

# Oedipus Complex Reflected through Edmund Pevensie's Characters in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*

Herlina Auriellas Zalsa Bella<sup>1</sup>, Ni Komang Arie Suwastini<sup>2\*</sup>, I Gusti Agung Sri Rwa Jayantini<sup>3</sup>

{herlina.auriellas@undiksha.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, arie.suwastini@undiksha.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, agung\_sriyayantini@unmas.ac.id<sup>3</sup>}

English Language Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali<sup>1,2</sup>  
Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Bali<sup>3</sup>

{Corresponding: arie.suwastini@undiksha.ac.id}

**Abstract.** The present study analyzed C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, focusing on the formation of the Oedipus Complex in Edmund Pevensie's characters as a reference to understand the motive of his betrayal of his siblings under the influence of the White Witch. Through textual analysis, the study revealed that Edmund's Oedipus Complex was reflected by his desire and need for a mother's approval through the presence of the White Witch. Edmund's fixation on the mother figure instigated his betrayal of his siblings due to his fear of being left by all comforts of the White Witch. His instincts to seek comfort put him as an enemy in the blanket for his siblings and complicated the novel's plot. As literature reflects and affects life, discussing Edmund's psychology and his Oedipus Complex may shed insight into children's behaviors.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis; Characters; Oedipus Complex; Edmund Pevensie

## 1 Introduction

*The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* is the first novel in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, written by C.S. Lewis. The novel has been known as the best classic children's literature since its first publication in 1950. As a significant effect of the novel, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* has 47 languages versions and sold over 100 million copies along with the other version. The Great American Read nominate this novel as one of America's top 100 most-loved novels [1]. This novel has been adapted to fulfil the public's enthusiasm for the novel. It has already been adapted into a movie produced by Walden Media and Walt Disney, with some slight changes in plot development and characterizations detail, which is a standard process and result of adapting a novel into a film [2], [3]. It has also become part of a television program on the live stage.

Many studies used *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* novel as their object for developing more profound research. Persson [4] analyzes how myth and Narnia's creatures connect with moral expression related to political opinions, children's education, social rules, gender differences, and misogyny. Studies on the mythical structure analysis were also developed by Karlin [5] by defining the analysis based on plot development. Gilete [6] sees the

characterization of Pevensie children by pointing out the kind attitude as the representation of a pure and heroic spirit in youth. Wahana & Johan [7] used the theme as the elements that they deliver us in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* novel by seeing the sociological aspect. Furthermore, not only the myth or elements in the novel, but some studies also talk about how the translation results in the educational use of *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* novel in studying the imagery, ideology, and culture [8].

*The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* tell the journey of four Pevensie siblings: Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy. It delivers a story in the fantasy genre, where the four siblings go to the magical country of Narnia through the strange wardrobe in an empty room in an old and isolated countryside manor where they had to take refuge during the London air-raids. Although Lucy was intended to be the main character in the novel, her brother, Edmund, stands out as a distinct character from her brother and two sisters. Where Peter, Susan, and Lucy were depicted as generally kind, appreciative, and honest, Edmund was shown to be sarcastic, rebellious, and deceitful. Edmund's different characters had made him an object of academic scrutiny. Nugraha & Wachyudi argue that the inclusion of the negative depictions of Edmund made him the most developed character in the novel [9]. Kristiyani sees the complexity of Edmund's characters as the catalyst for the plot development, building the love-hate relationship between Edmund and his siblings that complicated the siblings' journey to the fantasy land more testing for the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve [10]. However, beyond its importance to the novel's narrative, Edmund's peculiar characters invite further readings from Freud's psychoanalysis.

According to Hossain, psychoanalysis revolves around the idea that people's actions are affected by their unconscious internal motivation resulting from recurrent events in their life [11]. For Hossain, understanding these motives can shed understanding to the character's actions in a story. In this case, psychoanalysis can help understand why Edmund developed negative traits and why he chose to betray his siblings. In Freud's psychoanalysis, the understanding of human character is based on understanding children's sexual development from birth until they turn five [12]. According to Hossain, the oral, anal, and phallic stages determine the children's personalities, depending on how the children's needs for pleasure [11]. During the phallic stage, a child's pleasure moves from their mouth and their bowel in the previous stages to their genitals. At this stage, a child is considered to recognize the difference between male and female genitalia and starts to identify the parent of the opposite sex as their object of love [12]–[14]. For a boy like Edmund Pevensie in Lewis's *Narnia*, he would identify that he had a penis, started to identify similarities with his father, and like his father, established his mother as his object of love. However, the son cannot compete with his father, the child has to suppress his desire, and the repressed desire is not resolved; the child will develop Oedipus Complex, where he keeps desiring his mother and considering the father figure as a rival [15]. Paris [16] and Haute [17] argue that these repressed feelings are the primary source of psychological phenomena. For example, Digamon et al. [18] found that repressed desire correlates strongly with male anxiety in romantic relationships.

As one of the sons of four siblings, Edmund is problematic. Edmund was placed as the emblematic troubled middle child as a third child. He was not the youngest; thus, he could not be the longest in his mother's cradle. As a second-born son, Edmund was the not oldest, as to be the transformation of his mother's Penis Envy. As a third-born child, Edmund had to share his mother's love with his two elder siblings before she had to share her attention with the youngest child further. The effect of Edmund's incomplete and early loss of his mother's love is signalled early in the novel. On the novel's second page, Edmund is shown to be bad-tempered and snaps at her older sister, Susan. Edmund refused Susan's authoritative direction for them to

be in an orderly manner by asking her to stop “[T]rying to talk like [their] Mother.” Edmund’s lousy temper and refusal of Susan’s role as a replacement for their mother were indicative of a deeper-psychological-troubles within his mind [16]. While his refusal to behave in an orderly manner against Peter’s direction shows his rivalry with Peter as the father figure, his rebellious trait is symptomatic of his need for attention to compensate for his mother’s lack of attention. His rejection of Susan’s direction suggests his refusal of Susan as a mother surrogate, signaling his search for a proper replacement for his mother’s love was still ongoing. As argued by Freud, simultaneous ego from losing the figure of mother lead children to experience struggle, individualistic attitude, and destruction not just for themselves but also people around them [19]. Thus, Nugraha & Wachyudi [9] and Kristiyani [10] justified in their arguments that narratively Edmund’s more complex characters become the catalyst for the plot development, as his search for a suitable mother figure would bring trouble to the fights of the Narnian citizen against the regime of the White Witch.

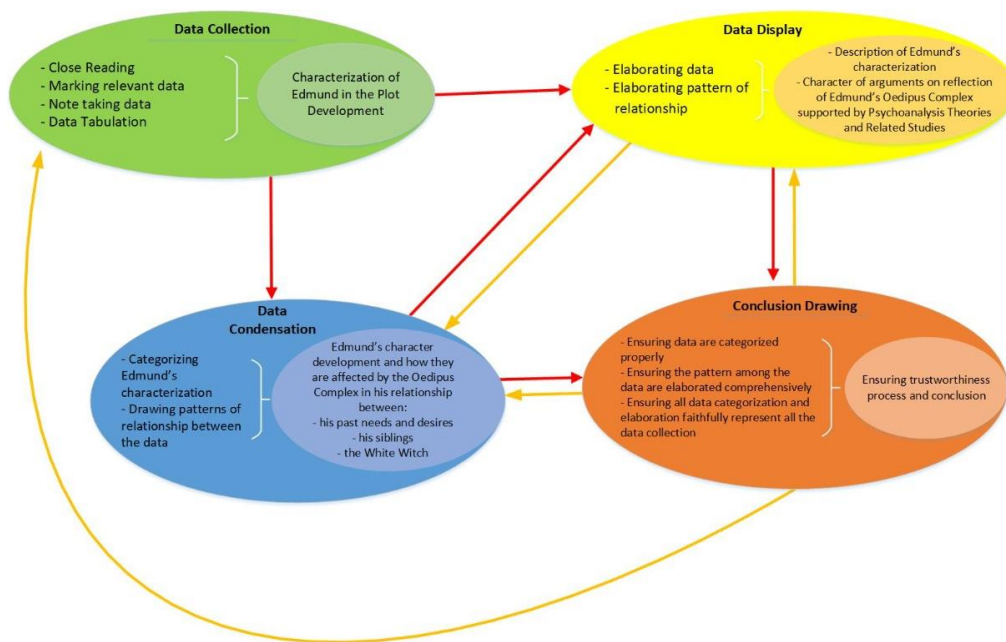
Psychoanalysis has been widely applied in literature [11], and Oedipus Complex has been identified as the motive of action and source of plot complications in literature [20], [21]. Cahya & Margawati [22] used psychoanalysis to analyze Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to elaborate on how multiple personality disorder was caused by rejection from society. Dell’Olio observed Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* argue that her Oedipus Complex triggered Jane Eyre’s inferiority complex and infatuation with Mr. Rochester [23]. Fatimah analyzed Tony Parsons’ *Man and Boy* and revealed that Harry saw his father as a rival and developed jealousy that complicated the father-son relationship [24]. Haiyan et al. analyzed Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* and attributed Paul’s abnormal obsession with his mother as the source of the tragedy that befell him [25]. Priscilla analyzed the same novel to reveal the effect of Paul’s Oedipus Complex on his personality [26]. Unsriana [27] and Windriya [28] analyzed Japanese Murakami’s *Kafka Tamura* to highlight how the novel is inspired by Sophocles’ tragedy. Kafka’s obsession with an older woman was motivated by his unresolved Oedipus Complex. Al-Hajaj & Rakhees [29] also attributed the exact cause as the motive for Julia’s hysteria in Albee’s *A Delicate Balance*. Al-Dmour analyzed Morrison’s *Beloved* and argued that Sethe’s actions were motivated by a constant search for a father figure as her object of love [30].

These previous studies have successfully applied psychoanalysis and traced Oedipus Complex as psychological trauma that triggers the characters’ actions and provides motives for their character development. However, these studies mainly focus on manifesting the Oedipus Complex in adult characters when their sexuality can be manifested within the socially approved age range. Thus, the present study differs from the previous one as it takes a novel from children’s literature as its subject and traces the symptoms of the Oedipus Complex in characters aged ten years old. It is the age when Edmund was in his latent period, with repressed sexuality, before he entered puberty. As a novel for children, it is appropriate to have sexual matters abstain from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Nevertheless, it does not mean that a child’s development forgoes its sexual development. From psychoanalysis’s perspective, this study lays its premise on the argument that all actions are reflections of repressed emotions. It is precisely because the libido is repressed that it would be manifested in other actions other than sexual ones. Thus, this study argues that during this latent stage, Edmund Pevensie developed his negative traits as a manifestation of his repressed Oedipus Complex. Hence, the present study aims to elaborate on how this complex could have developed related to Edmund’s birth as a third child and a second son among four siblings and how it affects his decisions during the plot development.

This study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of *Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* as a narrative. It will explain Edmund Pevensie's peculiar character development in the novel, which is otherwise simplified as different without further explanation, yet necessary as a catharsis to the plot development. By offering a possible cause of this distinct personality, the present study will provide a more evocative understanding of the character, adding to the plot's plausibility. Beyond its contribution to understanding the novel as a work of literature, the present study is also expected to exemplify how a child such as Edmund Pevensie is insistently influenced by their sexual development during their early adolescence. Because the latent stage supposes repressed or dormant sexuality, parents and educators need to be cautious of the manifestation of the repressed sexuality into other forms of actions. Thus, this study can show readers the possible mechanism among children from the characters of fictional children [31]–[33].

## **2 Method**

The subject of the present study is C.S. Lewis's first novel from the *Narnia Chronicle*, *the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In the present study, the novel analyzed is the version published by HarperCollins Publisher in 1994. The present study's object is Edmund Pevensie's characters, focusing on those that reflect his Oedipus Complex. The present study is designed as a textual analysis McKee [34] with the perspective of Freud's psychoanalysis in the belief that the novel contains ideologies about children's psychological development beyond its seemingly naïve narrative of a childhood fantasy. As a qualitative interpretive research, the study adopts the interactive process in Miles et al. [35] interactive qualitative data analysis, where the data categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing are conducted simultaneously with the data collection. In this case, the search for the representation of the Oedipus Complex in the characters of Edmund Pevensie is undertaken through the detailed analysis of its intrinsic elements (i.e., the characters, the characterizations, the plot development) to support the study's hypothesis that Edmund's characters are affected by his Oedipus Complex. In this process, the study continuously looks closer into the novel's descriptions and takes a distance to condense the data and their elaborations to ensure thorough analysis and a reliable conclusion. This procedure is perhaps better illustrated in the following figure.



**Fig. 1.** Research Design based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) with the perspective of Freud's Psychoanalysis

Figure 1 illustrates the simultaneous process of analysis in Miles et al [35] model when implemented with the perspective of Freud's psychoanalysis. The initial step is data collection. This step includes several reading processes. The first is the initial reading, aimed to get a general understanding of C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia; The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. And then, a close reading is conducted to understand Edmund's Pevensie characters as affected by the understanding of the other intrinsic of the novel, i.e., the setting, the point of view, the tone, and the plot development. This step involves repeated readings, which are not necessarily linear, from the beginning to the end of the novel. The readings can go back and forth depending on the focus. This process allows the marking of potential data on the novel, namely the characters of Edmund Pevensie. Notes are taken to record possible explanations of the characters as they are compared with other data from the novel's setting, point of view, tone, and plot development. And then, the data are recorded into tables to categorize Edmund Pevensie's characters into groups of traits.

The second process is data analysis, where the data condensation and data display are conducted simultaneously to formulate tentative conclusions on the analysis. The first step in data condensation is evaluating the categorizations of Edmund Pevensie as collected in the previous steps to ensure comprehensive categories. This next step scrutinizes Edmund Pevensie's characters using the perspective of psychoanalysis. It allows the identification of relations between Edmund Pevensie's characters with his past needs and desires, his relationship with his siblings, and his interaction with the White Witch. This step is simultaneous with elaborating this pattern in the data display process. It describes Edmund Pevensie's characters and how they are affected by the Oedipus Complex that Edmund Pevensie had developed because of his past lack in his infancy. The process of data condensation and data display are dialogic, where the data condensation affects the data display, and the elaboration in the data display can affect the

data condensation. Both processes may lead to the conclusion, yet the conclusion is constantly compared with the data display and data condensation to ensure that the conclusion represents the categorizations, the pattern between data, and their elaboration. At the same time, the conclusion is compared with the data collection to include any relevant data that may have been left unrecorded in the previous data collection. Any updates on the data collection will affect the data condensation, the data display, and the conclusion. This simultaneous process is repeated until the whole process results in the same conclusion. Hence the conclusion is considered the result of a trustworthy analysis.

### **3 Result and Discussion**

This section will be divided into three subsections to describe how Edmund Pevensie's Oedipus Complex is reflected through the lack during Edmund Pevensie's infancy, how it affects his behavior when he needs food, shelter, warmth, and his relationship with the White Witch.

#### **3.1 Edmund Pevensie as the Third Child and Second Son**

Edmund's position as the third child impacts his struggles with the phallic process in child development. It all started with the fact that he was already born as the third child who could not get full attention, love, and care from his mother. His mother's attention must have been constantly divided between him and his older siblings. Besides, Edmund was the youngest child only for a year before the fourth sibling, Lucy, was born. Edmund seemed to be exceedingly jealous of Lucy. Thus, he loved to make her look bad. For example, when Lucy asked Edmund to confirm that they both had been to Narnia, Edmund "decided to let her down" by stating, "*Oh, yes, Lucy and I have been playing — pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. Just for fun, of course. There is nothing there really.*" (Lewis, 1994: 48). Edmund lied because Edmund had gone through the wardrobe to follow Lucy during the hide-and-seek game, and they both ended in Narnia. Even worse, Edmund had met Lucy in Narnia after his meeting with the White Witch. Edmund's lie had made Lucy very disappointed. But instead of regretting his action, he further points out that Lucy's response is proof that she was the worst kid, "*There she goes again. What is the matter with her? That is the worst of young kids*" (Lewis, 1994: 48).

Meanwhile, as the second son of the family, Edmund was never the first love of his mother. He was never the remedy for his mother's penis envy. Peter Pevensie, the first-born male of the family, occupies that position. Thus, Edmund had never felt the kind of love that Peter had received. Moreover, as the first-born child, Peter would receive her mother's undivided love and attention. This condition would never happen with Edmund. Although Edmund did not logically realize the difference, he would subconsciously feel the lack. This feeling can create jealousy that would manifest in the rejection of Peter's authority and his competitive behaviors toward Peter. Edmund never listened to Peter's words, and the response was always in an unpolite tone. For example, when Peter and Susan optimistically commented about the old professor who took them in for the summer, Edmund curtly responded: "*Oh, come off it!*" It was then explained that "*who was tired and pretending not to be tired, which always made him bad-tempered.*" (Lewis, 1994: 2). However, Edmund's response also shows that he resented Peter to the point that he did not want to agree with him and expressed his disagreement resentfully.

Furthermore, Edmund had a strong desire to be better than Peter. When the White Witch offered him to be her heir, Edmund immediately considered it an opportunity to be finally better than Peter. Edmund's obsession with not losing to Peter and being a prominent boy in the family

made him greedy. Thus, he pressed the White Witch to proceed with her plan immediately, “*Why not now?*” (Lewis, 1994: 40), because he did not want to lose the chance to beat Peter. Furthermore, when Edmund knew that the White Witch was a Jinn whose magic could turn her enemies into stone, Edmund still reported his siblings' location to the White Witch. He was described contemplating what would happen, as shown in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 1.

*“As for what the Witch would do with the others, he didn't want her to be particularly nice to them — certainly not to put them on the same level as himself; but he managed to believe, or to pretend he believed, that she wouldn't do anything very bad to them...”*

(Lewis, *The Lion*, 1994: 96)

The above description shows that Edmund might not wish his siblings turned into stone, but Edmund still wanted the White Witch not “*to be particularly nice*” to his siblings. It means Edmund still wanted to see them suffer, which reflects how he resented his siblings. Furthermore, Edmund wished that the White Queen “*certainly not to put them on the same level as himself,*” which reflect his ambitions to be above Peter. Edmund saw the White Witch as the replacement for the lacking mother's attention that grew from the unresolved loss of sexual objects. In Edmund's life, he never got full attention and care from a mother figure. Edmund felt the loss and developed the need for a mother figure's love. Edmund's cruel intention to Peter could be explained psychoanalytically as the effect of rivalry feeling arousing from his unresolved Oedipus Complex [12]. As a child denied the attention as the extension of her mother's penis envy, Edmund projected the loss onto Peter as his rival who robbed him of the opportunity to be the first-born. Thus, his vengeful thoughts that wished the White Witch to punish Peter were a selfish act rooted in this rivalry [20].

Furthermore, Paris [16] and Hossain [11] argue that males' psycho-sexual development includes a sexual attachment to their mother as males' first love. Nevertheless, according to the father's law, the mother is thoroughly deserved by the father, and the child will find other love objects or comfort feeling from others that mature enough to nurture the boys. It makes boys sometimes act like their fathers, showing the willingness to become number one and having the power to look for other objects of love as replacements for the love of the mother, unattainable for them due to their incapability to compete with the father. In Edmund's case, his insecure position in competing with his father figure is further complicated by his own position as the second-born male in his family. He needed to compete with his father *and* Peter, the family's first-born male child. As a first-born male, Peter had enjoyed the privilege of being the extension of his mother's penis envy. Because Mr. Pevensie was absent from home because of the war, Peter became the family's alpha male. On the other hand, Edmund did not have this chance. In the father's absence, Edmund had to accept that he was not the alpha male because Peter had already occupied the position. This situation is problematic for Edmund because the age gap between Edmund and Peter was only four years. In Edmund's point of view, Peter could be an insufficient father figure, not qualified enough to replace Mr. Pevensie's role. At the same time, Edmund might view that his sheer age gap with Peter would mean that he was just as qualified to be the replacement for the father figure. This competitive position could heighten Edmund's desire to find a place where he could be the first male without competing with Peter. Hence, a little persuasion from the White Witch is already a high temptation for Edmund to take sides with the evil queen.

### 3.2 Edmund Pevensie' in Need of Food, Shelter, and Warmth

Physically, a child needs food, shelter, and warmth as his basic needs. Along with Edmund's psychological vulnerability, when he met the White Witch in Narnia, he was hungry, lost, and cold. In such a condition, the White Witch came as a mother figure who could satisfy Edmund's needs. The third-person narrator describes the arrival of the White Witch as follows,

Excerpt 2.

*"— a great lady, taller than any woman that Edmund had ever seen. She was also covered in white fur up to her throat, held a long straight golden wand in her right hand, and wore a golden crown on her head. Her face was white — not merely pale, but white like snow or paper or icing sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face in other respects, but proud, cold, and stern."*

(Lewis, *The Lion*, 1994: 15)

Excerpt 2 above displays Edmund's first impression when he first saw the White Witch. The Witch was "*covered in white fur*," which displays warmth, comfort, and elegance. Her golden wand and crown command power. More importantly, the description of the White Witch includes her "*very red mouth*." The color red is very often associated with sexual passion [36]–[38], while the mouth is closely related to the source of satisfaction during the oral stage [39], [40]. The inclusion of the "*very red mouth*" as one of the noticeable appearances of the White Witch marks a strong fetish that relates to the sexual aspect of Edmund's Oedipus Complex. On the contrary, the Witch's beautiful yet pale face was further remarked as reflecting "*but proud, cold, and stern*." These adjectives signal power, but at the same time, it also invites the feeling of discomfort. Thus, the description of the Witch's arrival combines comfort and warmth with power and discomfort. Asymmetrically, these effects correspond with Edmund's uncomfortable, cold, hungry, and lonely situations with his need for comfort. The ambivalent situation reflects the unresolved loss during the pre-oedipal and phallic phases, where the ambivalent combinations of discomfort-pleasure and love-hatred are prevalent [41]. When the White Witch recognized Edmund as the Son of Adam, she offered Edmund comforting words and provided her shelter on her sledge, as shown in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 3.

*"'My poor child,' she said in quite a different voice, 'how cold you look! Come and sit with me here on the sled and I will put my mantle around you, and we will talk.'"*

(Lewis, *The Lion*, 1994: 17)

By addressing Edmund as her "*poor child*," the White Witch established herself as a mother figure for Edmund. The Witch assumes the position of a mother who took pity on Edmund. Edmund direly needed this sentiment to remedy his forlorn and lost feelings. Furthermore, by offering a sit on the sledge and the warmth of her mantle, she made available the shelter and comfort Edmund urgently needed. At the height of his vulnerability, Edmund's Oedipus Complex came to the surface, and he readily accepted the White Witch as the replacement of the mother figure for Edmund. The presence of a powerful yet caring woman offered a sense of security for the helpless little boy in Edmund's infantile phase. All of these remedies for Edmund's ordeal in his first visit to Narnia were performed through language by the Witch, especially by selecting the word poor [20].



Another essential need of a baby is food provided by his mother, whose satisfaction correlates directly with the fulfilment of his pre-oedipal sexual needs as a baby. Freud in [13] explained that since the first time humans lived as a baby and came to the earth, they already own natural libido as their sexual energy for being comfortable with only a particular object or specific someone they want to be accompanied with. Thus, how parents treat their children will become a significant influence in satisfying their needs. In Edmund's case, this need may not have been fully satisfied because he was only a year older than Lucy, the youngest child, as stated in Chapter 4 of the novel. Assuming that Mrs. Pevensie breastfed her children, she would certainly have had less than a year to breastfeed Edmund, if she did not stop breastfeeding when she discovered she was already pregnant again. It means Edmund's first loss would be the loss of her breastmilk as the essential food for him as a baby. In *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, this lack was another source of loss that accumulate into the formation of his Oedipus Complex. It is the aspect of Edmund's complex that the White Witch used to manipulate Edmund when she offered Edmund hot drink and Turkish Delights once he sat in the Witch's sledge (p. 37-38)

Edmund relished the hot drink the Queen magically conjured. Edmund was described to feel so much better after the drink, and then the queen offered him something to eat. When the queen asked Edmund what he would like to eat, Edmund stated "*without much thought*" that he would like Turkish Delights. The queen obliged, and Edmund enjoyed the treat immensely while answering the queen's inquisitive questions. The novel describes Edmund's feelings during this interview as a mix of contradicting emotions. He wanted to be polite by not talking with his mouth full, yet he was obsessed to fill his mouth with sweet treats. He felt "*warm and comfortable*" because of the drink and the treat, yet, his instinct noticed the queen was too inquisitive about his siblings. The contradicting emotions reflect the duality of Edmund's personality resulted from his willingness to break from the painful loss in his childhood and his desire to compensate for the loss of pleasure from his childhood, normally found among people with the Oedipus Complex [42]. The duality is made stark by comparing Edmund's understanding of the social norms, the ego, and Edmund's instinctive desires, the id. Normatively, Edmund knew that he should not eat with his mouth full or answer very inquisitive questions from a stranger. Instinctively, Edmund was drawn to the comfort provided by the comforting words and shelter and the food offered by the Witch. It is symptomatic that the instinctive id is represented most strongly by Edmund's desires for the Turkish Delights as a pleasure attainable from his mouth, reflecting his raw need to compensate for a loss of pleasure in his oral phase.

### **3.3 Edmund Pevensie's Fixation on the White Witch as Mother Surrogate**

The novel *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* continues to make Edmund's fixation with the Witch's Turkish Delights the reason for his obsession to meet the White Witch again. As a fantasy novel, it is very logical to simply attribute the obsession as part of the Witch's power, i.e., the magical Turkish Delights contain certain spells that cause Edmund's erratic behaviors. Yet, after understanding his loss as a third-born child of four siblings, this analysis has shed some light on the psychological trauma that affected Edmund's characters. His childhood loss during the oral and pre-oedipal phases had made Edmund prone to the manipulation of an intelligent, ambitious, and strong mother figure of the White Witch. In similar cause-and-effect logic, the Oedipus Complex suffered by Edmund resulting from his childhood trauma as a second born-male and a third-born child out of four siblings had affected Edmund's relationship with the White Witch.

After successfully establishing herself as the perfect mother figure for Edmund, the White Witch went further to offer Edmund the position of the first-male born in her household:

Excerpt 4.

*“It is a lovely place, my house,” said the Queen. “I am sure you would like it. There are whole rooms full of Turkish Delights, and what’s more, I have no children of my own. I want a nice boy whom I could bring up as a Prince and who would be King of Narnia when I am gone. While he was Prince he would wear a gold crown and eat Turkish Delights all day long; and you are much the cleverest and handsomest young man I’ve ever met. I think I would like to make you the Prince—some day, when you bring the others to visit me.”*

(Lewis, *The Lion*, 1994: 40)

Excerpt 4 above shows that the White Witch offered Edmund a place in her home, which was “lovely,” with “rooms full of Turkish Delights”, and most importantly, the offer to adopt Edmund as heir to her throne. Other than reminding Edmund’s lack of shelter and food, the White Witch further evoked Edmund’s psychological feebleness by invoking his loss as a second-born male and offering the remedy to this loss. As pointed out earlier, Edmund's position as both a second-born male and a third child of four siblings might have triggered the loss of pleasure during his infantile period while limiting his chance to be the replacement of the family's alpha male when the father figure was absent. By offering Edmund the opportunity of being the first-born and the father figure of a household, the White Witch manipulated Edmund’s psychological feebleness. For a boy who has an unresolved oedipal phase like Edmund, the offer touched the deepest part of his vulnerability. Thus, Edmund readily agreed to the Witch's proposition because he was obsessed with being the first-born, with a palace to live in, endless Turkish Delights, and a kingdom to inherit.

At this point, his only obstacle was the indecorous feeling of being threatened by the arrival of his siblings, especially Peter. This apprehension might have triggered another erroneous thinking in Edmund’s mind to wish to place Peter outside of the Witch’s reach to eliminate the competition. This flow of thought could explain why Edmund told the White Witch that “*there was nothing special*” about Peter, Susan, and Lucy. Thus, when the White Witch assured Edmund that *he* was the heir presumptive and his siblings would be his courtiers, Edmund was satisfied and agreed to bring his siblings back to Narnia for the White Witch. Narratively, Edmund betrayed his siblings for selfish reasons. However, psychoanalytically, it can be explained as Edmund’s instinctive desire to get the pleasure denied him because he was not the first-male born. As explained by [43], Edmund's effort to use the White Witch's position to fulfil his desire represents the stigma of boys having one of Oedipus’ performative acts, self-blinding.

C.S. Lewis’s novel provides the backdrop for Edmund’s attachment to the White Witch by starting the narrative with the children’s separation from their mother due to London air raids during the war. According to Rowland [44], the war represents the threat that every child fears: the condition that forces the separation of a child from their parents. The fear may grasp the child's mind at a certain point, forcing him to flee the situation and free himself from the pressure [45]. However, the novel does not include details that point to the impulse to flee other than the sheer force of the air raid, forcing them to find safety in the countryside. Thus, while the escape motive may be weak, the purpose is similar to finding freedom from the threat. Similar to the separation of the child from his mother's breast during weaning, the removal of the Pevensie children from their mother's comforting embrace. Nevertheless, the effect of the separation may be felt differently by the Pevensie siblings. As a first-born and a male first-born, Peter would not feel the separation as a trauma. Instead, it was an upgrade for him, from the extension of his mother's penis envy to the father figure of the family, smoothened up by the absence of the

father throughout the narrative. Similarly, Susan stepped up as the mother figure, eliminating the rivalry with her mother for the father's love. On the other hand, Lucy must have felt the separation more challenging because she was the longest to be in her mother's embrace since she was born last. Besides, the presence of Peter and Susan as the surrogate father and mother would ease the pain of the separation for Lucy. Edmund, however, had to endure the separation akin to reexperiencing his loss when weaned early from her mother due to Lucy's arrival into the family. He had to reexperience the trauma of being physically removed from his mother's presence and thrust into the embrace of the surrogate mother, Susan. And because Susan was only two years older than Edmund, the transition did not happen smoothly. The minimal age gap may present Susan as an incompetent mother surrogate. Edmund's rejection of Susan as the mother figure is symptomatic of his distrust of Susan filling the role of the mother figure. The severity of the separation for Edmund would invoke the loss he had experienced during his infantile period. It was during this austerity that the White Witch came into his life with power, charisma, maturity, and all the comforts that a mother could provide, the perfect mother surrogate in Edmund's time of need.

Narratively, the relationship between Edmund and the Witch grew stronger because Edmund needed food, shelter, and warmth. Psychoanalytically speaking, the more important reason for the relationship was the role of the surrogate mother played by the White Witch for Edmund. Despite the duplicity of the White Witch's reasons in providing the fulfilment of Edmund's desires, her manipulative promise of making him her heir and the next king of Narnia represent the parents' unfulfilled promise to continually provide food, shelter, and comfort for their children. As a child loses the comfort of the breast when he is weaned or the gradual diminishing of parental assistance for his child's daily function, the White Witch would bound to disappoint Edmund as her promise to make Edmund her heir was never fulfilled, symptomatic that Edmund's fixation on the White Witch as the mother figure that promised him the position of the first-born male should grow strong because children with unresolved Oedipus Complex are often trapped in their own subconscious relationship with their parents in the past and projecting them to their current relationship with older women [46]. Although [18] argue that Oedipus Complex can push a boy into a masculinization process to compete with his father, the boy can continually be driven by his need for attention, love, and a caring environment [42]. The problem is, sometimes the child cannot always differentiate whether or not the fulfilment of this desire is real or imaginative, making him prone to manipulation. Thus, Edmund was very vulnerable to the manipulation of the White Witch, making him easily fall into his fixation on the White Witch as the source of fulfilment of his repressed desires. Edmund did not know that the White Witch was manipulating him to bring his siblings to the White Witch so she could kill them.

#### **4 Conclusion**

This study has elaborated the possible explanations for Edmund Pevensie's characters in C.S. Lewis's *Narnia The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Using Freud's conception of the Oedipus Complex, this study analyzed Edmund's background as a second-born male and the third child of four siblings as the source of his Oedipus Complex. His mother divided attention had developed a lack in Edmund's psychology, resulting in his rude, distrustful, and mischievous character. The lack also made Edmund prone to temptations, especially in the forms of food, shelter, warmth and comfort, leading him to easily fall into the White Witch's manipulation. Most importantly, Edmund's infantile trauma had a repressed sexuality that was projected into

his fixation on the White Witch as his object of love/mother surrogate without being able to differentiate whether or not the satisfaction provided was real or imaginary. Although Edmund sometimes felt guilty for betraying his siblings, he was psychologically very vulnerable to fight the temptation to fulfil his desires. This analysis allows insights into Edmund Pevensie's psychology, providing an understanding of his characters and why he developed them. With these insights, the novel can be appreciated more profoundly beyond its generic function as a children's story. The insights into Edmund's motives and purpose in the plot development can help understand the story's complexity beyond the seemingly simple plot, providing layers of possible reading for more mature and knowledgeable parties like parents, teachers, and researchers. Beyond this narrative utility, this analysis may also imply that parents, teachers and educators should be aware of children's backgrounds and upbringing in their endeavor to raise and educate children.

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