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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Instability of Faith: A Deconstructive Reading of Lucy Pevensie in The Chronicles of Narnia

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## ABSTRACT

Lucy Pevensie is commonly portrayed as a symbol of innocence, faith, and unwavering belief throughout The Chronicles of Narnia. Previous studies have largely emphasized her positive moral qualities and spiritual steadfastness, often treating her faith as stable and coherent. But a closer examination revealed tensions, contradictions, and moments of uncertainty that complicate such interpretations. This study aimed to examine the instability of faith in Lucy Pevensie's character through a deconstructive reading of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Prince Caspian, and The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. This study applied a qualitative literary research design using textual analysis. Drawing on Jacques Derrida's deconstructive theory, the analysis focused on binary oppositions such as faith and doubt, certainty and uncertainty, as well as obedience and hesitation. Relevant passages, dialogues, and narrative events related to Lucy's beliefs, emotional conflicts, and spiritual experiences were selected and examined to identify contradictions and shifting meanings within her characterization. The findings showed that although Lucy is predominantly constructed as a figure of faith, her belief is neither fixed nor entirely stable. Throughout the trilogy, her faith was repeatedly challenged by doubt, social pressure, emotional vulnerability, and moments of hesitation. These tensions demonstrated that faith in Lucy's characterization was continuously negotiated rather than permanently secured. Furthermore, the study showed that faith and doubt are not mutually exclusive opposites but interdependent elements that shape the complexity of her character. This study concluded that Lucy's faith should be understood as a dynamic and unstable construct rather than an absolute and unchanging quality. Through deconstruction, the dominant interpretation of Lucy as an unwaveringly faithful character was reconsidered, revealing the complexity and multiplicity of meanings embedded within her characterization.

## KEYWORDS

Lucy Pevensie; Faith, Deconstruction, Doubt, Fantasy Literature

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### 1. Introduction

Within C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lucy Pevensie is frequently portrayed as a symbol of innocence, truthfulness, and unwavering faith. As the youngest of the Pevensie siblings, Lucy is often characterized as possessing a unique spiritual sensitivity that enables her to perceive realities beyond the understanding of others. She is the first to discover Narnia through the wardrobe, the first to recognize the presence and guidance of Aslan, and the character who consistently demonstrates trust in moral and spiritual truths throughout the trilogy. Consequently, Lucy has often been regarded by readers and scholars as an embodiment of steadfast belief and moral certainty.

Previous studies on Lucy Pevensie have frequently portrayed Lucy Pevensie as a symbol of innocence, courage, and unwavering faith (Suwastini et al., 2020; Hilder, 2012). Many interpretations position Lucy as a stable moral center within the

narrative, portraying her faith as consistent and unchanging despite the challenges she encounters. Such readings contribute significantly to understanding Lucy's role as a symbolic representation of virtue and faith within Lewis's Christian-inspired fantasy world. Within children's literature, characters often function as sites through which questions of identity, morality, and personal growth are explored (Nikolajeva, 2014; Stephens, 2021). Contemporary theories of identity suggest that identity is not fixed but continuously shaped through experience, narrative, and social interaction (Hall, 1996; Ricoeur, 1992; McAdams, 2001). Such perspectives open the possibility of reading Lucy's faith and identity as dynamic constructions rather than permanent qualities.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into Lucy Pevensie's role as a symbol of innocence, courage, and faith, most of them primarily emphasize her positive moral qualities and spiritual steadfastness. As a result, limited attention has been given to the contradictions, tensions, and moments of uncertainty that complicate her characterization. Furthermore, existing studies tend to examine Lucy's faith as a stable and coherent construct rather than as a dynamic and potentially unstable process. While deconstructive approaches have been widely applied in contemporary literary studies to reveal hidden contradictions and alternative meanings within texts, little research has employed Derrida's deconstruction to examine the instability of faith in Lucy Pevensie across *The Chronicles of Narnia* trilogy. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how faith and doubt, certainty and uncertainty, as well as obedience and hesitation interact to destabilize dominant interpretations of Lucy's character. Furthermore, although deconstructive approaches have been widely applied in literary criticism to expose contradictions and alternative meanings within literary texts, little attention has been devoted to examining the instability of faith in Lucy Pevensie through Derrida's deconstructive framework across *The Chronicles of Narnia* trilogy. This gap provides an opportunity to reconsider Lucy's characterization beyond conventional moral interpretations.

A closer examination of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), *Prince Caspian* (1951), and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952) reveals that Lucy's faith is not entirely stable. Throughout the trilogy, she experiences moments of uncertainty, hesitation, emotional vulnerability, and internal conflict. Although she is frequently associated with belief and spiritual insight, her convictions are repeatedly challenged by doubt, social pressure, fear, and personal desires. In *Prince Caspian*, for instance, Lucy sees Aslan when the others cannot, yet she hesitates to fully follow him when her siblings disagree. Similarly, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, she struggles with jealousy and insecurity when confronted with the temptation to become someone else. These moments complicate the dominant image of Lucy as an unwaveringly faithful character. The existence of such contradictions suggests that Lucy's characterization contains multiple and sometimes conflicting meanings. Rather than functioning as a fixed representation of faith, her character may be understood as a site of tension where belief and doubt continuously interact. This perspective challenges conventional interpretations that privilege faith as a stable and superior quality while marginalizing moments of uncertainty. Consequently, a different critical approach is required to explore the complexities underlying Lucy's characterization.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to examine how Lucy Pevensie's faith is destabilized through the interplay of opposing concepts across *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Rather than viewing faith and doubt, certainty and uncertainty, or obedience and temptation as mutually exclusive oppositions, this study argues that these concepts are interdependent and continually negotiate one another throughout Lucy's spiritual journey. Accordingly, faith is understood not as a fixed and absolute quality but as a dynamic construct that is continually reconstructed through contradiction, uncertainty, and experience.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Lucy Pevensie's faith is destabilized through the interplay of opposing concepts across *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Applying this perspective to Lucy Pevensie allows for a reconsideration of the binary oppositions that shape her characterization, particularly faith and doubt, certainty and uncertainty, as well as obedience and hesitation. Rather than viewing these oppositions as mutually exclusive, this study argues that they are interconnected and mutually dependent. Lucy's faith does not emerge despite doubt but is continually shaped through encounters with uncertainty and contradiction. Therefore, faith in her characterization should not be understood as a fixed and absolute quality but as a dynamic construct that is constantly negotiated throughout the narrative.

This study uses a qualitative literary research design using Jacques Derrida's deconstructive approach. The primary data consist of textual evidence obtained from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, while secondary data were collected from scholarly books and recent journal articles on deconstruction, identity, faith, and literary criticism. Data were collected through close reading and purposive selection of passages representing binary oppositions related to faith, doubt, certainty, uncertainty, obedience, and temptation. The selected passages were subsequently analyzed through deconstructive reading to identify internal contradictions, destabilize conventional interpretations, and construct alternative meanings concerning Lucy Pevensie's faith and identity.

Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction is used to examine the instability of faith in Lucy Pevensie's character. Deconstruction questions the assumption that meaning is fixed, coherent, and hierarchical. According to Derrida (1978), binary oppositions such as presence and absence, truth and falsehood, or certainty and uncertainty are not naturally stable structures but systems in which each term depends upon the other for meaning. Through deconstructive reading, meanings that appear dominant and self-evident can be destabilized, revealing contradictions and alternative interpretations hidden within the text. Similarly, Tyson (2006) explained that deconstructive criticism reveals tensions and contradictions that challenge dominant

interpretations within literary texts. Beyond Derrida's original formulation, deconstruction has been further developed by literary theorists who emphasize its capacity to expose ambiguities and multiple meanings within texts. Culler (1982) argues that deconstruction challenges the assumption of stable interpretation by revealing internal contradictions embedded in language. Likewise, Royle (2019) suggests that deconstruction encourages readers to examine what texts exclude, suppress, or leave unresolved. More recent literary studies further demonstrate that deconstructive reading remains a productive approach for revealing hidden assumptions, binary oppositions, and multiple interpretations within literary narratives (Setiawan & Agustina, 2024). Collectively, these perspectives provide an appropriate theoretical framework for examining the instability of faith and identity in Lucy Pevensie's characterization. These perspectives provide a useful framework for examining the tensions underlying Lucy Pevensie's faith and identity throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Moreover, this study contributes to literary criticism by offering an alternative interpretation of Lucy Pevensie's characterization through Derrida's deconstructive framework. Unlike previous studies that primarily portray Lucy as a stable symbol of Christian faith, the present study demonstrates that her faith is continually negotiated through contradiction, uncertainty, temptation, and vulnerability. By examining the instability of binary oppositions throughout the trilogy, this research expands existing scholarship on *The Chronicles of Narnia* while illustrating how deconstructive reading provides new insights into the relationship between faith and identity in literary characters.

Beyond Derrida's original formulation, deconstruction has been further developed by literary theorists who emphasize the instability and multiplicity of meaning within texts. Culler (1982) argues that deconstructive reading exposes internal contradictions that challenge the assumption of a unified interpretation. Similarly, Setiawan and Agustina (2024), for instance, employed deconstructive reading to uncover alternative meanings within traditional narratives and showed that textual meanings remain open to reinterpretation. Likewise, recent discussions on deconstruction have emphasized its significance in revealing hidden assumptions, binary oppositions, and the instability of meaning across different forms of texts and interpretations. These perspectives provide a useful framework for examining the tensions and contradictions underlying Lucy Pevensie's faith throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Building upon these theoretical perspectives, this study applies Derrida's deconstructive approach to examine how Lucy Pevensie's faith and identity are constructed, challenged, and continuously reconstructed throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia* trilogy. Rather than treating Lucy as a consistently unwavering symbol of Christian faith, this study explores the internal contradictions and binary oppositions that reveal the instability underlying her characterization. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question:

➤ How does a deconstructive reading of *The Chronicles of Narnia* trilogy reveal contradictions and instability in the construction of Lucy Pevensie's faith and identity?

## **2. Faith and Doubt: The Contradictions of Lucy's Belief**

Lucy Pevensie is commonly regarded as the most faithful character in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. From the beginning of the novel, she demonstrates a willingness to trust her own experiences even when they are dismissed by others. After entering the wardrobe and discovering Narnia, Lucy insists on the truth of her experience, explaining, "*It was just after breakfast when I went into the wardrobe, and I've been away for hours and hours, and had tea, and all sorts of things have happened*" (Lewis, 2001, p. 16). Lucy enthusiastically shares her experience with her siblings. "*It's – it's a magic wardrobe. There's a wood inside it, and it's snowing, and there's a Faun and a Witch and it's called Narnia; come and see*" (Lewis, 2001, p. 16). These statements position Lucy as the sole witness to a reality that the others refuse to acknowledge. However, Peter, Susan, and Edmund refuse to believe her story, considering it either a fantasy or a childish invention. In this situation, Lucy becomes isolated as the sole witness to a reality that no one else is willing to accept.

At first glance, this episode appears to reinforce Lucy's role as a figure of unwavering faith. Unlike her siblings, she does not abandon her belief simply because others reject it. Her insistence on telling the truth reflects a strong sense of conviction and moral courage. Indeed, Lucy's faith is often contrasted with Edmund's dishonesty, creating a binary opposition between truth and falsehood, belief and disbelief. When Peter and Susan ask him about Lucy's story, he responds, "*Oh yes, Lucy and I have been playing—pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. Just for fun, of course. There is nothing there really*" (Lewis, 2001, p. 27). This statement creates a binary opposition between truth and falsehood, belief and disbelief. While Lucy openly defends her experience, Edmund knowingly conceals the truth. Within this framework, Lucy occupies the privileged position as the bearer of truth.

However, a closer reading reveals that Lucy's faith is not as absolute as it initially appears. Although she continues to defend her experience, she is emotionally affected by the disbelief of those around her. The repeated rejection of her testimony places her in a vulnerable position and exposes the emotional cost of maintaining belief in isolation. This situation becomes particularly evident when Peter and Susan become concerned about Lucy's behavior and seek advice from Professor Kirke, believing that her persistent claims about Narnia may indicate a problem rather than a truthful experience. Rather than presenting faith as effortless certainty, Lewis portrays it as something that requires persistence in the face of doubt and misunderstanding. The conversation with Professor Kirke further complicates the issue. After listening to the children, the Professor asks, "*which certainly deserves consideration; very careful consideration. For instance – if you will excuse me for asking the question – does your experience lead you to regard your brother or your sister as the more reliable? I mean, which is the more truthful?*" (Lewis, 2001, p. 28). "*Logic! You know she doesn't tell lies and it is obvious that she is not mad. For the moment, then and*

unless any further evidence turns up, we must assume that she is telling the truth" (Lewis, 2001, p. 29). While the Professor ultimately supports Lucy's credibility through logical reasoning, his intervention suggests that faith alone is insufficient to resolve the conflict. Lucy's truth gains acceptance only when it is validated by an external authority. This moment subtly undermines the assumption that faith is entirely self-sustaining. Instead, belief becomes entangled with questions of recognition, validation, and social acceptance.

Furthermore, Lucy's confidence is not entirely immune to uncertainty. Although she never explicitly renounces her experience the narrative suggests that the continuous skepticism of her siblings affects her emotionally. After repeated disbelief from Peter, Susan, and Edmund, Lucy becomes distressed and isolated, leading her siblings to question whether she is telling the truth. *"I don't care what you think, and I don't care what you say. You can tell the Professor or you can write to Mother or you can do anything you like. I know I've met a Faun in there and – I wish I'd stayed there and you are all beasts, beasts"* (Lewis, 2001, p. 28). Her emotional vulnerability indicates that maintaining belief is neither effortless nor free from psychological pressure. While Lucy continues to insist on the reality of Narnia, her position as the sole believer creates a tension between personal conviction and social rejection. This tension suggests that faith and doubt are not completely separate categories but interconnected experiences that coexist within her character. From a deconstructive perspective, Lucy's certainty becomes meaningful precisely because it is constantly challenged by uncertainty. Rather than functioning as opposing forces, faith and doubt exist in a mutually dependent relationship, each contributing to the significance of the other. From a deconstructive perspective, Lucy's faith cannot be understood simply as the opposite of doubt. The very significance of her belief emerges because doubt exists around it. Without the disbelief of Peter, Susan, and Edmund, Lucy's faith would not be tested or demonstrated. In other words, faith derives meaning through its relationship with doubt rather than through its separation from it. The binary opposition between faith and doubt therefore becomes unstable, as each concept depends upon the other for its existence.

Consequently, Lucy's characterization in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* reveals a more complex understanding of faith than is commonly acknowledged. While she remains committed to her beliefs, her faith is shaped by resistance, uncertainty, and emotional vulnerability. Rather than functioning as a fixed quality, belief appears as a dynamic process continually negotiated through encounters with disbelief and contradiction.

### 3. Seeing Aslan Alone: Certainty under Social Pressure

In *Prince Caspian*, Lucy once again occupies the position of the character who perceives a reality that remains invisible to others. During the Pevensies' journey through Narnia, she sees Aslan and becomes convinced that he is guiding them toward the correct path. However, unlike her earlier experience in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lucy does not immediately act upon her conviction. Instead, she faces resistance from her siblings, who are unable to see what she sees and therefore question her judgment.

Initially, Lucy expresses confidence in her vision of Aslan. *"Look! Look! Look!" cried Lucy. "The Lion," said Lucy. "Aslan himself. Didn't you see? Right up there between those mountain ashes. No, this side of the gorge. And up, not down. Just the opposite of the way you want to go. And he wanted us to go where he was – up there"* (Lewis, 2001, p. 69). She insists that she has seen him and believes that following him is the right course of action. This statement reflects Lucy's certainty in her perception and her willingness to trust Aslan's guidance despite the absence of visible proof. Nevertheless, her certainty gradually weakens when confronted with the doubts of the group. Peter and Susan prefer to rely on reason and observable evidence, while Edmund remains hesitant. As the majority rejects Lucy's perspective, she finds herself isolated once again. Yet unlike her earlier experience, Lucy does not immediately act upon her belief, revealing the growing tension between personal conviction and social pressure.

Rather than firmly maintaining her position, Lucy hesitates. Although she believes that Aslan is calling them, she allows herself to be persuaded by the opinions of others and eventually follows the group's decision. Later, Lucy admits her mistake to Aslan, confessing, *"Yes, wasn't it a shame?" said Lucy. "I saw you all right. They wouldn't believe me. They're all so –"* (Lewis, 2001, p. 77). This confession demonstrates that her hesitation is not caused by a lack of faith in Aslan but by the pressure of social disapproval. The decision to follow the group's judgment instead of her own conviction becomes a significant moment in her character development. It reveals that faith is not simply a matter of seeing or believing; it also requires the courage to remain committed to that belief when confronted by social pressure.

Lewis emphasizes this conflict when Lucy later encounters Aslan and receives a gentle rebuke for not following him earlier. Aslan reminds her calmly and silently hinting that she had seen him clearly. *"I'm sorry," said Lucy. "I didn't mean to start slanging the others. But it wasn't my fault anyway, was it?" The Lion looked straight into her eyes. Aslan said nothing. "You mean," said Lucy rather faintly, "that it would have turned out all right – somehow? But how? Please, Aslan! Am I not to know?" "If you go back to the others now, and wake them up; and tell them you have seen me again; and that you must all get up at once and follow me – what will happen? There is only one way of finding out"* (Lewis, 2001, p. 77). This interaction is particularly important because it exposes the gap between belief and action. Lucy's faith is not completely absent, yet it proves insufficient to prevent hesitation. She believes, but she does not fully act on what she believes.

This contradiction complicates the traditional image of Lucy as an unwavering figure of faith. If faith is understood as complete certainty and obedience, then Lucy's hesitation appears as a failure. However, such an interpretation oversimplifies the

complexity of her experience. Lucy's reluctance does not emerge from disbelief but from the difficulty of maintaining conviction in the face of collective opposition. Her uncertainty is therefore intertwined with her faith rather than standing in direct opposition to it. From a deconstructive perspective, faith and doubt are therefore not mutually exclusive categories but interdependent experiences that continuously shape one another. This interpretation supports Derrida's view that binary oppositions are never fixed or hierarchical but remain mutually dependent, with each term deriving its meaning from the other (Tyson, 2006). Through a deconstructive reading, this episode destabilizes the binary opposition between certainty and uncertainty. Conventional readings tend to privilege certainty as a positive quality while treating uncertainty as a sign of weakness. Yet Lucy's experience suggests that certainty cannot exist independently of uncertainty. Her confidence becomes meaningful precisely because it is challenged. Likewise, her hesitation does not erase her faith but reveals its vulnerability and complexity.

Furthermore, the narrative demonstrates that social influence plays a significant role in shaping belief. Lucy's uncertainty emerges not because she loses faith in Aslan but because she struggles to maintain that faith when those around her refuse to share it. This interpretation is consistent with the concept of the social construction of reality, which argues that beliefs and meanings are continuously formed, maintained, and reshaped through social interaction (Lock & Strong, 2020). This indicates that belief is not purely individual but is constantly negotiated within social relationships. The tension between personal conviction and collective judgment becomes one of the central conflicts of Lucy's character.

Thus, *Prince Caspian* presents a more nuanced portrayal of faith than the image commonly associated with Lucy Pevensie. Although she remains the character most closely connected to Aslan, her relationship with faith is marked by hesitation, vulnerability, and internal conflict. Through this tension, the novel reveals that certainty and uncertainty are not mutually exclusive states but interconnected experiences that shape the development of belief.

#### **4. Obedience, Temptation, and Identity in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader**

While *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian* primarily present challenges to Lucy's faith through external disbelief and social pressure, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* introduces a more personal and internal struggle. In this novel, Lucy's faith is tested not by the skepticism of others but by her own desires and insecurities. As a result, the narrative reveals a deeper complexity within her character and further destabilizes the image of Lucy as a consistently unwavering figure of faith.

One of the most significant moments occurs during Lucy's encounter with the Magician's Book. As she turns its pages, she discovers a spell that would allow her to become physically beautiful. The temptation immediately attracts her attention because it speaks directly to her hidden feelings of inadequacy. Throughout the series, Susan is frequently described as exceptionally beautiful and admired by others, while Lucy is often associated with innocence and childlike simplicity. Faced with the possibility of changing herself, Lucy begins to imagine a different version of her identity. "*I will say the spell, said Lucy. 'I don't care I will' she said I don't care because she had a strong feeling that she mustn't.*" (Lewis, 2001, p. 77). This episode reveals a side of Lucy that is rarely acknowledged in conventional interpretations. Beneath her image as a faithful and virtuous character lies a desire for recognition and acceptance. Her temptation is not simply about physical beauty; it reflects a deeper longing to become someone she perceives as more admired and valued. The desire to resemble Susan suggests that Lucy is not entirely satisfied with her own identity. Consequently, her self-perception becomes a site of tension and instability.

Although Lucy ultimately resists the temptation, the significance of the episode lies not only in her final decision but also in the existence of the temptation itself. Traditional readings often celebrate her ability to reject the spell as evidence of moral strength and obedience. However, a closer examination indicates that obedience gains meaning precisely because temptation exists. Without the possibility of failure, her obedience would remain untested and therefore less significant.

From a deconstructive perspective, this episode destabilizes the binary opposition between obedience and temptation. Conventional interpretations tend to privilege obedience as a positive moral quality while viewing temptation as a negative force that must be overcome. However, the two concepts are deeply interconnected. Lucy's obedience becomes meaningful only because temptation is present, while temptation itself reveals desires and vulnerabilities that contribute to her personal growth. Rather than functioning as opposites, obedience and temptation depend upon one another for significance. As the book mentioned, "*Lucy still beautiful beyond the lot of mortals, was back in England. And Susan (who had always been the beauty of the family) came home from America. The Susan in the picture looked exactly like the real Susan only plainer and with a nasty expression. And Susan was jealous of the dazzling beauty of Lucy, but didn't matter a bit because no one cared anything about Susan now.*" Furthermore, the episode complicates the notion of a stable identity. Lucy is often regarded as the most spiritually mature of the Pevensie children, yet her desire to become someone else exposes uncertainty within her sense of self. The tension between self-acceptance and self-transformation suggests that identity, like faith, is not fixed but continuously negotiated. Lucy's character therefore embodies a process of becoming rather than a state of complete certainty.

Ultimately, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* presents faith as inseparable from human vulnerability. Lucy remains devoted to Aslan and committed to moral principles, yet she is not immune to jealousy, insecurity, or temptation. These moments do not diminish her faith; instead, they reveal its complexity. By exposing the tensions between obedience and desire, the novel challenges simplistic interpretations of Lucy as a perfectly faithful character and demonstrates that faith is shaped

through ongoing struggles with the self. This interpretation is consistent with deconstructive criticism, which rejects fixed and stable meanings in favor of contradictions and internal tensions (Tyson, 2006), while also supporting Hall's (1996) view that identity is continuously constructed and reconstructed through experience rather than existing as a fixed essence.

### 5. Deconstructing Faith: Beyond the Binary Opposition of Belief and Doubt

The preceding discussions demonstrate that Lucy Pevensie's characterization cannot be fully understood through conventional assumptions about faith. Throughout *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lucy is repeatedly associated with belief, spiritual insight, and moral integrity. Consequently, she is often interpreted as a stable representation of unwavering faith. However, a deconstructive reading reveals that this interpretation relies upon a series of binary oppositions that oversimplify the complexity of her character.

One of the most prominent binary oppositions in Lucy's characterization is the distinction between faith and doubt. Traditional readings privilege faith as a positive and desirable quality while treating doubt as a weakness or deficiency. Within this framework, Lucy occupies the position of the faithful believer, whereas disbelief is associated with characters such as Edmund or the skeptical attitudes of her siblings. Yet a closer examination of the narrative reveals that faith and doubt are not entirely separate categories. Likewise, the opposition between certainty and uncertainty collapses when Lucy hesitates to follow Aslan despite recognizing his presence. Similarly, obedience becomes significant only because temptation exists, particularly during her encounter with the Magician's Book in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Rather than functioning as independent opposites, these concepts depend upon one another for meaning. This finding supports Derrida's argument that binary oppositions are inherently hierarchical but ultimately unstable because each privileged term depends upon its marginalized counterpart (Derrida, 1978). From a deconstructive perspective, faith cannot be understood independently of doubt, certainty cannot exist without uncertainty, and obedience derives significance through temptation. This interpretation is consistent with the principles of literary deconstruction, which view binary oppositions as mutually dependent rather than fixed or hierarchical (Derrida, 1978; Tyson, 2006; Setiawan & Agustina, 2024). Consequently, the binary structures traditionally used to define Lucy's faith become increasingly unstable under a deconstructive reading.

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lucy's faith becomes meaningful because it is continually challenged by the disbelief of others. Her confidence in the existence of Narnia acquires significance only within a context of skepticism and rejection. Likewise, in *Prince Caspian*, Lucy's certainty regarding Aslan is repeatedly tested by both the doubts of those around her and her own hesitation. Rather than existing as an independent or absolute quality, faith emerges through its continual encounter with doubt. From a deconstructive perspective, the meaning of faith is therefore inseparable from the presence of its apparent opposite, illustrating Derrida's argument that binary oppositions derive meaning through mutual dependence rather than fixed hierarchy (Derrida, 1978; Tyson, 2006; Setiawan & Agustina, 2024). A similar pattern can be observed in the opposition between certainty and uncertainty. Lucy is often portrayed as possessing knowledge that others lack. Nevertheless, her experiences repeatedly demonstrate that certainty is never absolute. Although she sees Aslan before the others do, she hesitates to act upon her vision when confronted with social pressure. Her uncertainty does not eliminate her certainty; instead, it exposes the fragility of conviction within difficult circumstances. Consequently, certainty and uncertainty function not as opposing forces but as interconnected dimensions of belief.

The binary opposition between obedience and temptation is likewise destabilized in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Lucy's moral choices acquire significance because she experiences temptation. Her obedience is not a natural or automatic condition but the result of an ongoing struggle between conflicting desires. The temptation to become someone else reveals insecurities that coexist with her spiritual devotion. Therefore, obedience cannot be understood without acknowledging the presence of temptation, just as temptation gains meaning through the possibility of resistance. From a deconstructive perspective, obedience and temptation are not mutually exclusive moral categories but interdependent concepts that continually define and reshape one another. This interpretation supports Derrida's view that binary oppositions are never completely stable because each term derives meaning from its relationship with its apparent opposite (Derrida, 1978; Tyson, 2006; Setiawan & Agustina, 2024). Derrida argues that binary oppositions are structured hierarchically, with one term typically privileged over the other (Derrida, 1978). However, deconstruction exposes the dependence of each term upon its supposed opposite. Applying this perspective to Lucy's characterization reveals that faith depends upon doubt, certainty depends upon uncertainty, and obedience depends upon temptation. The concepts that appear secondary or negative are not external threats to faith but essential components in its construction.

This reading challenges the dominant perception of Lucy as an entirely unwavering figure of belief. Rather than representing a fixed ideal of faith, she embodies a dynamic process of negotiation between opposing forces. Her moments of hesitation, insecurity, and vulnerability do not contradict her faith; they help constitute it. The apparent stability of her belief is therefore revealed to be contingent, fragile, and continually subject to revision.

Eventually, Lucy's characterization demonstrates that faith is not a static condition achieved once and maintained forever. Instead, it is a continuous process shaped by uncertainty, temptation, and emotional struggle. Through deconstruction, the boundaries separating faith from doubt become increasingly unstable, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of Lucy's

identity. The significance of her character lies not in the absence of contradiction but in the way contradictions themselves contribute to the formation of belief.

### **5.1 The Collapse of Binary Oppositions**

The preceding analyses demonstrate that Lucy Pevensie's faith cannot be adequately understood through rigid binary structures that position faith over doubt, certainty over uncertainty, or obedience over temptation. Across *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, these oppositions appear to organize Lucy's characterization at the surface level. Conventional interpretations therefore present Lucy as an unwavering symbol of Christian faith whose moral integrity remains stable throughout the trilogy. However, a closer deconstructive reading reveals that these binary oppositions fail to sustain such a fixed interpretation. Instead, each privileged concept derives its meaning through its relationship with the term it seeks to exclude. Lucy's faith becomes meaningful only because it is repeatedly confronted by disbelief; her certainty gains significance only because it is challenged by hesitation and social pressure; and her obedience acquires value only because she experiences temptation. Consequently, the meaning of each privileged term depends upon the continual presence of its apparent opposite rather than existing independently.

This finding reflects Derrida's argument that binary oppositions are not natural or stable structures but hierarchical systems in which one concept is traditionally privileged over another while simultaneously depending upon that subordinated term for its meaning (Derrida, 1978). As Culler (1982) explains, deconstruction exposes the internal tensions and contradictions that destabilize apparently coherent interpretations. Likewise, Tyson (2006) argues that deconstructive criticism demonstrates how literary texts resist singular meanings by revealing multiple and often conflicting interpretations. Recent applications of deconstructive reading have likewise emphasized that binary oppositions should be understood as fluid and mutually constitutive rather than absolute categories (Setiawan & Agustina, 2024). Accordingly, the opposition between faith and doubt, certainty and uncertainty, as well as obedience and temptation should not be interpreted as fixed moral divisions but as dynamic relationships through which Lucy's spiritual journey acquires meaning.

The collapse of these binary oppositions represents the central contribution of this study. Previous interpretations generally emphasize Lucy as the embodiment of unwavering Christian belief, thereby privileging faith while minimizing the significance of contradiction, vulnerability, and uncertainty. In contrast, the present study demonstrates that these supposedly negative elements are not obstacles to faith but fundamental components in its construction. Rather than diminishing Lucy's spiritual character, doubt, hesitation, and temptation continuously reshape and redefine the meaning of her faith. Consequently, Lucy's characterization illustrates that faith is not established through the absence of contradiction but through the continual negotiation of opposing forces, thereby revealing the instability of meaning that lies at the heart of Derrida's deconstructive philosophy (Royle, 2019; Setiawan & Agustina, 2024).

### **5.2 Faith as an Unstable Construction**

The findings of this study indicate that Lucy Pevensie's faith should not be understood as a fixed spiritual condition but as a dynamic and continuously negotiated process. Conventional interpretations frequently portray Lucy as the embodiment of unwavering Christian belief because of her loyalty to Aslan, moral integrity, and spiritual sensitivity. However, the analyses presented in the previous sections demonstrate that such an interpretation overlooks the internal contradictions embedded within her characterization. Across the trilogy, Lucy's faith is repeatedly shaped by disbelief, hesitation, social pressure, temptation, and emotional vulnerability. These experiences do not weaken her belief; rather, they provide the conditions through which faith acquires meaning and develops throughout the narrative.

From a deconstructive perspective, instability should not be interpreted as evidence of weakness or inconsistency. Instead, instability constitutes the very condition through which meaning is produced. Derrida (1978) argues that meaning is never complete or permanently fixed because it is continuously deferred through its relationship with other meanings. Consequently, Lucy's faith cannot be regarded as a finished spiritual achievement but as an evolving process that remains open to contradiction, reinterpretation, and reconstruction. As Culler (1982) explains, deconstruction reveals the tensions concealed beneath apparently coherent structures, while Tyson (2006) argues that literary texts inevitably resist singular interpretations. More recent discussions likewise emphasize that post-structuralist approaches reject essential or fixed meanings and instead understand meaning as contingent, relational, and continually negotiated within discourse and interpretation (Martínez Aguilar, 2025). Likewise, recent literary applications of deconstructive criticism demonstrate that binary oppositions should be understood as fluid rather than absolute, allowing literary characters to be interpreted through multiple and often contradictory perspectives (Tamtama, 2025).

Accordingly, the instability of faith identified in this study should not be interpreted as the failure of Lucy's spirituality but as the defining characteristic of her faith itself. Lucy remains devoted to Aslan throughout the trilogy, yet that devotion is continually transformed through encounters with doubt, uncertainty, temptation, and self-reflection. Rather than eliminating contradiction, faith emerges through the continual negotiation of contradiction. This finding

therefore extends previous interpretations that primarily emphasize Lucy as an unwavering symbol of Christian belief by demonstrating that instability does not diminish faith but instead constitutes the process through which faith is continually reconstructed. In this sense, Lucy's characterization illustrates that belief is not maintained through certainty alone but through an ongoing engagement with vulnerability, ambiguity, and competing meanings, thereby reinforcing the deconstructive proposition that meaning always remains open to reinterpretation.

### 5.3 The Reconstruction of Lucy's Identity

The deconstructive reading presented in this study demonstrates that the instability of faith ultimately leads to the continual reconstruction of Lucy Pevensie's identity. Rather than portraying Lucy as a static symbol of unwavering Christian belief, *The Chronicles of Narnia* presents her identity as a dynamic process shaped through encounters with disbelief, hesitation, temptation, emotional vulnerability, and self-reflection. Across the trilogy, Lucy's understanding of herself is continuously challenged and redefined, indicating that identity develops through negotiation rather than permanence. Her identity is therefore not established through the absence of contradiction but through her responses to the contradictions that accompany her spiritual journey. The findings further indicate that Lucy's identity cannot be separated from the instability of her faith. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, her identity as a truthful witness is constructed through the rejection of her testimony by her siblings. In *Prince Caspian*, her confidence is reconstructed through the tension between personal conviction and collective skepticism. Likewise, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the temptation offered by the Magician's Book exposes insecurities that reshape her understanding of herself. These experiences demonstrate that identity is continuously reconstructed through encounters with competing values, internal conflicts, and changing interpretations rather than through fixed personal characteristics.

This interpretation is consistent with Hall's (1996) argument that identity is not an essential or permanent essence but a continuous process of becoming. Identity is produced through ongoing social, cultural, and personal negotiations rather than existing as a completed state. Recent scholarship likewise emphasizes that identity remains relational, fluid, and context-dependent, continually reconstructed through lived experience and interpretation (Benwell & Stokoe, 2021; Barker, 2022). From this perspective, Lucy's identity should be understood as an evolving construction that develops alongside the transformation of her faith, demonstrating that both identity and belief remain open to reinterpretation rather than fixed within stable meanings.

The reconstruction of Lucy's identity represents one of the principal contributions of this study. Previous studies generally interpret Lucy as the embodiment of unwavering Christian faith, thereby emphasizing consistency, innocence, and moral certainty. In contrast, the present study argues that Lucy's identity is continually reconstructed through contradiction, uncertainty, and vulnerability. These tensions do not weaken her characterization but instead constitute the very process through which her identity acquires meaning. Consequently, Lucy emerges not as a flawless representation of faith but as a dynamic literary character whose identity remains continuously negotiated, reconstructed, and reinterpreted throughout the trilogy.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has examined the instability of faith in Lucy Pevensie's character across *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* through Jacques Derrida's deconstructive approach. While Lucy is commonly interpreted as a symbol of unwavering belief, the analysis reveals that her faith is more complex and dynamic than traditional readings often suggest. Throughout the trilogy, Lucy experiences moments of doubt, hesitation, uncertainty, temptation, and emotional vulnerability that challenge the perception of her as a consistently steadfast character.

The findings demonstrate that the binary oppositions underlying Lucy's characterization—faith and doubt, certainty and uncertainty, as well as obedience and temptation—are not fixed or mutually exclusive categories. Instead, these oppositions are deeply interconnected and dependent upon one another. Lucy's faith gains meaning through encounters with doubt, her certainty is shaped by uncertainty, and her obedience becomes significant only in the presence of temptation. Consequently, the qualities commonly regarded as threats to faith emerge as essential elements in its construction.

From a deconstructive perspective, Lucy's characterization reveals that faith should not be understood as a stable and permanent condition. Rather, it is a continually negotiated process shaped by internal conflicts, social pressures, and personal struggles. Her moments of weakness do not diminish her faith but instead expose the complexity of belief as a lived experience.

Through this reading, Lucy emerges not as a flawless embodiment of spiritual certainty but as a multifaceted character whose faith is formed through contradiction and instability.

In the final analysis, this study contributes to Narnian scholarship by offering an alternative interpretation of Lucy Pevensie beyond the dominant image of unwavering faith. By demonstrating how deconstruction uncovers tensions and ambiguities within her characterization, the research highlights the multiplicity of meanings embedded in literary texts and encourages a more nuanced understanding of faith, identity, and character development in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

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