

A Psychoanalytic Examination of Birth Order in
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
Into the Wardrobe: The Siblings of Narnia

Sarah Geil
Shorter University
Georgia Theta Chapter

Vol. 1(1), 2016

Article Title: A Psychoanalytic Examination of Birth Order in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Into the Wardrobe: The Siblings of Narnia

DOI: 10.21081/ax0008

ISSN: 2381-800X

Key Words: Birth Order, Lewis, Psychoanalytic Theory, Siblings, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Author contact information is available from the Editor at editor@alphachihonor.org.

Aletheia—The Alpha Chi Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship

- This publication is an online, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary undergraduate journal, whose mission is to promote high quality research and scholarship among undergraduates by showcasing exemplary work.
- Submissions can be in any basic or applied field of study, including the physical and life sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, education, engineering, and the arts.
- Publication in *Aletheia* will recognize students who excel academically and foster mentor/mentee relationships between faculty and students.
- In keeping with the strong tradition of student involvement in all levels of Alpha Chi, the journal will also provide a forum for students to become actively involved in the writing, peer review, and publication process.
- More information and instructions for authors is available under the publications tab at www.AlphaChiHonor.org. Questions to the editor may be directed to editor@alphachihonor.org.

Alpha Chi is a national college honor society that admits students from all academic disciplines, with membership limited to the top 10 percent of an institution's juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Invitation to membership comes only through an institutional chapter. A college seeking a chapter must grant baccalaureate degrees and be regionally accredited. Some 300 chapters, located in almost every state, induct approximately 12,000 members annually. Alpha Chi members have been "making scholarship effective for good" since 1922.

Article Title: A Psychoanalytic Examination of Birth Order in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Into the Wardrobe: The Siblings of Narnia

DOI: 10.21081/ax0008

ISSN: 2381-800X

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

A Psychoanalytic Examination of Birth Order in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* Into the Wardrobe: The Siblings of Narnia

Sarah Geil

Shorter University
Georgia Theta Chapter

Abstract

Analyzing the traditional birth order roles in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the author uses psychoanalytic criticism to examine how the fictional characters show researched birth order personality traits. Peter's brave responsibility, Susan's motherly caution, Edmund's rebellion and redemption, and Lucy's innocent curiosity are examples of characters that match birth order standards and fulfill sibling stereotypes. It is compelling, then, to consider how the infusion of birth order characteristics into fictional characters might strengthen the development of the story, while simultaneously enabling strong reader identification. However, does the literature help shape psychological constraints or do existing psychological trends shape the way literature is written and received? Lewis, whether consciously or subconsciously, infused these traditional birth order personality traits into his characters.

Key words: birth order, Lewis, Psychoanalytic Theory, siblings, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Introduction

A father reads *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to his children. He pauses to ask what they think. His oldest boy, pretending to swing a sword, says he likes Peter. His innocent youngest daughter whispers that she hopes to be like Lucy. And his middle child, a son, sits quietly, wanting to be brave like Peter but angry about something his own older brother said. Narnia has had this effect on children for over half a century. The Pevensies' adventure through the wardrobe is more than a simple foray into another land; it is a narrative on psychological governances that impact characters and readers without their knowledge. A Neo-Freudian psychologist, Alfred Adler, described birth order as a defining factor in personality development (*What Life* 144).

In *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, four siblings display stereotypical birth order characteristics: Peter is the responsible firstborn; Susan acts as the practical peacemaker middle-born; Edmund is the rebellious but redeemed middle-born; and Lucy, the last-born, is loved for her believing curiosity. For generations, children have identified with the Pevensie children, some more closely with one of the siblings in particular. Part of the reason for this identification could be that Lewis, whether consciously or unconsciously, infused these traditional birth order personality traits into his characters. It is also possible that when characters are written for reader identification and they fit a psychological stereotype such as birth order, the author unknowingly perpetuates the stereotypes, strengthening, for example, the impact of birth order on personality development.

Psychoanalytic Theory and Birth Order

Theories relating to birth order stem from research by Sigmund Freud theorizing that there are many variables, conscious and unconscious, that trigger actions a person might take (*Problem Child* viii; Freud 93). One important element in this psychoanalytic theory discusses the importance of the family, as explained by Lois Tyson: “the *family* is very important in psychoanalytic theory because we are each a product of the role we are given in the family-complex” (13). Psychoanalysts adopted Freud’s ideas and applied them to other aspects of the development of personality and the impact of family. One prominent Neo-Freudian researcher, Alfred Adler, proposed a theory in which birth order is key in defining the choices one makes and the characteristics one adopts (*Problem Child* 38, 172).

Like many theorists of his time, Adler developed his theory based on his personal experiences, primarily his experience as a middle child (Friedman and Schustack 130). Fundamental to his psychology is the need to overcome inferiority, and he believed that middle children had the most inferiority to overcome (*What Life* 144). Adler also observed social structures in other families, and he believed birth order played a significant role in determining and shaping personality characteristics (*What Life* 144; Friedman and Schustack 130). Adler’s original hypothesis that birth order has a strong impact on shaping personality has since been revisited by numerous studies (*Problem Child* 38; Eckstein 412). Research testing personality traits and the relationship they may have with a certain birth order have distinct categories: firstborn, middle-born, or last-born children.

Adler’s prototypal theory proposed that because firstborns begin their life as the only child, they are favored and greatly benefit from the full attention of their parents (*Problem Child* 56). When their siblings are born, they must adjust to sharing the focus and they often help the parent nurture and care for their new younger siblings (Friedman and Schustack 130). As the child grows, this responsibility translates into personality traits. On a basic level, these personality traits are also linked to vocational trends. Firstborns are overrepresented in leadership roles; they are more likely to hold CEO positions, be elected to the U.S. Congress, and work in professions requiring high levels of precision and intelligence, such as surgeons (Kluger 43). Firstborns respect authority and are more likely to become the authority

figures themselves (Epstein 52). In terms of personality, firstborns score high on conscientiousness and responsibility subscales (Herrera et al. 144). These personality traits are also built into the stereotype of firstborns. A study on beliefs about birth order found that firstborns were described as obedient, stable, responsible, and unemotional (Herrera et al. 144). Because of their family position, responsibility and leadership are encouraged in and commonly shared among firstborns.

Unlike the privileged firstborn, middle-born children have instant inferiority to overcome. Adler proposed that middle-born children are “born into a situation of rivalry and competition” and must fight to overcome their inability to match older siblings in size and in strength (*What Life* 144; Friedman and Schustack 130). Adler’s theory of personality focuses on overcoming inferiority, and because middle children are immediately inferior in size and experience to their older sibling(s), the early practice of overcoming inferiority could lead them to be more successful (Friedman and Schustack 130). Middle-born children act as both older and younger siblings, taking on the most confusing and least characterizable of roles. Few studies have focused solely on middle children, because in most cross-sectional studies, whether a participant is second born in a family of three or sixth born in a family of seven, they are classified as a middle-born. Though meager in comparison, research about middle children does exist. In an examination of many birth order studies, Eckstein et al. found that middle-born children tend to be characterized in one of two different groups: they are either practical, quiet, and reserved or they are outgoing, find negotiation easy, and are more likely to rebel dramatically (412). Regardless of these two types, middle-born children must face the feeling that they do not belong. However, overcoming this feeling can help them develop into successful adults.

While firstborn children are overrepresented in leadership positions, most of the revolutions of the world have been led by later-born children. Last-born children are more open to new experiences and are more likely to give themselves to radical causes (Epstein 53). The landmark Sulloway study of three hundred major league baseball playing brothers and similar studies have shown no correlation between athletic ability and birth order, but younger siblings are more likely to participate in high-risk sports (402). Last-born children are believed to be more creative, emotional, extroverted, disobedient, irresponsible, and talkative (Herrera 147).

These believing, open, creative personality traits of last-born children are often important in completing family dynamics.

The time period in which *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* was written was one in which the family, particularly the Western family, was idealized as a whole. Western society had recently made the transition from logical unions between extended families for economic survival to more individualized, compassionate marriages (Linn et al. 21). If there were blended families in 1953, they were the rarity and not at all focused on by media or entertainment. The post-war economic boom encouraged the pursuit of the ideal family unit. But as economic trends shifted, and social movements such as feminism became common, the family focus emphasized individualism even more. Divorce rates rose, increasing to nearly fifty percent of first marriages in the 1980s (Linn et al. 21). Today, family relationships often include half siblings and step siblings. Contemporary families in Western societies have become very difficult for social demographers to categorize, measure, and define (Linn et al. 22). The historical context is different today, but in many ways, the idealistic psychological context has remained the same.

There are many complexities to the basic nuclear family, but the stereotypical family is still prized. Despite the changes, birth order is still being studied and still intrigues popular culture. *Time Magazine* has written multiple articles on birth order, with one magazine even displaying birth order trends as the cover story (Kluger 42). Popular dating websites give advice based on birth order compatibly, and they take birth order into consideration while matching users. Parenting books are still written on how to raise children of different birth orders as if dynamics have not changed since the 1950s when *the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* was published (Kluger 48). Birth order theory has remained a consistent trend on which one can build an identity, even if many other aspects of the family unit have changed.

It is compelling, then, to consider how the infusion of birth order characteristics into fictional characters might strengthen the development of the story while simultaneously strengthening reader identification. This description of characteristics commonly found or associated with firstborn, middle-born, and last-born children is applicable to a psychoanalytic criticism of the four Pevensie siblings. The personality traits of the Pevensie's match research about the birth orders; they

match the stereotypes that suggest birth order effects personality.

An Examination of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and Birth Order

Peter Pevensie is the consummate example of a firstborn. Even Aslan, the great lion, marks Peter as significant because of his birth order: "'That, O Man,' said Aslan, 'is Cair Paravel of the four thrones, in one of which you must sit as King. I show it to you because you are the first-born and you will be High King over all the rest'" (Lewis 130). From the start, Peter's leadership and responsibility make him a compelling candidate for a King of Narnia. As Ford summarizes, "Lewis means to suggest that Peter is a natural leader, discerning and well-read and imbued with the right stock responses" (329). While he enjoys Narnia, there is a certain weight to his leadership position in the family, especially in light of the absence of adults in the story. Peter often assumes the role of the father figure, even going so far as to admonish his younger siblings as a father would (Lewis 51). In the absence of adults, Peter is forced to take on an adult role. When adult figures (e.g., Professor Digory, Mr. Beaver, Father Christmas, and Aslan) are present, they reinforce his expectation to fill the role of a responsible leader.

Peter is asked to follow through with difficult decisions and mature battles. Though he is not necessarily brave all of the time, there are many examples in which his sense of responsibility trumps his fear, and he makes a courageous decision. Peter understands his role and acts out the weight of duty. This is evident as the children first approach Aslan, the lion they initially fear:

'Susan,' whispered Peter, 'what about you? Ladies first.' 'No, you're the eldest,' whispered Susan....Then at last Peter realized that it was up to him. He drew his sword and raised it to the salute and hastily saying to the others 'Come on. Pull yourselves together,' he advanced to the Lion and said: 'We have come — Aslan.' (Lewis 128)

Though responsibility often overwhelms his sense of fear, Peter has traces of innate bravery. When he discovers that the faun who saved Lucy is in danger, he wants to do anything that he possibly can to save him (Lewis 78). Even in wanting to meet Aslan, Peter is brave (Lewis 80). His responsibility and sense of bravery fit well to-

gether. When faced with pressure, his responsibility and love for his siblings trumps what weaknesses and fear he might have. This is displayed when the wolf attacked his sisters and Susan called for help: “Peter did not feel very brave; indeed, he felt he was going to be sick. But that made no difference to what he had to do.” (Lewis 131). In this, one of the goriest scenes in the children’s book, Peter assumes the responsibility of an adult protector.

Another endearing personality trait in which Peter shows commonality with other firstborns is his keen awareness of the difference between right and wrong and his ability to uphold one and shun the other. He immediately recognizes the areas in which he has failed and he is quick to assuage the damages. He shows responsibility as he asks Lucy for forgiveness when the four siblings have all entered Narnia together for the first time and Lucy is quick to forgive (Lewis 55). Again, he shares the blame for Edmund’s fall, even in front of Aslan when the great lion questions the location of the fourth Pevensie sibling: “That was partly my fault, Aslan. I was angry with him and I think that helped him to go wrong” (Lewis 128). In this, he shows that he truly cares for his younger siblings. Similar to his display of responsibility in accepting the blame, he is also quick to share the credit, especially at the end of the novel as Aslan commends the children (Lewis 178). Peter’s willingness to act out of humility makes him appear more mature to his youngest sibling, and completes his embodiment of the stereotypical firstborn persona.

Susan is a classic example of the practical, peace-keeping middle child. She attempts to soothe arguments between Peter and Edmund (Lewis 46). When the siblings first enter Narnia together, Susan encourages her siblings to borrow coats from the wardrobe, and “They immediately carried out Susan’s very sensible plan” (Lewis 55). Even her sensibility displays a timid nature; as soon as they enter Narnia, Susan deems it unsafe and wants to leave (Lewis 59). Susan is careful to do things by the book, and oftentimes this translates into a pessimistic but realistic attitude toward life. For example, she wishes that she never would have come to Narnia when she realizes that Edmund has gone missing (Lewis 83). In an examination of the personalities of the children, Rogers characterizes Susan as cautious and hesitant (11). Susan pessimistically plans and keeps the peace, illustrating the typical role of one type of middle-born children. If Peter assumes the role of a father figure, in

can be argued that Susan assumes the motherly role. While Peter does it out of necessity, Susan accepts the role because she wants to be an adult. Susan is often looking ahead to the future instead of enjoying the present (Montgomery and Fuller 101). While most of the children are at least partially changed by Narnia, Susan remains stagnant, especially in this role. Even after she experiences the resurrection romp with Lucy and Aslan, Susan is quick to admonish her sister (Lewis 167). Susan adopted the motherly role to calm Lucy’s excitement so they could watch Aslan free the stone statues from their captivity.

With his acute sense of injustice and his penchant for rebellion, Edmund fulfills the stereotype of the other typical middle child role. From a betraying beast to a Narnian Knight, Edmund is an example of a middle child who overcomes inferiority and matures. In many ways, Edmund is the main character in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. More than any other character, Edmund goes through the most change: “The story’s momentum depends on a crisis involving the morally weakest member of the four Pevensie children” (Campbell and Jackson, 43). The lessons he learns are most impactful. Children love to vilify him, but older readers find themselves relating to Edmund’s struggles and triumphs.

From the beginning, there is a sense that Edmund is not as inherently good as his siblings. He rebels even in the simple tasks such as shutting the door to the wardrobe (Lewis 28). His interactions with Lucy are especially telling of his character. Edmund treats her as if he is more worthy, showing his feelings of superiority as a male and as an older sibling: “And Edmund gave a very superior look as if he were far older than Lucy (there was really only a year’s difference)” (Lewis 30, 45). He fails to fulfill his duty as an older brother by being rude and condescending toward Lucy.

Edmund’s mistreatment of Lucy is simply minor sibling rivalry compared to the bigger “sin” Edmund commits. Upon arriving in Narnia and meeting the White Witch, he takes the Turkish delight and betrays his siblings. Rogers describes pre-Aslan Edmund this way: “Back on this side of the wardrobe, it becomes apparent that Edmund is not just a glutton and a fool, but a traitor also” (Rogers 8). Campbell and Jackson point out that Edmund’s pleasure in the Turkish delight is a weakness triggered by insecurity: “Edmund, the struggling, resentful middle child, chafes against the other three, as

he strives to be his own little man. In his insecurity and his desire for position, he eventually betrays his siblings for a few mouthfuls of candy” (43-44). Out of insecurity and jealousy, Edmund chooses sweets and a witch over his siblings.

Edmund’s betrayal is not entirely his fault; he was manipulated by the most powerful figure in Narnia, the witch who controlled grown creatures (Lewis 35). Lewis even has the narrator shed grace on Edmund:

You mustn’t think that even now Edmund was quite so bad that he actually wanted his brother and sisters to be turned into stone. He did want Turkish Delight and to be a Prince (and later a King) and to pay Peter out for calling him a beast. As for what the Witch would do with the others, he didn’t want her to be particularly nice to them — certainly not to put them on the same level as himself; but he managed to believe, or to pretend he believed, that she wouldn’t do anything very bad to them. (Lewis 89)

Edmund’s initial jealousy drove him to a situation in which he could not escape (Rogers 18). In this cycle of mistakes, Edmund is not entirely to blame, but he is also not without fault.

In the clutch of the White Witch’s hand, and even before meeting the evil ruler, his negative character traits are displayed as he makes his share of conscious choices and mistakes. Edmund is driven by the negative effects of jealousy. As the White Witch manipulates Edmund, his ill opinion of his siblings is also displayed: “I will make your brother a Duke and your sisters Duchesses. There’s nothing special about *them*” (Lewis 39). He consciously knows his actions are wrong, but his jealousy fuels him to act anyway: “Up to that moment Edmund had been feeling sick, and sulky, and annoyed with Lucy for being right, but he hadn’t made up his mind what to do. When Peter suddenly asked him the question he decided all at once to do the meanest and most spiteful thing he could think of. He decided to let Lucy down” (Lewis 44). Edmund seeks revenge, often for things he created from his own position of bitterness: “but Edmund was saying to himself, ‘I’ll pay you all out for this, you pack of stuck-up, self-satisfied prigs’” (Lewis 56). His guilt makes him feel paranoid (Lewis 88). Negative characteristics, many of which are often associated with middle-born children, are personified by Edmund Pevensie. But the enormity of his mistakes make his redemption that much more profound.

In the end, he is reunited with his siblings after talking with Aslan, and all is well again (Lewis 139). He is able to forget his jealousy, pride, and desire for revenge when he gazes on Aslan: “But Edmund had got past thinking about himself after all he’d been through and after the talk he’d had that morning. He just went on looking at Aslan. It didn’t seem to matter what the Witch said” (Lewis 141). Though Edmund seems predetermined to have a less than desirable personality, he changes for the better when his circumstances change. When Lucy looks on her older brother, the reader catches a glimpse of who Edmund is becoming: “She found him standing on his feet and not only healed but looking better than she had seen him since — oh, for ages; in fact ever since his first term at that horrid school which was where he had begun to go wrong... And there on the field of battle Aslan made him a knight” (Lewis 180).

Different from all of her siblings, the baby of the family, Lucy, complements the other characters with her curiosity and sweet belief. Lewis introduces the reader to Lucy by characterizing her by her birth order, “...he was so odd-looking that Lucy (who was the youngest) was a little afraid of him” (3). Birth order is therefore a defining characteristic for Lucy. She lives up to the cultural expectations and trends of being the youngest sibling. Lucy is innately curious, and it is her curiosity that leads the Pevensie siblings to Narnia (Lewis 6). Just as Peter’s responsibility trumps his fear, Lucy’s creative curiosity trumps hers: “Lucy felt a little frightened, but she felt very inquisitive and excited as well” (Lewis 8). Without Lucy’s brave imagination, the Narnian adventure would not be possible. In an examination of the concept of masculinity and femininity as it is displayed through symbols in the Hero’s journey, Emerson pointed out that Lucy Pevensie seemed to be favored by Lewis, a lastborn himself (McGill 1). She has the most encounters with Aslan, discovers the wardrobe, and is named after Lewis’s goddaughter. Examining Lucy’s encounter with Mr. Tumnus, her test of faith in the face of Edmund’s doubt, and her emotional battles, show, as Emerson described, that her familial position is important: “A personal reward for Lucy is that she is now perceived as a peer among her siblings, rather than merely the baby of the family” (Emerson 9). Lucy is sweet, innocent, loving, and almost angelic in her perfection. This is often how youngest children are viewed and how they are taught to identify themselves.

Interactions with the powerful figure Aslan enhance the siblings' innate personality traits. This is particularly true the first time that they hear Aslan's name, as they receive gifts from Father Christmas, and as their Narnian adulthood enhances the positive personality aspects of their birth order. One of the most prominent examples of this is also one of the most compelling and quoted parts of the book. The Pevensie children sit down with the beavers, and they hear Aslan's name for the first time. It stirs in each of them a feeling that is expected given their birth orders. Campbell and Jackson describe the reactions: "One by one, Uncle Jack enters each child's head to tell us what he or she thinks and feels at the sound of Aslan's name — Peter feels brave, Susan hears music, Edmund is horrified, and Lucy feels as if summer vacation is about to begin" (Campbell and Jackson, 46).

Their birth order roles are also highlighted in the gifts they receive from Father Christmas. Peter's sense of responsibility and the expectations heaped upon the firstborn male are represented in his gift of a sword and a Narnia crested shield. With the sword comes the responsibility to act (Campbell and Jackson 49). The sword and the shield were not more than Peter could handle; instead, they were perfectly sized for his responsibility and ability (Lewis 108). Peter's innate sense of responsibility ingrained in him from his birth (and the birth of Susan, representing the moment he became an older brother and thus a protector), enabled Peter to accept the weight of responsibility. Susan receives a bow and arrows that do not easily miss, a tool helpful for someone who mediates from afar. She also receives a horn to blow when she needs help (Lewis 130). A gift like this is perfect for the timid and practical Susan.

By this section of the story, Edmund is deep in the throes of his betrayal, and so in an honest depiction of suffering from wrongdoing, Edmund does not receive a Narnian Christmas gift. Lucy's gift also highlights the personality traits so descriptive of her position as last-born. She receives a small dagger and a little bottle of a healing cordial. As Peter uses his gift to save Susan, so Lucy uses her gift to save Edmund. After he is hurt in battle, Lucy remembers her Christmas gift (Lewis 179). This is a rare example in which Lucy does not quickly believe; instead, she waits to see if her gift works. Aslan reprimands her: "'Daughter of Eve,' said Aslan in a graver voice, 'others also are at the point of death. Must *more* people die for Edmund?'" (Lewis 179). She later returns to find Edmund healed, in more ways than

the physical battle wound. Their gifts show their birth order-driven personality traits as they are received and as the children use the gifts to interact with each other.

Narnia time runs differently than the time of this world, so the four children grow up in Narnia after this initial encounter with Aslan's sacrifice. The change is described:

And Peter became a tall and deep-chested man and a great warrior, and he was called King Peter the Magnificent. And Susan grew into a tall and gracious woman with black hair that fell almost to her feet and the kings of the countries beyond the sea began to send ambassadors asking for her hand in marriage. And she was called Queen Susan the Gentle. Edmund was a graver and quieter man than Peter, and great in council and judgment. He was called King Edmund the Just. But as for Lucy, she was always gay and golden-haired, and all princes in those parts desired her to be their Queen, and her own people called her Queen Lucy the Valiant. (Lewis 183-184)

As the siblings grow, the characteristics most representative of their birth orders are enhanced. They mature into the better qualities that characterize their individual birth order. Peter's leadership guides the hunt, and Lucy suggests the grown Kings and Queens of Narnia, her siblings, investigate the post they find while hunting the white stag. Practical, grown Susan suggests that they leave the post be, and Edmund's great change is seen in his response, "I have such desire to find the significance of this thing that I would not by my good will turn back for the richest jewel in all Narnia" (Lewis 187). It is Edmund's persuasion that spurs the Pevensies through the wardrobe and back to their childhood, where they can grow anew into their birth order branded personality traits.

Perpetuating Birth Order's Effects

Literature is, without a doubt, shaped by existing psychological concepts. The family atmosphere of England obviously impacted the ways in which the Pevensies were given personalities. To craft such relatable characters, Lewis must have spent time observing the relationships that siblings shared with each other. Because he knew children, Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter are products of Lewis's observations. However, it is likely that the inclusion of family dynamics was done

without conscious effort: “Lewis, as much as for any writer, involves forays into parts of the mind that the writer himself has little understanding or control over” (Campbell and Jackson 55). He allowed the family dynamics he grew up with in the twentieth century and the people he interacted with to shape his novel, and in doing so, he crafted four siblings who personified one or more birth order characteristics.

Literary texts also shape the reader’s psychological context. A firstborn child might read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and identify with Peter. His bravery will then be reinforced. A youngest girl will be told “you’re like Lucy” and a self-fulfilling prophecy will be created; she might unknowingly emphasize and develop traits similar to Lucy’s and thus similar to that of most last-born children. But what of middle-born children? The so-called middle child syndrome is fed. Middle-born children see the negative traits in both types of middle-born characters: Susan remains timid, practical, and unbelieving and Edmund is initially a traitor. Thus, the middle-born child’s sense of injustice and inferiority grows.

These implications are true for parents as well as children. Children who grow up reading books such as *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* become adults that have been socialized to the concept of how an ideal family should act. When these adults have a family of their own, will they unconsciously revert back to this early foundation of wanting to be like the Pevensies, encouraging bravery in their eldest and curiosity in their youngest while understanding the tendencies to rebel that their middle children might display? *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is influential: “the power of the Narnia books to connect to their audience involves more than just a formulaic outline or a simple plot structure” (Campbell and Jackson 44). Literature helps shape psychological constraints in subtle ways, including strengthening birth order beliefs.

In conclusion, the beloved *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is filled with textbook examples of characters who live up to their birth order stereotypes. Most of the personality traits represented by the Pevensie siblings are personality characteristics associated with the role that sibling plays in the family. When the siblings all finally arrive in Narnia together for the first time, Lucy remarks, “And what wonderful adventures we shall have now that we’re all in it together” (Lewis 43). She truly believes that they will have grand adventures,

not because Edmund, Susan, and Peter are simply her playmates, but because they are her siblings. Though Lucy does not appear to understand the deep psychological principles driving her actions, this statement summarizes a truth that Lucy recognized. Lucy needed her siblings to add bravery, realism, and redemption to her believing attitude so that their time in Narnia could truly be a wonderful adventure. Deciphering psychoanalytic theory is an adventure itself, and applying birth order research to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is like borrowing a fur coat and stepping further into the wardrobe, into the mind, and into the questions. What makes us who we are? What makes the characters we read about identifiable? How do these characters shape our interactions? With a mix of firstborn responsibility, middle-born practicality and brave insurgence, and last-born belief, these questions can begin to be answered.

Works Cited

- Adler, Alfred, and Alan Porter. *What Life Should Mean to You*. New York: Gosset & Dunlap, 1931. Print.
- Adler, Alfred. *The Problem Child: The Life Style of the Difficult Child as Analyzed in Specific Cases*. Trans. Guy Daniels. New York: Capricorn, 1963. Print.
- Campbell, Ethan, and Robert Jackson. “Good, Not Safe”: Structure vs. Chaos in Narnia and the Writing Workshop.” *Mythlore* 26.1/2 (2007): 41-59. *Literary Reference Center*. Web. 5 Oct. 2014.
- Eckstein, Daniel, et al. “A Review of 200 Birth-Order Studies: Lifestyle Characteristics.” *Journal of Individual Psychology* 66.4 (2010): 408-434. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- Emerson, David. “Innocence as a Super-Power: Little Girls on The Hero’s Journey.” *Mythlore* 28.1/2 (2009): 131-147. *Literary Reference Center*. Web. 5 Oct. 2014.
- Epstein, Joseph. “O, Brother!.” *Commentary* 103.4 (1997): 51. *Literary Reference Center*. Web. 15 Nov. 2014.
- Ford, Paul F., and Lorinda Bryan. Cauley. *Companion to Narnia*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. “The Anatomy of the Mental Personality.” *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton &, 1933. Print.

- Friedman, Howard S., and Miriam W. Schustack. "Alfred Adler, the Inferiority Complex, and the Importance of Society." *Personality: Classic Theories and Modern Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999. 129-34. Print.
- Herrera, Nicholas C., et al. "Beliefs about Birth Rank and Their Reflection in Reality." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85.1 (2003): 142-150. *PsycARTICLES*. Web. 15 Nov. 2014.
- Kluger, Jeffrey. "The Power of Birth Order. (Cover Story)." *Time* 170.18 (2007): 42- 48. *Vocational and Career Collection*. Web. 15 Nov. 2014.
- Linn, James G., Debra Rose Wilson, and Thabo T. Fako. "The Implications of Changing Family Structure for Childbirth and Childbirth Education." *International Journal of Childbirth Education* 27.4 (2012): 19-26. *Consumer Health Complete - EBSCOhost*. Web. 7 Feb. 2015.
- McGill, Sara Ann. "C. S. Lewis." *C.S. Lewis* (2005): 1-2. *Literary Reference Center*. Web. 1 Dec. 2014.
- Montgomery, John, and Edmund Fuller. *Myth, Allegory, and Gospel; an Interpretation of g. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton Charles Williams*. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974. Print.
- Lewis, C. S.. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1950. Print.
- Rogers, Jonathan. *The World According to Narnia: Christian Meaning in C.S. Lewis's Beloved Chronicles*. New York: Warner Faith, 2005. Print.
- Sulloway, Frank J., and Richard L. Zweigenhaft. "Birth Order and Risk Taking In Athletics: A Meta-Analysis And Study Of Major League Baseball." *Personality & Social Psychology Review (Sage Publications Inc.)* 14.4 (2010): 402. *Publisher Provided Full Text Searching File*. Web. 12 Jan. 2016.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-friendly Guide*. New York: Garland Pub., 2006. Print.