

Chapter 3

Change of Good and Evil Concepts in Fantasy Genre

Selvi Şenel

Independent Researcher, Turkey

ABSTRACT

In the postmodern era, concepts, notions, even ideologies that used to be concrete lost their precision. On the contrary to the clear point of view of modernism with linearity, postmodernism is circular and holistic. Thus, concepts like good and evil must not be seen as a total contrast. With the holistic approach of postmodernism, there can be evil in good and good in evil. In the popular fantasy texts that have been made especially in the last decade, this change easily can be seen in the characters. In this part, change of the good and the evil concepts in the fantasy genre will be examined in the context of postmodernism and developments in these concepts will be approached with the roles as hero, villain, anti-hero, anti-villain.

INTRODUCTION: CHANGE OF GOOD AND EVIL CONCEPTS THROUGH PARADIGM SHIFT IN EPISTEMOLOGY

Humanity has existed with the concepts of good and bad since the beginning of history. Since the first evil Satan, these concepts appear in the works of art and in everyday life as determining factors of people's view of events and people. History can also be defined as the struggle of good and evil, depending on which side wrote it. However, from a broader perspective, we can see that like most concepts, the content of these has changed and elaborated over the years as well. This change, of course, did not happen by chance. The change in epistemologies also changes the way humanity perceives very basic concepts. Before discussing the changes of these points of view, it would be appropriate to deal with the changes in the episteme that appeared in human history.

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BACKGROUND

From the traditional period to the postmodern period, it can be said that although the traditional period covers a much larger part of the history, the period that affects the current situation of humanity the most is the modern period. This period, which started with the Enlightenment, has changed the traditional man's life in an irreversible way. People, who used to explain life based on religious books with a habit of thousands of years, have stepped into a new era with the introduction of questioning and rationality. In this period, people who defined the world only with their knowledge learned that there are much more exist than they knew and learned from his ancestors. The most important of these is the humans questioning themselves. Descartes recognized that perception is important in the search for the truth, but he observed that our perception could mislead us. Descartes, who started by questioning everything systematically, stated that human existence cannot be questioned only as a thinking being. Stating that a clean and prejudiced mind is the basis of understanding everything, Descartes has revealed a clean distinction between matter and mind and body and soul (Fiero, 1998) The foundations of modern epistemology were laid with the concept of Cartesian dualism, which is a concept mooted by Descartes that states mind and body completely separate from each other..

Until the time when the Cartesian duality separated mind and body, humanity was dealing with this distinction through religious approaches to which they belong. Body was a shell to be left in the world that seen as the source of self, pleasure and therefore sin, while mind was identified with god, and therefore had no place among ordinary people in daily life. This binary approach of modern epistemology continues with other dualities such as science/metaphysics, society/individual, religion/rationalism.

The cause-effect relationship can be counted as another of these binaries. Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were called the age of reason in the West. Enlightenment thinkers see that each individual has more or less a mind above all (Cahoone, 1996, p. 27). All of the social information related to nature is based on the synthesis of empirical realities that individuals can only grasp with their perceptions (McGuigan, 1999, p. 40). The belief that empirical knowledge that comes with positive sciences is the only valid information reflected as the necessity of cause and effect relation in daily life. This requirement, which forms the basis of rationalism, implies that everything that exists has a reason and that it can be explained by science. Therefore, metaphysics and religion are pushed out of everyday life.

The idea that the source of everything that is happening can be explained by science is the first step of materialism, and hence, individualization. Kant (2007) explained the importance of the subject as follows: "If we remove our subject or even only the positive constitution of the senses in general, then the entire constitution and all relations of objects in space and time, nay space and time themselves, would vanish ". The importance of ordinary people has increased as the perceptions of the subject and the individual have become the main means of understanding the world. This change, which led to the emergence of the concept of humanism, laid the foundations of the world, as we know it today.

According to Wagner (2012), modernism always offers a progressive approach. Humanity always has the potential to go one-step further and improve itself by reason. This approach also brings linearity. Modernism, which always takes the mind, the individual and the science as a reference for the sake of achieving the better, truer and more prosperous, has found the way of this progress in the industrial revolution. The shift from village to city and the change in the source of production and workforce caused the city, industry, technology and therefore capital to come to the fore within the linearity of modern perception.

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