

Behind God Complex: Superman's Narcissism in Movie of *Superman: Red Son*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how the *Superman: Red Son* movie by Sam Liu portrays Superman's narcissism behavior. The movie is about another universe in DC Comics where Superman is born in Soviet Union within Cold War. It also shows how Superman is practicing his overconfidence within his God Complex as the sole legitimate ruler for his people in *Superman: Red Son*. In this movie, Superman is depicted as a very tyrannical Soviet leader. Superman also thinks that he is better than other people. He believes that all that he does is justified and bearing truth according to his own values. Through qualitative method, this article would like to explore more whether Superman's God Complex is closely related to condition of narcissism behavior. In analysis, Superman is proved to practice narcissism as a high sense of self-importance, being arrogant to other people, and always act high and mighty toward the people presence. In conclusion, it is clear that Superman's God Complex is in matter of narcissism behavior, especially in his action towards other people.

Keywords: God Complex, Narcissism, Sam Liu, Superman, Superman: Red Son

INTRODUCTION

According to Kelso (2001), human behavior is emergent, meaning that several factors or processes interact to form patterns of behavior. It is impacted by a variety of factors, such as biology, emotions, mental processes, and environment. Behavior can be influenced by a person's ideas, emotions, and genetic makeup (Saraswati et al., 2024). Social factors including friends, family, and cultural norms can have an impact on people's conduct. For instance, someone may behave charitably when they are happy, or they may behave differently in a group situation due to social pressure. Studying human behavior can help us understand how and why people interact with each other (Kirana et al., 2025; Pasopati et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025; Zwir et al., 2019).

There is also a negative part of human behavior that shows narcissistic side of human behavior. According to Mitra et al. (2024), narcissism is a complex psychiatric disorder characterized by a pervasive pattern of greatness, a need for adulation, a lack of empathy, and an elevated sense of self-importance. People who are narcissistic will continue to act in this way for a long time, regardless of the circumstances or social settings. Narcissistic persons are typically portrayed as haughty and despised by others. Most people who exhibit narcissistic behavior are unaware that they possess this characteristic. As a result, they behave superior to others and disregard the opinions of others (Clarke, 2023; Kirana et al., 2025; Pasopati et al.,

2025; Wijaya et al., 2025). It is because it can lead narcissistic behavior sufferers to believe they are better than most of their peers, this disorder is extremely harmful.

Superman: Red Son movie was directed by Sam Liu. The Blue-Ray digital version of this movie was made available on February 24, 2020. The main subject of this study is Superman's narcissistic actions in the movie *Superman: Red Son* (Liu, 2020). The duration of this film is one hour and twenty-four minutes. The source of the data is the Superman talks from Sam Liu's *Superman: Red Son* film. The researchers decided to focus their investigation on the *Superman: Red Son* movie. because the movie tries to show how *Superman: Red Son's* actions might have been affected by his narcissistic personality (Nento, 2020). Meanwhile, the researchers want to clarify the factors that can support the idea that *Superman: Red Son* is a narcissism behavior in this movie. Furthermore, because Superman is born in a liberal country, Superman has a unique perspective in this movie adaptation (Darowski, 2021). In this universe, Superman was born in a communist country. As the story progresses, the researchers look at how the Superman character acts narcissistically toward other characters and how this affects Superman's day-to-day activities (Mikail et al., 2025; Rafiuddin et al., 2025; Riza et al., 2025). The researchers therefore use quotations from the movie, particularly from the utterances of the actors, to illustrate Superman's narcissistic conduct.

METHOD

This study was developed using an exploratory approach within a qualitative research framework (Creswell, 2017). The researchers aim to investigate how Superman, in Sam Liu's animated film *Superman: Red Son*, displays forms of conceit or excessive pride throughout the narrative. By examining his behaviors, motivations, and interactions with other characters, the study seeks to uncover how this conceit shapes both his personal development and his role within the story's alternative historical setting. The research process involves a careful, in-depth reading of relevant books, scholarly articles, and theoretical discussions in order to build a comprehensive understanding of Superman's attitude toward other characters in the film. These journal sources draw on previous studies that apply similarity theory or related analytical frameworks to comparable topics, providing a foundation for interpreting character dynamics and ideological conflicts in the movie. Through this method, the study hopes to reveal deeper insights into Superman's moral complexity in *Red Son*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SUPERMAN'S NARCISSISM BEHAVIOR IN SUPERMAN: RED SON MOVIE

The director of *Superman: Red Son*, Sam Liu, discusses how Superman narcissism behavior to the other characters in the movie (Liu, 2020). Instead of Superman being a liberal American superhero, this movie presents him as a superman who adopts communist ideology and becomes a tyrannical leader in the Soviet Union. Additionally, Superman is portrayed in this movie as a superhuman who is far superior to everyone else. Superman acts narcissistically and gives himself the sense that he controls everything, as evidenced by this. This leads to him becoming arrogant about other people (Liu, 2020).

DATA 1

The people need you. (00:03:18 - 00:03:20)

Superman is advised to become a hero by her friend Svetlana. Svetlana believes that many people would need Superman's help due to his enormous abilities. This is what Svetlana told him after she realized that Superman's powers might be useful (Liu, 2020). And Svetlana became increasingly confident that Superman would eventually learn to make the world a better place.

DATA 2

Our sole desire is for peace and equality among all men. (00:09:46 - 00:09:49)

Superman uses the fact that he is the owner of equality and peace to influence Americans to adopt the values that Superman has taught them. to persuade them that Superman is a hero for everyone. This word was said by Superman after he successfully stopped an asteroid from striking the United States. Superman made this statement in front of everyone in order to present himself and his values to the American people (Liu, 2020). This is justified by Superman's conviction that the values espoused by Americans are flawed. Superman opposes the existence of such things because they will always uphold the concepts of freedom, which are opposed to the goals of communism, which he believes to be the true guiding principles.

DATA 3

I know of you...and your capitalist husband. (00:09:58 - 00:10:02)

Mrs. Lane and her husband are capitalists who are always trying to increase their own earnings, and Superman knows this (Liu, 2020). Lex Luthor, in particular, is a man who constantly seeks out benefits from others to appease himself.

DATA 4

I'm not afraid of anything. (00:10:57 - 00:10:58)

Superman is fearless because he thinks that no one can beat him and that no one can be on par with him (Liu, 2020). This is what Superman says when he feels denigrated by Mrs. Lane, who thinks Superman is a man without humanity.

DATA 5

*How you ever considered that the lack of fear can lead to arrogance, Recklessness?
(00:11:01 - 00:11:06)*

Mrs. Lane responds that she has no anxieties in response to Superman's assertion (Liu, 2020). Instead, Mrs. Lane accused Superman of being self-centered and uncaring about other people.

DATA 6

Your bulwark was built on the backs of slaves and immigrants. And it hasn't changed much, has it? (00:12:02 - 00:12:04)

Superman scolded Mrs. Lane for insisting that the country he had always been proud of was one of freedom and equality (Liu, 2020). Immigrants and slaves formed its basis, and this has not changed since.

DATA 7

Lies. I would certainly know if such things existed. (00:12:42 - 00:12:43)

Mrs. Lane provides evidence of the tyranny occurring in the USSR, which Superman shares with her. That was all untrue (Liu, 2020). It is because Superman believes it will if it does. He should be completely aware of what is going on in his country. However, Superman was ignorant about the system of forced labor that was in effect for those who protested Stalin's regime at the gulag forced labor camps.

DATA 8

This is a world, where the strong rules. And you are the strongest of all of us. (00:18:32 - 00:18:36)

Svetlana tells Superman that this world will surely be ruled by the powerful (Liu, 2020). Superman is the only person, in Lana's opinion, who is stronger than everybody else. Svetlana said this because she will always believe that Superman is the hope for those who are perceived as weak. Additionally, she wants people to believe that Superman is doing everything in his power to keep them safe from camps that use forced labor.

DATA 9

Now I save the world. (00:22:14 - 00:22:17)

Superman believes that he is the only man capable of being a hero and saving the planet from a range of misfortunes because he feels that he is the only thing the world needs. Superman said this because he started to feel that chaos was taking over the planet and that it was drifting away from his principles (Liu, 2020). It is because of this; Superman is positive that he must be a rescuer.

DATA 10

I had a name once, Diana... before I stopped being a man, and became a symbol. (00:29:53 - 00:29:57)

Superman answers Diana's question about whether he ever had a name when he was still a man (Liu, 2020). Nevertheless, after dedicating himself to his country, he would prefer to become a symbol for it and its people. Superman is proving why the Soviet people needed him in this scene.

DATA 11

But you, I think, actually embody the ideals you profess. (00:30:33 - 00:30:38)

During their dance, Wonder Woman reminded Superman that he is a man who has the guts to change the world by applying his morals. This saying emphasizes Superman's struggle to become the only leader in the world (Liu, 2020). Wonder Woman believes Superman has the power to change the universe into anything he wants, which is why she told him this.

DATA 12

We do not frighten easily. (00:32:40 - 00:32:42)

Superman tells Wonder Woman that despite the various threats posed by their enemies, he and his country are not readily intimidated. He believes he can use his own strength to defend the Soviet Union (Liu, 2020). Superman and Wonder Woman are talking about the American threat to the Soviet leader when this exchange takes place. Superman retaliated by declaring his indestructibility and invincibility.

DATA 13

The glorious future envisioned by Karl Marx is here. (00:42:34 - 00:42:38)

A classless society, equality between capital owners and the capital less, and the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie were all goals of Karl Marx's (Liu, 2020). It is said that Superman recognized those three things. All of that is really simply Superman's arrogance and conceit because he does not rely on anyone else and uses his own abilities exclusively.

DATA 14

You are our savior. (00:52:22 - 00:52:24)

The Chinese Prime Minister claims that Superman is their savior. Superman may feel always needed because he believes that everyone is weak and defenseless, including the Chinese Prime Minister (Liu, 2020). This gives him the confidence that everyone will always need him and his rescuer strength.

DATA 15

I saved you all. (00:55:55 - 00:55:57)

Superman thinks he is the one who can help everyone run away from Stalin's oppression in the prison (Liu, 2020). That should be given to them, in his own sense of justice. It is because he feels justified, he thinks he is the only one who can save humanity.

NARCISSISM AND IT IS RELATION WITH GOD COMPLEX

Arrogance, excessive self-centeredness, a strong need to be adored and appreciated by others, fantasies, jealousy, rage, and a lack of interest and empathy for others are all characteristics of a God Complex (Zara & Özdemir, 2018). The effects of a God Complex can lead to a sense of entitlement, control, or superiority over others by leading people to believe they possess superior traits, skills, or influence. Leading to a sense of entitlement and a lack of empathy for others. It is closely linked to traits of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), characterized by an inflated ego, arrogance, and a need for control. Although it is not a recognized diagnosis in psychiatry, this phrase is frequently used in a psychological context. People who have a God Complex can have a wide range of effects on others in addition to themselves. People with a god complex always think that many other people should be afraid of and bow down to those who behave in such a way. The reason for this is that people who have a God Complex often think they are on equal with God.

Narcissism is a Complex psychological condition that people will present with a pervasive pattern of greatness, need for admiration, lack of empathy, and a heightened sense of self-importance (Mitra et al., 2024). Narcissism will persist in people's behavior for a long period of time and through various situations or social contexts. People with narcissism are usually depicted as people that are arrogant and disliked by others. Narcissism primarily stems from psychological theories, particularly psychoanalysis, and posits that it has roots in early childhood experiences (Mikail et al., 2025; Rafiuddin et al., 2025; Riza et al., 2025). It is especially a lack of empathy and insecure attachment with caregivers. Narcissism refers to a personality trait that's characterized by a strong sense of entitlement for admiration and attention.

SUPERMAN'S NARCISSISM BEHAVIOR IN SAM LIU'S MOVIE OF *SUPERMAN: RED SON*

This section examines Superman's narcissism behavior toward the other characters in Sam Liu's movie of *Superman: Red Son*. The aspect is explained in down below:

In Data 1, Superman feels that he is needed by many people because Superman feels that he is more perfect than other people due to the super strength he possesses. Superman's narcissism believes that no one else possesses superpowers like him. Superman feels arrogant because he believes he is more needed by many people to change the world (Mitra et al., 2024). This can happen because Superman receives support from his good friend Svetlana, who is encouraging him to use his powers for the good of humanity in the future.

In Data 2, This dialogue explains Superman's arrogance in front of the citizens of the United States. Superman as a narcissist claims that he can provide his peace and equality for all humans in the United States. This happens because Superman feels he can do all of that with the power he possesses (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman considers himself superior because, with his presence, he feels he can change the life of many people with his own sole values and ideals. Superman's narcissism then drives all citizens in America so that they take side with Superman as their role model.

In Data 3, Superman dares to say this quotation in front of Mrs. Lane because he feels that he is better than her and her husband. Superman believes that his life in the Soviet Union is more perfect than Mrs. Lane's capitalist life as an American citizen (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman has no empathy towards Mrs. Lane because he looks down on her because her husband is a capitalist. Superman is also someone who does not want to accept Mrs. Lane's

opinion about him. It is because he is a narcissist who feels superior to other people. It is also because he is a man who prefers to belittle the existence of a woman.

In Data 4, Superman dares to say that he is not afraid of anything because he feels that he is the strongest among everything. This happens because of Superman's arrogant nature as a narcissist superhuman. Superman believes that there is no human on this earth who possesses strength equal to his (Mitra et al., 2024). This is what makes Superman disliked by many people outside the Soviet Union. Superman himself also feels that there is no threat that can stop his actions to change the world as he desires. Superman always considers that his existence is superior compared to others.

In Data 5, Superman's arrogance shows that he is a man who is not afraid of anything. He feels too overly confident by claiming that he is a fearless person in his self-importance among other people. This can happen because Superman always considers himself to be the most perfect being among everything. Superman also believes that his existence in this world is indeed necessary. It is because Superman believes that only he can change this chaotic world into what he wants (Mitra et al., 2024). What Superman says is indeed an indication that Superman is a narcissistic person.

In Data 6, Superman belittles Mrs. Lane and also the United States because he feels that he and his country are having the most perfect condition (Mitra et al., 2024). This happens because Superman enjoys belittling weak people like slaves and immigrants. Superman can think this way because he feels that he is the most rightful one compared to others. Superman is a person who cannot accept the existence of differences among humans because he is too shackled by his own values and ideals. This is what makes Superman lack empathy towards the existence of others. It is because of the narcissistic trait he possesses.

In Data 7, Superman feels this way because he believes that he already knows the ins and outs of his own country. This is proven to Mrs. Lane when Superman verbally attacks her. Superman refuses to believe the confidential information that Mrs. Lane provides for him. This is proven by Superman feeling arrogant and narcissistic in front of Mrs. Lane (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman considers all of that to be a lie because he is confident that he knows all the information in the Soviet Union. Superman also feels that he is an important person in the Soviet Union who is allowed to know the country's secret information.

In Data 8, Svetlana believes that Superman's potential is a hope for all the oppressed. Svetlana believes this because, in her opinion, Superman is the strongest among people. She believes that only the strongest can become leaders for the oppressed. This statement is what changed Superman's mindset to become a savior for the oppressed (Mitra et al., 2024). However, in reality, it was Svetlana's statement that turned Superman into a narcissistic hero. Superman becomes so arrogant and believes that the world needs him and that only he is capable of changing the world. So, Superman will feel that only he can provide a paradise for those who live in misery.

In Data 9, In this dialogue, it explains Superman's excessive self-confidence that causes him to become a narcissistic person. This is evident from his sense of superiority, as if he is the only one the world needs. Superman believes that no one but himself is capable of changing the world for the better. Superman is too confident that the values and ideals he will use as weapons to change the world are the most correct (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman is also someone who does not want to listen to others' opinions about him because he already believes in himself. Superman also feels that his existence is the most needed and desired by the whole world.

In Data 10, Superman feels that he is no longer a human like ordinary people. Superman's narcissism considers himself to have become a symbol for his country and its people. This shows how narcissistic Superman is in front of Wonder Woman. It is because Superman considers himself special and more perfect compared to most people around him (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman believes that his superior qualities are something that his people truly need. It is because Superman feels that his existence is above everything. Superman believes in himself as a symbol for those who need hope. Superman's dream of creating peace will come true through his narcissistic sides.

In Data 11, Superman is too confident that with his values and idealism, he can change the world for the better. This factor shows how narcissistic Superman is because he feels overly confident that only his values are needed by everyone in the world. Superman does not consider any input from others for himself. His self-importance considers anyone's opinions to him unnecessary (Mitra et al., 2024). It causes Superman to believe that with all the abilities he possesses, he can do anything for the world. This is what Superman shows to Wonder Woman. It is his arrogance as a savior who feels he can do everything.

In Data 12, Superman feels too confident that the Soviet Union is not easy to destroy. This shows Superman's narcissistic side because he claims that the Soviet Union is strong and unbeatable by anyone. Superman proves this to Wonder Woman by showing his arrogance that with his presence, the threat is not something to be feared (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman feels that he is superior to anyone else. Superman proves this by underestimating the threats posed by America against himself and his country. It causes Superman to feel he can protect his country and its people by himself without help from others, as he believes he is the best.

In Data 13, This statement is justified by Superman because he feels he has realized the ideals that Karl Marx had not yet been able to achieve. It is because Superman feels that with all the efforts he has made, he has liberated the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. Superman feels that his efforts so far have not been in vain because he truly feels needed by the proletariat (Mitra et al., 2024). Superman also always believes that his values of freedom have succeeded in making the Soviet Union prosperous. This is what shows Superman's narcissistic side because he feels superior to anyone else since he can advance his own country. Superman feels that only he himself is capable of doing all that because he believes he is the best.

In Data 14, Superman agrees that the statement made by the Chinese prime minister is true. It causes Superman to feel that he is indeed needed by others. Superman acknowledges this by undermining the confidence of the Chinese prime minister (Mitra et al., 2024). This is done by Superman with the intention of being more respected and trusted by more people. This evidence shows Superman's narcissistic side. This is proven by Superman feeling superior to the existence of others and believing that he is indeed needed by everyone.

In Data 15, This dialogue shows that Superman wants recognition from others because he feels he has done a service by saving their lives. Superman considers that the rescue he performed for the forced laborers in the gulag was his duty. Superman believes that he has also provided a decent life and jobs for those who are unemployed (Mitra et al., 2024). However, in reality, Superman only cares about himself. He never wants to listen to the complaints of the people he has saved. Superman always considers that everything he has done is an obligation for him. This shows Superman's narcissistic side, as he wants recognition and respect from those he has saved. Superman is also someone who wants to gain the attention of his people because he is considered a savior.

CONCLUSION

The *Superman: Red Son* movie, directed by Sam Liu, examines Superman's narcissism behavior. The academics aim to clarify how Superman's deceptive behavior, which he exhibits to others in this plot, is a manifestation of his narcissistic behavior for other people's existence. Superman does this by being very arrogant toward the people that he thinks is not equal with his existence, Superman always want to get respect for his action from other people, and Superman always do not want to listen other people opinions toward his action in front of the public. Superman always being narcissist because he wants people just always see him as their savior toward any trait.

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