turkish delight was the deciding factor for Edmund which made him take sides with the white witch. Forgetting the love of his family over a sweet dish proves his lack of wisdom, self-control and decision-making power. His spiteful and selfish side comes to the forefront where he only thinks of himself. Edmund let his emotions control him which is why he decides to go for something that looked more appealing to him. In order to understand the psychological workings of this emotional being, this paper will further examine Edmund Pevensie's personality using the concepts of id, ego and super ego. To analyze Edmund's mental workings, this paper will first talk about the Freudian concepts.

The Freudian imbalance

Freud's single most important and enduring idea was that the human psyche consists of multiple aspects- the id, ego and the super ego, all developing at different stages of life. According to the psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud, the id represents the instinctual and primitive part of the mind containing hidden memories as well as sexual and aggressive drives. The ego alludes to the realistic part that intercedes between the desires of the super ego and the id, whereas the super ego involves the conscience with moral virtues. The id refers to the unconscious part which contains impulses and urges and stubbornness because it only responds to the pleasure principle (things which makes one feel good) according to Freud. In other words, id is the response to the basic needs, desires and urges. Edmund Pevensie's personality shows excessive presence of the id component in him. From the beginning of the novel/movie, Edmund Pevensie is seen as a self-centered character concerned only about himself. He enters Narnia by following Lucy but doesn't reveal about the witch to his siblings even after knowing her real identity because of the pleasure principle present in him due to excessive id. Edmund chooses to side with the witch because of the Turkish delight she offered and the false hope of being made the prince. The Turkish delight was something which momentarily satisfied his desires and not caring much about his family, he decided to meet the witch at his second visit not only because of the sweet dish but also of the false hope of becoming a prince. Therefore, in Freudian light it was the id which was working on him more which made him take decisions just to satisfy his own impulses, cravings and desires, other than listening to his moral conscience. His bullying of Lucy, abandoning his siblings to follow his selfish desires to become a prince and taste a sweet dish alludes to the Freudian imbalance present in his character, with the presence of excessive id because of which he only tries to fulfill his momentary satisfactions. Had there been no imbalance in him then he would have listened to his moral conscience and thought more realistically. If he wouldn't have followed his impulses then he would have stayed with his family and not betrayed them and left them in danger. Following his moral conscience would have helped him to differentiate between the good and bad.

Juxtaposition to highlight the imbalance

On the other hand, Peter Pevensie, the elder brother of Edmund Pevensie, is a character who exemplifies a perfect balance of id, ego and super ego in his character. Being mature, protective and brave, he is endowed with a natural instinct for fighting and leading the way. The instinct for fighting is his impulse which signifies the presence of id but a fine balance is maintained by ego and super ego where he fights to protect, being aware of his duty as a brother and a warrior. It is due to the presence of ego and super ego in him that he chooses not to be self-centered and come forward when others need him. But in Edmund's case 'detachment from his parents, compulsion to stay at a frightful boarding school have given birth in him a chain reaction of selfishness and bullying tendencies'. (Jill Oglie) This in turn gave rise to his insecurities which led him to become self-centered and impulsive, focused only in fulfilling his own desires thereby bearing evidence to the presence of excessive id in his personality. His precariousness, insecurity and lack of love made him impulsive and flawed his judgements. It was not his intentions but insecurities and cravings to be accepted and cared for, made him take sides with the queen who offered him his favorite desert and showed him love. It was the situations which made him look like a villain and an anti-hero. His intentions were not to harm anyone but to be loved and cared for, which is why he went to meet the queen abandoning his siblings because she showed him love and care. All these allude to the presence of more id in his personality thereby leading to the Freudian imbalance which in turn led him to take wrong decisions and made him look like a villain.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper tried to explore the mental workings of Edmund Pevensie to understand the reasons behind his betrayal for which he has been categorized as a villain in the beginning. The Freudian imbalance in Edmund Pevensie led him to be viewed in a negative light. His insecurities, self-centeredness, results of studying in a frightful boarding school and untimely separation from his parents made him crave for more love and attention which ultimately resulted in the Freudian imbalance in him. Getting the same from the white witch in the form of Turkish delight and hope to become a prince, made him take sides with her. Unlike any typical villain or anti-hero, he never intended to harm anybody, he just wanted to satisfy his cravings for more attention and good things.

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