

THE TRANSITION TO SIBLINGHOOD: PSYCHO-SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES ON TOM MCGRATH'S *THE BOSS BABY*

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ABSTRACT

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Sibling relationships play a crucial role in children's initiation into social life as well as their individualization. It is impossible to avoid sibling conflicts or rivalries in the transition to siblinghood. Over the course of the transition, children go through a critical reassessment of their interactions with parents, their siblings, and the outside world, learning how to resolve conflicts in a manner that is consistent with feelings of psychological security. However, excessive conflict or negativity in sibling relationships is likely to lead to poor psychological adjustment in adulthood, whereas supportive sibling relationships are likely to lead to less anxiety and greater maturity. Using these issues as an investigative lens, the study analyzed the 2017 computer-animated film *The Boss Baby* as a case study in the transition to siblinghood. More specifically, the paper examined how the firstborn child Tim Templeton successfully negotiates the conflict and rivalry caused by being and having a sibling and, in the end, enjoys a warm, supportive sibling relationship with his newborn brother, Boss Baby. The study used the qualitative method and latent-content analysis as the research techniques to comprehensively examine the film and the script of *The Boss Baby* in order to make replicable and valid inferences from texts to realize how Tim goes through the transition of siblinghood. The study suggests the inevitability of sibling conflicts or rivalries; however, if managed appropriately, these conflicts may actually help facilitate a more positive interaction between siblings and create a healthier family life. The study may help readers, parents, or would-be parents realize how to help their children successfully manage their sibling rivalries in order to undergo the arduous transition to siblinghood, which is crucial for children to build positive and constructive social relationships later on in adulthood.

Keywords: Sibling conflict; sibling relationship; sibling rivalry; transition to siblinghood

1. INTRODUCTION

It is not an exaggeration to say that dealing with their firstborn baby is difficult for most parents. When they have their second child, many parents think that everything is going to be easier this time around. However, the arrival of a second child also presents parents with a challenging task. That task is telling the firstborn child, in language they can understand, that soon there will be a new member of the family. Moreover,

once the new child does arrive, the interactions between the siblings may become problematic, creating conflicts or rivalries (White, 2001; Dunn, 2002).

Research has shown that accepting the newborn sibling is an essential developmental process for most children, especially the firstborn (McGuire et al., 2000; Samalin and Whitney, 2000). The transition to siblinghood is a huge change for everyone involved, parents included, and may bring stress to children not used to having a brother or sister in the family (Dunn, 1995). The transition, however, may bring not only stress but also negative or destructive behaviors, or forms of “acting-out.”

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sibling relationships

Sibling relationships have been described as the most longstanding and important relationships over the life span (Voorpostel et al., 2007; Volling et al., 2010). If managed well, sibling relationships can serve as a scaffold affording feelings of support, unity, and fellowship; but if they are not managed well, these relationships may result in negative consequences for the children involved, including not just sibling conflicts or sibling rivalries but also a lack of resilience to conflicts more generally (Connidis, 2007).

A healthy or unhealthy sibling relationship, in short, is likely to have an impact on children over their entire life span (Connidis, 2007; Voorpostel et al., 2007). Stocker et al. (1997) research shows that there is a positive correlation between the number of children and the seriousness of sibling rivalries. Conversely, there is a negative correlation between the number of children and the warmth or attention they get from parents. Due to a larger family group having to share limited love and care, a new brother or sister has the potential to cause antagonistic sibling relationships both in childhood and also later in life (Kennedy and Kramer, 2008).

Research has shown that firstborn children are often reluctant to accept newborn siblings (Freud, 1946; Dunn, 2002). Freud (1953) took particular interest in observing the behaviors of two- and three-year-old children vis-à-vis their younger siblings. Freud mentions the instance of an only child who was told that a stork had brought a new baby to the family. Upon the new arrival of the baby, the formerly only child looked at the infant uneasily and commanded the stork to take the baby away. In the transition to siblinghood, the firstborn child often experiences painful emotions (Freud, 1946; Adler, 1957). Not only does the firstborn child need to share the attention of his/her parents with a newborn baby, but he or she may also fear that the new arrival will “use up” all the parents’ love. This sort of fear or anxiety gives rise, in turn, to sibling rivalry, which involves complicated feelings of envy, jealousy, comparison, and competitiveness between siblings in a family (Havnes, 2010; Volling et al., 2010). Tyson’s (2006) psychoanalytic approach to siblinghood suggests that the human personality and psyche derive from an unconscious mind that involves, at its core, sibling rivalries.

2.2 Transition to siblinghood

The transition to siblinghood constitutes one of the most dramatic transformations in one’s lifetime, on a par with other major life events that involve drastic changes in one’s social network (Cowan, 1991). Hence, how to manage such sibling conflicts or rivalries is, to be sure, an important concern for parents (Perozynski and Kramer, 1999). Apart from issues related to parenting, however, another important issue is how to help the firstborn child make a successful transition to siblinghood (Cicirelli, 1995; Brody et al., 1992; Bedford and Volling, 2004).

The transition is a significant life change for the firstborn insofar as the arrival of the new sibling changes how the firstborn child views him- or herself and his or her connections with others. Indeed, the transition not only carries psychological significance, but can lead to a momentous reconstruction of the child’s whole approach to social interactions. A key issue here is that of parent-child attachments, one of the crucial conditions for children being able to grow up feeling safe, secure, and healthy. Parent-child attachments shape the development of children’s self-image and their understanding of how they relate to others (Rutter, 1996). Those who grow up without any stable, secure parent-child attachment may suffer from regressive behaviors and other negative socio-psychological consequences (Cowan, 1991).

Therefore, in order to help readers realize how to manage sibling conflicts or rivalries and to help the firstborn child successfully go through the siblinghood transition, the study used the computer-animated film *The Boss Baby* (McGrath, 2017) as a case study in the transition to siblinghood—a term that refers to the state of being aware both that one is a sibling to another (or others) and also that one *has* one or more siblings. More specifically, the paper examined how the firstborn child Tim Templeton successfully negotiates the conflict and rivalry caused by being and having a sibling and, in the end, enjoys a warm, supportive sibling relationship with his newborn brother, Boss Baby.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate how Tim Templeton, the firstborn child, successfully goes through the transition of siblinghood, the study used the qualitative method and latent-content analysis (Babbie, 1995) as the research techniques to comprehensively examine the film and the script of *The Boss Baby* (McGrath, 2017; McCullers, 2017) in order to make replicable and valid inferences from texts to realize how Tim goes through the transition of siblinghood. Before analyzing the script, the researcher first checked whether there was any variation between the film version and the script version in order to keep going on the further latent-content analysis. By examining the hidden or underlying meaning in the film version and the script version, the study attempted to demonstrate how a seven-year-old boy, as remembered by an older, adult Tim, goes through his transition to siblinghood, rethinking his place and his connections with parents, his younger brother Boss Baby, and further the outside world.

4. FILM ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM: USING PSYCHO-SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

4.1 Get prepared for the newborn

It is typical for the firstborn or eldest child to react with annoyance, anger, or anxiety when the prospect of having a new sibling materializes (Dunn, 1995). These children need emotional support from parents or from someone else in order to negotiate such reactions (Davis and Keyser, 1997). Samalin (1996) recommends that parents introduce to the firstborn some background knowledge about where babies come from, so that he or she will be interested in the new sibling and be motivated to learn more about how to care for the baby. For instance, parents may want to read to their firstborn children's books about the process of welcoming a new baby to the family (Samalin, 1996).

As in *The Boss Baby*, Tim's memories return him to the time when his parents, Ted and Janice, bring home Tim's newborn sibling, a brother named Boss Baby. Tim recalls that when he was the only child in the family, he received not only unconditional love but also seemingly limitless attention from his parents. As Tim says, "even though my parents worked really hard...they still made just enough time for me. Three stories, five hugs, and my special song" (00:03:05-00:03:14). The full love and attention that he continually receives from his parents make Tim feel that he is the happiest child in the world.

However, his happy family life is suddenly disrupted when a newborn sibling arrives at his house, dressed in a formal business suit and acting like the boss of both Tim and his parents. The arrival of a newborn may be a happy matter for the Templetons but not for Tim, a seven-year-old firstborn boy. Being a single sibling, the arrival of a newborn sibling would definitely cause Tim frustration and depression because he has been used to getting all the attention of his parents. Tim quickly realizes that he is not the center of his parents' universe anymore. He starts to feel that the newborn sibling will steal everything he has been used to having all to himself. His strong sense of envy—even hatred—toward his new brother makes Tim build a huge wall between himself and Boss Baby. For Tim, the arrival of the newborn baby is "a hostile alien invasion" (00:09:28-00:09:30).

In order to safeguard the firstborn child's feelings, and protect him or her against distress of this sort, parents have to undertake the difficult task of explaining to their firstborn child, in language the child can understand, that a new baby will be coming to the family. In staging a conversation of this sort between father and firstborn son, *The Boss Baby* dramatizes this process of explanation in comedic terms:

Ted : Hey, Tim. How would you like to have a baby brother?
Tim : No, thanks. I'm enough. Life was good. Life was perfect.

(00:03:26-00:03:42)

It takes time for Tim as well as his parents to get accustomed to the idea of a new addition to the family. In fact, Janice has been pregnant for a good while before Ted asks Tim whether he would like to have a little brother. Tim is not aware of this fact; but when the question is put to him, Tim intuitively resists the idea of having a baby brother because he does not know what the feeling of having a younger sibling will be like. Nor does he know where this baby, or any baby, comes from. This moment in the film underscores the importance of parents' efforts to redress children's potentially negative response to the birth of a new brother or sister, by using readily understood language to let them know that there is going to be a new member of the family, and conveying this information in as constructive and optimistic a way as possible (Leach, 1997).

4.2 Power paradox in siblings

Being the only child, seven-year-old Tim has been satisfied with the monopoly of parents' affection and care until the newborn but bosslike baby, wearing a business suit and with a briefcase in hand, comes into the

family and completely takes over their home, setting “up his office, right smack dab in the middle of the house” (McCullers, 2017, p. 4). Doubtlessly, the newborn is the boss, hence being called Boss Baby: who right “from the start, he was yelling at people...ordering everyone around.” Moreover, “If things weren’t done to his immediate satisfaction...he had a fit” (McCullers, 2017, p. 4).

The appearance of the small baby let Tim come to the reality that his parents’ affection is not any longer his alone. Given that in the sibling relationship firstborns typically take a more aggressive role to dominate younger siblings, whereas younger siblings are more sociable and compromising in order to obtain parental resources (Buhrmester and Furman, 1990; Howe et al. 2002; Sulloway, 1996). However, there seem to be a power paradox in the power dynamic between the two siblings: Tim and Boss Baby. Interestingly, when a newborn comes to a new family, though weaker and smaller, the baby takes over all the attention from parents. Nevertheless, those older children, who are bigger and stronger, immediately become insignificant in the family. Boss Baby, once coming to the family, in business attire and in an adult voice, displays the image of cunning adults and acts out aggressively as a demanding boss to grab all his parents’ attention. Moreover, being the center of attention, Boss Baby, the weakest and youngest, controls his parents and hence rules the house, having “everyone wrapped around his chubby little finger. Everyone except for me [Tim]” (McCullers, 2017, p. 4).

Supposedly that Tim, the firstborn, should be more dominant in the sibling relationship; however, once his parents return home with the baby in hand, Tim is getting less attention from parents. Obviously, from the moment the baby arrives, the baby is the boss, making parents round the clock, with no time taking a rest. The primacy of the elder has been transferred to the younger. Moreover, in the sibling war, the baby—the weaker and the smaller—threatens Tim to behave well in order not be “fired” by his parents, saying that “Everyone wants the hot new thing” (McCullers, 2017, p. 8).

4.3 Tim’s transition to siblinghood

The Boss Baby dramatizes some of these issues by portraying Tim as losing the energy and feeling of purpose required to wake up and face the day after the arrival of the new baby. As Tim puts it in his conversation with his talking wizard clock, Wizzie, “What’s the use?” (00:17:20-00:17:22). Moreover, Tim feels that his father and mother are completely fooled by the newborn baby, in a way that threatens the caring environment in which he has been raised up to this point. In recounting his very earliest experiences as a child, Tim, conveys what made his home life seem so perfect prior to the arrival of his brother:

It was just the three of us. The Templetons. And three is the perfect number. Interesting fact... did you know that the triangle is the strongest shape found in nature? I was the luckiest kid ever.

(00:02:27-00:02:45)

Suddenly, however, things change. Tim’s life becomes totally different, starting from the day his baby brother, or Boss Baby, arrives home. As a matter of fact, Tim has by this point already undergone an arduous period in the transition to siblinghood, struggling to acclimate himself to the new role he will be taking up in the Templeton family. Despite his efforts, Tim feels a strong sense of resistance to Boss Baby, as the baby’s arrival upsets Tim’s former pace of life. Previously, the firstborn Tim had all the parents’ attention. However, after the arrival of a sibling Boss Baby, the firstborn child has to share the parents’ love with the newborn and stands to lose a substantial percentage of the parents’ attention. Therefore, while the parents are busy welcoming their newborn baby, Tim, feeling neglected, may experience emotional distress. The situation is not helped by his parents assuring him that the more he gets acquainted with the newborn, the more love he will feel for his sibling brother.

Janice : All babies are different, Tim.

Ted : And each one is special.

Tim : He’s taking over the whole house!

Janice : Are you taking over the house? Yes, you are. Yes, you are.

Ted : Trust me, one day you’re gonna get to know this little guy...and you are gonna love him with all of your heart. Just like we do.

Tim : All of your heart? Never.

(00:11:35-00:12:01)

Tim’s “never” signals his non-acceptance of his sibling, as well as his strong disagreement with his parents, in his transition to siblinghood and its repercussions. However, in order to grow up, Tim has to go through the transition to siblinghood during which he can reconstructs his sense of self, in part by learning how to negotiate conflicts with his younger brother, Boss Baby, in a manner that is consistent with his feelings in order to reach psychological security.

4.4 Sibling rivalry and competition for affection

With limited love and care from parents, children have to fight against each other in order to obtain parents' attention and affection, hence causing a hostile sibling relationship with each other in early childhood and, if not managed well, later in life (Kennedy and Kramer, 2008). That is why Boss Baby tells Tim that his parents can never love him as much as before.

Boss Baby : Mom and Dad don't even know you.
Tim : They love me!
Boss Baby : Oh, yeah? Do the math, kid. There's only so much love to go around. It's like these beads. You used to have all your parents' love. All their time. All their attention. You had all the beads. But then I came along. Babies take up a lot of time. They need a lot of attention. They get all the love.
Tim : We could share.
Boss Baby : You obviously didn't go to business school. Look, Templeton, the numbers just don't add up. There's not enough love for the two of us. Not enough beads to go around. And then, all of a sudden, there's no place for Tim. Tim doesn't fit anymore. Oh, no! What about Tim? So keep quiet. Stay out of my way. Or there's gonna be cutbacks.
Tim : You can't be fired from your own family. Can you?

(00:15:38-00:16:47)

Tim reveals that he cannot accept the idea that the Boss Baby is gradually taking away his privilege of being loved by his parents. Tim believes his parents love him, and him alone, and that the love they shower on him will not be shared with others. Thus, after Boss Baby's arrival, when Ted and Janice become so busy with caring for the new baby that they are unable to tell Tim his usual bedtime stories, Tim feels forced to beg for his parents' love and attention.

Hello! It's time for my three stories, five hugs, and special song! How about one story...three hugs, and my special song? Just my special song? What happened to bedtime?

(00:12:18-00:12:51)

Ted and Janice's failure to register Tim's fear about losing his parents' affection and attention further intensifies the sibling conflict or rivalry between Tim and Boss Baby, confirming Neubauer's (1983) finding that when an only child has to give up a privileged position vis-à-vis his or her parents, sibling rivalry can be the result. The once-only child may unconsciously begin competing with the newborn, or may even wish that the baby would just vanish. Along these lines, Tim says to Boss Baby, "You're just trying to steal them from me. You stole everything! You're the one who should be in jail!" (00:29:11-00:29:18).

Sibling rivalry is an intense motivation to fight for parental love (Tyson, 2006). Rivalry of this kind seems to drive Boss Baby when he tries to persuade Tim that he, as the new baby, is the one who qualifies for all Janice's and Ted's attention and affection. From Boss Baby's perspective, it is high time for Tim to make concessions and learn to share their parents' love with his baby brother. The two siblings are thus deadlocked, owing to their different positions within the family—and to what the film portrays as competition for a limited resource, namely, parental love.

Whereas the primary cause of sibling rivalries seems to derive from such competition for parental attention and affection, another contributing cause may be the compulsory sharing of personal possessions (McGuire et al., 2000; Moser et al., 2005). When Ted and Janice sing the "Blackbird" song to Boss Boy at bedtime, Tim angrily responds, "Hey, that's my song" (00:28:00-00:28:01). Having to share a song that was once his and his alone leads Tim to experience feelings of resentment, jealousy, and envy for Boss Baby. Children receiving more love and attention from parents will be the target of intense feelings of jealousy from other siblings. In turn, there is evidence that children holding such feelings of resentment and hostility toward their siblings show a stronger tendency to engage in socially and personally destructive behaviors (Dunn, 2002). Soon there is discord between Tim and his young brother Boss Baby. With hostility to another sibling, both Tim and Boss Baby also use verbal or even physical means to attack each other. This offense dramatizes the findings of Updegraff et al. (2005), who suggest that relational offenses or disputes among siblings correlate positively with stronger negative emotions and less affective support in the relationship. Feeling neglected by the parents, Tim uses language as an offensive weapon with which to attack the baby. Tim initiates a verbal battle with Boss Baby:

Tim : You don't know anything about hugs, or bedtime stories, or special songs!
Boss Baby : Oh, please! Stop acting like a baby.
Tim : You're a baby!
Boss Baby : You take that back.
Tim : My life was perfect until you showed up!
Boss Baby : Believe me, kid, the feeling is mutual. I wish I'd never met you!
Tim : I wish you'd never been born!

(01:01:38-01:01:55)

If, moreover, siblings use backhanded or manipulative means to engage in such conflict, their behavior is likely to carry negative impacts when it comes to individual development, adaptation, and adjustment (Soli et al., 2009). Such conflict or negativity within the sibling relationship is likely to lead to poor psychological adjustment in adulthood, whereas supportive sibling relationships are, by contrast, likely to lead to less anxiety and greater maturity (Stocker et al., 1997). These developmental patterns underscore the importance of overcoming sibling conflicts and rivalries in order to make a successful transition to siblinghood—and thereby create a template for constructive social relationships later on in adulthood.

4.5 Parents' response to sibling rivalry

For most siblings, some degree of conflict and rivalry is an unavoidable part of growing up together. A key aspect of transition to siblinghood, however, is the degree to which parents help children cope with these sibling conflicts (Voorpostel and Blieszner, 2008).

Obviously, parents play a crucial role in bringing about sibling relationships in the first place. Moreover, how parents resolve a sibling conflict will have either a positive or a negative impact on a child's behavior with respect to his or her sibling(s). When Ted and Janice ask Tim whether he would like to have a baby sibling, his answer is negative. In such situations, where the parents become aware that their firstborn child is not ready to accept a new sibling, they should try to keep negotiating with the child, before the baby's arrival, to help him or her adjust to the new family dynamic (Legg et al., 1974). Moreover, after the birth of the newborn, even though they are busy with taking care of the baby, parents should take time to reassure elder children about their security within the family (Voorpostel and Blieszner, 2008). Otherwise, children may engage in counter-productive attention-getting behaviors, such as fighting with their siblings.

If children do engage in fighting, to get their parents' attention, the parents should not interfere in the fights, letting siblings settle conflicts on their own. If a parent intervenes in favor of one child over another, the other child may feel that he/she has less value within the family, thereby increasing resentment and the probability of acts of revenge (Levi et al., 1977). Sometimes, however, parents' timely intervention may be necessary to prevent a tragedy. When Boss Baby threatens Tim, saying that he is going to tear up Tim's favorite stuffed animal, Lam-Lam, Tim is so irritated that he rolls Boss Baby and almost throws the baby out of the window. The parents come in just in the nick of time, making known their displeasure with Tim:

Ted : *What are you doing?*
 Tim : *Nothing. My proof!*
 Janice : *Tim! Explain yourself!*
 Ted : *Yes, explain yourself.*
 Tim : *It wasn't me! It was the baby's fault.*
 Ted : *The baby's fault?*
 Tim : *It's true! He can talk. They all can talk. They were having a meeting. There's something about puppies. It's one big baby con-spy-racy!*
 Janice : *Timothy Leslie Templeton!*
 Ted : *We are very disappointed in you.*
 Janice : *No, we're mad at you!*
 Ted : *Exactly, we're mad at you.*
 Tim : *Mad?*
 Ted : *You need a time-out!*
 Janice : *You're grounded!*
 Ted : *Yes, grounded! For two...*
 Janice : *Three!*
 Ted : *Three days?*
 Janice : *Weeks!*
 Ted : *Weeks! Three weeks!*
 Janice : *For three... evers!*
 Ted : *Grounded?*
 Janice : *You're gonna stay in this house with your baby brother...until you learn to get along.*
 (00:26:50-00:27:22)

Without listening to Tim's explanation, the parents punish Tim by grounding him for three weeks—or until he can learn to get along with his baby brother. This punishment only intensifies Tim's negative emotions toward his new brother, furthering Tim's sense of sibling conflict and rivalry. After being punished, Tim projects his anger onto his baby sibling. Moreover, as the older, narrating Tim vividly recalls while returning to this incident so many years later, he feels heartbroken as well as isolated. As the older Tim puts it, "It was my first time behind bars. The big house. The lock-up. Grounded for life. The minutes turned into hours, the hours into days. Every man has his breaking point. This was mine" (00:27:36-00:27:55).

Janice and Ted's timely intervention, in this instance, prevents a tragic outcome: namely, Tim throwing his baby brother out of the window. Sometimes, however, parents' interference may deny children the opportunity to negotiate with each other and figure out a way to work through their own conflicts, thereby achieving a healthier siblinghood. In order to help children work out sibling conflicts, parents, instead of always trying to control this process, should sometimes let the siblings solve the problems themselves. The more parents get involved in sibling disputes, the less possible it becomes for their children to solve their problems on their own (Brody and Stoneman, 1987). Once parents get involved, they may make sibling conflicts even worse, since the motivation for such disputes is mainly fighting for parents' attention. Parental involvement is thus likely to perpetuate the conflicts. By the same token, if parents try to take sides, one of the siblings will perceive himself or herself as disadvantaged and will likely try to take revenge on the other (Levi et al., 1977).

4.6 Transition from sibling rivalry to sibling support: a critical period for firstborn children and their parents

It should be emphasized here that, in the transition to siblinghood, children will normally experience sibling conflicts and rivalries. The jealous and antagonistic behaviors mainly come from competition over parents' or caregivers' attention. The point is that children need techniques to cope with such discord, in order to build up a secure, constructive sense of self. If the conflict cannot be solved properly, siblings may experience devastating breakdowns in their sibling relationships—with negative socio-psychological consequences in the future (Cicirelli, 1995). In some sibling relationships conflicts and supportive affiliations may both be at work (Dunn, 2002). In such complex scenarios, where children are torn between simultaneous feelings of rivalry and support, the transition to siblinghood, so critical for socio-psychological adaptation, becomes all the more challenging (Bandura, 1977).

Though the children may behave well in front of their parents, there may be discord between them. In order to gain parents' attention and affection, Tim and Boss Baby pretend loving and getting along well with each other. Interestingly, while Tim put a sailor shirt on Boss Baby, Janice, the mother, gets another sailor shirt for Tim to let them look like good brothers. While dressed in the sailor shirts, Ted, the father, takes photos of them. In order to please the parents, Tim commands Boss Baby to keep smiling for the camera so as to show, ironically, they are good brothers. While behaving well in front of their parents in order to look for the approval and attention from his parents, children may fight against each other to gain parents' attention and affection.

However, while parents hold interfering with children's fights, children may manage to work out their own problems themselves, acquiring conflict resolution skills. *The Boss Baby* dramatizes a complex scenario of this sort. Thus, although there is considerable conflict between Tim and Boss Baby, when Tim reveals that he is scared about being on a plane that is about to take off, and notes that "My parents always hold my hand" (01:55:13-01:05:27) in such circumstances, Boss Baby tries to empathize with Tim's nervousness. He puts his own hand in Tim's to calm his elder brother's anxiety, thereby demonstrating his support. Boss Baby's willingness to show empathy for his brother weakens the intense sibling conflict, introducing warmth and support into a sibling relationship that has been marked by sibling conflicts. Through empathy, children can regulate their emotions in order to share concern and provide support to others (Blair et al., 2004; Lam et al., 2012). In turn, they can set aside negative experiences and work together in the transition required to bring about a positive sibling relationship (Alkema, 2013).

While there is a war between siblings, there is a war between babies and puppies. Though Tim and Boss Baby are against each other because of the competition over parent's attention, most important of all, they have a common enemy in front of them: puppies. Boss Baby says that:

But I'll tell you who is. Behold our mortal enemy. Puppies! No! That's exactly the problem. Puppies? What's the deal with puppies? Throughout history...people have loved babies more than anything in the world. We've always been a must-have item...number one on every wish list. Puppies were merely accessories. But all that changed when the puppies began coming out...with new designer models. Each one more adorable than the last.

(McCullers, 2017, p. 10)

Hence, in order not to let puppies take away humans' or parents' attention from babies, Tim and Boss Baby have to collaborate to fight against puppies, which are receiving more love and affection than do babies. Despite their competition to win parents' attention and affection, Tim and Boss Baby link together to fight against puppies. Hence, they are forced to be together and to collaborate with each other. While trying to do something to fight against their common enemy, puppies, at this point there naturally comes to a sibling support and intimacy between them.

With the acquisition of conflict resolution skills, Tim and Boss Baby can use their way to reach a positive sibling relationship in terms of intimacy and support. Also, they link together to fight against their common enemy. Moreover, with love toward their parents, they can further collaborate with each other, using their wits to help parents out of danger. After Tim and Boss Baby put aside their differences and fight side by side to save their trapped parents, Janice says:

Janice : Tim! Are you okay?
Tim : I'm fine. We're fine.
Janice : You saved us. You're our hero. And a great big brother. We love you both so much.
Tim : Both of us?
Janice : With all our heart.
Ted : Let's go home.

(01:16:41-01:17:03)

Through negotiation and encouragement, parents can help children learn how to maintain positive sibling relationships. Moreover, children can get over sibling rivalries and bring mutual support to each other, as when, late in McGrath's film, Tim sends this memo to Boss Baby:

"Even though I never went to business school...I did learn to share in kindergarten. And if there isn't enough love for the two of us... then I wanna give you all of mine."

(01:23:43-01:24:03)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The transition to siblinghood is a period during which children rethink themselves, their place in the world, and their connections with others. Over the course of the transition, children go through a critical reassessment of their interactions with parents, their siblings, and the outside world, learning how to resolve conflicts in a manner that is consistent with feelings of psychological security. In other words, the transition to siblinghood is a critical phase in shaping children's development of a sense of self as well as their relationships with others. As shown in *The Boss Baby*, furthermore, parents and children need to help each other overcome the obstacles to personal growth and familial harmony during this transition period. Thus, though initially frustrated and depressed by the arrival of his new baby brother, with the help of his parents, Tim Templeton makes a successful transition to siblinghood and in the end enjoys a warm and supportive sibling relationship with his newborn sibling.

By placing *The Boss Baby* (2017) into dialogue with research on sibling relationships, this study has shown how the film dramatizes key issues bound up with the transition to siblinghood. Moreover, the study illustrates how sibling relationships play a crucial role in children's initiation into social life as well as their individualization. The study suggests the inevitability of sibling conflicts or rivalries. As the film also suggests, however, if managed appropriately, these conflicts may actually help facilitate a more positive interaction between siblings and create a healthier family life. The study may help readers, parents, or would-be parents realize how to help their children successfully manage their sibling rivalries in order to undergo the arduous transition to siblinghood, which is crucial for children to build positive and constructive social relationships later on in adulthood.

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