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Topic: A Watchful Protector: A Psychoanalytic Criticism of the Portrayal of Batman in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy*

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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

Student's Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'LGY', written over a light blue rectangular background.

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Chapter 1: Introductory Chapter

1.1 General Background

Batman, the alter-ego of billionaire Bruce Wayne, was created by DC Comics in 1939. Over the years, he has spawned a wide range of print and digital media and become one of the best-loved superheroes in popular culture.

The Dark Knight Trilogy comprises three movies, namely *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises*. It is the most popular Batman incarnation (Walsh, 2018), and has been recognised as having altered “the way film critics and the public perceived superhero films” (Hughes, 2018, para. 1). A significant reason for the *Trilogy*’s popularity is the relatable portrayal of Batman that resonates with audiences.

1.2 Rationale

Especially in the 21st century, superhero movies are one of the most lucrative genres of movies in Hollywood, with 104 superhero movies having been distributed from 2000-2019 (Silberstein, 2019) and 12 of these earning over 1 billion USD worldwide (The Numbers, n.d.). One of the most significant reasons for this is that they “mirror the human experiences”, allowing viewers to relate to the superheroes easily (Towers, 2018, para. 9), thereby increasing superhero movies’ relevance to audiences. Hence, it is important to understand how modern heroes are presented as relatable characters in digital media, so as to explore how they shape viewers’ opinions of themselves and the world, as well as gain insight into the genre’s popularity. In particular, *The*

Dark Knight Trilogy is able to sufficiently represent the genre for analysis due to its significant cultural impact.

The protagonist Batman was specially selected for analysis due to his realistic traits (Boscaljon, 2013) that make him an icon in popular culture (Carney, 2019). Unlike many superheroes, such as Superman, Batman is not gifted with special abilities, but is simply skilled in martial arts, wealthy and exceptionally technologically-savvy. Moreover, Batman is relatable to audiences through the moral grey areas that he operates in (Boscaljon, 2013). As a vigilante, Batman operates outside the law, hence he is regularly hunted by law enforcement. Against the backdrop of the moral ambiguity of a modern technologically-advanced society, where there are no clear-cut answers to weighty problems (Polatis, 2014), Batman's challenges are shown to be very real and pertinent. As such, Batman is an ideal representative character with which to analyse superheroes' relatability to modern audiences.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do Jungian archetypes (Jung, 1959) in Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey (Campbell, 1987) serve as foils to flesh out Batman's virtues and, conversely, his vulnerabilities and weaknesses?
2. How does the tension between the Id, Ego and Superego (Freud, 1923) in Batman's psyche provide greater insights into his virtues and flaws, which culminate in a relatable superhero?

1.4 Thesis Statement

Through the shaping of and subsequent tension between Batman's Id, Ego and Superego, as well as his relationships with other key characters, represented by Jungian Archetypes (Jung, 1959) in the Hero's Journey (Campbell, 1987), Batman is shown to have extraordinary resilience and moral tenacity, in spite of his psychological flaws, thus leading to a superhero character who is very relatable on many levels.

1.5 Limitations

Only psychoanalytic theories will be applied to analyse Batman's resonance with audiences in *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, limiting this analysis to an exploration of his inner psyche through the monomyth framework. While other methods of analysis, such as through the lens of postmodernism, may gain insight into the different contextual factors that define a superhero, such as his upbringing or societal conventions, they will not be used.

Moreover, there exists a wide range of superheroes in the superhero film industry, and depending on contextual factors surrounding their character development, each might possess different special abilities or experience different challenges, thus they have different virtues and vulnerabilities. Hence, while Batman has been established as an ideal representative hero, he cannot be assumed to fully capture all the character strengths and weaknesses that make superheroes more relatable.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Defining the Modern Hero

Heroes have evolved from their larger than life mythical incarnations in ancient civilisations to the current modern and more personable portrayals. In ancient Greece and Rome, mythological stories of legendary human heroes and creatures were part of their cultural history and beliefs. These heroes were imbued with exceptional abilities and immense mental fortitude and bravery, thus they could achieve goals thought insurmountable by humans. Their main purpose then was to teach people valued moral principles and to distinguish right from wrong. (Mileff, 2018)

However, in modern society, past god-like figures are forgettable characters as they represent unattainable qualities. Whilst most mythical heroes are shown to possess superhuman abilities and untainted morals, modern heroes resonate more with audiences through their markedly flawed character attributes that elicit empathy and a sense of kindred spirit amongst the audiences. Failure and loss are accepted as “a core part of the transformation process” (Shang, 2018, p.20). Moreover, the lesson appreciated is that modern heroes never give up. Instead, they continue to display extraordinary sincerity, compassion and grit in service of others. Batman is a prime example of a modern hero, as across his multiple incarnations, he is hailed by viewers as a flawed but tenacious hero whom people look to for inspiration while overcoming setbacks.

2.2 The Batman

Batman is Bruce Wayne’s alias and he lives in Gotham City. The main characteristic that distinguishes Batman from his enemies is that he frequently abides by a well-known no-kill rule, under which he never kills his enemies, no matter how ruthless or despicable they are. Critics

have argued that Batman's moral code has resulted in many innocent deaths, while proponents assert that it is this very code that distinguishes Batman morally, both from his enemies and from other types of superhero vigilantes.

2.3 Psychoanalytic Criticism

Psychoanalysis is outlined as a collection of psychological theories originating from the work of the first psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. It aims to understand one's unconscious mind, including their thoughts, feelings and desires, and how they shape personality and influence behaviours.

2.3.1 Freudian Psychology: Id, Ego and Superego

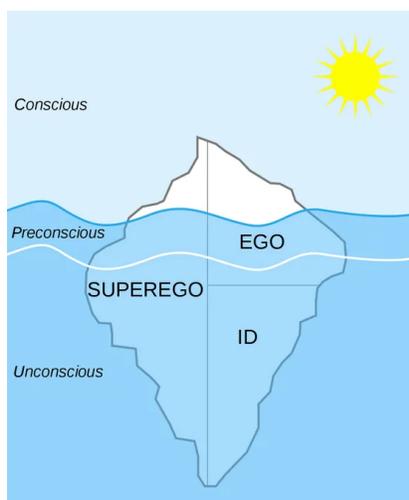


Figure 1: Freud's Iceberg Analogy

In 1923, Freud developed a structural model of the mind which is split up into three different entities: the Id, Ego and Superego. Each of these elements interacts with the others, influencing an individual significantly in the process.

The Id is a collection of one's deepest, most primal desires, including their sexual drive. It operates solely in one's unconscious mind, hence people are usually not aware of it. The "pleasure principle", which seeks instant satisfaction for all desires and needs, propels the Id (Freud, 1923). This behaviour is usually considered as socially unacceptable and disturbing to the majority of people as underpinning it is an overriding self-serving motivation.

The Superego is developed to completely control the undesirable impulses of the Id. It comprises two components, the conscience and the ego ideal. The conscience contains learnt knowledge about actions viewed as mischievous, harmful or immoral by society. These behaviours are normally punished with negative consequences or feelings of guilt (Cherry, 2020). For instance, Batman's no-kill rule forms a component of his conscience. Meanwhile, the ego ideal contains principles and standards for socially-acceptable behaviours that the Ego strives towards (Freud, 1923). Combined, these components actively work together to determine what a person should and should not do as a member of society. However, the Superego may be impractical as it strives for an idealistic image of oneself which is unachievable in reality.

The Id and Superego are continually in conflict with each other due to their differing principles (McLeod, 2017). Therefore, the Ego is developed to ease the tension between the Id and Superego. It operates according to the "reality principle", which endeavours to appease the Id's desires in reasonable and socially-acceptable ways (Cherry, 2020). This is achieved by the "secondary process", by which one can delay gratification until a more acceptable time, and come to a compromise or seek alternatives to their desires (Freud, 1911). However, there may be instances where the Ego is unable to restrain the impulses of the Id, resulting in the release of

repressed and undesirable desires under the Id's influence. This fleshes out one's flaws and psychological vulnerabilities, common traits of a relatable hero.

2.3.2 Jungian Psychology

Another important psychoanalyst Carl Jung theorised in 1959 that there are universal archetypes that function as parts of the collective unconscious which constitutes the foundation of human existence, and that we acquire them through being human. Although he believed that the quantity of the archetypes that could exist are limitless, just five archetypes that are most useful to this study, namely the Senex, Anima, Trickster, Outlaw and Shadow will be referenced as the five main character foils.

The Senex

The Senex reflects intelligence, wisdom and competence, and often assumes the role of a mentor. The Senex usually takes the form of a wise elderly man, but can also appear through different symbols, taking the form of people, dreams or new insights. The Senex values qualities such as discipline and self control, but may eventually become arrogant or disillusioned with society when they are exposed to outside influences.

The Anima

The Anima represents the universal feminine aspects in the male psyche. The evolution of a man's anima mirrors how he relates to women. It can act as the sorely needed solace for all of his disappointments in life (Jung, 1951). Moreover, a man is susceptible to anima projection, whereby aspects of his anima are reflected onto another woman, creating a virtual, ideal image of

the woman, to whom he becomes especially attracted to (Luton, n.d.). Finally, the lack of a conscious relationship with the anima can cause “a diminution of vitality, of flexibility, and of human kindness. The result [is] sloppiness, irresponsibility” (Jung, 1951, p.92). Owing to the popularity of love interests for modern heroes to grow the hero’s character arc (Tabb, 2015), the anima plays an important role in the hero’s holistic character development.

The Trickster

The Trickster is a prankster who makes naughty jokes, often with nasty intentions. Common trickster motifs outlined by Jung (1959) include “his fondness for sly jokes... , his exposure to all kinds of tortures... [and] his approximation to the figure of a saviour” (p.255). Besides these, the Trickster may possess considerable intellect. (Know Your Archetypes, 2020).

The Outlaw

The Outlaw lives for revolution and wants to improve the world through questionable and unethical means. He may also desire for revenge for horrors committed against him. As such, he can be a strong campaigner for change to better the world but he may employ alarming, dangerous means to reach this goal (Neill, 2018).

The Shadow

The Shadow archetype exists in the unconscious mind and is a collection of repressed weaknesses and desires (Cherry, 2020). It contains ideas unacceptable to society, such as one’s potential for resentment and violence, and can be brought about by unpleasant experiences in their childhood (Hauke, 2006). In order to avoid uncomfortable emotions, people may project

their undesirable Shadow traits onto other innocents to avoid admitting these flaws directly. As a result, it requires “considerable moral effort” for one to become conscious of the Shadow (Jung, 1951, p.14).

2.3.3 Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth: The Hero’s Journey

The monomyth, also known as the *Hero’s Journey*, was first recognised by Joseph Campbell in 1949. Having first set out a conventional path followed by mythological heroes, the monomyth has since been universally recognised and adapted in modern storytellers’ intentions. It is a useful narrative structure that allows for clear analysis of crucial plot points and the character development of protagonists as they traverse their complicated worlds, undergoing inner and outer transformations at each building block of their life journey. Campbell (1949) laid it out in seventeen stages and grouped them under three distinct acts: *Departure*, *Initiation* and *Return*. Christopher Vogler, a popular Hollywood screenwriter, adapted many of these stages in his book “The Writer’s Journey” to better relate to present-day storytelling. Successful modern superhero franchises, like the *Star Wars Series* and Marvel’s *The Avengers*, are strong testaments to the relevance of this framework in our day and age.

Only 6 key stages set out by Campbell (1949) and Vogler (1992), grouped into three distinct acts, will be used in this research:

Act	Stage	Description
<u>Departure</u>	<i>Call to Adventure</i>	The hero encounters a catalyst that prompts him to start his journey.

	<i>Meeting with the Mentor</i>	The Mentor gives the hero the resources and lessons he will need to start his journey.
<u>Initiation</u>	<i>Tests, Allies, Enemies</i>	The hero is introduced to his friends and foes, and must then endure and live through a series of challenging trials.
	<i>Belly of the Whale</i>	The hero faces a significant setback and seems to have died, only to be reborn.
	<i>Apotheosis</i>	The hero achieves enlightenment and transcends to god-like status.
<u>Return</u>	<i>The Road Back</i>	The hero returns and deals with the consequences of the climatic encounter with the villain.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Batman's development and relatability in *The Dark Knight Trilogy* will be analysed using theories from Freud and Jung to achieve different purposes. Firstly, Batman's interactions with allies and enemies, as well as his own inner conflicts, will be analysed using Freudian psychoanalytic theory to flesh out how Batman's psyche works and is shaped. Secondly, scenes from key characters' engagements with Batman will be evaluated, using Jung's collective archetypes, to explore their impact on Batman's psyche.

Scenes that a) involved significant interactions between Batman and other characters that were most representative of Jungian archetypes, and b) were most significant in shaping and subsequently causing conflict in Batman's psyche, were selected. Campbell's monomyth will be used as the narratological framework in the *Trilogy* to structure the scenes selected for analysis in the 6 stages mentioned earlier. The three-act building blocks of *departure*, *initiation* and *return*, as outlined by Campbell, will also be employed as main epiphanic phases through which Batman's internal conflicts are presented with key characters, acting as foils in Batman's character development.

In addition, *mise-en-scène*, referring to on-screen visual elements such as costume design, set design and lighting, will be applied to capture important details in certain scenes.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Act 1 - Departure

The first Act Batman goes through in The Hero's Journey introduces him to specific Jungian archetypes which influence and shape his Id, Ego and Superego. This establishes his resilience and flaws, and for audiences, it creates interest in the motivations behind the hero's decisions.

4.1.1 Call to Adventure: Establishment of Batman's Superego Traits



Figure 2: Batman Begins - The Bat Motif

Batman is Bruce Wayne's projected vigilante persona. In this scene, Bruce, in his childhood years, falls into a deep cave. He is subsequently swarmed by hordes of bats that surround him.

From a young age, Bruce's frantic flailing and screaming at bats while in the cave establishes bats as his greatest fear. Later, Bruce's father ingrains an important life lesson into Bruce's mind: "Why do we fall? So we can learn to pick ourselves up." This trait of never giving in to fears and his opponents becomes a key principle in Bruce's ego ideal, in turn forming an important component of Bruce's Superego.

Furthermore, when Bruce grows up to become Batman, Batman's Id, which tempts him to defeat his villains as violently as possible, clashes with his Superego, which instructs him to beat his villains using non-violent, socially-acceptable means. However, when he grows up, he eases the tension by constantly learning to overcome his fear of bats by embracing that fear itself. In his words, "Bats frighten me, and it's time my enemies share my dread." As such, the bat motif on Batman's costume acts as the secondary process in Batman's Ego, often reaching a compromise between his Id's inclination to wipe off all threats as quickly as possible and the Superego's ethical no-kill rule by instilling psychological fear in his enemies to minimise any form of physical violence needed to subdue them.

4.1.2 Meeting with The Mentor: Senex Archetypes



Figure 3: Batman Begins - Alfred, Bruce's Anchor

The sole responsibility of taking care of Bruce after his parents' death was entrusted to his butler, Alfred Pennyworth. For context, Bruce's parents were shot dead by a mugger, in full view of him, while he was a young child. This evokes feelings of anger in Bruce, both towards himself for being powerless, and towards the mugger, thus developing his Id's yearning to avenge his parents and punish the perpetrator violently in order to gain closure and retributive gratification. However, in this scene, when the grieving child Bruce returns home after the incident, Alfred consoles and embraces Bruce, henceforth acting as a steady anchor for him, almost like the father figure he misses.

Alfred develops Bruce's Superego by underscoring the importance of its conscience component, calling to his attention the exceeding lack of morality in an action such as murder and thievery. Thus, Bruce feels less guilty for not having saved his parents, convinced that it was not his fault in being unable to do anything, but it was the mugger's fault for committing the crime and not his own paralysis. In addition, Bruce's conscience becomes a key component of his Superego,

and it eventually leads to his adoption of the no-kill rule as Batman in the future, as he becomes averse to taking a life because of the anguish it can cause to the victim's friends and family. As such, through this scene, Alfred, as a Senex archetype, is established as a loving mentor to Bruce, as well as a constant reminder to Bruce's Superego traits.



Figure 4: Batman Begins - The Training Scene

A similar Senex archetype is Henri Ducard. When Bruce grows up, Ducard, the leader of the assassin organisation, the League of Shadows, takes him up as his mentee, with the intention to groom Bruce to take up a leadership position.

Ducard teaches Bruce the fighting skills and mental fortitude that become essential to Bruce's quests as the Batman. The editing and compressing of shots over a long period of time into a five-minute training montage reinforces the speed at which Bruce is learning the skills and tactics required to become a formidable crime-fighting vigilante in the future. As such, Bruce is positioned as a capable hero character whom audiences can admire.

In addition, Ducard reiterates the conviction in Bruce that he was not in any way responsible for his parents' deaths, instead it was his father's own inability to react when the criminal was pointing a gun at him that led to his demise. Following Ducard's advice, Bruce finally lets go of his guilt for the death of his parents. The Superego moral of maintaining law and order in Gotham is also emboldened in Bruce, as he decides to take action against such criminals and prevent anyone else from undergoing similar traumatising incidents. In addition, similar to the role of Alfred, Ducard develops the ego ideal of Bruce's Superego by instilling in Batman later the importance of having the will to act to overcome overwhelming odds.

In summary, in establishing Bruce's Superego traits before his transformation to Batman, these Senex archetypes, represented by Ducard and Alfred, form the basis and pattern of his Superego, which is further developed and molded in the course of the *Trilogy*.

4.2 Act 2 - Initiation

The second Act Batman goes through threatens to tear apart the boundaries Batman has created between his Id, Ego and Superego. Moreover, Batman's insecurities and disillusionments are exemplified in his failure. However, he later regains self-control, and rises up to make a valiant stand against his enemies, displaying the strong virtues of heroism and resilience.

4.2.1 Tests, Allies, Enemies: The Anima Archetype - Rachel



Figure 5: Batman Begins - The Kiss

In the scene where Bruce and Rachel share a romantic kiss, it establishes Rachel, whom he has been romantically attracted to since they were kids, as a significant love interest in Bruce's life.

Thus, up to this point, Rachel has been projected onto Bruce's mind as the ideal anima, whom he wants to impress and whose approval means a lot to him. His crime-fighting heroics could also be a way to show his maturity as a changed man, driven by a noble purpose to keep law and

order in Gotham. However, Rachel rejects him after the kiss, instead telling him that she would wait for the day when Gotham no longer needs Batman before she will accept him as a partner. Her rationale is that Bruce would be too caught up with his double life fighting criminals as Batman, thus he would not be able to spend time and effort to pursue her. As such, in an effort to relate better to his anima and spend more time with Rachel, Batman is driven to persevere in his quest to stamp out all crimes in Gotham, thus eventually leading to the day when permanent law and order could be maintained in Gotham and Batman could finally retire from his job. Moreover, as Batman's anima, Rachel plays a balancing role in Batman's life. This is because whenever he is tempted to give up or succumb to his Id's temptation to punish his adversaries violently, he is instead constantly motivated by his desire to gain Rachel's approval so as to persevere and eliminate the crime in a morally upright manner.

4.2.2 Tests, Allies, Enemies: The Trickster Archetype



Figure 6: The Dark Knight - The Interrogation

In another scene, Batman interrogates The Joker on what his henchmen had done to Harvey Dent whom they had captured.

The hideous red scars on The Joker's lips make him seem to be perpetually smiling. This ceaseless smile becomes twisted because it remains on The Joker's face even when he is killing or torturing others, suggesting that he experiences warped gratification from horrific acts of violence. As such, his completely Id-driven perversity in deriving pleasure from others' pain is symbolised. Thus, The Joker is the twisted incarnation of the Trickster Jungian archetype who acts purely according to the Id's "pleasure principle", creating havoc with his malicious disruptions to society.

In their interrogation, The Joker displays another Trickster trait, approximating himself as the "saviour", who is able to see through and expose the flaws in human nature. However, his warped moral sense instills fear as it operates on a totally irrational plane with no clear moral compass. Set against Batman's consistent and upright moral code, The Joker is established as Batman's potent nemesis, who appears to have the same mission but for different ends. While Batman actively seeks to correct human flaws, The Joker seeks to unmask them by baiting them to give in and thus show their weaknesses, thus justifying their punishments in his hands.

Ironically, The Joker points out their similarities, in that they employ unusual actions to correct or unmask, in The Joker's case, human flaws, with The Joker terrorising the city while Batman protectively operates in the shadows in a Bat costume. However, their main distinction is Batman's Ego which is shown to be separate and distinct as he operates on a unique "reality principle", which appeases his Id's desires to punish the criminal underworld but in a socially-acceptable way, taking on the watchful and protective vigilante personality.

Initially, Batman exudes restraint when channelling his Ego's secondary process of instilling fear into The Joker to reduce the violence needed to learn Harvey Dent's location. However, The Joker later reveals that he has Rachel too, Batman's anima projection. Fearing for his lover, the conflict between Batman's Id, which urges him to physically exterminate the threat in The Joker, and the morals of his Superego, which remind him that it is socially unacceptable to make anyone suffer with any form of brutality, reaches a crescendo pitch. Eventually, Batman's Id is led to overcome his Superego, as he gives in to extreme violence, most notably smashing The Joker's face onto the window.

Batman's Id's triumph fleshes out his humanity, as well as his escalating psychological vulnerability when faced with the imminent danger of losing a loved one. However, the hero in Batman is redeemed when he resists killing The Joker in the end as he retains his Superego's ethical no-kill rule, which distinguishes him morally from the murderous Joker.

4.2.3 Belly of the Whale: Outlaw Archetype and Loss of Senex and Anima Archetypes

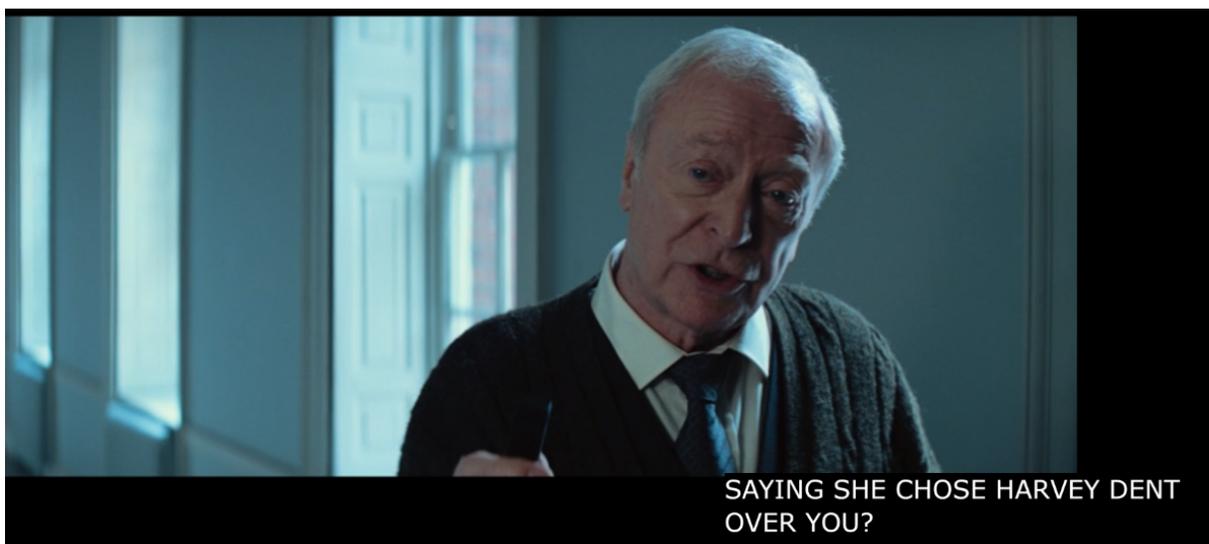


Figure 7: The Dark Knight Rises - Alfred's Departure

Alfred confronts Bruce after he gets back from a fight with Bane's henchmen and nearly gets caught by the entire police force. Alfred tells Bruce that he could no longer stand watching Bruce fight Bane, who is a potent excommunicated mercenary from the League of Shadows, as it would only lead to Batman's eventual death. He then leaves Bruce after advising him to give his fight up and save his own life.

As Batman states later, "[Alfred] left, taking everything." Indeed, through Alfred's departure, Bruce's emotional connection with his longtime guardian and mentor is shattered. Alfred, the Senex archetype, is no longer present to act as a counsellor to manage Batman's Superego traits in the real world whenever he encounters major setbacks. As such, Batman hits rock bottom in this scene, as his Superego morals, which prompt him to strategise before every attack in order to minimise his brutality towards enemies, break down. Meanwhile, Batman's now unrestrained Id increasingly takes control of his psyche, inducing him to undertake a reckless pursuit of justice by beating down his enemies impulsively and without any consideration.

Furthermore, Alfred reveals that before she died, Rachel had moved on to Harvey Dent, instead of deciding to be together with Bruce, probably because Harvey was able to spend more time with her, thus forging a stronger bond. This severs his last remaining connection to his Rachel anima, thus causing him to experience a diminution of vitality. This leads to him throwing caution to the wind and exhibiting increasingly Id-dominated, irresponsible actions to fill in the void Rachel has left in him, as seen in the subsequent scene.



Figure 8: The Fight with Bane

When Batman seeks Bane out to remove the threat he poses to Gotham, a long fight scene ensues, with Bane easily winning and ending with Bane breaking Batman's back.

Bane represents the Outlaw archetype as he persuades the people to start a revolution to gain power over the rich Gotham elite, arguing that they are corrupt and take away their freedom. Similar to Batman, he wishes to improve the quality of life of Gotham's citizens, but he employs alarmingly destructive means to carry out his goal. However, despite Bane's twisted and controversial idea of morality, Bane fights more methodically, and his more disciplined fighting style is juxtaposed with Batman's id-driven punches. Having lost focus in the previous scene analysed, Batman fights in an erratic and reckless manner, grunting repeatedly and throwing punches at Bane haphazardly. In comparison, Bane's targeted punches project an image of composure. As such, Bane acts as a foil to Batman, emphasising how much the boundaries have

collapsed between Batman's Id, which desires to punish Bane violently for the suffering he has inflicted by indirectly causing the Senex Alfred's departure, and Batman's Ego, which instructs him to fight in a controlled and strategic manner to minimise the violence needed to defeat Bane. The literal breaking of Batman's back further symbolises the breaking of the foundational Ego traits that have come to define Batman.

4.2.4 Apotheosis: Restoration of Superego Morals



Figure 9: Batman's Reincarnation

After breaking his back, Bane throws Batman into The Pit prison, featuring a well-like structure that prisoners are allowed to climb in order to escape. Prisoners are tied to a rope to preserve their life should they fall halfway during the climb. However, the escape is nearly impossible as the Pit features an insurmountable huge jump between two ledges. Bane's intention is to give

Batman false hope that he could climb to escape the prison. After multiple attempts, it would eventually lead to despair.

With help from the prison doctor, Batman trains his back to recuperate by tying himself to the ceiling in order to stand straight, enduring immense suffering in the process. Batman's efforts to escape the prison initially seem futile as he fails the climb repeatedly. However, Batman is able to fully dissociate himself from his personal psychological setbacks and see beyond himself, focusing on the concerns of Gotham. Motivated by his Superego morals, the vigilante's drive to save lives from Bane and his henchmen and to maintain law and order in Gotham pushes him to make the climb without a rope, thus using the possibility of death to motivate him.

Furthermore, right before Batman makes the jump, a horde of bats encircle him, calling back to his fear of bats as a child. The emergence of the bats from this womb-like Pit symbolises the rebirth of Batman as a stronger, more resilient hero. These bats also remind audiences of how Batman's character growth is brought full-circle from the first film where he was afraid of bats as a child, and he is shown to be now at the top of his game as a hero.

Finally, Batman heroically makes the nearly impossible jump. The jump symbolises the full restoration of Batman's Superego morals, as he rises from the depths of his initial failure to maintain control over his Id before entering the Pit, and now regains full control of it with his Superego morals that form an important part of his Ego.

4.3 Act 3 - Return

After defeating the main villains, Batman's return to society is always bittersweet and not always a clear-cut happy denouement. In the process, his extraordinary virtues are exemplified through the display of his Superego traits.

4.3.1 The Road Back: Confrontation with the Shadow Archetype



Figure 10: The Dark Knight - Dent's Threat

After the tragic loss of Rachel, who is also Dent's love interest, the darker, more violent instincts of Dent's Shadow now come to light. His Shadow traits, specifically his rage towards criminals and cynicism towards societal law and order, motivate him to carry out a twisted justice for Rachel, having no qualms killing the culprits, while killing his reputation.

Batman, having shared the same love interest in Rachel, sympathises with Dent's anger and despair and decides to take the fall for Dent to preserve his reputation as well as to maintain the people's faith in Gotham. Batman's sacrifice to cover up Dent's wrongdoing is a devastating blow to himself, but it also displays his sheer courage in a moment of hopelessness. Moreover, his sacrifice underscores Batman's faith in Gotham society to always do the right thing given the right motivation, an important principle in Batman's Superego. He believes so strongly in this principle that he is able to make the choice to become "whatever Gotham needs him to be", and in this case employing his constructed persona as Batman to cover up Dent's Shadow traits. Therefore, Batman's extraordinary mental fortitude is highlighted. Ending his crusade as The Batman was and has always been his mission and he has accomplished it, as Rachel, his anima, has wished for.

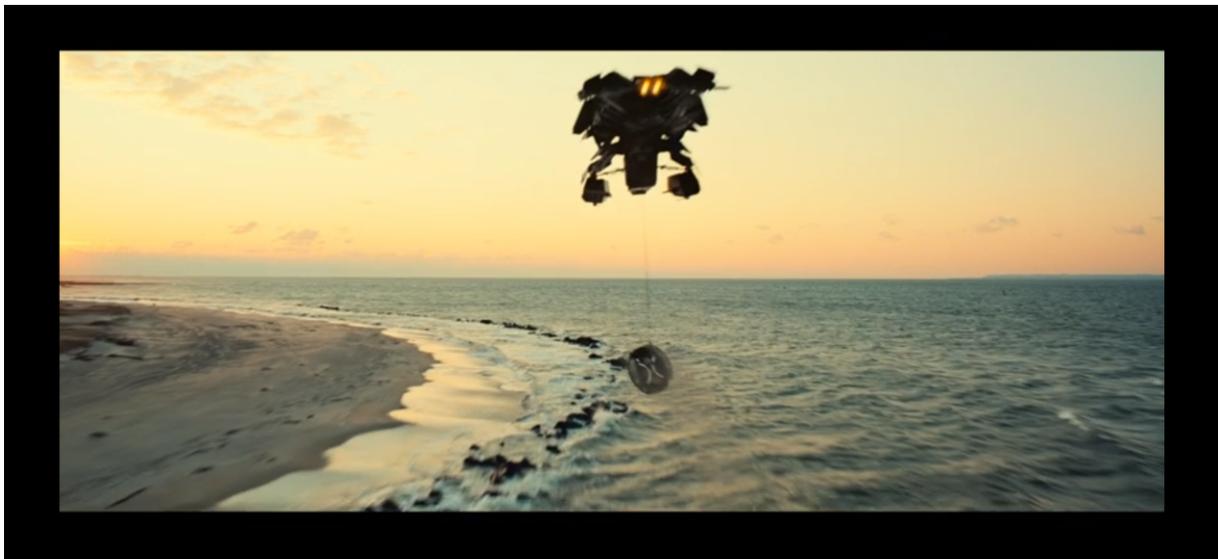


Figure 11: The Dark Knight Rises - Farewell

After defeating the villains, Bane and Miranda Tate, Batman carries a nuclear bomb rigged to explode with his aircraft, “The Bat”, out into the sea to save Gotham from its destructive impact. In addition, he points out that the aircraft has no autopilot function, thus he cannot escape before the bomb explodes.

This scene is similar to *The Dark Knight’s* ending, with Batman making another great sacrifice, giving up his life this time so as to preserve those in Gotham. In addition, Batman’s sacrifice is done against the backdrop of a beautiful sunset and angelic vocalisation. The beautiful setting created reinforces Batman’s heroism and emphasises the control Batman has over his Superego, which motivates him to preserve the well-being of Gotham’s citizens and overpowers his Id’s desire to save himself instead.

The similarly poignant endings of these two films show that even though Batman is not able to completely eliminate the threats posed by the villains, he still does what he can for the greatest good to be achieved in Gotham, and displays astounding fortitude in the face of potential failure.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Crucial elements of a very human and relatable character, specifically moral tenacity in the midst of contending psychological pulls and pushes, are indeed present and developed in Batman throughout his superhero’s mission. Jungian archetypes, strategically positioned in the *Trilogy’s* building blocks, following Campbell’ Hero’s Journey framework, function as emphatic as well as contrastive character foils that reveal Batman’s very human vulnerabilities and inner conflicts between his Id, Ego and Superego. These make him a superhero whom audiences admire and at

the same time empathise with because his struggles manifest themselves on many levels and they resonate with audiences who have come to know and love the man in the hero.

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