

Freudian Psychoanalytic Exploration of Will Freeman's Transformation into an Impromptu Parent in Nick Hornby's 'About a Boy'

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Abstract

Through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory—specifically, the id, ego, and superego this study examines the psychological development of Will Freeman, the main character in Nick Hornby's novel *About a Boy*. The purpose of the paper is to reveal how Will's unconscious impulses and internal conflicts influence his development from a selfish bachelor to a dedicated, unintended father figure to a youngster named Marcus. The study examines a few chosen narrative scenes, conversations, and character interactions that illustrate Will's evolving mental state using a qualitative descriptive methodology. The changes in Will's psychological state were charted using data gathered from closely examining texts and evaluated using Freudian frameworks. The results show that Will's metamorphosis is fueled by an ongoing dialogue between his innate needs, realistically based reason, and growing moral consciousness, which is reflected in the major incidents and character interactions. By showing how Freudian theory can shed light on character development in modern fiction, the study advances psychoanalytic literary theory. It also sheds light on the wider ramifications of applying psychoanalytic frameworks to the analysis of contemporary stories' themes of identity, masculinity, and emotional development.

Keywords

Ego, Nick Hornby, Psychoanalytic, Super Ego, Transformation, Unconscious (Id)

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INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalytic method developed by Sigmund Freud is psychological theory and therapeutic approach that focuses on the unconscious mechanisms influencing human behavior. Freud describes three structural model forms of the psyche in *The Ego and the Id* (1923): the id, ego, and superego. Based on the pleasure principle, the id is linked to primal wants. The id, reality, and the superego which building internalized moral and social norms are all mediated by the ego, which functions in accordance with the reality principle. Freud believed that most mental activity was unconscious and that psychological distress was often caused by tension between these structures. Every human being must have an id, or desire that contains desire and its nature has been ingrained since birth, according to Freud Giordano (2020). In this instance, the superego can also influence what the ego will generate and plays a significant part in the ego's outcome Gultom and Astarini (2018). The ego is an actual action derived from the outcomes of the id, which is dominated by the superego. The ego may eventually contain notions from the superego if the superego is in control. Thoughts from the id may eventually appear in the ego, though, if the id is dominant. These two egos, however, may contain fresh ideas or a compromise between them Septiani (2022).

According to Stepić, N. (2018) examines how a crisis of masculinity and changing marital standards are reflected in Will's life, in 'About a Boy' (2000) by Nick Hornby which is involving psychoanalysis approach. The psychoanalytic theory approach offers a striking contrast between two humans who are attached to each other. Will, an adult who lives for freedom, lives without purpose, and lives in abundance. Using psychoanalysis approach affect the Will's transformation. Marcus, a 12-year-old child who lives with minimal wealth, is often bullied by his friends, and has lost his father figure since childhood. By seeing the poor life of Marcus Will decide to become a father figure for Marcus, which is corresponding to Stepić, N. (2018) such as the loss of a father figure, a crisis of loyalty, and a crisis of masculinity become the reason why the protagonist has willing to do so.

The phrase "transformation" refers to a systematic state in which reality can change the person's own existence, becoming the target of an unbalanced relationship, which is often marked by the person's own norms, unconscious desires, and ego Malykhina, (2018). European literature up until the eighteenth century was generally acknowledged to be patriarchal for centuries, with male protagonists, male authors, and a largely masculine worldview dominating the stories. Women and the subtleties of masculinity itself were marginalized in this traditional literary setting, which subtly equated the masculine experience with the entire human predicament. A reactionary rise of masculinity studies that aimed to examine and reinterpret what it meant to be male outside of the hegemonic norm resulted from feminist theory's challenge to this imbalance as it gained traction. In *About a Boy*, Will is a father figure who symbolizes perfection because his understanding of the child's will is quite good, even desired by many women. Marcus, a 12-year-old child, instead of being Will's child figure, behaves strangely, is nerdy, and loses a father figure from the baby.

Despite the novel's widespread scholarly attention, not much research has been done to analyze the Will–Marcus relationship as a mythic structure of psychoanalytic, especially using Sigmund Freud's framework of id, ego, and superego. This inquiry satisfies that necessity. Therefore, this study uses Sigmund Freud's concepts of theme and structuralist narrative mapping to investigate how *About a Boy* structurally portrays transformation through the id, ego, and superego between Will and Marcus.

In accordance with Loway, S. N. (2023) the Superego, Ego, and Id. These factors, which frequently clash with one another, combine to influence behavior and personality. This study will identify and categorize narrative elements that establish the Will as an impromptu parent and the Marcus as a impromptu son. This approach not only reveals the novel's underlying psychoanalysis theory, but also demonstrates how id, ego, and superego connect to each other.

Therefore, this research seeks to carefully reveal the layers of interaction between the id, ego, and superego depicted in the novel *About a Boy* by Nick Hornby through the character Will to explore how these experiences and decisions complexly contribute to Will's subsequent ideas and actions. By using psychological theory and framework, this research aims to explain specifically the events that form Will's narrative in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of how id, ego, and superego are important factors in making decisions. Through this exploration, this research aims to contribute valuable insight into the complexity of the id, ego and superego. Encouraging increased empathy and awareness around the intersection between the id and the superego.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Tarzian, M., Ndrio, M., & Fakoya, A. O. (2023) Sigmund Freud's revolutionary theory of psychology, psychoanalysis, offers a perceptive examination of the unconscious mind and how it shapes behavior. Freud's psychoanalysis, developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was a reaction to psychological disorders that neurology was unable to explain. The hypothesis is predicated on the idea that early life experiences, subconscious memories, and desires significantly influence feelings, ideas, and behavior. The tripartite model of the psyche the id, ego, and superego are the foundation of psychoanalysis. Instinctual impulses and instant gratification govern the id, the ego acts as a mediator between these desires and the outside world, and the superego internalizes morality.

Corresponding to Lapsley and Stey (2012) of Sigmund Freud stating that id is the oldest and most basic component of the human mind, constituting the basic, instinctual part of our mental apparatus. It is the source of our basic personality by giving expression to our inborn biological desires and early impulses, existing separate from reason, morality, or social rules. The id, which stands for our most basic instincts and desires, is a fundamental part of the human psyche according to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The id, which operates solely in the unconscious, disregards morals and social norms in its pursuit of instant gratification. It is guided by the pleasure principle, which states that it will stop at nothing to avoid suffering and experience pleasure. Freud believed that all psychic energy originates from the id, which is present from birth and drives basic urges like libido, violence, and hunger.

In accordance to Afkarina, I., & Wardhani, D. T. M. (2019) the ego is a personality system that serves as an individual's guide to reality and performs actions based on reality. As the personality's executive apparatus, the ego governs and manages the id and super-ego and cultivates connections with the external environment for the benefit of the personality as a whole and its long-term requirements. Lapsey (2012) according to Freud's theory, ego growth comprises the abandonment of narcissistic self-love in favor of the idealization or exaggeration of cultural and ethical standards, which are illustrated to the child by parental influence.

According to Afkarina and Wardhani (2019) the superego is concerned with the morals, ethics, and values of the personality system. It also includes both positive and negative aspects of human desires and actions. The superego's actions are the opposite of those of the id. Because it specifies what is true or false, appropriate or not, the super-ego is a moral component of personality that allows one to act in a way that is morally acceptable to society. Freud claimed in Calvin (1954: 81) that youngsters identify with their parents' moral advice because they fear punishment and want to be accepted. Parental identity contributes to the development of the superego. hang, S. (2020) states that ego itself using "reality principles".

Further research with the same research object discussing the New Lad phenomenon is research conducted by Chifane, C. (2019). This study to examine how Nick Hornby's bestselling fiction novels, which are typically linked to the New Lad phenomenon, include the idea of modern masculinities. As a result, Will Freeman in *About a Boy* and Rob Fleming in *High Fidelity* both have a crisis of masculinity at the start of the new millennium and adopt a more adaptable paradigm that enables them to see the failure of the New Lad movement. Will Freeman and Rob Fleming start to resemble the postfeminist free guy, who is prepared to embrace the ensuing feminist waves and rediscover the importance of real human connections at the expense of an ongoing fixation with ideas of gender roles, power, and hierarchy. Chifane (2019) focuses on the representation of New Lad masculinity, specifically the New Lad phenomenon, in Nick Hornby's novels. Given that it focuses on Will Freeman's change and the topic of masculinity, this research is thematically congruent with the ongoing studies. Both studies are prepared to acknowledge that Will changes as a person as he adjusts to new social and emotional roles. Instead of employing a deep psychological model, Chifane's analysis analyzes Will's character in the context of postfeminist identity while staying within the parameters of cultural and gender discourse. Emphasis is placed on the development of male identity through literary and sociological notions. The current study analyzes the unconscious motivations behind Will's behavioral shifts using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, namely the concepts of id, ego, and superego. By closely examining Will's internal conflict and metamorphosis into an impromptu father figure through psychoanalysis, the current study fills the research gap of Chifane's incapacity to apply psychological insight into Will's development.

Next is Divine, Pangmeshi, and Kusi (2022) study. Their study focuses on the formation of a family in contemporary English fiction *About a Boy* by Nick Hornby. With an emphasis on Hanif Kureishi's *Intimacy* and Nick Hornby's *About a Boy*, this essay aims to analyze the traditional family in modern British fiction. The study examines and dissects family structure typologies that stem from the traditional family as shown in Hanif Kureishi's *Intimacy* and Nick Hornby's *About a Boy*. Therefore, the article suggests that there is a dramatic and profound transition rather than the "death of the family," as some critics like Judith Stacey have predicted in her speech aimed at "rethinking family

values in the postmodern age." Divine, Pangmeshi, and Kusi. (2022) examine how family structures have changed in contemporary British fiction, such as in *About a Boy*. Their study is similar to the current one in that it focuses on unconventional family structures, particularly how characters adapt to social and emotional demands in a changing society. Will joins an alternate family structure, according to both research papers. Though they look at the typologies of family in literature on a larger scale, their focus is social and structural. The psychological mechanisms that underlie character development or behavior are not examined. In contrast to their studies, the current study uses Freud's structural model of the psyche to explain Will's conduct by focusing on his intrapsychic growth processes. Their research is therefore limited by the lack of psychological research; the current study addresses this gap by systematically applying Freudian ideas to trace Will's internal development and role as a parent.

Another studies ARPA (2017) this study focuses at how television and ideology relate to the fictitious characters in Nick Hornby's *About a Boy* (1998) and Martin Amis's *Night Train* (1997). Life is no longer imitated in the postmodern world; instead, it mimics screens, such as those found in mass media, movies, television, and retail establishments. These screens are products of popular culture that teach us how to think, how to perceive "the other," how to dress, how to desire, and, in other words, how to live. This essay makes the case that the two novels' depictions of violence and suicide on screen are mimicked, and that the audience is exposed to hegemony and ideology via the screen. ARPA (2017) provides a critical analysis of *About a Boy* from the perspectives of postmodern ideology and consumer culture, contending that character action and philosophy are influenced by television and mass media. Although the study's analysis of *About a Boy* is comparable to that of the current study, its methodology and focus are very different. While the current study looks inward, analyzing Will's affective process and personal development through unconscious urges, ARPA investigates the ideological forces and external cultural influences that impact people's attitudes, most notably through the media. The main distinction is in the theoretical framework: present research is based on Freudian psychoanalysis, whereas ARPA is based on postmodern theory. The lack of a psychological component or character-oriented internal analysis in ARPA's research is the study's weakness. By offering a character-oriented theory that explains Will's transformation as the result of a psychological conflict between his id, ego, and superego, the current literature fills a gap.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study examines how Will's transformation is shown in *About a Boy* by using descriptive qualitative approach Seixas, Smith, and Mitton (2018), and the psychoanalytic theory Sigmund Freud. Selected lines from the story that highlight the fundamental differences between Will and Marcus make up the core data. Due of their thematic connections to power, fear, physical contrast, and adolescent vulnerability, these passages were chosen through attentive reading.

Id, ego, and superego are used to fully accomplish the study's goal of exposing psychoanalytic approach by Sigmund Freud. To find the transformation of Will, we must determine the desire id, ego, and superego. According to Freud, S. (1923) The id, the most primal part of the mind, is completely unconscious, operates on the pleasure principle, and pursues immediate satisfaction of primal needs and desires without consideration for morality or truth. The id gives rise to the ego, which operates according to the reality

principle. It acts as a mediator between the superego's moral obligations, the id's demanding desires, and the limitations of the outside world. The ego is mostly unconscious and partially conscious. Later in life, the superego emerges, mostly as a result of absorbed social and familial values. It is a moral critic that punishes expectations and goals and usually makes people feel guilty when its standards aren't fulfilled.

To comprehensively achieve the objectives of this research, it is necessary to elaborate on how the id, ego, and superego are formed within Will's personality. Will's life experiences can be used to analyze how these three structures were formed, according to Dwi Amareta, and Hardiyanti (2024) Freud stated, beginning with the unconscious drives that stand in for his primal desires (id), the ego's process of adjusting to the reality he encounters on a daily basis (ego), and ending with the superego's moral principles and social conventions that start to shape his transformation. According to Freud's psychoanalytic method, the relationships between these elements can disclose the psychological mechanisms underlying Will's behaviors in reacting to his surroundings and establishing social bonds, especially when he interacts with other characters like Marcus.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Major Events in Will's life That Affected His Impromptu Parent

1. Will's Glamour life

The event in the story which illustrating and also the transformation to become an impromptu parent of Will is his glamorous life. Give a description to the quotation. Will's habit of dining at fancy restaurants, which defines his glamorous lifestyle.

"He had eaten in a restaurant that served polenta and shaved parmesan" (Hornby, 2000, 5, xx).

"How cool was Will was Freeman? He had slept with a woman he didn't know very well in the last three months"

"Any desire for a family of your own yet?"

"Not yet" Will said

Will, spends his days soaking up the flash and glamour of city life. On the exterior, he seems to have it all eat with an expensive stuff, late-night parties. He uses sex to fill the hidden desire of him as he moves from one woman to another without developing any kind of relationship. However, he does exist aimlessly against the backdrop of the club lights and other people's fake smiles. His spirit is slowly being consumed by a rising emptiness; there are no goals to pursue or significance to uncover. He laughs a lot throughout the day but becomes quiet at night, as though all the glitz is a front for a life that is actually meaningless and empty.

Conrad and Konain (2025) definig the id is the first aspect of the psyche to manifest, according to Freud. The id exists from birth and is driven only by need, desire, and instinct. It includes the most primal aspects of the personality, such as fundamental biological urges and instincts, and is completely unconscious. The pleasure principle, which seeks to instantly satisfy all impulses, is what drives the id. Will is shown as someone who leads an entirely independent life devoid of direction or purpose. Regardless of morals, societal conventions, or long-term consequences, he decides to pursue every whim and impulse that comes to him. Instant satisfaction, like as casual,

commitment-free sex, is a part of his existence. Will is compelled to pursue a lady without giving it much thought when he meets one who satisfies his personal tastes and he finds her physically beautiful. According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, this spontaneous reaction demonstrates the id's dominance in the personality structure. The pleasure principle, which demands the prompt satisfaction of primal desires, governs how the id functions. Will's actions here show how his unconscious drive for sexual gratification, or id, rules without interference from the ego or superego.

According to Mashori, Mahesar, and Mustafa (2018), the ego determines what is appropriate for the individual while the id tries to satiate its desires. The ego is more than just the id's ally. Additionally, it is a docile slave who pursues his master's affection. Though not without carefully weighing the potential disadvantages or social expectations, Will's ego plays a role in helping him fulfill his id. Will's impulses are not controlled by the ego, which is meant to act as a mediator between the id's desires and reality's assertions. By choosing to date the lady, Will's ego stops serving as a filter of reason and instead becomes a means of fulfilling his id-based desire for sexual fulfillment. Even though his outward actions seem planned, they are really a concession made by the ego to satisfy the id's primal want, disregarding morality and societal norms.

In accordance to Loway, S. N. (2023) Sigmund Freud stated, the subconscious gives rise to the superego, a personality type that knows right from wrong and acts accordingly through directives, counsel, critiques, or recommendations that incorporate socially acceptable standards and regulations. Furthermore, Will's superego also seems to be limited in its function. The superego, as the moral compass having internalized social norms and ethical standards does not seem to exert much control over Will's behavior. This is made evident in a scenario where those around him seem to live "complete" lives, both physically and mentally. In this environment, Will may become partially aware of other people's conformity to norms and values. This awareness does not, however, prove to be enough to suppress his id-induced desires or significantly affect his ego's decisions. That is, Will does possess a superego, but it is weak or repressed and thus cannot provide a proper balance between his spontaneous urges and the social conventions around him.

2. Will and Marcus learn the truth that Fiona (Marcus' mother) was never married.

Another incident in the narrative that impacted Will's as an impromptu parent is discovering the truth that Fiona was never married.

"Fiona, have you ever been married?" Will asked

"No" Fiona said (Hornby, 2000, p. 85).

In this quotation, Will asks Marcus's mother about the true relationship figure in Marcus's life, and then Marcus finds out that his parents were never married.

For a moment, Marcus was confused, when he was a real kid, a little kid, he used to think that you had to have a driving licence to drive.

(Hornby, 2000, 85, xx).

Here, Will observes Marcus's peculiar response at learning that he was born out of marriage, meaning his parents were not married. Will reflects for a moment after coming to this realization. According to İSAOĞLU (2015) The first aspect of the personality is the id, which contains our primal urges like hunger, resentment, and rage. According to Freud, we were born with these instinctive, primal urges, which makes the id something natural. Will's internal reaction to Marcus's claim that he was born out of

wedlock illustrates the existence of the id, the subconscious part of the mind that is motivated by instinct and primal desire. Marcus's remark causes tension since it is founded on societal conventions that Will has long suppressed, even though he is not expressing emotion. The conflict between Will's unconscious aspirations and the social expectations of marriage and family is indicated by the tension. The idea that having children outside of marriage goes against some unspoken agreement that Will had willingly left behind stirs Will's id.

Will is forced to acknowledge that Marcus's parents ignored this norm. Marcus illustrates the Superego's dominance by comparing getting married before starting a family to obtaining a driver's license. Parental and societal conventions, morals, and values are internalized by the superego. Marcus is addressing a larger cultural presumption that elevates parenthood through marriage, not just expressing a personal viewpoint. Jarnkvist (2019) His analogy implies that there are moral standards and proper procedures to live by in his own mind standards that his own parents did not uphold.

Will has internal conflict in the instant Marcus says that he was born out of marriage, involving not only instinct and conscience but also his id and superego. In the midst of this blind alley stands the ego, the logical mediator. Corresponding to Hussaini, S. (2019) the ego, aims to express and satisfy the id. Will is aware that he feels uncomfortable but his actions which are driven by Marcus's statement. Rather, he absorbs the information, balancing his lifestyle with Marcus's societal expectations. According to Freud, the ego operates on the concept of reality and strikes a balance between morality and instinctual need. Will's ego keeps his inner turmoil and his calm exterior intact by enabling him to think without fear of public reaction.

In accordance to Afkarina, I., & Wardhani, D. T. M. (2019) the superego is concerned with the morals, ethics, and values of the personality system. It also includes both positive and negative aspects of human desires and actions. The superego's strength is most evident in the conversation between Will and Marcus, particularly in Marcus's remark that marriage is like receiving a driver's license. According to Nila Mutyarani, Dwi Amareta, and Hardiyanti (2024) Freud stated, this simile is an expression of internalized moral and social norms, which are important functions of the superego. Marcus is aware of what is "proper" or socially acceptable, but his parents didn't live up to that expectation. Will's superego is subtly evoked by Marcus's remark, which reminds him of the conventional norms he has given up. Despite his polished appearance, his thoughtful hesitancy indicates that these moral principles are still present in him. By providing Will with a child's internalized sense of right and wrong, the superego challenges his detached existence.

The commitment Which is reprinted the major event as a parent resulting from an impromptu parent is presented in the novel:

1. Buying a pair of shoes

The action of Will bought Marcus a pair of shoes showed his transformation to become commitment as a parent, which they usually by their kids a pair of shoes.

"Do you like those shoes" Will asked

"What do you mean?" Marcus said (Hornby, 2000, 110, xx).

In this quotation, Will and Marcus went shopping together. Will, who was really concerned and willing to assist, listened intently to Marcus's need as he walked along the aisles. The increasing emotional connection between them, not just between two strangers, but a father-son closeness that filled a hole in both of their lives was reflected in this incident.

"Marcus wore the kind of shoes that Will didn't think they made anymore". (Hornby, 2000, 110, xx).

In this quotation, Will thinks that the shoes Marcus wears are old and raggedy, then in this segment, Will makes a commitment to become an impromptu parent by buying Marcus a pair of shoes which is reflected as transformation. According to Freud, the unconscious mind, which contains suppressed emotions and unresolved childhood memories, has a dominant effect over human behavior (Freud, 1915). Mentioned Zhang, S. (2020) as a stated by Freud. Id stood for the biological instinct of humans. Freud defined Id as the "pleasure principle" and "primary-process thought," signifying that Id quickly satisfies human needs to alleviate anxiety. The most fundamental human characteristic that embodies their physiological desires is their id. Ego applied the "principle of reality." Will is motivated by his id, the primal part of the mind that loves pleasure and shuns suffering, as he is portrayed at the beginning of the book (Freud, 1923). Will feels an intense emotional desire when he sees Marcus's old and cracked sneakers. The natural need in this case, the impulsive urge to assist or satisfy another person's need comes from the id, the most primal aspect of the psyche. Will's wish to purchase Marcus a new pair of shoes is an indication of a psychological change taking place in him rather than necessarily an act of generosity. This move is a step toward emotional attachment and a stronger sense of duty to others, whereas before he was a guy motivated only by self-gratification, fleeting pleasures, and non-attachment.

Will's desire to purchase Marcus a new pair of shoes when he realizes that they are worn out is not only driven by his id, but it also demonstrates how his ego is increasingly influencing his behavior. A raw emotional impulse must be transformed into a deliberate, socially acceptable reaction by the ego, which acts as a mediator between the id's instinctive desires and reality's limitations. Will's ego assesses the circumstances and transforms the desire into a useful and meaningful action rather than acting solely on impulse. Will's ego shows an increasing ability to behave not simply for his own satisfaction but also with respect for the needs of others by choosing to purchase Marcus new shoes. Will's ego is maturing at this point, showing that he is starting to manage his desires through empathy, social awareness, and growing emotional responsibility.

When Will sees Marcus's old and unsuitable shoes, the desire to offer him a new pair signals the emergence of Will's superego rather than just an unadulterated emotional reaction. In Will's instance, the superego set of internalized moral principles, ethical standards, and social norms begins to have a more noticeable impact on his actions. But helping Marcus also stems from a growing sense of moral obligation and empathy, not

just a gut instinct. For what may be the first time on a true level, Will examine to understand that it is morally wrong to let a human person, particularly a child in danger, stay in such a position. Will is starting to connect values other than self-interest, as seen by this behavior, which shows that his feelings and sense of moral judgment have been activated. As Will's superego begins to control his behavior toward compassion and societal duty, it shows a moral development in his character.

"I've made an unhappy boy temporarily happy" (Hornby, 2000, 110. xx).

Will glamour life also can be seen when he met Marcus and bought him an expensive shoe. Will indirectly makes a young boy happy by buying him a pair of shoes, which is expensive for the boy. This reflects the id-driven impulse from Will's subconscious that brings pleasure him from what he has done (Freud, 1923). Will witnessed Marcus's delighted Id when he was going to buy shoes, according to Freud, S. (1923). Freud believed that the Id is the most scientific drive or idea, and it is founded on pleasure as a result, Will's Id manifests when he purchases Marcus' shoes, which stand for Id. By purchasing Marcus shoes, Will matches his ego reflected as a consciousness. In accordance to Gera, Chandra, Labibah, Vincensia, and Sulistyorini (2022) which is an element of the ego since it acts as a mediator between his id, reality, and superego. Because Marcus is wearing inappropriate shoes, the superego resulting here is a symbol for the norm.

2. Will Accompany Marcus as a Christmast Partner

The action of Will to accompany Marcus as a Christmast partner is showed his transformation to become commitment as a parent.

"Do you want to spend Christmas round ours?" Marcus asked

"ummm," Said Will. "That's, ah, very kind of you."

"Good" Said Marcus

"I only said that's very kind of you" Said Will

"I haven't got any other friends, have I?" Marcus said

"I'm sorry, Marcus, I was being rude. I'd love to spend Christmas with you"

In this quotation, Marcus reassures Will that he has no other friend except him, while also inviting Will to celebrate Christmas together. Will's unconscious emotional traumas are triggered by this pivotal emotional appeal. At this very time, Will experiences an emotional connection that awakens his id, triggered by Marcus's naive request to spend Christmas with. Will initially pauses and reacts awkwardly is a defensive tactic derived from years of emotional distance. However, Will's emotional barriers are breached by Marcus's candid revelation that he has no other friends. Will's unconscious wants change at this point, moving from egocentric isolation to a repressed need for belonging and connection. Once controlled by hedonism and avoidance, the id starts to transform into a yearning for emotional closeness. This is the point at which the id displays a deeper,

human want for relational attachment, which Will had long suppressed, in addition to innate longing.

Will's resistance to Marcus's invitation to spend Christmas with him is a result of his ego's struggle to strike a balance between his inner unease and the social constraints of compassion and sympathy. The ego, which functions in accordance with the reality principle, mediates between the ethical imperative to respond with sympathy (caused by the superego) and the Will's desire for detachment (caused by the id). The ego forces Will to reconsider his response when Marcus discloses his loneliness. His final admission "I'd love to spend Christmas with you" is a deliberate change that demonstrates emotional control rather than an act of impulsiveness. Here, he is able to preserve his individuality while enabling himself to be vulnerable and connect with others by using his ego Will to effectively negotiate the social environment. The ego's function in Will's gradual psychological development is made clear at this point, as it encourages him to move from emotional avoidance to interpersonal intimacy.

Will's superego the internalized voice of conscience influenced by societal and moral norms is also appealed to by Marcus's sincere request and candid admission that he has no other pals at this meeting. At first, Will responds evasively, motivated by habit and emotional detachment. Will, however, undergoes a moral reassessment as a result of Marcus's weakness, which makes him feel guilty and responsible. His ultimate decision to change his mind to accept the invitation and apologize signals the superego gaining control and pushing him to act out of compassion, obligation, and empathy. Will's choice expresses an underlying moral value of preserving compassion and human connection, going beyond simply reacting to social ease or personal comfort. Here, the superego comes into play as one of the driving forces behind Will's development, promoting moral development that goes beyond self-interest.

CONCLUSION

The id, ego, and superego structures three pillars of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory—have been used to analyze Will Freeman's psychological development in *About a Boy*. The study reveals that Will's transformation from a self-centered, aloof bachelor to a parent figure who is emotionally invested and morally concerned has deep unconscious causes. Every stage of Will's growth, fueled by his interactions with Marcus, exemplifies the dynamic conflict between internalized moral principles, reality-mediated bargaining, and intuitive cues.

Through the application of Freudian theory to a modern work of fiction, this research adds new dimensions to psychoanalytic literary theory by demonstrating the continued applicability of conventional psychological models to the study of modern masculinity, identity, and emotional coming-of-age stories. It specifically demonstrates how Hornby's depiction of Will goes beyond societal preconceptions of the "New Lad" and investigates the intrapsychic mechanisms entailed in emotional development and providing care in postmodern contexts. This analysis reveals the intrapsychic causes of

Will's behavior shift, in contrast to earlier research that focused on societal, ideological, or gendered interpretations of his character.

There are nevertheless limits to the study. It is solely focused on Will's psyche and does not explore Marcus's psychological development or the mother-son relationship, which could have yielded a fuller view of relational transformation. Furthermore, although its use of Freudian theory is insightful, it might exclude alternative possible viewpoints from other psychological theories like Jungian analysis or attachment theory.

By exposing Will's development to multidisciplinary frameworks or comparing his character to similar protagonists in other modern works of fiction, future research could address these issues. Our comprehension of how fictional characters absorb and respond to emotional crises, particularly in non-traditional families, may be improved by such parallels.

Finally, this study shows how psychoanalytic criticism is applicable to the emotional and psychological aspects of character development in modern literature and confirms its value in character change analysis. It also discusses the difficulties and possibilities of adapting classic Freudian frameworks to modern fictional situations, which forces the literary psychologist to exercise flexible criticism.

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