

THE INHERITANCE OF MODERNISM: CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S  
LITERATURE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHRONOTOPES IN THE  
UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

By

Joseph Michael Sommers

Ph.D., University of Kansas, 2007

Submitted to the graduate degree program in English and the  
Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Kansas  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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Giselle Anatol, Chair

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Michael Cadden

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Frank Farmer

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Kathryn Conrad

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Karen Jorgensen

Date Defended \_\_\_\_\_

The Dissertation Committee for Joseph Michael Sommers certifies  
that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

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Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Giselle Anatol

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Cadden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Farmer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathryn Conrad

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Jorgensen

Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_

## ABSTRACT

My project conducts a historical study of the narratology of children's and adolescent literature in post-World War II United States and Great Britain. More specifically, I demonstrate the rapid flourishing of the field's prose as arising directly out of those children's writers' reconsideration of nineteenth-century European folklore during the socio-political climate of World Wars period (roughly 1900-1950). I argue that the authors of twentieth-century children's literature writing post-World War II internalized the socio-cultural mores of the first half of the twentieth-century, and, as resultant to growing up during this period, they reinterpret the purpose and architecture of the children's literature that they create. Prior to the World Wars, folk traditions emphasizing the preservation of static nationalism dominated the landscape of what would then have been called children's literature. These fairy tales and folklore emphasized straightforward didacticism keyed to the oversimplified binaries writers believed a child would best comprehend. After the World Wars, the writers of children's literature began re-examining the former static constructions of nation and community with greater chrono-spatial, or as Mikhail Bakhtin termed it, chronotopal, complexity germane to their place in history and the audience they addressed.

Therein, I argue that the first half of the twentieth-century marks an intersection, really more a conflation, of what Bakhtinian scholars refer to as the Quest/ Romance chronotopes and the *bildungsroman/ entwicklungsroman* into a single chronotope whereupon the linearity of the one form and circularity of the other are reconciled through the emergence of the Fantasy genre from what was earlier only known as the novelized fairy tale (and later still, the rise of the genre of Young Adult fiction).

Chapters will deal specifically with the works of The Grimm Brothers, L. Frank Baum, C. S. Lewis and Judy Blume. Each will be shown to make advances upon the complexity of the children's novel as the twentieth-century progresses until the novel reaches a point that transcends what a children's novel could hope to accomplish with its audience, and we enter a new chronotope designed specifically for children in their adolescent years.

**The Inheritance of Modernism: Contemporary Children's Literature and the  
Construction of New Chronotopes in the United States and Great Britain**

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## 1.) Introductions, Laying Foundations and Establishing a Trajectory

In their 1998 volume, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture*, John Stephens and Robyn McCallum undertake the heavy lifting involved in placing traditionally-held children's narratives<sup>1</sup> alongside their adult antecedents and precursors. They maintain that much of what we in the twenty-first century (then, the late twentieth-century) have known as "children's literature" comes *vis a vis* a retelling of "traditional, or already known, [adult] stories" such as the European fairy tale or the folktale of the nineteenth-century (ix). Their study more specifically focuses on the question of authority and authoricity<sup>2</sup> of multiple versions of the same "pre-text," or master narrative (4). They find that such variations on the original pre-text occur often and replete with conflicting ideologies in far different genres than the original pre-text. Stephens and McCallum pose a question about such authoricity, asking "in what sense can two narratives be the same if they are so organized that there are differences in the manner of telling, or in the point of view adopted [...] or in the potential moral impact on audiences?" (ix). Their conclusion:

Any particular retelling may purport to transmit elements of a culture's formative traditions and even its sustaining beliefs and assumptions, but what it always

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<sup>1</sup> That is to say, narratives written with the idea of children being the primary audience.

<sup>2</sup> This is a difficult term to use within the context of my study as it has been more often used in relation to late-twentieth and early twenty-first century internet narrative. The underlying concept to be derived here is one of "multiple authorship" in reference to singular metanarratives composed at different, but relatively close times, which find themselves altered or unique for no stated reason. I use the term here as it allows for consideration of additive and subtractive practices accounted for by otherwise veiled contributors who embellish or, in Stephens and McCallum's term, "retell" a narrative for a variety of unannounced reasons. For a good discussion on the topic within its more familiar context of hypertext narrative, please consult Elisabeth Davenport and Blaise Cronin's "Who Dunit? Metatags and Hyperauthorship." *Jasist* 52 (2001): 770-773.

discloses is some aspect of the attitudes and ideologies pertaining at the cultural moment in which that retelling is produced. (ix)

Essentially, they assert what might seem obvious in any other light: when a larger, cultural meta-narrative—that is to say, a national or “global”<sup>3</sup> cultural narrative schema that “orders and explains knowledge and experience” through the eyes of an author seeking to interpret these truths in attempts at preservation (6)—becomes appropriated into a written adult narrative (for our purposes, a fairy or folk tale), it becomes a transmission of not only the author’s personal attempts at socio-historical preservation but one also laced and imbricated with the particular ideological predilections of the composing author. With respect to children’s and adolescent literature, Stephens and McCallum argue that what the author of this kind of narrative composes is what Bakhtinian scholars might refer to as a monological carrier, or a coding of the accepted and tolerated discourses of a culture (here, the culture of the nation as retold by an author<sup>4</sup>) in a “*semiotic totalitarianism*” of a particular time and place (Morson and Emerson 28). Over the course of the telling and retelling of these monologic narratives—monologic in the sense that they are preservational and not intended to be open to interpretation—they began to be appropriated by other authors and turned into the stories that we, today, recognize as the first narratives written specifically for children as audience.

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<sup>3</sup> Or for my purposes national and, later, international – that is to suggest transmission between certain nations or national identities. In this project, we will illustrate the move from nineteenth-century continental Europe to Great Britain and the United States.

<sup>4</sup> Morson and Emerson explain culture in this sense as “any [system of] laws of history or [...] any underlying order that could explain away the disorder of everyday life” (28).

This formulation presents an interesting and somewhat disconcerting paradox: If these fairy and folk tales are, as Stephens and McCallum suggest, preservational, and therefore monological and totalitarian,<sup>5</sup> how could they, then, ever be appropriated into any other form without some substantial semiotic and cultural loss? Appropriation implies evolution, and evolution signifies a radical change, or a mutation, all of which runs counter-intuitive to a preservational, monological discourse seeking to control the design. Stephens and McCallum suspect children's literature is evolutionary by design: it is a genre particularly designed for the retelling of adult stories to a youth culture coming into adolescence and then adulthood because it offers possibilities for conveying manifold incidents meant to "initiate children into aspects of a[n adult or mature] social heritage" (4). In other words, the story is told and retold based upon age-appropriate levels of comprehension and complexity. Mikhail Bakhtin's discussion of dialogue and chronotope might help afford us some answer. Folklore and fairy tales, by Bakhtin's admittedly complicated definition, is a matter of "national and local" discourse ("*Bildungsroman*," 52). Myth, lyric and the epic all occupy a verbal form, which, by their heritage and nature, preserves national time and halts dialogue by instilling in a reader some sense of the past in the present moment of reading (Morson and Emerson

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<sup>5</sup> Stephens and McCallum are not alone in this perspective. Maria Nikolajeva makes the case that folktales, when prepared for an audience of children, are "adapted to prevailing [national] moral and pedagogical views" with the distinction that current incarnations of folk tales travel "non-adapted" from "sender to addressee" (*CLCA*, 14-15). More recently Jack Zipes has echoed this claim; in his 2006 volume *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, he takes up Marie-Louise Teneze's famous question, "Isn't the folk tale a response to the oppressive interrogation of reality?" by suggesting that, yes, "the tendency is to homogenize creative efforts" in order to render them "universal, ageless, and eternal" (5). He goes on further to explicitly claim that the tales assert a dominance intended to only "address the concerns of the educated and ruling classes of late and feudal and early capitalist societies" (6).

452). In this act of preservation, the folk and fairy tale seem to operate much as Bakhtin constructs the epic, where the world presented is one of a “national heroic past” that is “absolute” and part of a “national tradition” (“Epic and the Novel,” 13). And yet, in his later “*Bildungsroman*” essay, Bakhtin asserts:

The folksong, the folktale [...] and the saga were above all a new and powerful means of humanizing and intensifying one’s native space.

With folklore there burst into literature a new, powerful and extremely productive wave of *national-historical time* that exerted an immense [...] and productive influence on literature. (52)

He goes on to state that “folklore is in general saturated with time [...] Time in folklore, the fullness of time in it, the folkloric *future* [...] all these are very important and fundamental problems” (52, emphasis mine). This idea would appear to be contradictory; how can something preserve a national past and yet allow for future, even concurrent, embellishment that may detract from the nationally-accepted discourses?<sup>6</sup> To be more concrete, how can folklore preserve national traditions and yet invoke a sense of looking forward into the future of the folk? At the heart of these questions is an implied friction between the arbiters of a preservational nationalist discourse, that being the government, and the oppressed folk seeking evolution<sup>7</sup> as they look towards a future that represents possibility and change to them. As Michael Holquist states, “Authorship is a form of

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<sup>6</sup> Here, I may be referring to what Bakhtin has termed “transgredience,” the degree of “outsideness” to a text where an author sees “the whole existence of others” from a perspective that is not only outside the scope of the writer’s own sense but, also, denies the possibility of the existence of the writing “I” (Holquist 32, 33). Needless to say, Bakhtin asserts that it is not possible to achieve complete transgredience, or total impartiality, from the first-person perspective.

<sup>7</sup> Or, possibly, revolution.

governance, for both are implicated in the architectonics of responsibility [...]

Totalitarian government always seeks the (utopian) condition of absolute monologue” (34).<sup>8</sup> Thus, the idea of a folk or fairy tale that could be both culturally and semiotically discursive while still preserving the absolute hegemonic discourses of national preservation seems to be a problematic proposition at best—for one group of people to rise in power, the other must necessarily divest itself of its power, either of its own volition or through revolutionary change. An answer to this conundrum may come through Bakhtin’s own formidable study of the rise of the novel from its historical ancestors. His work is an examination of the time and space both within the text and surrounding it—the chronotope—and it is my contention that it can be used to illustrate the emergence of the anglophone children’s novel, and later young adult, or adolescent, novel, both of which allow us to see the dialogic evolution of the seemingly monologic genres of the folk and fairy tale.<sup>9</sup>

Where Stephens and McCallum begin their investigation, I shall continue along a different path. Unique to my study is the idea of the appropriation of adult narratives of one particular time and place and the re-imagination of those narratives for use in another time/ place whose primary audience is composed of children or young adult readers. In Bakhtinian critical circles this interrelation of time and space is what Bakhtin labels the Chronotope, literally the “form-shaping ideology” of any particular literary genre: for us children’s, and later, adolescent, literature (“Chronotope,” 250). At first, this concept might sound a little tricky: how can a formalist sense of “time” and “place” construct,

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<sup>8</sup> As evident in the epic, or that which seeks to preserve the past discourses of a nation.

<sup>9</sup> I will intertwine these terms frequently, but I am referring to the same age bracket referred to later in this chapter.

even denote, ideology? I will build on this question as we progress throughout the study, but the short answer is that Bakhtin allows us to use these formalist terms in post-structural applications.<sup>10</sup> His argument arrests the idea of monologic time and place in the novel and asserts that their constructions within text result from historical (non-textual) precursors. And thus, by extension, as the novel makes attempts towards a dialogic interaction between reader, subject and author, the uses of time and space constructed within the text are revolutionary agents toward the future evolution of the genre itself.<sup>11</sup>

In his voluminous essay, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,”<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin asserts that literary genres do not merely transcribe the thoughts and ideas of any particular culture *vis a vis* the writings of any one person or persons as Stephens and McCallum suggest. Rather, genre itself “makes discoveries” about particular events in the composition of works designed to discuss “people and events” of any given time and place with an audience who will comprehend them in potentially any other time and place from whence the original words were committed to print (Morson and Emerson 366). Therein, the idea of the chronotope for Bakhtin advances past understanding the act and message of a particular writing within the context of the time period in which it was written (a supposition he makes in an essay entitled “Towards the Philosophy of an

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<sup>10</sup> I am by no means implying that this particular approach to chronotope is totalizing. Rather, for me, chronotope’s capacity for structural and post-structural interpretation, literally, its overwhelming urgency towards a multiplicity of use and functions, draws me towards it as a viable filter for academic study and interpretations.

<sup>11</sup> I could also suggest that the chronotope helps aid in the revolution of the social, historical moment as well. We will find this use of chronotope particularly active in the twentieth-century during the women rights movements of the late 60s and 70s, subject matter that will be touched upon in Chapter Four.

<sup>12</sup> It is traditionally as one of the four essays comprising *The Dialogic Imagination*. I will refer to them collectively in my Works Cited.

Act”). I would argue that the chronotope reconstructs that idea by allowing the addition of a new third variable in the audience. As Morson and Emerson suggest, Bakhtin considers that the idea of chronotope asserts nothing less than “understand[-ing] context and the relation of actions and events [of different times of consumption] to it” (367).

For us, this is somewhat revolutionary in thought and design. Well before it was argued that authors come to further the work of their predecessors through some form of intentional misunderstanding of their literary antecedents,<sup>13</sup> Bakhtin allows us to consider the idea of the advancement of literary forms not through any conflict between author and the author’s past, but rather as a definite, even concerted, reconceptualization of prior semiotic and cultural utterances in the effort to advance the heteroglottal possibilities of the text.<sup>14</sup> Bakhtin credits this idea to the advancement of the novel where the hegemony of official discourse, such as found in the epic, becomes subverted by the novel’s capacity to allow for formative dialogue between author, idea and audience (“Epic,” 7, 15, 38). As I examine the emergence of an Anglo/ American concept of the “children’s

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<sup>13</sup> One’s first thoughts might be to gravitate to Harold Bloom’s capacious 1973 work, *The Anxiety of Influence*, but, more recently Peter Hunt revisited Bloom’s concept from the perspective of audience and narrative theory in his article “Necessary Misreadings: Directions in Narrative Theory for Children’s Literature.” Whereas Bloom takes a somewhat Neo or Romantic Freudian outlook on the matter of poetic reception and perception, Hunt takes the position that “reader affects text affects analysis” (109). That is to say that “misreadings,” or, as he also describes them, “counter-readings” of children’s texts are an “inevitable part of the complex process of reading [or for our purposes re-reading] the children’s book” (109). We will revisit Hunt’s, as well as others’, narrative theory later particularly in Chapter Four’s examination of the misprision of the romantic family story during the 60s and 70s.

<sup>14</sup> Discussion of Bakhtin’s principles in such semiotic terms can leave one with some internal misgivings or outright tenuous connections particularly when one can more easily cite the work of Voloshinov. This conflation comes out of the work of Robyn McCallum in her introduction to *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction* where she addresses Voloshinov’s and Bakhtin’s similarities. My study is more than willing to concede that Bakhtin is more often seen speaking of tones than signs, but, likewise, I also buttress my own ideas with McCallum who differs on this thought.

novel,” Bakhtin’s formative notions of chronotope support following the evolution of the highly monologic discourse of the nationalist fairy tale towards what the critics of the early twentieth-century would identify as the “novelized”<sup>15</sup> fairy tale.<sup>16</sup> This evolution would continue with an effect prone to continued variation and evolution. For example, what the Brothers Grimm once only viewed as a scholarly project doing little more than chronicle and preserve the sanctioned discourses of a European (German) civilization thought to be on the brink of cultural erasure eventually evolved from simple folk tales into the novels written specifically for children that called for the cultivation and commodification of their imagination in America.

My project conducts a historical study of the narratology of children’s and adolescent literature in post World War II United States and Great Britain. I demonstrate that the rapid flourishing and evolution of the field’s prosaics arises directly out of those children’s writers’ consideration of the socio-political climate of the World Wars period (roughly 1900-1950) after assimilating the early Continental children’s texts of a century prior. In other words, I have found that the authors of twentieth-century children’s literature who wrote immediately after the Second World War internalized its socio-

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<sup>15</sup> “Novelized” and “novelization” are tricky words to use in a Bakhtinian theoretical discussion. When Bakhtinian critics refer to novelization, in the sense that Bakhtin considers, they refer specifically to an increase in the types and number of voices (heteroglossia and polyglossia, respectfully) (Morson and Emerson 66). This multi-voicedness creates an opportunity for the dialogic complexity of the novel, the text itself, which Bakhtin is renown for emphasizing in narrative. My contention, though, is that through this increase in complexity comes a necessary increase in the verbiage or narrative “heft” of individual texts. Thus, as texts become increasingly novelized, they become larger in size and complexity than their forebears.

<sup>16</sup> In my study, I examine *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ*. There are many other retellings and “novelizations” of the fairy tale, in a variety of media: The classic Disney movies such as *Cinderella*, *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty*, the works of Gregory McGuire (*Mirror, Mirror; Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister*), Robyn McKinley’s *Beauty, Spindle’s End* and *Deerskin* among many, many others.

cultural mores of escape from the gravity of the global situation. Having grown up during this tumultuous period, they developed an animosity towards the staid traditions of the dominant national agenda and reinterpreted the preservational discourse and architecture of the children's literature that they had received. They did so in a conscious effort to subvert the hegemony of the sanctioned discourses operating at the time.

Prior to the World Wars, folk traditions emphasizing the preservation of static nationalism and communities dominated the landscape of what would eventually be called children's literature. The simplicity of these stories was as transparent as the vehicles themselves. These fairy tales and folklore emphasized straightforward didacticism with oversimplified binaries writers thought a child would best comprehend. After the World Wars, but as early as the beginning of the twentieth-century, the writers of children's literature began exploring these moral binaries, as well as formerly static constructions of nation and community, with greater choral-spatial complexity relevant to their place in history. Essentially, this new breed of authors brooded over the state of the development of a canon of literature intended to cultivate both a child's mind and a young adult's mind, and they found existing techniques both lacking and outdated. They found that a child does not possess the same imaginative complexity as an adult. Likewise, an adolescent, while certainly more cognitively, ethically and socially developed than a child, still was not an adult either. It was their perception that these two audiences were both distinct and separate from an adult audience and demanded a literature that specifically addressed them in a manner which would allow them to grow. At the same time, they realized that the considerably more simple and static nineteenth-century narrative perspective simply did not fit within the textual representations of the

hustle and bustle of a century built upon constantly shifting and evolving concepts of consumerism, geography and radical social agendas. In essence, the idea of time began to move faster than the thought occupying space in text; the writers I discuss sought to change that.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the first half of the twentieth-century marks a conflation of what Bakhtinian scholars refer to as the chronotope of Quest/ Romance time and elements of *bildungsroman/ entwicklungsroman* time. In this single chronotope, the linearity of the quest and circularity<sup>18</sup> of the *bildungsroman* are reconciled through the emergence of the fantastic (or Fantasy). The major children's works that come in the second half of the century work to tease out a new form of narrative that responds to this conflation. This new chronotope, which I have termed "the chronotope of the children's novel of fantastic escape from the modernist period," is considerably less enamored with polarized and judgmental world-views and tradition regarding the state of "nation" and community. It reflects a more global perspective, as opposed to one marked by a singular ideology or trajectory, interested in exploring the axiology of multiple perspectives. Here, there can be no simple line between the beginning and the ending of the quest or growth

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<sup>17</sup> I use the term "writers," as opposed to "authors" here very specifically. I would argue that these texts I will specifically examine, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the problem novels of Judy Blume, are not written well enough to be considered "art," nor was that their purpose. An unstated question arises for these writers: "Should one compose art for an audience still too young to appreciate art?" Overwhelmingly, I find that the writers I consider say no, and the beauty of their prose suffers from that. Bearing that in mind, as these writers lay the groundwork for the construction of a literary canon designed specifically for the pre-adult, those who followed them—Kathleen Paterson, Roald Dahl, J. K. Rowling, et al—possessed the foundations to create art from the pre-texts that the writers I examine constructed.

<sup>18</sup> Retrograde motion might be a more accurate description of how a *bildungsroman* might be viewed as circular. The idea is that, in order to go forward and grow, the protagonist reflects upon his/ her past.

experience. Instead, many steps and missteps, many wrong turns and unexpected journeys mark an enhanced sense of development.

In a second new chronotope, “the chronotope of the post-modern problem novel of female adolescence,” we find the vestiges of World-Wars-period Modernist (in the literary sense) thinking and exploration revisited and re-examined through the work not of authors of adult fictions, but of the children’s authors who wrote after the World Wars period ended. This era marks the beginnings of a new type of fiction keyed not to the remarkably young or the adult, but rather to the indeterminate age, or maturity, in between. This chronotope of young adult or adolescent literature<sup>19</sup> branches off of the construction of the fantastic in the 1950s to re-examine situations that, in the cultural literary imagination of the latter-half of the twentieth-century, at least in the publishing community, were considered fantastic. Therein, young adult literature specifically seeks out and reifies the Anglo/ American family romance of the mid-nineteenth-century and re-engineers it as the problem novel of the mid-twentieth-century. My argument articulates the idea that, to an audience of women trying to attain a voice during the Women’s Movement of the late-60s and early-70s, these problem novels actively provided young women “fantastic” opportunities to escape from their familiar situations by surrogating their subject position to a constructed, yet realistic, literary protagonist.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Specifically, I indicate that there are clearly other designations of chronotope available *not* bifurcated along gender lines, but, it is my opinion that within the specific subgenre of the problem novel we find these gender lines operating.

<sup>20</sup> I use “fantastic” in the sense that discussion of these private matters in the public sphere at the time was considered highly taboo and, therefore, highly unlikely. A young female protagonist can actively find an eager ear in the female reader, and, reciprocally, the young female reader vicariously can escape the complex of her own personal dilemmas through interaction with the young female protagonist in the novel.

The rationale for this lag time in addressing an adolescent audience has already been critically established by scholars such as Maria Nikolajeva, Roberta Trites and, perhaps most prominently, Michael Cart in *From Romance to Realism*, but I seek to build upon that criticism to illustrate that these twentieth-century authors chose to compose in this new manner specifically for children and later adolescents. That is to say, the increased novelization, literally the increased narratological complexity of the text, which occurred in children's writings starting at the turn of the century, occurred because children were perceived as a unique audience who, by their very nature of having not lived through the World Wars period but rather in its wake, might be more pliable to allow the author's continual re-examination and reconfiguration of the early twentieth-century children's literary chronotope. Why the children might be more pliable is open to some debate, but I would suggest that the World Wars destabilized prior static notions of consumerism, geography, views of nation etc. to the extent that a chronotopal shift occurred seeking to address this greater complexity specifically to an audience of children who would need better stories that reflected their new world. The writers I examine picked up the tenor of the fraught World Wars period and inculcated their new children's fictions with the ethos of their immediate forebears from the first-half of the twentieth-century. This reconfiguration can be seen in the increasingly complex subject matter and prose, especially given the target age of their audience. As the century marched forward from the 1950s, the prosaics of children's and young adult's writings evolved rapidly, to such an extent that, by scholarly definitions, the work itself truly became literary and a far cry from where it stood at the start of the century, let alone prior to it.

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From here, it might be prudent to attend to some housekeeping. While Bakhtin's positions on dialogue, addressivity, laughter et al. have lurked prominently and bolstered countless arguments in academic scholarship since the early 1980s, use of his theory of chronotope has not been anywhere near as prominent in children's literary discussions. Why this dearth occurs is a difficult question to address. It certainly is not for a lack of the enormous theoretical potential of what the chronotope *can* be used for. Sue Vice considers that much of chronotope's "puzzling" nature derives from the fact that its concept alone "seems omnipresent to the point of invisibility or of extreme obviousness" (201). Holquist concurs, and he argues that Vice's view is inherent to chronotope's design. He asserts that Bakhtin's use of chronotope is as wide and expansive as the principles of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Holquist asserts that Bakhtin found the chronotope to be nothing less than a "device, a function, a motif" while others, such as Vice, have found that "it can be used to discuss a whole genre" (109-110; 202). This particular construction of scholars' use of chronotope can indeed be found in a great deal of the critical use of chronotope and for good reason: Bakhtin himself establishes many "generic techniques" for chronotope in "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (84). The essay outlines throughout history different chronotopal moments that appear synonymous with genre types, such as the "adventure-novel of the ordeal" (86), the "adventure novel of everyday life" (111), the "miraculous world in adventure time" (154), the novel of "historical time" (156) and "the family novel" (229), among many others. As such, it should come as little surprise that a relatively common approach for the use of chronotope is to relegate it to a synonymous relationship with genre. And while

there's nothing inherently incorrect about this usage, it is a limiting perspective to say the least.

Vice points out the trouble when she writes:

What is suggestive about Bakhtin's essay is his *historical* and generic charting of the chronotope. The subtitle to his essay, 'Notes towards a Historical Poetics', shows that his interest is in *how texts relate to their social and political contexts* rather than in simply drawing up in a typology of how time and space relate to each other within different texts. (201, emphases mine)

As Vice notes, chronotope can be used as a multi-layered tool within Bakhtinian scholarship. While it can operate like generic definition it can also illustrate the "means by which a text represents history" (201), show the "relation between time and space in the novel" where "any representation of history must be constructed," and, finally, the chronotope can "discuss formal properties of the text itself," such as plot, characters and narrator, in "relation to any other texts" (202).<sup>21</sup> But, as far my study is concerned, the chronotope also has very specific functions as a record of historical change and evolution. Holquist supports this approach in describing one of Bakhtin's uses for chronotope. He writes that "chronotopes are highly sensitive to historical change: different societies and periods result in different chronotopes both inside and outside literary texts" (112). This does present me with an interesting problem in that having chronotope be something that can be specifically generic, intertextual and historically "intra-textual" (112) and, at the

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<sup>21</sup> Or as Bakhtin writes, "The Chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" ("Chronotope," 250). And yet, in this form, Holquist notes, the chronotope has very structuralist applications as opposed to the applications this study works with (110).

same time, also able to be “transhistorical [...] not unique to particular points in time” seems contradictory. The only answer I can offer to this conundrum is the same one Bakhtin does and Holquist reaffirms: chronotope is highly specified in time, place and usage. It, and its function, at any particular time, is highly dependent upon why and how it is used in each particular instance.<sup>22</sup> This caveat is meant not to illustrate the chronotope as a panacea to any particular literary situation demanding the intersection of time, place and reader, but rather a reminder that chronotope operates, much as most things do in the novel for Bakhtin, dialogically. As such, chronotope needs to be met on its own terms, or, perhaps, better, Holquist’s term: “bifocally” (113). The critic must be careful to use chronotope as a lens with which to look at any particular text or texts closely, formally, generically, and yet also knows when to pull back the lens and examine the work and its “relation *between* any text and its times” (113). The critic employing chronotope examines a text and its literary antecedents through the passage of time, space, culture and generic evolution.

### **Acknowledging my Forebears: The Critical Dominance of Maria Nikolajeva**

In 1999, McCallum stated, “Maria Nikolajeva (1988, 1989, 1996) is perhaps the only children’s literature critic to apply Bakhtin’s chronotope to the discussion of children’s texts” (185). Seven years later, Michael Cadden cites Nikolajeva’s 2003 work *From Mythic To Linear* as one of the preeminent texts dealing with Bakhtin’s chronotope. It enables her, he writes, to move away from both simplistic considerations of audience and

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<sup>22</sup> In 1973, Bakhtin placed an addendum to the original chronotope essay listing new chronotopes (the chronotopes of the road, the trial, the provincial town, etc.) applicable to new places, venues and approaches different from those initially listed in the original essay (Holquist 112).

genre as she “uses the chronotope as her critical lens in order to understand children’s literature” (185). In her recent article on children’s literature and narrative theory, Nikolajeva writes on her particularly Bakhtinian approach to narratology in Children’s and Young Adult’s Literature as she asks the difficult question, “How are the temporal structures of the discourse organized in relation to the temporal structures of the story?” (“Beyond,” 12). Her observation on chronotope outlines that it, as a guiding theoretical strategy, affords her the possibility to illustrate peculiar narrative elements unique to children’s and young adult stories such as the rarely encountered “prolepsis” or flash-forward (12), and, as Cadden reaffirms and completes the binary, “analepsis,” or looking back (88).<sup>23</sup> As Nikolajeva argues, these concepts are not new to literary study as a whole, yet they are part of the more recent critical apparatuses offered to the scholar of children’s literature.<sup>24</sup> Whereas both utilize the concepts as within the text, my study will propose to look at the literary use of these concepts from both within and outside the text – with the texts existing in context with the particular time and place of their generation and publication acting as cultural markers for the evolution of the genres of children’s and adolescent literature.

When Nikolajeva speaks of Bakhtinian narratological investigations, ones of the intersection of time and place and narrative with the peculiar addition of audience within

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<sup>23</sup> Neither concept is remarkably new or unique to either critic; both seem to borrow the concept from Gerard Genette’s 1980 work *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Yet, both of their uses of prolepsis and analepsis are far more eloquent, current and concretized in the realm of children’s literature (Nikolajeva) and adolescent literature (Cadden) than Genette’s.

<sup>24</sup> And I will add to this critical toolbox later by introducing “paralepsis,” or stories that occur alongside the master narrative but are normally occluded, into the historical development of the modernist and post-modernist chronotope. The point that will be made is that these side stories actually subvert the master narratives as the *prima facie* source of readerly interest in the fictions.

and outside that matrix as “indispensable [...] as we set off to explore more complex, contemporary children’s novels with multiple plots and narrative levels” (14). This approach strikes me as particularly attractive given my interest in identifying, localizing and understanding non-adult narratives as evolving into novelized “literary texts” and not simply stories meant for children (14). Nikolajeva’s use of chronotope does nothing less than allow us to break with former structuralist ideas of the children’s story as being necessarily “simple, straight-forward narratives” devoid of a particular cultural heritage and, simultaneously, another culture’s embellishment based around the retelling that McCallum and Stephens tell us occurs (14).

But let me not pull the cart before the horse; if Nikolajeva’s work were all encompassing in regards to chronotope and chronotopal application, I would have very little to add to the discussion past reiterating what her larger projects, most often aimed at Continental children’s literature, had to offer to the Anglophone texts I investigate. Part of the dearth in the scholarship of this admittedly new approach to examining children’s and young adult’s texts comes in the markedly finite use of Bakhtin’s chronotope *within* the literary text itself. In a recent article in *College English*, Jordynn Jack did me the service of identifying the problem of this otherwise narrow use of chronotope:

Scholars have used the concept of chronotope to explore the material and symbolic environments in which writers are embedded [...] the spatiotemporal features of written genres [...] and the personal and dialectical relationships between personal and academic writing.

[Chronotopes] help us understand the temporal, spatial, discursive,

material and, importantly, ideological qualities of rhetorical situations and the kind of arguments they enable. (53)

All of these approaches she mentions are extra-textual concerns.<sup>25</sup> They do not discount, deny or disuse chronotope inter-textually, within a single text, but only add to the possible applications of Bakhtin's work. Near the end of the "Chronotope" essay, Bakhtin blankly notes, "we might even speak of a special *creative* chronotope inside which the exchange of between work and life [of the author] occurs, and which constitutes the distinctive life of the work" (254). He goes even further to state that the "chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation) emerge from the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world reflected [and] represented in the work (in the text)" (253). Thus, as Jack states, and as Holquist defends, the chronotope is a device as willing to examine "other domains" of the textual artifact as the textual artifact itself (53); Jack writes, "In this sense, the term *chronotope* refers to the ways which a text draws upon, constitutes or appeals to particular notions of space and time" of textual creation (53-54). And it is within that definition that my study comes to stand on its own feet.

Nikolajeva's rise as the preeminent Bakhtinian children's literary critic using chronotope arises out of her groundbreaking 1988 volume *Children's Literature Comes*

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<sup>25</sup> McCallum actually uses the term "extraliterary" to discuss the same concept (185). She borrows this idea from Holquist who unpacks Bakhtin's densely-packed and often circuitous exposition in the "Chronotope" essay to remind the critic that Bakhtin stresses the "cultural and ideological specificity of the chronotope" (McCallum 185), allowing it to be "in dialogue with specific, extraliterary historical contexts" (Holquist 112). I alter the term to extra-textual at this point as I work to prove the anglophone literary heritage of Children's texts as they come into their own novelistic form at the turn of the twentieth-century.

*of Age: Towards a New Aesthetic.*<sup>26</sup> As the title indicates, the work is mostly concerned with illustrating differences between genre-specific types of primarily Continental European children's literature. Here, she not only lays the narratological groundwork for the establishment of "children's literature as *literature*" (4, emphasis mine), but she helps delineate the argument regarding the so-called "classics" of children's literature (for her, those texts written for adults and appropriated into the children's literary canon [5]) and, for the purposes of this argument, contemporary children's literature (or, as you would suspect, works written specifically with an audience of children in mind [5]). As mentioned, Nikolajeva's interest is examining the aesthetics of children's literature *as an accepted and established medium*. My interest arises in the questions she leaves largely unanswered: Where did the "modern," as she calls it, genre of children's literature in the anglophone cultural sphere come from? How does it differ from its socio-cultural precedents, and how does it operate and evolve as it moves across the Atlantic Ocean into the United States?

We both agree on some specific points: the immediate predecessor of the twentieth-century child's story comes from "cultural-semiotic" traditions and codifications present in the European folk tale and fairy story (9). Nikolajeva, however, distinguishes between what has traditionally been called the "modern" period of the twentieth-century and the "post-modern" period (9-10): the early twentieth-century children's literature chronotope and the mid-century chronotope concerning adolescent

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<sup>26</sup> Nikolajeva has comment on chronotope more recently than the 1988 work; perhaps most notably, as Cadden has indicated, *From Mythic To Linear* in 2000, and most recently in 2003 in an article entitled "Beyond the Grammar of Story, or How Can Children's Literature Criticism Benefit From Narrative Theory?" I choose to work with the 1988 text here as it presents her theory at its most replete (most of her later dealings with chronotope either are applications of her theory or derive from the 1988 text).

literature. It is these distinctions that lead me to establish two larger epochal shifts in the chronotope of children's writings. The first chronotope, the chronotope of the children's novel of fantastic escape from modernist time, is marked by the move towards the novelization of the fairy story, folk tale and mythology into what we generally now call children's "fantasy" stories of escape from troubling situations (Nikolajeva, *CLCA* 122). The second major chronotope of the twentieth-century, being the mid-century chronotope of adolescent literature, borrows from the work of Roberta Trites; I argue that the Fantasy of the early twentieth-century turns on its edge to re-configure the domestic narrative of the nineteenth-century into novels, dialogues, which were considered fantastic at the time of publication. From this point we find the intimate discussions of once taboo subject matter arise out of the problem novels of the 1960s, a period Trites finds wrought with the advancement of women's rights (ix). My study will serve to not only illustrate the social, political and cultural underpinnings of these narratives, but it will also explore the constituent features of the genres suggestive of a move from their predecessors.

In effect, what Nikolajeva has come to identify, it will become my duty to explain as a socio-cultural representation of the then present and an evolution of established forms and genres of a known past within the texts of specific authors. The examples I use to illustrate my finding should not be considered entirely inclusive of the boundaries that this use of chronotope suggests. To the contrary, as I hope I have illustrated, these works I examine will be looked upon as exemplars and possibilities in a further expanding sense of Bakhtinian theory.

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It has been this introduction's purpose to establish the critical history and the antecedents of this Bakhtinian investigation. It is not a replete exploration or explanation of Bakhtin's theory of chronotope, but it does not seek to be; each chapter will build upon his theory of the creation of a prosaics as I move through time and space to show the steps taken in the genesis of the children's novel. Theoretically, as mentioned, what interests me is tracing chronotopes, motifs, genres (e.g. the fairy or folk tale) back to a particular time and place and showing how they contribute to the full development of the modernist children's, and later post-modern young adult's, novel. The theorists explored in the present chapter will help me to lay the groundwork for how these proto-novelizations, or pre-texts, actually became novelized as the novel gained its own historical confidence within a genre built upon an audience – children. From that moment of hybridization and novelization, the children's novel will be shown to become an established form for a previously unconsidered group of consumers.

Chapter Two takes us into the meat of how the folktale and/ or fairy story became novelized. The figures at the center of my investigation happen to be Lyman Frank Baum and *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ*, but, in order to approach that novelized fairy tale, I take the project back into the nineteenth-century to look at the Grimm Brothers' project. Their project sought to unify a Germany under siege by attempting to preserve and catalogue tales of the *Volk*. They sought to protect the German heritage by preserving the household tales and folks stories in their native language that represented, to them, a sort of oral history. That they did not actually go to the folk, but rather to the *bourgeois* middle class notwithstanding, the Grimm Brothers took that oral tradition and, in transcribing and editing it, gave it an authority (namely theirs). When they discovered

that their project might actually sell to an adult audience who wished to consume these texts for dissemination to their children, the Grimm Brothers emended the original stories to feed that burgeoning audience's need for a more palatable set of tales.

As those tales crossed the Atlantic and reached the American child, Baum found them out-of-date and out-of-touch with the American sense of nationalism—a nationalism that he felt was built out of consumerism and commodities fetishism. I will show through an exploration of his particular moment how the dialogism surrounding the tales' move to the United States emboldened those texts with complexity, dialogism and, necessarily, a greater narrative heft to help sate the complexity. To show how Baum took more simply constructed tales and charged them with novelistic complexity, I will engage in a side-by-side comparison with Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, a novel operating in the same socio-cultural moment towards similar ends. I will show how Baum seeks to reify the folktale into something more distinctly American: the capitalist story of success in the big city. Dreiser's *Carrie* will serve as an antidote to the problems and complexities these changes cause and help to explain Baum's similar, though not completely identical, concerns. In the end, Baum's *Oz* will not be shown as arriving at the concept of a "children's novel"; in fact, it is only slightly less monologic than the Grimms' tales before him. Rather, it will be shown that Baum represents a formative step in the increasing discursiveness of the children's narrative *en route* to even more discursive works occurring after World War II.

Chapters Three and Four represent the culmination of my efforts: showing the rise of two distinctly new and unique chronotopes designed for the pre-adult, not as Bakhtin originally illustrated, but through the intersection of a new term in the equation:

audience. Chapter Three accounts for figures in the post World Wars period attempting to deal with the tragedy of those years through a literary escape. I will show the rise of the chronotope of the children's novel of fantastic escape from the modernist period, literally a chronotope of children's literature surrounding a literary intervention in the present moment encouraging children to escape that present moment (and all it inherited from the modernist, or interbellum, period) into a safer place built upon many other times, histories and mythologies.

The figure I choose to examine here is Clive Staples Lewis and his *Chronicles of Narnia* book set, written *explicitly* for children as an audience. It is a point I must emphasize because what I argue Lewis constructs is, ostensibly, a fantasy world specifically built for children out of the "mere Christianity" *he* advocates. Lewis literally, and literarily, decides to recreate his current moment by addressing the problems of the modernist period—specifically the World Wars period—a period he holds a particular animosity towards. Lewis decides to create a cosmology that exists along-side his reality, yet it happens to be a reality built upon many different histories, theologies and mythologies from that very same reality. What I hope to show is Lewis's work as indicative of how the shift in narrative discursiveness that we saw occurring at the century's turn with *OZ*—due to audience—now causes a complete shift in genre with the creation of the children's fantasy. The emphasis in these fantasies is both escape for the audience and for the characters within the novels: escape from the current moment and the past moment with an eye towards the possibilities of the future.

My final chapter takes this study past the modernist moment of literary history into the post-modernist one. It is my argument that in the 1960s and 1970s we find

another chronotopal shift based upon a further attenuation of the idea of audience. In the 60s, writers, specifically, females writing for young, adolescent women, begin to stress the idea that there are more levels of maturity than simply “childhood” and “adulthood.” Therein, the chronotope of the post-modern problem novel of female adolescence illustrates how the socio-political tenor of the time begins to cause further tectonic shifts in the narrative style of the novel. It will be shown that plots of novels begin to focus on sex, age and the problems of a shift between ages (from childhood to adolescence), specifically to young women, who encounter very specific problems inherent to their sex and gender’s roles in society at this time.

I could have sought to explore both sexes here, but given the time period and the rise from the margins encountered specifically by women during the 60s, I chose to focus only on young women and, arguably, the most well-known representative of the problem novel for women, Judy Blume. I use Blume to explore both the period and the period’s novels’ focus on young women as a specific consumer, absent, possibly, even of their parents. Blume accomplishes Baum’s trend in consumer specialization by discussing a variety of subject matter considered otherwise as taboo to an American culture of the time. It is her choice to muddy the waters of the sub-genre of the problem novel that moves Blume away from the traditional ideas of the *bildungsroman* into novels that show growth and ordeal but not necessarily resolution. Though Blume is critically maligned by many, it is my hope to show her as providing a new type of novel specific in purpose, style and narratological approach to a particularly specific audience. This is a trend that I believe carries on forward throughout the twentieth-century as publishers, authors and audiences become increasingly discriminating about who they seek to reach with their

product.<sup>27</sup> It is my opinion that Judy Blume can be seen as one of the progenitors of this model as early as the late 60s.

A short set of conclusions, questions and considerations will follow the final chapter with indications of where I would like to see my research continue and expand as this dissertation becomes a book manuscript. Most of these thoughts are at a tentative stage of development and consideration, but they are indicative of a trajectory I wish to follow in the years ahead.

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<sup>27</sup> What I speak of here is the segmentation of audience in children's and adolescent literature by topic. For example, let us look at the broader topic of adventure novels. In the late twentieth-century, we find the market responding along gender lines with survival narratives for young boys, such as Gary Paulson's *Brian's Books* set, and domestic adventures for young women such as the ongoing *Babysitter's Club* series. Chapter Four will examine this topic along the lines of the problem novel.

**2.) From Nationalism to Novelization: The Evolution of the European Folk Tale Tradition into the Novelized-Fairy Tale of American Consumerism**

“In literature and culture generally, time is always in one way or another *historical* and *biographical*, and space is always *social*; thus, the chronotope in culture could be defined as a ‘field of historical, biographical, and social relations.’”

Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, 371

Literature, as Morson and Emerson argue, is “heterochronous”: at any given time, any number of different genres can be instituted or realized in a text in order to effect a message or utterance of any type (371). In other words, different, incongruent and competing genres can all exist simultaneously and vie for exposure and comprehension. As such, we can see “literature” as an encompassing term of many different genres—both written and visual forms—which possess the ability to act on and interact with subject matter at times when such forms and materials are new and vital, worn or outdated, or even revived and re-engineered due to some nostalgia for them. Discussing literature in this way feels odd, abstract and opaque, but, put into more concrete terms, I think the discussion might be made to be a bit more transparent. Let me try to explain by asking a question not about children’s literature but simply about an event in the current American public sphere: How can a society such as the United States celebrate filmed narratives, movies, containing remarkably realistic depictions of militaristic or combative violence during a period in their culture when they clamor against their elected government for

keeping an American military presence engaged in a war against the ideology of violent, militaristic terrorism?<sup>1</sup>

Often, I imagine, the answer gravitates to the idea that what is seen in the movies has little to do with social policy and is understood by the audience and filmmakers alike to be escapist and fantastic, not didactic, and speaking to the best interests of the “blockbuster [movie] which means nonstop action, [...] narrow escapes, cliff dangling [and] every trick the filmmakers could raid” (Travers). That is to say these movies are *acceptably* violent; they occur in what appears to a viewer as an absolute past hermetically sealed off from reality. Bakhtin tells us that the chronotope “provides the ground essential for showing forth, the representability of events [...] the primary point from which ‘scenes’ from a novel<sup>2</sup> unfold [...] ‘binding’ events, located far from the chronotope, [making them] appear as mere dry information and communicated facts” (“Chronotope,” 250). In relation to our movie example, we can extrapolate from Bakhtin using a recent example: Director Zack Snyder’s *300*. The story of *300* was, itself, a filmed representation of comic book and graphic novelist Frank Miller’s gory and *quasi-*

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<sup>1</sup> Consider five out of 10 of 2006’s leaders as the box-office: *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest*, *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Superman Returns*, *Mission Impossible III*. All of these movies celebrate, even valorize, accounts of war, violence, where heroism is depicted by the defeating of evil, in the audience’s eyes, by a hero who dispatches the villain by lethal means (even Superman abandoned Lex Luther on an island where there were insufficient materials to survive) (“2006 Yearly Box Office”). By the same token, and to be fair, most of these movies provide opportunities, in a Bakhtinian sense, for laughter which seems to mollify the efficacy of the tragic. Also consider, the summer of 2006 was book-ended by two movies taking a historical investigation of the incidents surrounding 9/11, which led to the War on Terrorism. The movies *United 93* and *World Trade Center*, which both critical darlings, were substantial failures at the box office even though there was a significant revitalization of moviegoers re-entering theatres. Both movies failed to turn a profit at the theater, let alone crack the coveted 100 million dollars sales mark (“2006 Yearly Box Office”).

<sup>2</sup> Or, in this example, a movie.

historic re-visioning of the Battle of Thermopylae (filmed with the appropriate hard R-rating). The film was critically lauded and celebrated popularly to the tune of 210 million dollars in domestic revenue in the United States. In a Bakhtinian sense, Snyder grounds the movie in the reality of the movie-going moment currently established: adaptations of comic and graphic novels have proven to be a lucrative cottage industry for Hollywood since the late 1990s. Likewise, textually, the political tenor of the movie's storyline fits the current American historical moment with coincidental vigor. The primary point for a viewer seeing scenes develop in this instance is the backdrop of the current American presence in the Persian Gulf, seemingly, being recast from a similar conflict of Spartans vs. Persians 2500 years ago; the argument arose whether or not the timing of the decision to retell this story had any political allegorical connections to the contemporary moment.<sup>3</sup> Thus, between the movie and the historical moment it was re-told in, a binding does occur, whether intentionally set or not, between the original historical events, the re-interpretation of them and the choice to re-interpret them at a particular moment outside of textual time. While I am not well-versed enough on either film theory or political theory to take this particular example much further, Bakhtin goes so far as to say that it is through the chronotope that we see where elements of narrative, time and place take on

“flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work” (250). Again, I am

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<sup>3</sup> In the 5 March 2007 *New York Times*, Michael Cieply wrote about a recent press conference Snyder attended where a journalist, having viewed *300* in an advanced screening posed the question of "Is George Bush Leonidas or Xerxes?" (section E, 1). Snyder, nonplussed and somewhat confused, made the point that the movie was not intentionally allegorical, but, his depiction of Miller's work (which had been published between May and September of 1998 during the Clinton administration). Similar questions were raised in 2006 regarding the Wachowski Brothers re-engineering of Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta*. Unlike Snyder, though, the Wachowski's openly admitted to editing of the piece, set in Great Britain, to fit American social and political mores (MacDonald, "A for Alan").

not a film critic, and this is not a chapter concerning the genre of film – but as we consider the ideas of violence, nationalism and the rise and reconstruction of children’s literature, this analysis might not be a bad starting point for our discussion of how chronotopal shifts occur both within the narrative of fiction and the narrative of historical time and space. It is my argument that the two different shifts in chronotope are inextricably linked to one another.

Considering this, this chapter focuses on two distinctly different versions of chronotope. In the first, I will examine the idea of chronotope operating on narratives, folk tales, with an eye towards primarily structuralist concerns: I shall examine how the Grimm brothers took careful steps to record the orally-transmitted tales of the folk and then write *their* tales with an eye towards a preservational, “unified (monologic) worldview” for their particular readership in nineteenth-century Germany (McCallum 17). The second view posits chronotope in terms of the Grimms’ monologic addressivity. Addressivity, as Bakhtin writes, suggests, “every word is directed towards an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates (“Discourse,” 280). I want to discuss the role of language in its relationship between the self and the others. As McCallum notes, in an ideal use of addressivity, the word is dialogical: “Monological forms of address either ignore the other’s potential response or deny that other a position to respond” (261). Hence, when I speak of the Grimms’ written folktale as both preservational and monologic, I mean specifically that they do not invite response to or reinvention of their official discourse—even though they actively participate in this process by revising the spoken folk tales and revise their own written tales through subsequent editions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.

The Grimms wrote their tales in what Bakhtin defined as the Folkloric Chronotope.<sup>4</sup> In effect, they transcribed<sup>5</sup> the repeated tales of an oral historical past into a written script in an effort to establish a present based upon a staid “golden age” of an ideal German past (“Chronotope,” 147). It is their historical position that places them at this point where they write the oral in order to preserve a Germanic folk culture and make them a nation once again while they are under French occupation. As we approach the beginning on the twentieth-century, though, L. Frank Baum utilizes the technology of the folktale transformed into the fairy tale and alters both its ideological precepts and conceptualization of time given his unique position in space and history. He does not seek for his narrative to use folk culture to re-enforce any nationalist traditions; rather, Baum appropriates the technologies present to subvert and modify the state of the nation in ways that he thinks he can improve on it. He attempts to accomplish this by focusing on children as an audience, as they would be the arbiters of change in the future of the nation. As Morson and Emerson suggest in the epigraph to this chapter, we must approach Baum historically, biographically and within a system of social relations.

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<sup>4</sup> Later, in the “Chronotope” essay, Bakhtin would likely suggest that this chronotope be redefined better as the either the “realistic fantastic” or the “chronotope of entr’ acte” (150, 163). I do not wish to confuse his terminologies concerning fantasy with mine, but I would agree with him that the seemingly oxymoronic construction of the realistic fantasy has, at its heart, a conflation between “embodiment” and “potential” in these folktales (Morson and Emerson 435). As he says, “in no way does [folklore] exceed the limits of the real, here-and-now material world [...] Such a fantastic relies on the real-life possibilities of human development” (“Chronotope,” 150). Tatar agrees with Bakhtin: “the fairy tale keeps us firmly rooted in reality: at home, in the village, on the road or in the woods” (*ABG*, XXVIII).

<sup>5</sup> Of a sort. As we will see later, it is difficult to even suggest that what the Grimm’s did could have been transcription of the folk tales given their embellishment.

This chapter will build towards Baum by briefly examining the source materials for his novelization of the fairy tale.<sup>6</sup> I will observe it from both the ends of space and time: The Grimms will show us the make-up of the folktale's evolution into a fairy tale of middle-class consumption, and then I will invoke an author contemporaneous with Baum, Theodore Dreiser, to illustrate how Baum novelizes the fairy tale through the particular chronotopic norms that surround him. With an American perspective based around consumerism, Baum alters the focus of time in his folktale to look not into the past or the present, but at the future – that which Bakhtin argues “is in no sense part of the past's reality” (147). I will argue that through Baum's novelization of the fairy tale, he decidedly alters the capacity of the folkloric chronotope to look towards a future, which further destabilizes the nationalisms of the past and encourages change to a readership based in the future. I will specifically look at how Baum appropriates the idea of a woman's place being in the home and sees her future in the metropolitan marketplace as a consumer of goods and services. Capitalism and consumerism become Baum's hopes for a tomorrow, capable and possible through the inculcation of these ideologies in a base of children who could be brought up considering these thoughts as norms. The novelization of the fairy tale abandons the preservational dogma of the folk's nationalisms in lieu of broadcasting a challenge to the dominant discourses of his time

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<sup>6</sup> Here, “novelization” refers to both the increase of voices in the text (the addition of Baum's personal consumerist ideologies, the capitalist ideology of the United States, the Naturalist ideologies of Darwinian survival etc. as well as a palpable increase in the heft of the text. Therein, while his “novelized” fairy tale retains much of the simplicity surrounding formal narratological elements (character, plot), it grows significantly in terms of sub-text and psychological motivation, consistent with a move closer to Bakhtin's concept of the novel.

and place to a receptive audience of pliable and receptive children ready to accept the change.

### **The Bros. Grimm and the Romantic Project to Preserve the German “Volk”**

Bakhtin writes in the “Bildungsroman” essay:

The second half of the eighteenth century in England and Germany is characterized, as we know, by an increased interest in folklore. One can even speak with a certain amount of justification about the *discovery of folklore* for literature, which occurred in this epoch. This was a primarily a matter of national and local (within the boundaries of the national) folklore. [...] With folklore there burst into literature a new, powerful and extremely productive wave of *national-historical time* that exerted an immense influence on the development of the historical outlook. (52)

The Grimms add a particularly prickly irritant to trying to understand the tales they are ubiquitously remembered for. On one level, as Donald Hasse has suggested, they are supposedly the cataloguers of the German “*volk*,” a mysteriously-bound collective of people who are both “an ethnic or national group sharing common traditions, lore and social or cultural traits,” but also, as Giuseppe Coochiara suggests, are identified as “the expression of a certain vision of life, certain attitudes of the spirit, of thought, of custom, of civilization, which appear with their own clearly delineated characteristics” (354-355). At this level, one can identify the folk as Hasse, McCallum, A. J. Byatt and certainly

Maria Tatar do: as an imagined community<sup>7</sup> based around a shared ideology (an ideology which persists in their folk songs and tales), or, as Tatar, qualifies it: the “consolidate[d] national identity [created] by a common cultural heritage [mobilizing] the tales as part of an effort to mount intellectual resistance to the French occupation of their homeland” (xxxviii).<sup>8</sup> On another level, the Brothers Grimm are, as Jack Zipes<sup>9</sup> argues, as much the composers of these fairy stories as anyone, simply through their semiotic act of removing the tales from their oral discourses and transcribing them, and, with each subsequent edition of *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, revising them into tales of their own purpose and design (“CCC,” 867-868; Neumann 971). Zipes also reminds us that, while the Grimms’ tales clearly resonate with the demarcations of German culture, there is little that is intrinsically “German” about these tales (“CCC,” 845). As he mentions in “Cross-Cultural Connections,” the tales that Grimm Brothers collected had roots in Italy, France, Scotland and even as far away as the then-known Orient (867).

To find some space between these voices, it would probably be best to identify Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s project as it was within the context of their own time. This chapter is neither the time nor the place for a full-fledged discussion of the Grimm’s

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<sup>7</sup> I take this term from Benedict Anderson’s study of the same name *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Though dated, Anderson’s construction of the imagined community mirrors Tatar’s suggestion that the Grimm’s project was tied to a sense of finding a Germanic “national unity” (*ABG*, XXXVIII).

<sup>8</sup> What Tatar refers to here is the occupation of the Germany, specifically, the Rhine by the French Emperor Napoleon I Bonaparte when he defeated the Hapsburgs in the Battle of Austerlitz. The occupation ran from 1806-1813. By May of 1814, Germany once again declared its independence from France.

<sup>9</sup> Zipes also reminds us that, while the Grimm’s tales clearly resonate with the demarcations of German culture, there is little that is intrinsically “German” about these tales (“CCC,” 845). As he mentions in “Cross-Cultural Connections,” the tales that Grimm Bros. collected occupied roots in Italy, France, Scotland and even as far away as the then-known Orient (867).

project, poetics or politics (Baum will receive that treatment.). What I provide here advances my argument, but does not do the discussion justice. For a replete explanation of the Brothers Grimm, I recommend looking at the recent work of Jack Zipes and Maria Tatar. In particular, Zipes' *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to Modern Worlds*, his chapters on the brothers from *When Dreams Came True* and *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, and his own contribution to *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition* (which he edited) entitled "Cross-Cultural Connections and the Contamination of the Fairy Tale" are very helpful. Tatar's work on Jacob and Wilhelm is extensive. Her *Annotated Brothers Grimm*, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales* and *Off with Their Heads!*, though, are particularly helpful in understanding the evolution of the tales and the polemics involved in their evolution. Although scholarship differs, I will largely rely on Zipes' and Tatar's critically inescapable versions of the Grimm Brothers' scholastic history (particularly given their replete treatment of the biography).

In 1806, while the two brothers were still students studying law at the University of Marburg, they joined the project of poet Clemens Brentano who was seeking out the "old German literature and folklore" (Zipes, *TBG* 25-6). He wanted to use the two brothers to aid in his collection due to what he recognized as their familiarity with the subject matter, their youth and their "indefatigable" work ethic (26). That Jacob, in particular, was already formidable in his study of German philology goes without saying, but the ambitious brothers were also proud to be part of this project as it allowed them further intellectual pursuit and conversation with other prominent German academics. It must also be noted that the youthful exuberance that initially attracted Brentano to the brothers spurred from their unique sense of patriotism.

We can see evidence of this patriotism in the Grimms' own correspondence. In a letter dated in 1811, and finally printed in 1815, entitled *Circular wegen der Aufsammlung der Volkspoesie*,<sup>10</sup> Jacob wrote:

A society has been founded that is intended to spread throughout all of Germany and has as its goal to save and collect all the existing songs and tales that can be found among the common German peasantry (*Landvolk*). Our fatherland is still filled with this wealth of material all over the country that our honest ancestors planted for us, and that, despite the mockery and derision heaped upon it, continues to live unaware of its own hidden beauty and carries within it its own unquenchable source. (26)

Jacob makes a profound effort to understand Germany, freed from France in 1815 but still occupied during the original composition of the letter, as a "fatherland" with which the peasants could cultivate a German nationalism. I, like Zipes, see this as indicative of the Grimms' insistence upon seeing their work as "nation-building" where they sought to retrieve and rebuild as much of what they believed to be the formative past of a once great "*Landvolk*," literally, a country made up of the people (27). To them, these tales were indicative, proprietarily speaking, of a heritage of the German people, unencumbered by the imperialist transgressions of a condescending French culture. Given the Grimms' lower-class upbringing and social stature and the nature of their constant fight against teachers who found them to be somewhat inferior to "high-born" students, it is not surprising that the brothers found camaraderie with the peasantry (*WDTC*, 63).

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<sup>10</sup> Roughly, "Circular-letter Concerned with the Collecting of Folk Poetry" (26).

As I romanticize them, I must also dispel some of the romance surrounding the Grimm Brothers' project. For, as Zipes notes, in what would become the first edition of their tales, the Grimms' did not go to *das Volk* to collect their tales; they went to the "petit bourgeois [and] the educated middle-class" who were already inculcated with the folklore they had received from the *Volk* and had emended it with a distinct bourgeois flavor and bias (61). This information does not go to discredit the ends of Jacob's romantic call to a return to German fatherland; to the contrary, as Zipes notes, the Grimms proposed to re-inculcate German tradition into the population in the "rising middle classes" by filling their tales with the languages of "bourgeois norms" (61). In effect, the brothers posited that, in order to build a nation, they needed to build the nation on the backs of those who were climbing socially.

In order to find this success with the bourgeois communities, Jacob undermines "the mockery and derision heaped upon" the German peoples by the French by attempting to unify Germans in a shared animus against the French. James Fernandez notes that "one of the forces in the nineteenth-century that acted to promote folklore studies was the rise of nationalism" (144): folklore "embodies [...] the present national and ethnic quest for identity" (145). The Grimms believed that their efforts were to preserve the *Naturpoesie*, the natural poetry, and the *Volkpoesie*, the voice of the German people, on the verge of being eliminated from the global culture by the French incursion (Tatar, *ABG* XXXII, 399). These stories supposedly came from an "experience which is passed from mouth to mouth" from "tiller[s] of the soil" who passed these stories along and around to "reflect the local and the particular" (Benjamin 84). It makes a reasonable bit of sense to understand that the Grimms could potentially succeed in unifying the

nation through their shared ethnicity (Tatar, *ABG* XXXVII). Tatar, like Zipes, reminds us that the Grimms' project was entirely naïve – the folktales are polyglottal and polyphonic in that they have elements that have wandered from many lands. Then again, she also makes to the point that the Grimms' were not necessarily seeking to find a pure German history as much as *produce* one in their written tales. In light of this look at the Grimms' patriotism, though, I think we can make a point which has become accepted with reasonable certainty: the tales collected, written and published by the Grimms in 1812 were never meant to be read by children. But that does not mean that they would remain that way.

John Ellis reminds us that the Grimms “never stopped recasting, rewriting and rephrasing the tales over and over again; and this ever-present readiness on their part to tinker with the language of the tales is impossible to square with their professed reverence for the authentic folk quality of the material” (92). To a certain extent, Ellis is correct. In the preface to the 1812 edition of the *Children's Stories and Household Tales*, Wilhelm writes, “We have tried to collect these tales in as pure a form as possible [...] No details have been added or embellished or changed, for we would be reluctant to expand stories so rich by adding analogies and allusions. They cannot be invented” (Tatar, *ABG* 406). Of course; this is poppycock; the Grimms' motives and methods were as jingoistic as Wilhelm's prevarications concerning their authority were romantic and naïve. But, as early as 1815, when the second volume of the tales was published, the preface had already been appended:

The aim of our collection was *not* just to serve the cause of history of poetry. It was our intention that the poetry living in it be effective [...] In

this context, it has been noted that this or that might prove embarrassing and would be unsuitable for *children* or offensive [...] and that parents might not want to put the book in to the hands of children [...] We have published variant forms [of the tales]. (emphases mine 410)

Of course, the obvious and immediate change concerns audience: children. At some point in the three year span between volume one and volume two of the tales, the Grimms acknowledged a base audience not of erudites and scholars, but one of children and their parents. By 1819, the preface was changed entirely, now deemphasizing the *Volk* and immediately addressing a new audience of middle-class consumers: “children’s stories are told so that that the early thoughts and forces of the human heart will awaken and develop in their radiant mildness” (412). With minimal speculation, we can posit that, once France released their dominion over the German people, the Grimms did not need to further embolden their point to unite the German peoples under nationalist pretenses. At the same time, even prior to the second edition, the Grimms seemed to have altered their trajectory to *not* simply serve their nationalist program, but to also embrace children: an audience they, not three years earlier, noted that the tales “were not written for” (XLII). We have already established that the tales were commissioned for scholastic purposes and imbricated with nationalist intent, but at what point and under what circumstances did they evolve for an entirely separate, not to mention contradictory, audience?<sup>11</sup> Moreover, we must ask the question: if an audience of a folk tale changes, would not also the content and purpose of the text itself?

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<sup>11</sup> Contradictory in that while the children may have represented a German future to the brothers, they could not be part of the “now” of a German revolution.

And it is at that point where Ellis and I part company. It must be noted that the Grimms did embellish their tales – this is not an argument near as much as it is a simple fact proven simply by examining each successive edition of the released tales. But there is also a point to be made here about the movement from a monological address in the Grimms’ tales to one inherently more dialogic. McCallum argues that, with an implied readership, narratives operate with “active subject positions” (261). Ideally, an “addressee (reader or listener) is allowed a position from which to respond, and his/ her position is taken into account” (261). From, as short a period as the 1812 edition to the 1819 edition, and certainly by their final edition in 1857, the Grimm brothers realized an opportunity to expand their audience as the initial work of their project reached completion. Again: the 1812 tales were monological in construction: they denied individual responses to the project, and they had to in order to bring about a national unity. The Grimms wrote from a subject position disinterested in opinion or dialogue; as “authors,” or editors, of the transcription of oral narratives that bore their ideologies, their position was dominant and their method was didactic.<sup>12</sup> But, once the French occupation ended, why would they need to continue to toe that embedded line of nationalism that

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<sup>12</sup> Note, for example, two tales from the first edition, “The Mother-in-Law” and “The Starving Children,” both of which were not reprinted into any successive edition. In both cases, the dominant monarchy of the period, such as the usurping mother-in-law who marries into a German King’s home, takes the indigenous children and consumes them to satisfy her rapacious hunger for their flesh, essentially, making them part of herself (Tatar, *HFG* 249-250). It is not stretch to assume that, past the gynophagia and androphagia presented here, which remained prominent in subsequent tales in later editions, there is an metaphor of imperialist threat and terror as the mother-in-law, the intruder on the national household of the German king, would take the sons and daughters of Germany and try and devour them. When the cook switches out the children with suckling pigs, she saves their lives and, possibly, Germany’s future (249).

they had already achieved? My belief is that they did not; they allowed their project, their tales and their method to evolve with the time period.

And, as both Zipes and Tatar note, while reviewers of the first edition lauded its scholarly effort, they balked at its commercial value, finding it wholly unfit for a younger audience. Yet, by the same token, certain tales (Tatar specifically mentions “The Juniper Tree” and “The Fisherman and His Wife”) were critically seen as *Marchenstil*, fairy tales, which, if revised, would be perfectly suited to an audience of children (xxxix). Considering the change in times and uses for the tales, the Grimms acquiesced.<sup>13</sup> Zipes contends that the changes are minor, but, for our argument, the minor alterations are fairly representative of major ideological advancements from nationalistic folk tales to something entirely different. For example, let’s look at elements of “The Frog King; or Iron Heinrich” in the 1812 and 1857:

**1812 version**

When [the frog] had eaten all he wanted, he said, “Now I am tired and want to sleep. Take me to your room, make your bed, so that we may *lie in it together*.” [...] There was no helping it; she had to do what her father wanted but in her heart she was bitterly angry. She picked up the frog with two fingers, carried him to her room, and climbed into bed, but instead of laying him next to herself, she threw him bang! against the wall. “Now you will leave me in peace, you disgusting frog!” but when the frog came down onto the bed he was a handsome young prince, and he was her

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<sup>13</sup> As Zipes notes, after 1815 the primary editor of the tales was Wilhelm, but he worked by the tone Jacob set in the original construction of the stories (*TBG*, 30).

dear companion, and she held him in esteem as she had promised and they fell asleep together with pleasure. (emphases mine, qtd. in Ashliman 101)

### **1857 version**

The frog enjoyed his meal, but for her , every bite stuck in her throat.

Finally he said, “I have eaten all I want and am tired. Now carry me to your room and make your bed so that we can *go to sleep*.” [...] She picked him up with two fingers, carried him upstairs , and set him in a corner. As she was lying in bed, he came creeping up to her and said, “I am tired, and I want to sleep as well as you do. Pick me up or I will tell your father.”

With that she became bitterly angry and threw him against the wall with all her might. “Now you will have your peace, you disgusting frog!” But when he fell down, he was not a frog, but a prince with beautiful friendly eyes. And he was now, according to her father’s will, her dear companion and *husband*. (emphases mine, 101)

There are immediate and obvious changes if the latter version is to be read as a children’s story: any connection to erotics and premarital sex has been completely elided. In “straddling the line,” as Tatar puts it, “between adult entertainment and children’s literature” in the 1812 edition (*HFG*, 21), the Grimms’ addressed their critics’ comments in the, later, “children’s version” of the tale by removing, obviating and “addressing,” in the Bakhtinian sense, the issues most inflammatory to the popular reception of the work. Thus, the lying together and pleasure-filled “sleep” of 1812 become more acceptable as “companion and *husband*” inabit the later “marriage” edition, with absolutely no discussion of developing love interest or passage of time. The sublimation, though, does

not seem to extend to any issues of violence in this example; in fact, the violence seems to permeate readily throughout both the tales. In both cases, the prince is shocked to transformation by a violent throw against the wall by the princess. Similarly, the princess' bitterness and anger are not revised; the reader is left in a position to know and understand, in either form of the tale, that she is still a petty little brat: having thrown her golden ball with too much vigor, she agrees to be the frog's "companion" if he will retrieve it for her even though she finds him "ugly" and distasteful (Ashliman 98). Interestingly enough, in the 1812 edition, the implication surrounding "companion" comes with a sexual connotation attached to it: she thinks, "What is this stupid frog trying to say? [...] But still maybe he can get my ball. I'll go ahead and say yes" (99). In the final edition of the tale, "companion" has been altered to "companion and *playmate*" with the princess' thoughts instantly dismissing for the reader any consideration of sexual relations: "He cannot be a companion to a human" (98, 99).<sup>14</sup>

And while we can argue about the motivation for the emendations – some critics will assert that Wilhelm simply came to a greater sense of the written narrative with each succeeding edition while others will contend that the project could only continue commercially by providing the audience with something different than what they had previously consumed – my point is relatively simple: the pre-texts of what the Grimms' originally worked with, the already recapitulated and re-ideologized tales, became malleable as the historical, commercial and social situations surrounding the publication

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<sup>14</sup> Another interesting addition to the final edition's version of the tale (if only for later discussion concerning Baum and other literary naturalist's concerns with commodities fetishism) include the enchantment of the prince by a "wicked witch" with the, by then, clichéd notion that only with the princess overlooking his disgusting person could he be freed from his otherwise precarious situation (Ashliman 98; Zipes, *WDCT* 74).

of the tales changed. When written for academics, the Grimms, even then, did not seek to provide the tales as were originally intended (Tatar, *HFG* 32). In fact, when the tales are first composed, in the sense of being written, any claim to them being transcribed *literally* is already dubious given that part of the inherent value of using the oral tradition relies upon each storyteller participating making minor alterations specific to their locale; there would like be no *literal*, in the sense of factual or authoritative, set of tales in existence. More interesting, perhaps, is the idea that the tales could remain and thrive as any form of a static identity.<sup>15</sup> Once placed into the public commercial sphere, the Grimm Brothers' motivations shifted from interests of national identity to ones of consumer success.<sup>16</sup> Therein, as Tatar notes, the Grimms successfully wrested the tales from the folk and placed them within semiotic discourse of a "literary tradition" in their written form (33). The end result, for her and myself, is that the Grimms take the folk tales and turn them into "fairy tales" or, as Tatar suggests, transform them from simply *Marchen* tales to *Buchmarchen* tales (33). The difference is very small but important – in fact, the point is as simple as the compounded word "fairy book." The word *Marchen* suggests folk ownership of nothing more than unwritten stories; *Buchmarchen* asserts that something,

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<sup>15</sup> Take for example any of the cross-cultural fairy tales that have been shown to exist in entirely different societies. Tatar, in her *Classic Fairy Tales*, show how popular fairy tales such as "Little Red Riding Hood," "Bluebeard," "Cinderella" etc. have literally crossed the globe (not to mention time) by constant evolution to the socio-cultural mores of the civilization using the tale (xii-xiii).

<sup>16</sup> Zipes makes the argument indicating that, if one is to sell books, one must sell books to people who have the capacity to purchase books – the middle class (*WDCT*, 74). As such, Wilhelm's revisions reflect a "middle-class morality": deemphasizing the erotic and emphasizing the "Christian role models of male and female protagonists according to the dominant patriarchal code of the time" (74). Of course, it is important to note that Wilhelm saw the "children's book" he was re-editing as being purchased by someone, a parent, who would wish to instill these good morals of the period, thus, in effect, transforming the Grimm's fairy tales from folk tales into semi-didactic "educational" fairy tales (74-5).

some artifact or product, has been produced in which the oral narratives have been collected. Tatar does not mean to make the idea of “folk” and “fairy” tales mutually exclusive of one another (*HFG*, 33). She simply suggests the difference to indicate that once the tale enters the written world of publishing, it enters a world of financial obligations, commerce and audience – allowing the tales that once belonged to a “folk” audience now to be owned by a singular author with singular, though malleable, intentions (33-35). This production, and consumption, of the tale as material goods holds strict implications for the initial message of the story: it becomes secondary to the sale of the text.

### **The Move to Baum... and Towards the Novelization of the Fairy Tale**

If the question was raised why I would choose to establish my study of the rise of the twentieth-century children’s novel in the folkloric roots of the nineteenth-century, I would have to quickly pay homage to Bakhtin’s own method of investigation of the rise of the novel in the “Chronotope” essay. That I follow a similar trajectory in order to continue his manner of investigation should not be surprising. I would assert that this sort of cultural/ textual archeology exactly marks the intersection of time and space that the term chronotope is meant to embody; it holds simultaneously existing literary and extra-literary spheres which operate any mere narratological or historical investigation on their own. Bearing that in mind, I would argue that folk tales are not fairy tales, but, as has been noted, they are not mutually exclusive of each other either. The fairy tale, coming from the Grimms’ notion of re-appropriating the *Volk*, can be seen as coming out of the oral tradition of the folktale. This corresponds to Bakhtin’s method in “From the

Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” where he tells us that the history of the novel is written far before the pages of the first novel were written. He writes:

[Novelistic Discourse] was formed and matured in the genres of familiar speech found in conversational folk language [...] and also in certain folkloric and low literary genres. During its germination and early development, the novelistic word reflected a primordial struggle between tribes, people, cultures and languages [...] in essence this discourse always developed on the boundary line between cultures and languages. (50)

If it sounds as if Bakhtin anticipates my construction of the evolution of folktales “transcribed” and later revised by the Grimm Brothers, he does. Though the Grimms are not mentioned by name, Bakhtin devotes a large section of the “Chronotope” essay to what he calls folkloric time and how it presupposes a movement into the novel in its most productive form, “the Rabelaisian Chronotope” (“Chronotope,” 206-07).<sup>17</sup> These “languages” he discusses, however, are less concerned with nation and/or national cultures than parody (52). Language in the “Prehistory” essay denotes “genre and generic styles,” and parodies of folklore, which itself, is already parodic, become gestures towards novelization (52-3).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Briefly, “the Rabelaisian Chronotope” represents a point of revolution which occurs in the novel through its use and power of the carnival (for example, laughter) which is “directed towards affirmative, positive and humanist action to be undertaken within the historical process” (Morson and Emerson 436-37).

<sup>18</sup> Bakhtin sees parody as that which allows staid, fixed, official discourses and other such monologia to be mocked or laughed at by the public in public forums. “Travesties,” as such, allow for the people, the folk, to have their voices entered into the dialogue present in the novel in “*the interanimation of languages*,” allowing “new artistic and ideological level[s]” to enter into the written discourse (51).

But what are these languages, or at least, what are their defining characteristics for narratological study<sup>19</sup>? Bakhtin gives us a few characteristics to consider: “the study of specific images of language and styles; the organization of these images; their typology [...] the combination of images of languages within the novelistic whole; the transfers and switchings of languages and voices; their dialogic interrelationships” (50). Of particular interest to us is the final concept of dialogic interrelationships. For example, if the Grimms sought to embolden the middle class through unifying them *vis a vis* the publication of the *Volk*’s tales, and, if this bourgeois class had already appropriated the tales of a folk culture into their culture, what can we discern about how the Grimms viewed a middle class seeking to use a folk culture? What did that middle class value of these country folk people that the Grimms thought they might exploit in the cause of the nation? What power does the folk hold that transcends time, place and social class?

As Bakhtin ponders this question, he offers a few ideas. Firstly, unlike the mythic, the folkloric looks towards a future time where one can see “the contradictions” of the past and, even the present<sup>20</sup> and place them into a generic construct which illustrates “time’s fullness as the artist represents it” (“Chronotope,” 147). For Bakhtin, the folk are inextricably tied to the land. They are tied to maintaining and cultivating that land in anticipation of a good harvest at a later date (150, 157, 207). The folk look

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<sup>19</sup> Here, I gladly tip my hat to my precursors of otherwise considered “structural” approaches to chronotopic study. Though my study is particularly enamored with examining the historical prosaics of the rise of the children’s novel – that novelization carries with it particular tropes to be observed. Certainly, such structural analysis is as important as my own “post-structural” needs in defining how audience begins to define the novel in children’s literature.

<sup>20</sup> As the closer we get towards the novelistic, the closer we get towards looking at the contemporaneous “now” as opposed to a static unchangeable “then”(“Chronotope,” 147).

towards a time of “productive growth”; this is a time which, thusly, must be “maximally tensed towards the future” (207). Secondly, keeping with this farming metaphor, the folk operate as a “collective life” and as “collective labor” (206-07). They must work the fields together; they must pass along the secrets of their trades to continue their existence. As Bakhtin states, “Interior time of individual life does not yet exist” as there literally is no place for the individual as the group collective must succeed (206-07). And, while this might sound, to a certain extent, utilitarian, naïvely Marxist or even communistic, that is not the case. The “cyclicity” of this time, its repetitiveness in nature and life, is seen as a distinctly negative attribute (209), but it presupposes the idyllic. For Bakhtin, this is the Rabelaisian chronotope; for me, this is the novelized fairy tale of American Consumerism. In fact, Bakhtin tells us that all these elements of the folk are to be seen as “positive features” capable of bringing about many voices, all fecund except for the fact that they do not allow us into the interior... yet (209-10). But, through the introduction of many voices, Bakhtin’s point is that the folk, and their songs, tales, etc., provide a “matrix of objects and phenomena [...] sharply different from the character of [...] matrices in literature and, in general, in the ideological cognitive processes of class society” (210). In other words, this other ideology of an other people, all congruent in worth and value, and their time represent a formative step towards further “idyllic matrices” of a period to come (230).

The consumerist ideology that we begin to see explored in the publication of the Grimms’ tales is something that would become increasingly predictable to see spurring the growth of the children’s literary industry. It begins to open the door to the novelization of the already novelizing advances on the fairy story. What the Grimm’s

begin to do with their tales, L. Frank Baum will advance by degrees that will have not been seen as yet in the United States. Baum accomplishes this by exploiting the rise of a nascent shift in American ideologies and planting the seeds for the growth of that consumerist impulse in the fertile minds of an audience of children.

***The Wonderful Wizard of OZ: a Naturalist Story of Consumerism and Object Fetishism Re-imagined as the Great American Fairy Tale***

Several scholars have noted L. Frank Baum's distaste for the Brothers Grimm. What he disliked about their work was "the horror," not necessarily the frightening bits, but the elements of the Grimms' work that he felt sought to scare children into following their edicts (Rogers 90). However, Baum spent much of his childhood alone reading fairy tales, due to an angina condition which severely limited his potential for any physical activity (Carpenter and Shirley 14). In fact, as he wrote his great American Fairy Tale, *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ*, he did not deviate far from the Grimms' established template for a fairy tale. Katherine Rogers states:

Us[ing] a traditional fairy tale plot: his protagonist is removed from her normal setting and has to find her way back; she meets and helps three creatures, who in turn help her to reach her goal; she is befriended and opposed by witches, good and bad, who work magic by familiar methods.

But he *reinterpreted* these traditional elements to make them new. (90)

It is this idea of reinterpretation that fascinates me at the present. What caused it? From where did the impetus for re-consideration spring? How did Baum seek to novelize that which was once a very static genre? And what specifically came about from his

changes? Rogers goes only so far as to state that Dorothy Gale, Baum's famous protagonist, "is able to make sense of the confusing world she is plunged into and to influence it" (93). It would seem that she possesses the imagination with which to operate outside of the prescribed spectrum of what the traditional fairy tale allows. And it is there, with Dorothy's absorption of possibility beyond her pre-texts, and what Baum sees as influencing that imagination, that I will focus on here.

I will focus on Baum's "pro-consumer"<sup>21</sup> notions of what exactly the great *American* fairy tale looks like and how it differentiates itself from its European counterparts. Edward Wagenknecht, in his essay "Utopia Americana," claims that "Some foolish people seek to discredit the fairy tale on the ground that fairy tales are made up [...] Fairy tales are no more 'made up' (in the sense of being fabricated) than Theodore Dreiser's novels are made up" (146). In fact, Baum's *OZ* is more "real" than one might suspect of the oft-considered fantasy. Published the same year as the aforementioned Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1899), *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ* employs the world view of a literary naturalist as it seeks to create a fairy tale situated in the American grain with its "primary source of secondary belief [...] in the powerful but receding faith in the American Dream, rather than any corpus of supernatural legend" (Attebery 284).

The poignancy of the *OZ* tale comes in Baum's search to convey to the reader what the life and times of a man succeeding in the urban metropolis of Chicago might suggest to be the American Dream constructed, most notably, by Horatio Alger: "capitalism, the entertainment and consumption [...] the 'dream life'" (Leach 56). In the

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<sup>21</sup> While I primarily make use of William Leech's *Land of Desire*, a more recent discussion of such "culture[s] of consumption" can also be found in Richard Flynn's article "Imitation OZ: The Sequel as Commodity" (122). However, unlike Flynn, I am more concerned with structuralist notions of the consumerism present in the original *OZ*.

words of William Leach, author of *Land of Desire*, “Baum wanted to lift taboos from the expression of desire. ‘To gain all the meat from the nut of life,’ he said is the essence of wisdom. He preferred spending to saving” (56). I will seek to prove that Baum’s unique take on the American fairy tale held a pro-consumerist fascination with object and commodities fetishism. Baum, much like Dreiser in *Carrie*, inextricably ties up “genius,” or imagination, with the consumption of goods and services (Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* 6). As Baum himself put it in the preface to *The Lost Princess of OZ*: “my youthful readers are developing wonderful imaginations... This pleases me. Imagination has given us the steam engine, the telephone [etc.] These things had to be dreamed of before they became realities. So I believe that dreams are [...] likely to lead to the betterment of the world” (Hearn 272). As a man coming out of the turn of the century, as a father and a provider to a family of four children and his wife, Maud, and as a former shopkeeper and journalist who moved to Chicago from Aberdeen, South Dakota, to escape financial ruin and destitution, Baum was a man innately tied up in commerce and commercial success. *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ* was his paean to the lifestyle he lead and advocated others, specifically children, to lead “for the betterment of the world.”

In the Fall of 1899, Baum and his illustrator, W.W. Denslow, went bearing several chapters of the then titled *The Emerald City*, up to the offices of their publisher, the George M. Hill Co., with a short set of demands: publish Baum’s new “American fairy tale” and render Denslow’s drawings for it in the new five-color printing process Baum had been exposed to at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago back in May 1893 (Baum and MacFall 112-113; Carpenter and Shirley 42-43). Hill, present with Frank Reilly, his head production man, and S. C. Britton, his top salesman, balked at the

idea; he told Baum and Denslow that “color plates were an extravagance in a child’s book,” and, like other publishers had told them prior, “if there had been any profitable market for an American fairy tale, it would have been written and published long ago” (Baum and MacFall 113).

Baum claimed that “it [needed to be] beautifully printed and bound,” processes Baum considered as part of his “pro-consumer outlook” which he directly attributed to his earlier books’ success (Baum and MacFall 92-93; Leach 247). Hill never wavered; as a counterproposal, he offered, “I’ll tell you what I’ll do, if you think so much of *The Emerald City*, why don’t you [...] put up the money to pay for engraving the illustrations in color, for setting the type and for printing and binding a few thousand copies” (Baum and MacFall 113). The title would also have to go since books with jewels in their name were considered bad luck in the publishing industry (114). To publish what would eventually become known as *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ*, Baum and Denslow would have to roll over their royalties from their earlier success, *Father Goose*, and take a chance on a fairy tale that no one wanted to publish because they did not believe that it would be profitable; Hill hoped it would sell 5000 copies “before the public tires of it” (114). History, of course, has proven Baum’s wisdom: by 1956, by which time the Hill Co. had long since folded and Bobbs-Merrill assumed publishing rights, over five million editions of the book had sold to an ever-growing audience of children who were captivated by what they read (138-139).

But the question persists, “What is so fascinating, so inextricably tied up in the American Grain, in *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ* that led to such success?” It is not particularly well-written. Even its fantastic elements are little more than allegorical

representations of what a child might better imagine himself. In his introduction to that 1900 edition of *OZ*, Baum concludes that “every healthy youngster has a wholesome and instinctive love for stories fantastic, marvelous and manifestly unreal,” which is fostered by what we have already established as the fairy tale (Baum ii). And yet, Baum argued that the classic children’s fairy tales of the likes of the Brothers Grimm displayed “horrible and blood-curdling” horrors seeking only “to point to a moralizing lesson” (ii). Baum was entirely disinterested with that province. As “modern education includes morality” Baum claimed that the child reader of 1899 “seeks only entertainment [...] and gladly dispenses with all disagreeable incident” (ii).<sup>22</sup> Thus, as a point of contrast with older fairy tales, Baum claimed that his tale “was written solely to pleasure children of *today*” (ii emphasis mine); so he wrote to children of the twentieth-century, not the nineteenth-century. Granted, there are some controversial elements that make one question what exactly Baum considers horrible since Dorothy kills two wicked witches, crushing the witch of the East with her house and dissolving the Western “old woman” with a bucket of water (22, 154). Given that, and incidents similarly violent in the story, one can dispute exactly how “agreeable” Baum’s fantasy is. The resonating factor in *OZ* really concerns how “real,” in the sense of the terminologies of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century literary naturalism, his story was when it was written.

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<sup>22</sup> According to Kevin Knott, “In the era of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Reconstruction-spurred schools, education had the specific purpose of indoctrinating the child into citizenship, in the same way it does today” (Knott.html). Baum claims to resist that notion; yet, Knott contends that Baum “aimed towards promoting a sort of nationalistic propaganda safely *embedded* in story,” but that the qualities Baum sought to indoctrinate and the “qualities that every citizen possessed or wanted to possess.” It is my contention to show the consumerist side of that debatable point: what Knott refers to as the “customary American manner of establishing relations through the exchange of goods or services” (Knott.html).

Frank Joslyn Baum, Baum's eldest son, and Russell MacFall pose the question, "What was there in the time and the writer [of *OZ*] from which it drew such amazing vitality?" (123). Their answer, or, as they admit, the closest they can come to answering it, is that the basic strength of the book "lies in its ability to capture the imagination of children" (123). However, they temper that answer with several mitigating factors. The story evokes imagination, yes, but the duo attributes the text's success as directly resultant to the time period in which it was written: "The country was tired of coping with the problems left by the gilded age. The growth of big industry"(123). Echoing that refutation of gilded age sentiment, an editorial in the 6 February 1946 edition of *Collier's* suggested that the *OZ* story "is a fairy tale of a strictly American kind with a deep appeal to the best American characteristics [...] a realistic attitude of mind" (wmp127). Here, "realistic" is less a discussion of the reconstruction of the real in print and more concerned with attitudes of the period's literary realism and naturalism. Literary realism and naturalism were fundamentally tied to a sense of externality constructed from the period's close relationship to newspaper journalism and the qualities of the "muckraking magazine expose and corresponding novel" (Harmon and Holman 339). Critics contend that these qualities migrated from Europe into the United States as the U.S. became part of a "growing international awareness [and] sensitivity to European literary models" (338). William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman have argued that American writers were "revolters against the village" mentality, the European folk, of the century prior "that repudiated the contemporary artist" and was foisted upon the shoulders of a "socio-economic determinism" consistent with the rise of capitalism in America (338-39). Literary realism, naturalism's immediate precursor, sought primarily to provide, as

accurately as possible, as “realistic [a] truthful representation” of this “actual” economic determinism as humanly possible (429).<sup>23</sup>

That realistic quality the *Collier's* editor notes no doubt echoes the numerous critical claims that Baum deserves to be read alongside authors writing in the realist/naturalist time period such as Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser (Bewley 200).<sup>24</sup> Like Crane and Dreiser, Baum, too, was enamored with journalism and its connections to the prose stylings of literary naturalism, and Baum approached his writing from that perspective from a young age.<sup>25</sup> In fact, Baum's reporter's life in the years preceding the publication of *OZ* gave him an opportunity to observe people and events that evoked the naturalist philosophy of determinism.<sup>26</sup> According to Robert Bannister, Baum saw people, like himself, who were caught in a position where “individuals can control neither their basic impulses nor their external circumstances,” leading them to a certain

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<sup>23</sup> Social Darwinism is most often considered in the same breath as Naturalism. I focus on socio-economic element as consumerism will be tied to my argument regarding the fostering of a child's imagination in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> And some will even read him further into the century: Laura Bennett in her “From Wonderland to Wasteland: *The Wonderful Wizard of OZ*, *The Great Gatsby* and the new American Fairy Tale” pushes Baum even further forward as an immediate precursor to Fitzgerald's view of the modernist period.

<sup>25</sup> In addition to *The Rose Lawn Home Journal*, which he began publishing at the age of 14, Baum had been publishing other journals including starting up a larger paper in 1873, *The Empire*, a magazine for the Syracuse Fanciers' Club devoted to his interest in Hamburgs (chickens [Baum and MacFall 27]), *The Poultry Record*, a Bradford, Penn., paper called *The New Era* and *The Chicago Evening Post* (Carpenter and Shirley 19-20; OZtl1800.htm). He also edited *The Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer* while he and his family resided in the town of the same name in South Dakota.

<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that Maud records that the genesis of the *OZ* story came through the numerous opportunities Baum found himself with to formulate and tell stories to children during slow periods working at the store (Carpenter and Shirley 35). Baum in his own way participated in a preceding oral tradition to what he would, himself, eventually record and sell.

extent, into a sort of primitivism, or the basic human instinct towards survival and security (H47%239-10.html).

Wagenknecht argues that, for Baum, an economically lean time in his life, “human misery [became] the source of all artistic expression” (142); it became a driving force towards more than simple survival, but, eventually, terrific success. Thus, Baum frequently relocated his family to locations whereby he felt that he might capitalize on the potential for commercial and artistic success. As a man who grew up in the shadows of the great American metropolis of New York City, it is not surprising that Baum relocated his family to what he knew of and considered to be “the shining, hopeful White City built on the shores of Lake Michigan” that he had visited reporting on the Columbian Exposition (Attebery 287). He would make Chicago *his* OZ (and, eventually, vice versa), Chicago being “the scene of his first successes, the home to which he returned after his sales trips, [and] the site of a growing artistic community of which Baum felt himself an integral part” (287). As I will argue that Baum is a realist who just happened to write fairy tales, it is not odd that, like a realist, he chose to identify with a particular region or locale that both “unites and separates [himself] from the larger body of Americans” (Knott.html).

And it is here that the connection between Baum, the generally perceived writer of fantasy, and American Naturalist writers such as Theodore Dreiser works especially well. Marius Bewley notes that in the late-nineteenth-century “American society evolved under the stimulus and energy provided by a new age of industrialization and technical discoveries” (203). For both Baum and Dreiser, the epicenter of this industrialized culture was in Chicago. Notably, like Baum, Dreiser began his career as a journalist in

1892, and was instantly captivated by his surroundings, the “grandiose architecture and theatrical forms [which] blurred functional and financial consideration” of Chicago (Bannister). According to Donald Pizer, Dreiser found that the somewhat ostentatious surroundings made Chicago for him “a magical land in which all the power and wealth available to man was displayed,” yet a land where only “a few men, favored by fortune in strength and in natural ability, gained these rewards, though the majority lived empty futile lives” (*NCESC*, 393).

As a reporter exposed to both the most grandiose elements and the most depraved elements of society, Dreiser, like other Naturalist writers of the period, developed a mindset almost socially Darwinian: survival of the fittest. As he writes in a letter to H. L. Mencken: “I went into newspaper work [...] and from that time dates my real contact with life—murders, arson, rape, sodomy, bribery, corruption, trickery and false witnesses in every conceivable form. The cards were put down so fast before me for awhile that I was a little stunned. Finally I got used to the game and rather liked it” (429). Dreiser’s works of fiction and prose became super-saturated with the elements of society to which he was exposed. And yet, in contrast to his exposure to some of the harshest forms of humanity in his journalistic work, writing about his travails brought him the success and affluence with which to see the other side of Chicago, the “palaces of this new consumer aristocracy,” department stores, the theatre district and the consumerism of downtown life (Bannister; Dreiser, “Chicago” 394-95). Quite contrary to the previous excerpt, Dreiser writes:

Would that I were able to suggest in prose the throb and urge and sting of my first days in Chicago! A veritable miracle of pleasing sensations and fascinating

scenes. The spirit of Chicago flowed into me and made me ecstatic. It's personality was different from anything I had ever known; it was a compound of hope and joy in existence, intense hope and intense joy. Cities, like individuals, can flare up with great flare of hope. They have that miracle, personality, which as in the case of the individual is always so fascinating and so arresting. (394)

Dreiser here notes how the city affects him – in his own words, it “flowed into” him bringing him hope and joy. Here, Chicago is not nearly the frightening beast of corruption, rape and sodomy that he had earlier noted in his letter to Mencken. His profession allowed him access to both sides of the bifurcated structure of urban success and failure on display in Chicago. On one side were the successful, those who reveled in a playground of their dreams and imagination built of their own construction. On the other side were not necessarily bad people, or even people of a reprehensible make or kind; rather, these people had been “selected” as unfit to succeed in affluence and success.

Dreiser seems to limit success only by the imagination exerted by someone entering into the city. In *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser called it “genius,” and in a location, the city, where the will of the city acts upon the citizen who inhabits it, the genius is the person whose imagination seems to allow his/her will and imagination to act upon the city. For example, the story's protagonist, Carrie Mebber, is a character “shaped by chance and need” (Pizer, “Late Nineteenth-Century” 572). As she enters the city of Chicago, having come to it from her home just outside of Waukesha, the fabricated town of Columbia City, she is held in “wonder” and “terror” (Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* 7) “while realizing how ‘alone’ she is in the ‘great sea of life’” (Butler 276). And yet, her youth

(she earns the narrator's respect with her innate genius) allows her the opportunity to nurture her creative mind and imagination; she is not doomed to the drone slavery of the industrial worker or servitude to her sister, Minnie, and her husband, Hanson. To the contrary, while she must begin her career in Chicago laboring in one of what could be any number of nameless factories,<sup>27</sup> her first reaction upon gaining her employment is to speculate on what she can do with that money: "Her fancy plunged recklessly into privileges and amusements which would have been much more becoming had she been cradled a child of fortune" (22).

Fortune here means both the conventional ascription of one's value of money, but, Dreiser also seems to render it in the same regard as he would luck or even the potential for success as a result of luck, particularly coupled with fancy. Thus, Dreiser celebrates Carrie as a creature who is willing to look past simple acceptance of her plight and to dream, or even imagine, herself out of it. Carrie has a similar reaction when Drouet pays her a simple compliment on her acting ability. Rather than merely accept it as a kind of courtesy, Carrie begins to imagine herself doing that which should not be possible to her: pursuing the stage as an occupation (117). Dreiser's narrator comments: "As usual, imagination exaggerated the possibilities for her [...] Her mind delighted itself with scenes of luxury and refinement, situations in which she was the cynosure of all eyes, the arbiter of all fates" (118). Carrie imagines herself as the focal point of events and culture, moving and motivating it as it has moved and motivated her to come from her comfortable, yet dull, home life in Wisconsin. She sees the "tangible and intangible possibilities" which Chicago (and eventually New York) offers her and, when she looks

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<sup>27</sup> Her particular toil has her employed at a shoe factory (Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* 21).

out the window, she allows the city to “fire her imagination” to lengths limited only as far as she wishes to limit them (Butler 276-28). That she eventually succeeds against all odds and possibilities as an actress in New York surprises no one, as it seems destined from start.

In *Carrie*, an eventually destitute Hurstwood does not possess the will or imagination to think of a position where he could again attain affluence or even survive. Upon arrival in New York, Hurstwood tries to regain a position as a bar manager (217). When that arrangement falls through, it becomes plainly obvious to both reader and Carrie that Hurstwood, too, is through. The character of Hurstwood, the aging plutocrat, stuck in both the shackles of a failing domestic situation and the comfort of his cushy position as bar manager, simply does not possess the imagination with which to succeed outside of his natural environment. Carrie, by her own consideration, is a very little fish swimming in the great big foreign ponds of Chicago and eventually New York; Hurstwood is a man of affluence and importance in his social setting, but, when removed from where he is comfortable, he fails due to not being able to imagine himself outside of the restraints he has lived. When Carrie leaves Hurstwood to pursue her acting career unfettered, he takes the only position he knows he can get in his current decrepit state: a scab motorman, essentially a socio-economic parasite to the otherwise employed but striking workers, who would be willing to drive cars others will not (300-02). For all extensive purposes, at this point he has been reduced to a bottom feeder, the last dregs from the employable. When he encounters resistance and that job falls through as well, without a shred of imagination about how to escape his plight, he escapes in the only way

he knows how: in suicide. “What’s the use,” he says on his deathbed before reconciling himself to his end (367).

Unlike Dreiser, who mastered the art of representing the world around him far quicker, Baum’s success would not come quickly or without personal loss. As Baum’s journalism career petered out, he was forced into a second line of employment, that of a traveling crockery salesman for Pitkin and Brooks (Carpenter and Shirley 42). He quickly became Pitkin and Brooks’ leading sales representative; his son Harry recalls, “because he had no idea of what his sales should be, he secured orders for an amazing volume and became almost overnight the firm’s leading salesman” (Carpenter and Shirley 42). In short, Baum’s inexperience, his almost childlike naïveté, placed no boundaries around his conceptions of success. Further, picking up on the tricks of the sales trade he had acquired in both his careers as a newspaper editor doing page layouts and arranging merchandise at the Bazaar, Baum focused on his clientele, teaching them how to arrange the china so that it would sell better, thus ensuring everyone’s gain and fortune (42). Baum improvised; he developed new strategies for dealing with his customers that separated him from his fellow salesmen, and his imagination in salesmanship bordered upon the revolutionary.

This creative interaction with his customers, his *first* consideration of an audience, would provide Baum with the impetus to apply these principles in order to advance his literary endeavors. In 1897, at the age of 41, Baum merged his experiences in journalism and salesmanship together and opened a small office in Chicago to publish *The Shop Window* (Baum and MacFall 93), a magazine devoted to “teach the trimming techniques [...] and to raise the vocational standing of the trimmers” (baum3.html). The first issue

went out 1 November 1897 and offered tips to window dressers on how “to attract consumer attention [with] ‘spectacular’ moving electrical displays of revolving stars, ‘vanishing ladies,’ mechanical butterflies, revolving wheels, incandescent lamp globes—*anything* to get the customer to ‘watch the window!’” (Leach 60, emphasis mine). The magazine was a success and attracted the attentions of major department stores of the era to advertise there (Baum and MacFall 95).

Critics have used such biographical material to take stances on *OZ* ranging from it being an allegory of William Jennings Bryan and the Populist Movement’s move to try and introduce silver coinage into the Gold Standard,<sup>28</sup> all the way to Wagenknecht’s view of *OZ* as Baum’s rendition of a modern American utopia. Looking at Baum’s free-fall from the bourgeois society of his upbringing into an immersion into what I would call the American Folk, I am reminded of the Grimms’ project of re-educating the mobile middle class in order to affect a change within a community on the rise. They sought to build a nation that was being threatened with cultural extinction; Baum’s nation was already established, not on a basis of a solidarity of cultures or ethnicities, but on a solid platform of capitalism and the consumption of goods and services as being healthy to that nation. As I see Baum existing at the turn of the century, I see a man who looks not necessarily to the people as the arbiters of change, as he felt that no one person, or even group of persons, could affect a change. In line with our discussion of the chronotope, Baum became a man not seeking to become a catalyst for a change in the present, but, rather, someone who might harness the winds of the moment to change the future through the most readily mobile and malleable class, the children. Baum saw that future in the eyes

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<sup>28</sup> For example, Henry Littlefield’s “The Wizard of OZ: Parable on Populism.”

of the Carries of America, not the Hurstwoods. It is my argument that Baum's re-conception of the fairy tale appears to be written in a vein that breathes these tenets of an American literary naturalism all through it without necessarily identifying with it as straight allegory. And, through giving his fairy tale the necessary complexities of novelistic discourse—by not eliding over the particulars, but, rather, reveling in them—Baum saw a future for both himself as a capitalist commodifying a growth industry in children's literature as well as encouraging the consumption of these texts to an audience who would prosper from their teachings.<sup>29</sup>

For example, it is not too difficult to look at the over-arching *OZ* tale as harboring a particularly narrow naturalist outlook allegorizing Baum's own life. Dorothy lives in rural Kansas, which, in the 1899 edition of *OZ*, has been colored and rendered by Denslow in grey tones linked "with hard work, scarcity, poverty and death" (Leach 252). Its inhabitants, too, are rendered similarly; Baum writes that Dorothy's Aunt Em and Uncle Henry live in a house where there are "four walls, a floor and a roof, which made one room; and this room contained a rusty looking cookstove, a cupboard for the dishes, a table, three or four chairs, and the beds" (11). Farther, past the doorway, there is:

nothing but the great gray prairie on every side. Not a tree nor a house broke the broad sweep of flat country that reached to the edge of the sky in all directions.

The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running

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<sup>29</sup> This argument also works *vive versa*: the more Baum influenced the minds of his reading populace, the more their minds would demand further inspiration. I have already commented on the questionable aesthetic of Baum's *OZ*; this lack of artistic merit did nothing to hurt the continued serialization of his product: he would pen 14 more *OZ* sequels before turning the reins over to other writers prior to his death. Baum's conception of the consumerist/ capitalist dimensions of his work proved to be entirely successful as the *OZ* product has never gone out of style or reconception in the 107 years since its first text.

through it. Even the grass was not green, for the sun had burned the tops of the long blades until they were the same gray color to be seen everywhere. Once the house had been painted, but the sun blistered the paint and the rains washed it away, and now the house was as dull and gray as everything else. (12)

This scene reads contrary to a similar one involving Carrie, who looks out her window while rocking in her chair and is stimulated by the possibilities that Chicago holds for her; there is not much in the gray desolation of Kansas to expand Dorothy's imagination. Everything there seems to be "flat," "vast," and "featureless," making the reader long for the eventual color-stained "fertility" of OZ (Attebery 280). Even the Kansas sun only does damage and scorches the color from the grass and bleeds the color of the house paint to an increased gray. Baum presents Kansas as a harsh wasteland deprived of imagination which affects its inhabitants by taking "the sparkle from [Aunt Em's] eyes [leaving] them a sober gray... never smil[ing] now" and rendering Uncle Henry "joyless [...] stern and solemn" (Baum 12-13). Past merely depressing and unimaginative, Kansas seems to recall the great expanse of nothing and emptiness Baum encountered in Aberdeen: the plight of the farmer, the problems with banks and mortgages, etc. (Attebery 281). Allowing the environment to play upon the inhabitants is indeed Naturalist enough, but, when we get to OZ and, later, the Emerald City, the allegory doesn't necessarily play out as we might expect it would.

OZ, with its "patches of green sward all about, with stately trees bearing rich and luscious fruits [and] banks of gorgeous flowers [...] on every hand and birds with rare and brilliant plumage sang and fluttered in the trees and bushes" (Baum 20), an almost antipodal contrast to Kansas, is rendered with the same dose of possibility and success

that Baum found as he fled the Dakota territories for Chicago years earlier. The character of Dorothy herself, the youthful girl swept up by a chance event of nature, a cyclone, that delivers her to a land of color, prosperity and possibility, seems to mirror Baum's "luck" in Chicago. Naturalist tropes such as these are almost inextricable from the great *OZ* narrative. Littlefield says, "Dorothy's house has come down on the Wicked Witch of the East, killing her. [This shows] nature, by sheer accident, can provide benefits, for indirectly the cyclone has disposed of one of the two truly bad influences in the land of *OZ*" (*OZ.htm*). Further, Littlefield notes the odd similarities between Baum's life in Aberdeen and Dorothy's dispatchment of the Wicked Witch of the West: "'Dorothy went to work meekly, with her mind made up to work as hard as she could; for she was glad the Wicked Witch had decided not to kill her' (150). Many Western farmers have held these same grim thoughts in less mystical terms" (*OZ.htm*). Littlefield connects the harshness and seemingly capricious actions of the way nature acts upon people with both Dorothy's journey and the plight of the farmer Baum came to know in South Dakota. Much like Carrie utilizes her imaginative prowess to see past the boundaries of her imagination and push past those boundaries in both Chicago and New York to find success,<sup>30</sup> Dorothy, replete in youth and constructed as being driven forward by the wonder and joy of her surroundings,<sup>31</sup> quickly dispatches the old, miserly and even cruel

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<sup>30</sup> Not unlike the old Wicked Witches of the East and West, the unimaginative Hurstwood withers and dies.

<sup>31</sup> Literally: Her story, while working with and further novelizing folkloric time, also takes distinct advantage of Adventure Time of the Road (specifically called 'the chronotope of the road' ("Chronotope," 243), which, essentially, interrupts the "normal course of life's events" as she literally travels down a yellow-brick road where she encounters the "intrusion of nonhuman forces – fates, gods, villains," for her, winged monkeys, fighting trees, wicked witches, Quadlings etc. (94-95). As Bakhtin says: "The road is a particularly good place for random encounters. On the road, [...] the spatial and

witches of the East and West. And, yet, to read *OZ* as a strict allegory to the life of Baum, I would be forced to question why, then, Dorothy would go through such travails as she does to return to Kansas. For, upon clicking the heels of her silver shoes thrice and finding herself back in Kansas, Dorothy finds herself back in the same “broad Kansas prairie” with Uncle Henry still working mirthlessly at his farmer chores, but, unlike when she left, Dorothy is utterly thrilled to return (Baum 258-259). She says, “Oh, Aunt Em! I'm so glad to be at home again!” (260).

The answer, I believe, can be illustrated by the results of Dorothy's encounter with the Wicked Witch of the West. Littlefield asserts:

If the Witch of the West is a diabolical force of Darwinian or Spencerian nature, then another contravening force may be counted upon the dispose of her.

Dorothy destroys the evil Witch by angrily dousing her with a bucket of water.

Water, that precious *commodity* which the drought-ridden farmers on the great plains needed so badly, and which if correctly used could create an agricultural paradise, or at least dissolve a wicked witch. Plain water brings an end to malign nature in the West. (emphasis mine, *OZ.htm*)

Dorothy dispatches the witch by the same manner with which the Good Witch of the North protects Dorothy and by which the charlatan Wizard of *OZ* cures her traveling companions' ailments – with simple household objects (such as her silver shoes) that

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temporal paths of the most varied people [...] intersect at one spatial and temporal point” (243). And while it is simple enough to assign this idea to Dorothy meeting her famous traveling companions en route to the Emerald City, it is also important to bear in mind Baum's own travels as a salesman and the influence it brought upon the *OZ* narrative construction. As Morson and Emerson put it: “Chronotopes also govern nonliterary life, chronotopic motifs may be drawn from extra-literary sources as well” (374); my argument only takes that idea a step further to suggest that non-literary life becomes represented in text through the novelization of prior literary forms (such as the fairy tale).

become commodities to the owner (Leach 255). In that, Brian Attebery feels that, if we could watch Dorothy grow up, we might find Willa Cather's Antonia in her place, a young heroine who defeats the aged as she radiates "order, contentment and fertility," qualities he finds emulated by the land of OZ itself (294-95). I would suggest that, if we could come upon an older Dorothy in this novel, she might resemble Dreiser's Carrie in that she, like Carrie, allows consumer objects to take on a life of their own, and, like Baum, believes that such objects only further and better the imagination with which can better her world.

Take for example, Carrie's interest in consumer materialism and consumption; Carrie loves to shop and surrounds herself with objects that she doesn't need but compliment her imagination. Dreiser writes, "'My dear,' said the lace collar she secured from Partridge's, 'I fit you beautifully; don't give me up.' 'Ah, such little feet,' said the leather of the soft new shoes; 'how effectively I cover them. What a pity they should ever want my aid'" (*Sister Carrie* 75). In this scene, Carrie does not need these objects because of their "definite needs"; in fact, she wants them in spite of what they cost or even how useful they are to her (Bannister). Here, Dreiser illustrates the power of consumer consumption where the "value" of product is neither inherent within it nor related to function but relative "to other products: how much it stands out from other products," thus making the product something desirable (Bannister). He writes that Carrie literally is becoming "an apt student of fortune's ways—of fortunes superficialities" (*Sister Carrie* 75). Further, "Seeing a thing, she would immediately set to inquiring how she would look, properly related to it" (75). Refined "things" literally increase her power to "dream," or imagine herself, into the class that the things represent

(75,76): if she imagines herself “old-clothed and poor appearing,” she relegates herself to the hard-labor and servitude she associates with the apparel (76). By contrast, “fine clothes to her were a vast persuasion” to lead a better life, literally, to be clothed as affluent spurs her mind to think how to become more affluent (75). Subsequently, as Drouet can afford her better things, she can dream greater dreams; as Hurstwood can afford her fantastic things, she discovers that she can better her own social mobility and possibility by gravitating to he who can give her more.

Even further, this moment illustrates a mindset in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century of the commodification of objects, where value “depends on something more than the ‘physical relation between physical things’” (Bannister). In essence, as Dreiser describes it, Carrie becomes attached to wanting money, and objects that money could provide her, but isn’t exactly sure why she needs money; the paper that money is printed on does not equate to the worth that the money actually holds in what it can provide to her. In effect then, what becomes valuable is not the “worth” of any object to Carrie (in the sense of the human labor in them), but, rather, a fetishism over the externalities of the objects and the effect that the objects have upon the owner. As illustrated above, Carrie celebrates consumerism as the “material propensity” of the objects she acquires stimulates her imagination and, through her newly acquired imagination, allows her to stimulate her environment itself; in essence, Carrie believes that objects allow her to act upon Nature as its will acts upon her creating this situation to begin with.

Carrie is drawn to the city by the forces of imagination that the city can possibly provide to her, but “her needs are [...] to obtain the tangible objects and social symbols

of comfort and beauty *which she sees all around her* in Chicago and New York” (emphasis mine, Pizer, “Late Nineteenth-Century” 572). These symbols of comfort and beauty, locked away from Carrie behind glass windows dressed to look even more enticing, motivate and spur her thought process on how she, independent of bothersome men who desire something in return from her, can obtain these totems of affluence. Carrie’s imagination is stimulated by that which attracts her to city in the first place: “fine clothing and furniture and attractive apartments and satisfactory food” (572); she desires that which makes her believe that she is part of a larger, more affluent social structure, which, in turn, makes her think she feels good. And yet, as the end of the novel shows us, affluence does not necessarily make her feel any happier or more content: “Amid the tinsel and shine of her state walked Carrie, unhappy [...] she was still waiting for that halcyon day when she should be led forth among dreams and become real” (Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* 368-69). Pizer claims that though Carrie is successful, affluent and rich, living in a luxurious hotel with all the gilt she can handle, she has come to this state of existence due to the fact that “as she gains more [...] her fear of returning to poverty and crudity [...] impels her to seek even more vigorously” (“Late Nineteenth-Century” 572). Thus, she operates without attention to why she needs, or doesn’t need, these objects she thinks she requires, but she must have them to stimulate her genius and her success.

This argument sounds rather depressing; Carrie succeeds—her imagination allows her to harness the capricious winds of nature and *realize* her potential (even if her muse is only reached through the acquisition of goods)—but she’s not happy. In fact, according to Pizer, and I agree, she is fearful of losing what she has gained, reminiscent of Hurstwood who loses touch with his muse as he ages and becomes stagnant. To me, the

realization present here is the simple historical truth regarding American capitalism and consumerism: in order to thrive one must continue to look towards the future with equal parts concern and hope. This sounds remarkably familiar to what Bakhtin stresses as a strength of the folkloric chronotope as it moves into the “novelistic” chronotope: a move where “embodiment” and “potential” express the vitality of youth and imagination and allows them to trump the experience and entrenchment that comes with age (“Chronotope,” 178; Morson and Emerson 440). Interesting, though, when novelized and removed from the *Volk* and taken into the *Stadt*<sup>32</sup> naturalistic forces temper the folkloric optimism and introduce a pronounced element of uncertainty. Where before, the farmer understood the rules of nature and “generative time” that will lend to a period of “productive growth” (even when approaching the harvest) the move to the city, though fecund with even more possibilities, adds many more elements to the “matrix of objects and phenomena,” so many so that one individual cannot necessarily control all these variables (“Chronotope” 207, 210). As has been shown, the naturalist perspective based in Social Darwinism holds that, though one cannot necessarily control all of these elements, one can, in fact, still try and be as fit as possible in order to survive. Like Pizer, I take the position that Carrie can buffet the waves of a capricious nature if she can imagine her way through it. Granted, if she were to stop thinking on her feet (which would be covered in fashionable stockings and shoes to keep her thoughts fresh), she, like Hurstwood, would grow stale, out-of-touch and out-of-date and likely die. Fear of this end perpetuates the cycle of consumption and drives American capitalism.

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<sup>32</sup> German for “city.”

In *OZ*, the reader finds with Dorothy that the commodification of objects is just as evident (if not as bleak and unforgiving as in *Carrie*); it spurs her imagination, propelling the narrative forward. For example, the penultimate scene of the book involves the Wizard, who has just been unmasked as a humbug (Baum 184). He bestows rewards upon Dorothy and her traveling companions for dispatching the Wicked Witch of the West. When Dorothy's group discovers that the Wizard is merely a simpler traveler from Omaha who can actually do no magic, they are incensed:

‘Can't you give me brains?’ asked the Scarecrow.

‘You don't need them. You are learning something every day. A baby has brains, but it doesn't know much. Experience is the only thing that brings knowledge, and the longer you are on earth the more experience you are sure to get.’

‘That may all be true,’ said the Scarecrow, ‘but I shall be very unhappy unless you give me brains.’ (189)

The Scarecrow truly believes that to be happy he must have some *thing* that he knows that everyone else has as a symbol of their intelligence. That he knows this is ironic enough; he doesn't really need brains, but that is the rub – like *Carrie* he feels that he cannot progress unless he has the same things that others do as well. Similar conversations with the Tin Woodman and the Cowardly Lion follow, and, yet, the Wizard is indeed accurate; the Scarecrow is very intelligent and sensible. For example, when the Wicked Witch of the West sends crows to attack the travelers coming to kill her, the Scarecrow takes charge of his traveling companions and orders them to lie down near him as he anticipates that the crows will attack, first, their natural enemy (143). His tactic works, the birds are frightened, but, led by their king, they decide to press on their

attack as the scarecrow “is only a stuffed man” (143). That may very well be true, but stuffed men apparently wring crows’ necks as well as any other man; forty crows with twisted necks later, the scarecrow and his companions may continue into the Winkie Kingdom. The Scarecrow has another opportunity to illustrate his intelligence and imagination quickly there after (indeed he seems to think fast on his feet). Angered at the deaths of her crows, the Witch sends forth now a great swarm of bees to sting Dorothy and company to death. Baum notes: “The Scarecrow had decided what to do. ‘Take out my straw and scatter it over the girl and the dog and the lion,’ he said to the Woodman, ‘and the bees cannot sting them’” (144). Brilliantly, the Scarecrow’s gambit eliminates four out of five potential bee targets. What the bees are left to sting is the one traveler whom they cannot hurt, and, when they try to, the swarm of bees are left dead “like little heaps of fine coal” after breaking their stingers on the Woodman’s tin hide (144-145).

As mentioned earlier, similar ironic complaints are made by all parties to the humbug wizard. The Tin Woodman, whose loss of his flesh body renders him sad to the point of worrying that the tears he will exhibit for crushing a beetle will threaten to rust his joints shut (71), desires a heart because he feels that he can not truly know emotion without one. The Lion, who exhibited exceptional courage fighting the Kalidahs (81) and the Winkies (145-147), makes the unusual, and solely intangible, request to the Wizard for courage that he has already exhibited. This is even more unusual because “courage” is not something one can actually commodify. The wizard essentially has to trick the Lion by offering him a liquid to drink which he tells him is “full of courage” (235); as one might suspect, with object in hand (or, in this case, stomach), the Lion now believes he is quite replete with courage and ready for any scrap. Baum’s characters possess

within them everything they seek for the Wizard to supply them; they don't wish to secure the objects that he actually can give them, but, rather, they are interested in the intangible effects those objects provide them with. That is to say, the Scarecrow asks for brains when he only wishes for greater intelligence; the Tin Woodman wishes for a heart to feel emotions again (58-59).

The Wizard's decision on how to ameliorate the situation is an interesting study into Baum's thoughts on the imagination. In 1900, the same year he published *OZ*, Baum also published a book entitled *The Art of Decorating Dry Goods Store Window*. In it, he argued that "the display window was [a place where] the mundane [was] made marvelous through manipulation of light and appealing arrangement of materials" (Mendelsohn). Leach argues that the Wizard's power, like Baum's as a window dresser, is that he is "able to manipulate others to do his bidding, to make them believe what is unbelievable, to do what they might not want to do (or buy what they might want to buy), and to do it without realizing they are doing it" (254). In that, the Wizard, like Baum, is a capitalist who, when the citizens of OZ promised to do anything he wished, took advantage of that situation for his own gains. The Wizard convinced the people that they needed to build him the great Emerald City. He didn't need it, but it amused him and "kept the people busy" (187). To mystify the otherwise mundane new capital of OZ, he decrees that all citizens must wear green spectacles to ensure that they think it really is made of emeralds; over time, citizens believe it (188). The Wizard, like Baum himself, dresses up the drab and the uninteresting and makes it a spectacle which captivates the minds of his citizenry and makes them want to believe the unbelievable.

Leach refers to this sort of indoctrination as a mind-cure, or something that allowed people to be “drawn to the *here and now* and to [free] its followers from any guilt about enjoying life, goods or money” (emphasis mine, 57). It is an interesting emendation to the folkloric chronotope which I would argue comes with the novelization of the fairy tale during this time period. In essence, the message Baum creates intends to indoctrinate the minds of an audience of children meant to become future capitalists since consumption works to help the child’s mind to develop. Baum himself was quite a fan of this idea. Baum argued that window dressers ought to use the “best art to ‘arouse in the observer the cupidity and longing to possess the goods’”(Leach 60). As Leach points out, as a man who endured such financial strife only to become a successful businessman in Chicago, “Baum seemed tolerant of greed. After all, didn’t any successful business depend on other people’s greed?” (60).

Greed might be a harsh characterization; in fact, Baum, when he regained his fortune via his publishing, actually seemed more to push a pro-consumerist/ active spendthrift bent.<sup>33</sup> In an 1890 article published under his editorship in *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*, Baum actually says “the good things of life are given to be used and [...] the ‘rainy day’ theory of saving is a good one in itself if it does not serve as an excuse for denying yourself comfort” (247). Much like Dreiser’s *Carrie* or the inhabitants of OZ, Baum seemed to find comfort in possessions. If anything, Baum seemed staunchly adherent to the idea that commodities, or excess products and provisions, seemed to equate to prosperity (Karp).

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<sup>33</sup> The idea being that Baum does not see greed as avarice but as consumerist and healthy. Much like Jacques Derrida’s notion of the *pharmakon* in “Plato’s Pharmacy,” Baum sees over-indulgent consumerism as a curative whereas typically it is viewed as poisonous.

And prosperity, for Baum, equates, much like for Dreiser, to imagination. David B. Parker, author of “OZ: L. Frank Baum's Theosophical Utopia,” claims that Baum tailored *OZ* “to the pattern of a little girl's dream” (OZtheos.html). For Baum, that dream seems to be Carrie’s dream: the acquisition of commodities. For, to solve the traveler’s ills, the Great OZ gives them objects which, in themselves, are utterly meaningless, but they spur each recipient’s imagination to their fondest desire. How else can one account for the Scarecrow’s joy at receiving “bran-new brains” (Baum 196)? The Wizard stuffs his head with needles and pins so that the Scarecrow “has proof that he is sharp” and fills out the rest of his head with bran (197). Further, the Woodman, upon receiving his silk heart stuffed with, of all things, sawdust, can barely contain his joy (198); while the Lion is utterly convinced that drinking a small dish of liquid innocuously labeled “courage” fills him with the stuff of which he has been lacking (199). All these creatures possessed within them what it is that the Wizard gives them; he even tells them this, but it is only when they receive objects which they may fetishize that they realize their true potential and allow their imaginations to expand and act upon their surroundings (Leach 257). This is personified best, perhaps, when the Scarecrow is acknowledged by both OZ and the people of the Emerald City as wise enough to rule over them in OZ’s absence (206-07). Collectively, the people of OZ rejoice and say, “When [OZ] was here he built for us this beautiful Emerald City, and now he is gone he has left the Wise Scarecrow to rule over us” (208). Even the citizens of OZ take part in the fetishism of their new commodity, their wise and beneficent ruler, the Scarecrow.

Dorothy also has been given objects which enhance her imagination and potential all through out the story. We have already paid notice to the silver slippers that Dorothy

uses to replace her “old and worn” leather shoes (32); the slippers possess what Baum dubs as “some charm” which will protect Dorothy all throughout her journey. Past the magic that the slippers seem to carry with them at the end of the narrative, though, the only thing they seem to do is make Dorothy *look* prettier. And yet the idea of the pretty new shoes and the other items she picks up along her travels enhance her imagination as she reaches the Emerald City: she replaces her otherwise nice gingham dress with one of the “prettiest gowns” of “brocaded satin” she had ever seen (125); containers and fountains of “green perfume” are made available to her in her room in the city’s palace (124), and, upon dispatching the Wicked Witch of the West, she and her comrades are given extravagant presents – a golden collar for Toto, a diamond studded bracelet for Dorothy, a “gold-headed walking stick” to the Scarecrow and a jewel-encrusted, silver oil can to the Tin Woodman (163-164). What is important to note here is that, while all these extravagant items seem useful to the travelers, none of them actually need them (or better versions of already preexisting items). Rather, as with Dreiser’s *Carrie*, the objects do little more than enhance their self-esteem for possessing them.

As Maud Baum herself recalled of her husband, “Frank knew how to cater to the tastes of children. He wrote their language” (Baum and MacFall 129). He did, of a sort. Baum looked at the cultural moment surrounding him, much like Dreiser, and appreciated the change in time and place which had occurred since the Grimm Brothers “created” their children’s fairy stories and folk tales. Baum decided that those stories were too divorced from the present moment and cloistered too far away from the city in a village filled with a *Volk* that didn’t inhabit his United States. When he brought his tales into the twentieth-century, he re-inscribed them with the dominant ideologies reflecting his time

period: capitalism and consumerism. And, not unlike the Grimms', Baum addressed the population he felt had the best chance for success: children—youthful imaginations still intact, potential-filled and limited only by their own wills to succeed. For Baum, children could succeed and could change the way America worked because they were containers yet to be completely filled, and he felt that he could nurture their minds *properly*.

Though Bakhtin's socio-historic discussion of chronotope does not approach these topics as he considers it—we have moved past Bakhtin by way of a chronology—we can see how L. Frank Baum invigorated the staid generic tradition of the folktale with the unique American complexities of the next century leading him, and carried children's literature into increased novelization.

### 3.) C. S. Lewis' Manifold Mythopoeics: Towards a Reconsideration of Eschatological Time in the Construction of the Post -World Wars Fantasy Novel for Children

Our life comes to us moment by moment. One moment disappears before the next comes along [...] That is what Time is like. And of course you and I tend to take it for granted that this Time series—this arrangement of past, present and future—is not simply the way life comes to us but the way all things really exist. We tend to assume that the whole universe and God Himself are always moving on from past to future just as we do. But many learned men do not agree with that.

C. S. Lewis, "Time and Beyond Time"

I have fought through the thicket of considerable historical and critical preface to arrive at this point in my study: the analysis and construction of the chronotope of the children's novel of fantastic<sup>1</sup> escape from the modernist period.<sup>2</sup> Within that term, one should quickly notice a conflation of a few literary precedents. Bakhtin does not address chronotope in terms of audience. And yet, in order for me to attribute the rise of a generic novel written specific for an audience, namely children, tied to a particular time and place both in an author's life and the cultural moment surrounding, I must both bow towards Bakhtin's construction of chronotope while also making a necessary addition to his scholarship. In the last chapter, we found L. Frank Baum re-defining, novelizing, an existing literary genre to fit the ideology of his present moment; now, I will show an author fitting that newly-constructed concept to his chosen audience: children.

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<sup>1</sup> Fantastic here should be considered both a term suggesting "fantastic," as in that which is improbable, highly unlikely, within the idea of the real, as well as "fantasy" suggesting a genre which allows a reader to take for granted that reality which have been removed, or perhaps, moved on, from the real.

<sup>2</sup> Interbellum *might* be a better term as I would argue that my argument hinges more on looking at the World Wars cultural moment than the literary cultural moment, yet, given Lewis' consideration of authors of this period as he constructs his own opinions on the time, I leave the term to suggest that literary "modernism," views the period as a collapse of both text and culture.

Michael Cadden has commented on the rise of children's literature and its connection to audience, with particular reference to C. S. Lewis whose work looms at the center of this chapter. Cadden is absolutely correct about the discussion of the genre-bending idea of a "children's literature." That is to say, "genre bending" to indicate that, within a chronotopal discussion of a canon of fiction, children's literature, by its very name, looks to define itself and its genre by its readership. Cadden writes:

C. S. Lewis is perhaps the most well-known critic of the cult of the generalized child: There needs to be, he says, a dialogue between an author and *a* child, a real person with whom one either actually consults or about which the author can predict responses based on the history of acquaintance. (emphasis mine 137)

Lewis supports his proposal through a voluminous correspondence with children during, before and after the publication of his *Chronicles of Narnia* as well as in his literary scholarship. In his essay, "On Three Ways Of Writing for Children," Lewis defines children as a "special public" and states:

The printed story grows out of a story told to a particular child with the living voice and perhaps *ex tempore* [...] you are dealing with a concrete person [...] you were talking to a child and the child would become slightly different because it was being talked to by an adult. A community, a composite personality, is created and out of that the story grows. (769, 770)

Lewis, in many ways, romanticizes the dialogism inherent to the construction of the children's book; to say that he was receptive to the child reader out of a strict altruism to

them disregards a great deal of biography which suggests that his adult writings were being far less received.<sup>3</sup> His thoughts go on to support the idea of a new chronotope built out of a need to address a particular audience in an effort to construct a dialogized text designed specifically for reception by that audience who have otherwise, prior, not been seen as a target audience.<sup>4</sup>

In that same essay, Lewis goes on to define his children's writings as "fantasy," a "sub-species" of children's literature distinguishable from the fairy tale in ways which he does not go on to define (770). He does provide us with some hints, though, to distinguish the fairy story as something far different from what he believes is the fantasy. For one, he notes that the fairy tale itself so something that concerned his past, his childhood: "When I was ten, I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so" (qtd in Bowman 25). Further he indicates very specifically that not all children's literature is (or should be) fantasy, but for "modern children," fantasy suits their needs rather nicely (777). This brings out the obvious question of why "modern children" of his writing period (post-World War II) would *need* fantasy. What

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<sup>3</sup> See A. N. Wilson's *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*, chapters entitled "Separation" and "Narnia" for full discussion of his critical maligning as a Christian Apologist.

<sup>4</sup> In his *History of Children's Reading and Literature*, Alec Ellis notes that one of the great impacts of the World Wars was on the literary trade where many publishing houses closed due to the United States and Great Britain's need for paper during the war and a severe shortage afterwards (170). Thus, a severe reduction in the actual number of books written for children sharply declined in number and quality. A resultant effect of this dearth in quality and quantity was that "much of the dross was purged and the opportunity given for a resurgence which was to herald a Second Golden Age" (171). "Escapism," as a genre, had been on the rise since the end of the First World War reflecting both the financial and spiritual depression of the times (160-61); children sought refuge from their realities where they could afford to: in their imagination. But he specifically mentions Oxford and the Oxford University Press as reinvigorating the industry through their production of works of fantastic escapist literature (194). Specifically, he cites C. S. Lewis as one of the standard-bearers of that resurgence.

from Lewis' construction of the fantastic (and its difference from the fairy tale) provides his audience with something "modern children need"?<sup>5</sup> Further, how did the cultural markers of his childhood past and erudite present factor into his conception of a modern moment requiring the fantastic? For me, the answer is simple – the fantasy differs from the fairy story in that it allows the reader "escape" from the locality and reality of the fairy tale<sup>6</sup> in a time of crisis where an escape from reality is necessitated.<sup>7</sup> In "Three Ways," Lewis asserts that "we run to [the fairy story] from the disappointments and humiliations of the real world; it sends us back to the real world undivinely discontented" (774). Part of what makes the journey to the "fairy land," an escape for him from the real, so satisfying for Lewis comes in its "emptying of the actual world" where the child can abandon his or her real world for one with a "new dimension of depth" (775).

Therefore, in this chapter I will use Lewis' work as an example that defines the cultural moment of the rise of chronotope of the children's fantasy novel of escape. Of

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<sup>5</sup> Angela Glover makes a point to note that Lewis specifically targeted and "established children as legitimate readers, not a group to be written at or down to" (131). It is an important distinction as, previously, I have made note of children as the secondary audience of the commercial consumer of books for children (with their parents being the primary audience). Here, Glover asserts, and I agree, that Lewis is an author writing for children *specifically* and arguably for the first time in Children's Literature.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>7</sup> One should not necessarily go so far as to argue that he does not mine the fairy tale in an effort to feed his fantasy. In "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said," Lewis argues that the fairy tale form was "ideal [...] for the stuff I had to say" (*OTAOW*, 73). What *exactly* he meant by that remark is open to debate but critics such as Walter Hooper have argued that Lewis belied the simplicity of the fairy tale was less "likely to deceive" children than any other form (398). Wilson agrees, stating that Lewis needed to find "another way 'further up and further in,'" leading a reader towards "a truth about something – a story which is felt, in reading, to be reality itself" (219-20). Wilson's contention is that, to accomplish this, Lewis chose to write in "a very few pages" filled with a rich concentration of all that he most intensely felt and enjoyed as a reader – the talking animals of [fairy stories], the fauna of classical mythology" etc. (220).

particular interest will be *Narnia* as both a constructed time, place, destination and Lewis' attempt to escape the reality of his own time and place.<sup>8</sup> *Narnia* will be illustrated as Lewis' eschatological take on how a child might escape *his* contemporary moment – a time and place he held a particular animosity towards – and not necessarily the child reader's. And while much has been made of J. R. R. Tolkien's accusations (which were the beginnings but, by no means the end, of such accusations) of Lewis' alleged allegorizing of the Christian Bible to create shoddily composed children's stories based in the tenets of his own conversion, I will argue Lewis' side: *The Chronicles of Narnia* are not only not allegorical, but they are, in fact, only *broadly* Christian.<sup>9</sup> Lewis, in an effort to escape the reality of his time and place, invoked a great many myths, histories and

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<sup>8</sup> There are, of course, others who illustrate this chronotope of escape from a specific time period. For example, E. B. White's 1945 *Stuart Little* uses animal fantasy in a similar way that Lewis uses what has been called "portal" fantasy with *Narnia*. For the eponymous Stuart, though, a chronotope of the road *as* escape is utilized more so than a specific chronotope of fantastic escape (in the manner I describe in this chapter – that Stuart is an anthropomorphized mouse who is treated, essentially, like any other citizen is fantastic in its own right). Ever further back, in 1865, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* toys with the concept of the portal fantasy in Great Britain's first attempts at fantasy written specifically for children. Like Baum, though, it is far more allegorical and far more of a novelized fairy tale than the unfinalized work of C. S. Lewis. More recently, J. K. Rowling's construction of a hidden analogous world visible only to wizards in her *Harry Potter* set fits the Lewis mold far better. Besides being set within our own complex geo-political moment, the *Potter* set looks at a world where humans, known as muggles to the Wizard set, live in relative naiveté to the entire world of magic which surrounds them (not to mention the war amongst the wizards set into motion by Voldemort). The continuity of the wizards world resides within the continuity of the "real" world, but it is hidden from muggles through elaborate sorcery. There are far more texts one could consider as parallel worlds harboring escape from an encroaching reality: The works of Maurice Sendak (1963's *Where the Wild Things Are*, 1970's *Into the Night Kitchen* etc.), Michael Ende's 1979 German opus *The Neverending Story* (not to mention the seeming American counterpart: William Goldman's 1973 *The Princess Bride* – thought this is considerably more a frame narrative that happens to allow both the reader and the sick child to escape into the story), among many, many others.

<sup>9</sup> Which is to say that they are less enamored with religion and religious tenets than they are with biblical stories.

realities of times and places in the *past* (not simply Christian ones) in order to create his new world alongside the one in which he lived. As such, Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope will help illuminate Lewis' interests in collapsing mythic time, adventure time, folkloric time and chivalric time. In doing so, he could collapse a great many mythologies into a reading of Christian myth *analogous* to modern times and not *allegorically* connected to stories told before. The end result of this collapse of so many uses and types of time is that Lewis' fantasy bends the cyclical mythic time into linear, teleological, eschatological time pointing towards a very definite end.

Critical debate on *Narnia*, let alone on Lewis' intents and portents, usually have the same point of genesis (no pun intended): Tolkein's remarks on the *Chronicles* as being "allegory, a literary form [Tolkein] never enjoyed" (Wilson 222). Tolkein's indignation with the work was probably tied to the notion that Lewis, a relatively new convert to Christianity after years of a strict atheism (Freshwater 18), had the audacity to allegorically connect Christian tenets with "*Nymphs and their Ways, the Love-Life of a Faun*" (Hooper, *CG* 402). As Tolkein allegedly mentioned to Lewis' friend and publisher Roger Green, he could not believe that Lewis would dare mar a story connected with Christ with mythological antecedents dealing with ribaldry, Bachhian subject matter etc.; he stated "Doesn't [Lewis] know what he is talking about?" (Hooper, *CL* 1041). Walter Hooper attests that Tolkein's indignation (and, as I will argue, blatant misprision) had much to do with the fact that he believed that this allegorical construction of Christian concepts was "too hastily written and contain[-ed] too many inconsistencies" (*CG* 402). If Lewis was to affirm his faith by writing an allegory set in time contemporaneous with his own, why, then, would he get so many of the "facts" wrong,

let alone mix in so much pagan mythology as to render the work as faulty allegory?

Lewis was considered to be an academic and a scholar of the first order almost from childhood; why, then, would he compose such a shoddily assembled allegory? My answer is that he simply did not.

As mentioned, this is a point of some major critical debate. To this day, critics align themselves with Tolkien and, more recently, with Philip Pullman who has taken up Tolkien's arguments with greater vigor.<sup>10</sup> Chad Wriglesworth flatly calls the writing "allegory" even while acknowledging that "Lewis gathers and grafts [...] images into a new state of being, reshaping pagan signs and medieval lore into an imaginative and highly accessible Christian context" (29). David Holbrook, too, believes that "Aslan seems too full of magic" if we are to examine Lewis as a writer within the Christian tradition even though Lewis admitted that the series was designed specifically "for a wide audience" (Holbrook 11; Manlove 13).<sup>11</sup> In no way am I arguing that C. S. Lewis tries to write something *non-Christian* in his *Narnia* set. To the contrary, my idea of the Modernist Chronotope of Children's Fantasy holds that Lewis attempts to re-examine his time and place in the world around him *vis a vis* re-visiting Christianity by examining concurrent and predating mythologies. That he chooses to represent the idea of escape

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<sup>10</sup> Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy has been argued by many, including Pullman himself, to be an antidote, of sorts (He is clearly Christian.), to Lewis' supposed misgivings on religion and allegory. A recent discussion of this was taken up by Mary Bowman in her piece "A Darker Ignorance: C. S. Lewis and the nature of the fall" where she claims that "Lewis disagrees not simply on whether the Fall was a fortunate one (I believe he does disagree with Pullman here) or on the necessity of growing up (I believe his view actually has much in common with Pullman's), but on those fundamental assumptions about innocence, sin, and maturity" (63).

<sup>11</sup> For a greater discussion of the initial critical reception, particularly towards allegorical accusation surrounding *Narnia*, one should read the third chapter of Colin Manlove's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Patterning of a Fantastic World*.

from his own moment as escape from the mortal coil points to how Christianity's eschatological perspective brings him relief.

Others, such as Amanda Neidbala, have asserted that, for Lewis, the inclusion of pagan elements "anticipates Christianity" and "are, in a way, their own *mythology* that ultimately points towards Christianity" (72). Her choice to assign *Narnia* mythic status as opposed to allegorical status is somewhat of a compromise between the Tolkeinian perspective and less-virulent ones. Among these less-virulent assessments of Lewis' project, Lee Rossi sees *Narnia* as being consistent with Lewis' adult writing (he specifically mentions Lewis' update on the Cupid and Psyche myth, *Till We Have Faces*) in that it attempts to "translat[e] Christian mythology into a slightly different language, not so that it becomes unrecognizable but so that it gains freshness" (52).

This idea of a re-mythologization of Christianity within a modern filter has been picked up individually by Mark Freshwater and Michael Nelson. Freshwater claims that it is Lewis' childhood reading experience of George MacDonald's *Phantastes* that fueled his imagination towards being able "to create modern myth [...] MacDonald was the first modern writer to show [Lewis] that this was possible" (17). He goes so far as to connect this idea of Lewis' re-imagination with his actual conversion experience itself, stating that "Lewis had begun to abandon his religious beliefs [...] because he didn't think Christianity had much connection with the unhappy world around him" (18). A young Lewis, in a 1916 letter to Arthur Greeves, confirms this:

I think that I believe in no religion. There is absolutely no proof for any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint, Christianity is not even the best. All religions, that is, all *mythologies* to give them their proper name,

are merely man's own invention—Christ as much as Loki [...] and so Christianity came into being—one mythology among many, but the one we happen to have been brought up in. (Hooper, *TST* 135)

Lewis would, of course, alter that trajectory, but as Nelson asserts, not as much as critics often claim: “To Lewis, belief in God was the only intellectually honest position he could take: ‘I am an empirical Theist. I have arrived at God by induction’” (626). Nelson asserts that Lewis’ famous paradox of Jesus being realized as a “true myth” (Wilson 126) came by way of collapsing his youthful mythological precepts concerning religion and his empirical eye: “The Christian story of the dying god, in other words, lay at the exact intersection of myth and history [...] ‘myth had become fact’” (627).

### **Dependent upon Definition: What is Lewis’ Concept of Allegory?**

As Joy Alexander has recently pointed out, “Lewis always resisted making any simple equation that Aslan is Jesus Christ. In his first novel, 1933’s *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, he came closest to allegory but he spent the remainder of his prolific career retreating from anything so explicit” (37). Alexander buttresses her claim, as I will, on Lewis’ own remarks on the matter. Lewis explicitly states that the *Chronicles of Narnia* are *not* allegorical, at least in the way he understood allegory.

In a letter dated 11 September 1958, Lewis writes about his notion of allegory to a young girl named Lucy:

A strict allegory is like a puzzle with a solution: a great romance is like a flower whose smell reminds you of something you can’t quite place. I think there is something in ‘the whole *quality* of life as we actually

experience it.' You can have a realistic story in which all the things and people are exactly like those we meet in real life, but the quality, the feel or the texture or smell, of it is not. (Dorsett 81)<sup>12</sup>

Lewis' critics rightly do note how elusive Lewis was to point out to fellow adults the meaning behind his words and their, if any, antecedents, but he was entirely forthcoming with children who asked the same questions. In another letter dated 8 June 1960 to Patricia, Lewis answers the question of *Narnia's* allegorical ties with little equivocation:

I'm not exactly 'representing' the real (Christian) story in symbols. I'm more saying 'Suppose there were a world like Narnia and it needed rescuing and the Son of God (or the 'Great Emperor oversea' [sic.]) went to redeem *it*, as he came to redeem ours, what might it, in that world, all have been like?' [...]

- 1.) The creation of Narnia is the Son of God creating *a* world (not specially *our* world.)
- 2.) Jadis plucking the apple is, like Adam's sin, an act of disobedience, but it doesn't fill the same place in her life as his plucking did in his. She was already fallen (very much so) before she ate it. (92-93)

Although I only provide two examples from this letter here, Lewis goes on to list five more differences between his Narnia set and any Biblical construct. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but only to illustrate the point that Lewis never foresaw what he was doing as strict allegory as he understood it.

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<sup>12</sup> I must here mention the famous "letter to fifth graders" where Lewis juxtaposes what he did in *Narnia* to famous allegorical works which inspired it such as *The Pilgrim's Progress* (64). In using these other letters written on the nature of allegory specifically to children, I seek to expand the quality of investigation by inclusion of additional voices.

Lewis preferred to imagine what he was doing as “retelling” (Hooper, *CL* 1042). Allegory, to Lewis, was something far different than retelling. Lewis defines it in his work *The Allegory of Love* in long and somewhat obtuse terms. He provided a more concise definition to one Mrs. Hook in a letter dated 29 December 1958:

By an allegory I mean a composition (whether pictorial or literary) in which immaterial realities are represented by feigned physical objects, e. g. a pictured Cupid allegorically represents erotic love (which in reality is an experience, not an object occupying a given area of space), or, in Bunyan, a giant represents Despair. (Hooper, *CG* 424)

To extrapolate further and contextualize this discussion within *Narnia*, in that same letter, Lewis explains how, under his terminologies, Aslan is in no way allegorical in connection with the figure of Jesus Christ:

If Aslan represented the immaterial Deity, he would be an allegorical figure. In reality however he is an invention giving an imaginary answer to the question, ‘What might [Jesus] Christ become like if there really were a world like Narnia and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in *that* world as He actually has done in ours? This is not allegory at all. [...] Allegory and such supposals differ because they mix the real and the *unreal* [emphasis mine] in different ways. Bunyan’s picture of Giant Despair does not start from supposal at all. It is not a supposition but a fact that despair can capture and imprison a human soul. What is unreal (fictional) is the giant, the castle and the dungeon. The incarnation of Christ in another world in mere supposal: but *granted* the supposition, He

would have been a physical object in that world as He was in Palestine, and His death on the Stone Table would have been a physical event no less than his death on Calvary. (424-25)

Many points arise from this letter, but one in particular demands our attention here. It has already been critically established that Lewis had Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, and Spencer's *Faerie Queen* in the back of his mind as he began his *Narnia* set. As he notes, though, where he differs from those authors in regards to construction of his tale comes in the idea of including fictions, the "unreal," into his story in an effort to create something new, something analogous to the story of Christ and not allegorical to it. The unreal Lewis sought to include, as Nelson points out, are the many classical mythologies which permeated his own childhood reading experiences (621-24). And as Donald Williams points out, Lewis didn't limit himself to the classical mythologies of the Norse, Celts, Greeks, Romans, and other heathen cosmologies, but also readily included Gnostic Christian mythology with his portrayal of Jadis being a descendant of Adam's first wife (in the apocryphal sense), "her they called Lilith" (Williams 48, 53; Lewis, *LWW* 147).

While not *Narnia* may not be allegorical, Lewis did seem to be after symbolism and mythopoeia in his *Narnia* sequence. In *The Allegory of Love*, he writes:

The attempt to read that something else through its sensible imitations, to see the archetype in the copy, is what I mean by symbolism [...] The allegorist leaves the given – his own passions – to talk of that which is confessedly less real, which is a fiction. The symbolist leaves the given to find that which is more real. (Hooper, *CG* 426-27)

The difference is finite, but very important in understanding Lewis' initial divide with the Christian Church in the first place. Lewis felt that one of the greatest shortcomings of the Church was its capacity to try to teach, in the dogmatic sense, as opposed to letting children learn from the stories of the Bible themselves (Wilson 77). As Wilson notes in his biography, Lewis's conversion was a process built less upon a literal conversion from atheism into Christianity than a more gradual evolution of how he constructed his own sense of Christianity – one that might or might not conflict with a greater sense of other religions and mythos. Lewis himself read Christian stories, texts and tracts rather voraciously even though he had issues with the ideological tenets and politicking of his Belfast homeland and the Catholic Church. In consideration of how he could despise the politics and dogma of the church and yet still find such satisfaction in Christian writings, Lewis said, "Christians are wrong, but all the rest are bores" (Wilson 78). His audio-lectures on his Christian vision can be found in *Mere Christianity*. Kathleen Norris sums up the difference very succinctly: "[Lewis] sees religion with fresh eyes" (xix). Her contention, as is mine, and I believe, Lewis', is that "mere Christianity" attempts to see the faith as just that: faith. It is neither treated as "theology" or "philosophy" but as a "reality [...] taking on our humanity" (xix). It is Wilson's argument that Lewis was able to see literary modernist writers around him, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats et al, collapsing a great many discordant discourses, mythologies, ideologies and religions into singular bodies of work.<sup>13</sup> Because of this, he too, could allow Christianity

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<sup>13</sup> Wilson does not expand upon why these writers collapsed so many different discourses into their work. However, we can certainly speculate that these "High Modernist" authors and poets operating within the literary modernist period, those writers whose texts literally characterized the term "Modernist," saw the traditional, un-unified, vehicles of art, commerce, culture, literature etc. as outdated in need of reform. Therein, it is fair

to “engage his imagination” on a level that was not so much about conversion as acceptance of his manifold beliefs and belief systems (79, 110).

The end result of this experience becomes realized in what Lewis himself coined as his own “mythopoeics” (Hooper, *CL* 389). In a letter written to T. S. Eliot, Lewis asserts some doctrine of his faith in mythopoeics, “The connection [...] is that they are all concerned with *story*, or if you will *mythopoeia*” (655). Lewis’ assertion is that the narrative, freed from dogmatic instruction or overt pedantry, could teach, fundamentally speaking, all that one would be required to know free from the interpolation of a body concerned with politics (Wilson 122-23).

Lewis explores the idea further when he writes his childhood friend Arthur Greeves in 1930, stating:

I am still inclined to think that you can only get what you call ‘Christ’ out of the Gospels by picking & choosing & slurring over a good deal [...] Of course the trouble of writing about it is that the words inevitably mean more than one intends. (Hooper, *TST* 331)

Authors who Lewis viewed to have slurred, so to speak, in order to create were all roughly labeled by him as “mystics,” people who wrote in “quasi-theosophical, semi-astrological” ways (Wilson 123). In fact, as he considered the sacred act of prayer in 1944’s *Beyond Personality*, he, somewhat playfully, included it under the chapter heading of “Let’s Pretend” (124). “Pretending,” in many ways, is how children attempt to orient themselves to the discourses of adulthood; therefore, “pretending” in prayer is a

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to argue that the mighty complex of discourses, narrative structures, discordant voices etc. we find in poetry such as “The Wasteland” or “the Cantos” and in books such as *Ulysses* sought to re-create the way literature was created in a world, similarly, brought together by the First and Second World Wars.

manner by which the adult comes to orient him or herself to some sort of spiritual life. As to how the idea of a mythopoeics plays into this pretending, it was through his friendship to Greeves and Tolkein that Lewis discovered the capacity and possibility for the idea of “myth” and “truth” to blur by way of examining the similarities of the Jesus Christ “myth” to similar ones in Greek (Dionysus) and Roman (Bacchus), Norse (Balder) etc. pantheons (Wilson 126).<sup>14</sup> His conclusions were a strange alchemy of negative capability, story, history, truth and fact. Wilson writes:

He stopped short of understanding Christianity [the religion<sup>15</sup>] because when he thought about that, he laid aside the receptive imagination with which he allowed himself to appreciate myth and became rigidly narrow and empiricist. He should understand that ‘the story of Christ is simply *true myth*: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that is *really happened*. (emphasis mine, 126)

In short, Lewis’ ultimate acceptance of the capacity to be religious came *vis a vis* abandoning hope in organized religion and regaining faith in the capacity to tell (many) stories appreciated for their spiritual value and, often, their historical value as well.

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<sup>14</sup> In Wilson’s biography, a fine chapter on Tolkein’s assistance in guiding Lewis to a sense of mythopoeics can be found in the chapter of the same name. In particular, the final ten pages outline the process with a degree of specificity that I would not hope to recreate here due to space limitations.

<sup>15</sup> In *Miracles*, Lewis writes of ‘religion’ with no minor animosity. He states, “I call it ‘religion’ advisedly. We who defend Christianity find ourselves constantly opposed not by the irreligion of our hearers but by their real religion” (129).

### **Towards a Theory of the Chronotope of Children's Escapist Fantasy**

In the 29 December 1958 letter to Mrs. Hook, Lewis dismissed the allegorical argument of *Narnia* by asking the simple question of what might happen if Jesus had been born in *another* world not similar to our own (presuming such other worlds could exist). It is an important element to both his argument concerning *Narnia* as well as my own because it brings up specific matters of chronotope indigenous both to *Narnia* and Lewis' own time and place in history: the fantastic land's connections to the world of the real that it is constructed against. I choose my words here quite deliberately as I would easily contend that Lewis constructs *Narnia*, chronotopally, as an antidote to the times he lived. He writes in *Miracles*:

The Christians say that God has done miracles. The modern world, even when it believes in God, and even when it has seen the defencelessness of Nature, does not. It thinks God would not do that sort of thing. Have we any reason for supporting that the modern world is right? I agree that the sort of God conceived by the popular 'religion' of our own times would almost certainly work no miracles. The question is whether that popular religion is at all likely to be true. (129)

The animosity towards his time period drips off each of Lewis' words. Besides the obvious cultural antecedents of both World Wars (Ellis 170, Reynolds 47),<sup>16</sup> Lewis "despised" what he perceived as the degraded virtues of a people connected with the modern period in which he lived: "modernism, evolutionism, materialism and historicism with the traditional Christian verities" (Rossi 29). In many ways, Lewis connected these

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<sup>16</sup> Particularly difficult for Lewis was WWI: he was both wounded in the Battle of Arras and lost a dear friend in Paddy Moore in 1918 (Hooper, *CG* 122).

ideas, celebrated as they gained potency in an increasingly industrialized, urban twentieth-century, with a declining capacity to embrace religion free of ideological precepts (similar to the way he encountered it as a child). In response, Lewis sought refuge in another world not marred by its own history. In effect, Lewis culled out the best pieces of other worlds, literally, to his mind, the best places and times which reflected his ideals, to create his. At the very least, Lewis culled elements of our reality and its imagination to create his world from the best thoughts he believed that had been considered.

Lewis turned to mythologies. As many biographers have pointed out, Lewis' secular youth spent under the tutelage of W. T. Kirkpatrick helped cement a fondness for mythology that had been fostered since he first began to read (Nelson). From the *Aeneid*, to Frasier's *Golden Bough*, to British Faerie myth, to the Egyptians' resurrection myths of Osiris, to the "Irish [myths] better still [and] the Norse best of all," Lewis explored a greater canon of mythos than anything resembling a typical British educational experience (Nelson). His correspondence with Greeves is littered with deep consternation on the relevancy and possibilities for fact and truth contained within the great many myths of humankind. He writes that, within mythology, "Anything MAY exist [...] Whenever any new light can be got as to such matters, I will be glad to welcome it [...] you see most legends have a kernel of fact in them somewhere" (Hooper, *TST* 135-37). Here we see not only his open-minded approach to myth, but a thorough optimism that, within myth, some answers to that which troubled him and his spiritual dearth, not to mention his present historical moment, might be found. And from that humble clutch of mythologies, Lewis changed the landscape of children's literature.

What Lewis did with his Narnia set was to create a portal out of our own agreed upon historical reality into a reality of his own construction, created out of the different realities he had become familiar with as a child. As the criticism exposes, and as he rightly claimed, it is a universe governed by Christian precepts, but not exclusively. In fact, in creating an alternative universe, he does not set it contemporaneous with his time. Actually, he establishes the place as far from his reality as possible in a time equally separate from a modernity he reviled. Therefore, it is not, in the manner that Wriglesworth suggests “allegory” or “fairy tale”; if anything, Lewis wanted to get as far away from the real and the local that the fairy tale would have cemented him to as possible. What Narnia, for Lewis, really is, is: “fantastic,” “marvelous,” and “uncanny,” from anything anyone contemporaneous with Lewis would have known or understood children’s fiction to be (Nikolajeva, *CLCA* 70).<sup>17</sup>

Nikolajeva collapses these terms, arguing that the “fantasy code” that Tzvetan Todorov originally constructed changes in the 1950s: since “the evolution of science and technology has radically changed our attitude towards a rich variety of phenomena within fantasy novels [including] parallel worlds, non-linear time [etc.] that modern science cannot explain but accepts as possible” (71). In regards to Lewis, I agree entirely. With his animosity towards all things he saw as contemporary and the attitudinal change it represented regarding children and the imagination, he felt that there was no better solution than to pull his universe and its cosmology from the time and place he wished it to be as a method of “romantic” escape for his audience (71). In lieu of a world divided

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<sup>17</sup> Maria Nikolajeva, from whom we borrow the aforementioned terms, actually separates them from each other in line with how French scholar Tzvetan Todorov used them in his study of eighteenth and nineteenth century literature (*CLCA*, 70).

and frightened by wars of an abominable nature, he sought refuge for his audience in a time *analogous* but not allegorical – a time and place where he felt war and fighting had rules, reason and rationality – a civility not known or understood in the twentieth-century. He based, constructed and laid his universe in a time of chivalry (or, perhaps, as a backdrop) and order to combat what the world of WWI and WWII appeared as to him.

Nikolajeva doesn't articulate why the code changes in the 1950s. I suggest that the vestiges of the World Wars period seem to allow nothing less than a change in the paradigm from the concern with the local in the novelized fairy tale to the full-blown escape from the local into a time and land of the fantastic separated from the reality that drove one to the fantasy to begin with – literally, an escape.<sup>18</sup> For example, Nikolajeva notes that “magic,” both a fundamental element of fairy tale and clearly in the vein of the Nesbitian style that Lewis picks up when he constructs Narnia, loses its familiar supernatural valences of the fairy tale and begins to “create a tension between the marvelous and the everyday” (71). There are several instances in *The Chronicles* where this is apparent: the ubiquitous “lamppost” growing like anything otherwise natural and organic in Narnia's infancy (*MN*, 67); the Pevensie girls preparing lunch and eating with the Beavers as they would, perhaps, with their own parents (*LWW*, 143); when we first meet Eustace, as Edmund and Lucy become absorbed (literally) by the painting of the Dawn Treader, it is treated by Eustace as some sort of everyday silly prank pulled on him

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<sup>18</sup> Without pressing this idea too much, take, for example, the Pevensies literally escaping the locality of London for the more idyllic and peaceful home of the Professor. They literally leave the dangers associated with bombings and air-raids to go “to the house of an old Professor who lived in the heart of the country, ten miles from the nearest railway station and two miles from the nearest post office” (111). Literally, they are cleaved from all of the trappings of the modern society and whisked away to an almost castle like estate held by a beneficent lord of the “very large house” (111).

by the Pevensises... even though he has clearly been brought through a portal into a new world (*VDT*, 426-27).<sup>19</sup> My point being, part of Lewis' fundamental framework for Narnia, and those who may enter into it and return to it, is that they must be young enough, and literally filled with enough imagination and will to resist "reality," that they are willing and able to accept a fantastic reality built upon disparate, impossible cosmologies.<sup>20</sup> These cosmologies merge within the alternative fantastic reality Lewis creates. This explains why the children are outlawed from Narnia as they age (most notably Susan, who is completely exiled from Narnia, and Narnia afterlife, as she has "grown-up" concerned with "nylons and lipstick and invitations" [*LB*, 741]). Often mischaracterized as some sort of anti-feminist/ poorly gendered stance against a real life adversary to Lewis,<sup>21</sup> it is considerably more likely that, as Aslan allowed Digory, Polly

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<sup>19</sup> Eustace states to the Pevensies, "Still playing your game?" prior to being pulled through the portal (*VDT*, 427). Later, just prior to being pulled through the portal, the narrator notes that he thought he saw the waves in the picture "going up and down," making him feel "horribly seasick" (427). Yet, upon being pulled through the portal, having been noticeably seasick and having had a very real conversation with Reepicheep, a gallant and anthropomorphized mouse, he still writes in his diary: "*August 7* – have now been twenty-four hours on this ghastly boat if it isn't a dream" (437).

<sup>20</sup> How else can one explain the presence of Father Christmas (*LWW*, 159), Bacchus, literally reveling during "the romp" upon Aslan's return in *Prince Caspian* (388-89), and, of course, the many instances of Aslan which occur in every single volume of the set. All are, as Paul Ford notes, representations in different "mythologies" of Jesus, but all are concurrently displayed as independent figures existing simultaneously in the same fantastic reality (110). To his credit, Lewis does write that "Vicariousness is the very idiom of [...] reality" with the difference between "history," or the reality of the real world, and fantasy being that "[fantasy] has little to say to the man who is still certain that everything is going to the dogs [...] Its hours comes when wholesale creeds have begun to fail us. Whether the thing really happened is a historical question. But when you turn to history, you will not demand for it that kind and degree of evidence which you would rightly demand for something intrinsically improbable" (*Miracles*, 210-212).

<sup>21</sup> Wilson has suggested that Narnia might even be some sort of defensive response to a lost argument to Elizabeth Anscombe's rejection of Lewis' *Miracles* or even a particularly anti-female bent consistent with the purview of the Christian church (The list of anti-feminist reads of Lewis is exceedingly long) (213-15). More recently, Jean

et al into Narnia later, Susan would be welcomed back to the Narnia afterlife as soon as she parted ways with the adult convictions which barred her in the first place. An excellent example of this idea exists whereby the children can only “see” Aslan as they begin to *accept* his possibility of reality in *Prince Caspian*. Lucy, who sees him first, declares: “I saw you all right. They wouldn’t believe me” (380). Aslan later tells her that the others will indeed “see” him but “not at first [...] it depends” (381). What it depends upon is whether or not the children, now a year older and worldlier, are willing to once again accept Aslan into their reality as they did when they first journeyed through the wardrobe.

Lewis mitigates such contradictions through a conflation of taking magic, legends, mythologies, histories etc. and filtering them all through a sieve of his imagination to create a guiding theological ideology to his fantastic world viable, sustainable and consistent with the rules of reality. As he wrote:

Myth is the isthmus which connects the peninsular world of thought with the vast continent we really belong to [...] it was through almost believing in the gods that I came to believe in God [...] To declare Christianity true was not to declare all other religions false. Rather, Christianity was true because it was the answer to two vital questions: ‘Where has religion reached its true maturity? Where, if anywhere, have the hints of all Paganism been fulfilled?’ (qtd. in Nelson).

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Graham castigates Lewis for having “the same ambivalence [in *Narnia*] about female power as does his writing for adult audiences” (32).

Of course, his paganism is our mythopoeics,<sup>22</sup> but the case is deliberately laid out: it is only through a reconstruction and reorganization of a plural past that Lewis feels that he can construct a future forgoing the present he exists within.

While fairy tale time exists proudly “once upon a time,” it is can also be a time of “*collective* life” which Bakhtin marks as folkloric time, replete with “*productive growth*” in a “time maximally tensed towards the future” (“Chronotope,” 206-07). Yet it is also married with a publicized “historicization” of private affairs, “food, drink, copulation, birth and death” as “common affairs” while also being wed to a “new context of magical significance” (209-212). This magical significance, for Bakhtin, deals with rituals – and in this new sense of time and place “the rituals and everyday life are tightly interwoven with each other [...] Ideological reflection [the word, the symbolization] acquires the force of magic” (212). What he is describing here is not allegory, but a symphony of the everyday and the symbols which create a differential between the common and the fantastic in an effort to unravel the piety of the sacred and force it into an area of “*ritualistic parody*” (212). Thus, Bakhtin states:

The elements of the matrix (which had in its ancient form encompassed a great deal) are, as before, tightly bound up with each other, but they are interpreted in a ritualistic *and* magical way, and differentiated on the one

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<sup>22</sup> Freshwater argues that as resultant to his conception of myth, “Lewis found the parallels in pagan mythology to the Christian story not as disconcerting similarities but as affirming signs of the truth of the Christian message. Lewis declared that Christians must not be ashamed of the ‘parallels’ and ‘pagan christ.’ They *ought to be there*” (40). Lewis states, “The resemblance between these myths and the Christian truth is no more accidental than the resemblance between the sun and he sun’s reflection in a pond” (qtd. in Kilby, 17).

hand from communal production, and on the other hand from individual everyday life [as] analogous phenomena. (212)

Correspondingly, Lewis' fantasies exist in a very real, discernable time and place, which have a direct connection to specific times and places in our historic reality. But, as Bakhtin illustrates, "the gross realities of the ancient pre-class context [...] are dissociated from each other, and undergo[...] a sharp hierarchical reinterpretation" (213). Thus, as Lewis borrows and applies discordant historical, theological and mythological tropes and figures into his world, he does so in an effort to juxtapose this world with the one he chooses to escape. But they are specifically targeted by and connected to the contextual moment of the time of composition. In effect, Lewis utilizes elements of religion – the biblical stories themselves devoid of that which he conceives of as political, or having Bakhtin's problem of an "absolute past" – and re-envision it as one of many mythologies which allow him to bring the past into the present, operating in folkloric time towards a better future. Further, this future timescape is still connected directly, by specific points, to present time.

Two incidents in *Narnia* illustrate this point: The analogy between the War for Narnia and World War II in the first volume,<sup>23</sup> *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, and the parallel between the destruction of Narnia and the death of the Pevensies and their extended family in the British Railway Disaster of 1949. *Wardrobe* begins thusly: "This story is about something that happened to [the Pevensie children] when they were sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids" (111). We can extrapolate from history that the date of the setting of this incident exists somewhere

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<sup>23</sup> Historically-speaking – it was the first published.

between June and October 1940 in the second major evacuations during the most extensive bombing of British towns by the German *Luftwaffe*. Lewis himself had hosted children when he lived at the Kilns in 1939 (Hooper, *CG* 401). That same year, he composed a variation of the initial lines of the *Wardrobe's* first words: "This book is about four children [...] They all had to go away from London suddenly because of the Air Raids, and because Father, who was in the Army, had gone off to the war and Mother was doing some kind of war work" (402). The differences are minor but significant. Both versions indicate a direct correlation between the story being told, concerning a war for Narnia, and the history that surrounds its composition. Likewise, in revision, Lewis de-emphasizes the parent's position as the center of the audience's concern: it is not important to worry about the Mother and Father Pevensie, both of whom are working with the war effort which threaten their children. Rather, the focus should be set upon the children's escape from the dangers of the here and now and the potentiality they will find in their future away from the present. Similarly, in *The Last Battle*, set nine years (Earth time) later at the Apocalyptic end of Narnia, the Pevensies (save Susan) are all welcomed back into Aslan's afterlife. The Pevensies believed that the "railway carriage" they were on was in some sort of accident, which opened a portal to Narnia (Lewis 743). In fact, Aslan tells them:

"Have you not guessed? [...] There *was* a real railway accident [...] your father and mother and all of you are – as they used to call it in the

Shadowlands – dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning.” (767)<sup>24</sup>

The differences between the reality and the analogues set in the fantasy of Narnia are of direct concern for me, and will be addressed shortly, but, for now, the point concerns the couching of Lewis’ fantasy within the boundaries of an absolute past of history. He makes operative use of that past by interpolating a set of secondary histories, mythologies and adventures in an effort to create a secondary world with which his protagonists, the Pevensies and their family, can escape what Colin Manlove called the “tendenc[ies] in modern life” – becoming part of the modern moment – even if their escape leads ultimately to an ahistorical end (5).

As Nikolajeva suggests, a variety of changes to the coding of the novelized children’s fairy tale occur as the novelized fairy tale becomes fantasy. For one, the code of the marvelous upgrades from a children’s code to an “adult code” of greater severity and consequence for the reader and for that which is being constructed (*CLCA*, 72). The writing becomes more literary. The consequences are more in line with the novelization of “mature writings,” and the adventure plot becomes subordinated to the “psychological

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<sup>24</sup> I have alluded to the railway disasters enough that I should provide some note as to its historical occurrence. Though discussions as to which particular railway incident Lewis alludes to have varied in *Narnia* circles, most Lewis scholars point to the 8 October 1952 railway accident at a Harrow & Wealdstone station near London as the correct influence. The history of the incident goes that, on the morning of the accident, a southbound train rammed into a local train which was at a full stop, causing substantial damage and loss of life, immediately before a northbound train plowed into the existing accident causing even further damage. In total, 112 people died while some 340 more were injured. Most of the casualties came from the local train which was literally hit from both ends during the double collision.

dimension” of questioning the reality which has been left behind in the fantasy (72).<sup>25</sup>

What comes of all this change is the chronotope of the children’s novel of fantastic escape. Nikolajeva calls it simply the “fantasy chronotope,” but I find her construction of the term somewhat simplistic and not entirely different from the concept of the novelized fairy tale (122). Most fundamentally similar between our perspectives is the issue of escape from reality. Nikolajeva contends there is a basic “link” between the world of the real and the world of the fantastic, both of which possess independent “primary” concepts of time and space (122-23). The “portal” between the two worlds allows them to exist simultaneously but not necessarily continuously or contemporaneously (as seen by the fact that Narnian time is not necessarily consistent nor regularized by the rules of Earth or reality’s time) (123-124). I also concur that the move from the novelized fairy tale into the fantasy realm does incur a shift in the gendering of the tale’s readership as the move from adventure to psychological tales would seem to indicate a difference in the audience from young boys to young girls (124).<sup>26</sup> However, the secondary audience created by the collapsing of mythologies into one “Narnian” sense of Christianity would suggest that

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<sup>25</sup> Although the so-called “Caspian Trilogy” becomes increasingly episodic, narratologically speaking, Nikolajeva’s point concerning an increase in mature psychological dimensions still holds true when one considers the internal dilemma Lewis places on his characters. Consider examples from *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, arguably the most episodic of the three works and certainly the one most operating in adventure time: Eustace’s maturation as seen through his journal entries (456-57) as well his apology for being “beastly” to Aslan when Aslan cures him of being a dragon (475); Lucy, Aslan and the Magician’s discussion of the responsibility of caretaking of the Dufflepuds (499-501) and even Reepicheep’s final decision to sail off into a very realized death in order to finally achieve his goal of reaching Aslan’s Country: all are contained within episodic elements of the text but, Aslan is the catalyst to the internal growth and, as Joy Alexander notes, operates as a “deus ex excelsis [...] to bring closure [and] wisdom” (38).

<sup>26</sup> Particularly as I consider adding audience as a new third term to the construction of chronotope in defining children’s literature as a genre built upon an audience.

fantasies cannot be necessarily constituted as gendered male or female.<sup>27</sup> And while it would seem consistent with the view that Narnia is in some way allegorical to the Christian Bible that *Narnia*'s audience could be seen as being gendered male,<sup>28</sup> it seems more likely that the audience position of young Christians would not have Lewis focus specifically on one gender more than the other.

More recently, Nikolajeva has expanded upon the definition in ways which befit better construction of this definition of the children's literary chronotope of fantasy. Specifically, she helps address the difference, chronotopally, between the misconstrued notion of Lewis' work as allegory/ fairy tale and my contention that it is in fact fantasy. She writes, "the most common temporal pattern in fantasy [...] from C. S. Lewis to Ruth Park, is that the primary time, the adult, chronological time, stands still while the child protagonists are away in a magical realm or in another historical period" (*ML* 90). My only contention with Nikolajeva's remarks here is that Lewis actually collapses the notions of the magical realm with historical periodicity through a sieve of mythologies to

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<sup>27</sup> As she, herself, suggests (124). This thought would seem to run against her position that the psychological shift in the fantasy code moves away from a trend towards adventure. And yet, as I have noted earlier, there are clear elements of the Narnian set which are constructed based upon episodic Adventure time with elements of Chivalric Romance (by which I mean, Narnia is always a world given over to "suddenlys," whereby the "general" and the "miraculous" seem to become one in the same without necessarily becoming deus ex machina ("Chronotope," 152). As Bakhtin says, "the unexpected becomes the expected" (Take Aslan's repeated and expected appearances at the protagonists darkest hours in all of the stories as example.), and expect that it is this unexpected element which becomes "seductive" for both the reader and the protagonist alike (Morson and Emerson 399.) which would clearly shift an audience gender towards male. Also, given that the works allow for considerable character roaming, both male *and* female (Jill Pole is arguably the major protagonist of *The Silver Chair* as she experiences the most growth and is taught the story's major lesson by Aslan (Alexander)) reminiscent perhaps of epic time, the argument becomes difficult to avoid, but also equally difficult to validate (Nikolajeva, *CLCA* 125).

<sup>28</sup> As it is my position that the *Chronicles of Narnia* hold connections to a variety of preceding works rather than a strict allegorical one.

give us a place, period and time that the Pevensie children and their extended family escape from reality. The realm is created by both Aslan and Lewis; Lewis is working out of a moment that existed both historically and, in a sense, historiographically.<sup>29</sup> He includes the history of many histories and mythologies in creating a new time and place for his world to exist. This conflation is what our investigation of Narnia, and certainly our discussion of the chronotope of fantastic escape, explores. For, it is within Lewis' construction of a religious fantasy through mythopoeics that we find him shoving mythic time (which, as Nikolajeva notes, is cyclical [128]) against eschatological time (which is teleological, and leads, not to an absolute *past*, but to an "absolute end" which, given its Christian pre-cursors, is "utopian" [Morson and Emerson 398]). He resolved the two through a parallel, analogous response to the history of the author's sense of reality. In essence, what Lewis accomplishes is to allow his audience (whom he creates to associate with and join the Pevensie children) to escape the realities of the present moment by entering into a fantasy which allows both mythic time and adventure time to co-exist simultaneously, but is bound to the rules of an ultimately 'religious,'<sup>30</sup> or eschatological, cosmology. In other works for Lewis, escape is only a temporary solution and one that only children, who do not yet wish to take on the greater responsibilities of adulthood, may partake. And yet, as they grow older, as they take on more responsibilities, more demands and use their imaginations less, a very real end awaits them which irreversibly must return them to their reality and the judgment of that place.

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<sup>29</sup> I am speaking of historiography in an almost Thucididean or Herodotusian sense of recording history alongside mythology and creating an ethnography of Narnia as opposed to a strict history of Narnia.

<sup>30</sup> As opposed to strictly Christian.

### **The Outreach into Narnia: Considering the Existence of Contradictory Time**

There is, potentially, a flaw within my argument. As Morson and Emerson note, the “Chronotope” essay does not stress the utopian ends that Lewis seems to aim for in *Narnia* (if we believe that Narnia, in itself, is a utopia). Granted, this Lewisian conception of utopia precludes viewing the vicious railway accidents as, in some way, freeing the souls of the Pevensies and their larger family from Earthly bondage only to exist in the childlike harmony of Aslan’s post-Narnian afterlife as utopian (*LB*, 743). In a Christian sense, this particular view can be seen in recalling Lewis’ own conception of Heaven in the 40s. Lewis biographer Ruth Pitter stated that he had “desperately strong yearnings for [a] hoped Heaven (‘sweet desire’)” as an end in itself (Hooper, *CL* 882). Thus, eschatological time, time focused towards an end,<sup>31</sup> serves Lewis as Bakhtin views it: “Eschatology always sees the segment of the future that separates the present from the end as lacking value; this separating segment of time loses its significance and interest, it is merely an unnecessary continuation of an indefinitely prolonged present” (“Chronotope,” 148). I have already argued Lewis’ disdain for his contemporaneous historical moment within the composition of the *Narnia* set.<sup>32</sup> The precedents of that chronotopal moment, whether they be seen through a theological, personal or historical context, do not mitigate the fact that Lewis viewed his current moment as one of separation between the self and God (in however many plural forms). That he set the first published account of Pevensie children’s sojourns into Narnia within the historical context of the London evacuations of children following the attacks on the city in WWII

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<sup>31</sup> Which, in a Christian cosmology, would be seen as a utopia through a return to a direct connection with God.

<sup>32</sup> Though, for a greater discussion of this, one could read K. J. Gilchrist’s *A Mourning After War* or Lee Rossi’s *The Politics of Fantasy*.

seems to cement a solid argument for a foundation of escape from a possible death by the German *Luftwaffe*.<sup>33</sup> But this does pose the question: if Lewis' construction of Narnian time seems to work on the principles of eschatological time – that is, if the children escape our reality due to a fear of imminent death at the hands of war to enter into a world where they become closer to an incarnation of God, yet are set along a course towards an equally imminent death due to being placed in the line of fire of *another* war – why go on the journey in the first place? What is the difference in Lewis' eyes between dying in the reality he saw personally in the trenches of WWI and close at-hand during WWII versus dying in a world with witches, anthropomorphized animals, magic and magical adventure? The answer lies within the morality of the culture(s) in which Lewis grounds his universe.

There are many ways to proceed from here. Lewis' world is so replete in its construction that innumerable avenues exist for us to follow. For the sake of this argument, I choose to examine how time and place function both within Narnia and analogous to the historical reality Lewis lived within in order to illustrate a possible explanation for his invocation of the fantasy chronotope of escape. I've already noted a collapse of a variety of types of Bakhtinian-coded time and innumerable numbers of mythological, religious and historical topos Lewis used in the construction of Narnia. To continue our examination of it, I'd now like to ask why he chose to do what he did within the *Narnian* texts themselves.

To begin, as Rossi notes and as is apparent to any reader: “Time goes by much more quickly in Narnia than on Earth” (54). Indeed, from when Aslan literally sings

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<sup>33</sup> Not to mention a literal escape from Mrs. Macready and the other adults who would otherwise scold the Pevensies for interrupting the tours (*LWW*, 132-33).

Narnia into existence to when he has it ultimately destroyed takes place over the course of only 49 Earth years, while existing in Narnian time for approximately 2555 years, in whatever sense a Narnian year is composed. Yet, time is neither consistent nor permanently etched between the two worlds. Take, for example, when the Pevensies defeat Jadis and become High Kings and Queens of Narnia roughly in the year 1000 NT<sup>34</sup> (*LWW*, 193-94), in what becomes known as the Golden Age of Narnia. They remain, age and have adventures for some fifteen years that go unmentioned before stumbling back through the wardrobe again as the children they were when they entered the wardrobe (196). They emerge only mere Earth minutes after having entered it.<sup>35</sup> Even stranger, when the children are pulled into Narnia one Earth year later in *Prince Caspian*, close to 300 Narnian years have elapsed whereby many of the friends, notably Tumnus, have passed on since the children's last romp through Narnia (330). Of particular interest is the fact that, though the Pevensies have actually lived through the 15 years of the Narnian calendar, they not only speak little of it on Earth, but it doesn't seem to even register much: "While they were in Narnia they seemed to reign for years and years; but when

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<sup>34</sup> Narnian Time.

<sup>35</sup> Besides hunting the White Stag, their lengthy period spent in Narnia goes by with little note from Lewis until *The Horse and His Boy*. This work, which seems to exist almost entirely only to set up and complete the binary of the heathen empire of the Calormens (against the Christian empire of Narnia) to prelude the final battle between Aslanism and "Tashlan"-ism in *The Last Battle* as an analogue to the Apocalypse (*TLB*, 729). Lewis' explanation of the work as "the calling and conversion of a heathen" seems to support the view (qtd. in Hooper, *CGLW* 426). Interestingly enough, upon their return to Narnia in *Prince Caspian*, their history that was recorded chronologically (reordered into proper chronological time by William Collins & Sons in 1980 even though the original order went *LWW*, *PC*, *VDT*, *SC*, *HB*, *MN*, *TLB*) becomes mythology and legend to the Narnians which they see when the Pevensies reappear in *Prince Caspian*. Though I will not make any arguments concerning the favored order of reading these books, it is interesting to note that the 1980 chronologically-ordered *Narnia* allows a reader to fully-appreciate the capacity with which history can become legend as time passes.

they came back through the door and found themselves in England again, it all seemed to have taken no time at all” (*PC*, 317). Time here “seems” to be uncertain or something that cannot be held to any definites of the Earth planes of time and space. And yet, the more time they spend in Narnia, the more the Pevensies revert back to the adult-like High Royalty of Narnia who now just happen to be children again: “‘Now,’ said Peter in quite a *different* voice, ‘it’s about time we four started using our brains’” (emphasis mine 324). As the narrator goes on to note, the difference in Peter is that he is regaining, as they all are regaining, the attributes of the 15 years they spent ruling Narnia: courage, fighting prowess, courtly manners and behavior.<sup>36</sup> As Lisa Sainsbury has argued, “Time is a difficult idea for children to understand,” particularly in regards to memory, which implies a set of two moments of time: the time past being discussed and the time which the discussion is existing within (161,163). Lewis mitigates the temporal shift by having the fantastic locality evoke, or better, reawaken, the lost Narnian time, inside their minds (particularly the effects of the Narnian time on the Pevensie’s minds and bodies); the longer they are in Narnia, the more Narnian, and less Earthling, they become. I would suggest this is exactly what Lewis intends as he is making an argument for the Pevensies to ultimately give in to the call of Narnia, and, even though they will soon be expelled as they age, abandon their modern Earth for his Narnia in the ultimate end of his narrative.

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<sup>36</sup> For example, preparing to battle the Miraz, Peter discusses strategy for fighting with Caspian and the badger: “We shall spend the best part of the day sending heralds to and fro and all that. By then aslant may have done something. And at least I can inspect the army and strength the position. I will send the challenge [to combat]” (*PC*, 397). Peter has completely shifted from being a child about to return to school in our historical moment to a child who is about to engage in a potentially bloody and deadly conflict as a king in Narnia. Past simple bravery and valor for his sisters, who are in Aslan’s care, he is plotting strategy for victory for kingdom against invading forces.

And yet, this does not address the issue of how or why time works as it does in Narnia. Some clue is left in the tenor of Narnia, as a place, itself. We have discussed already that Lewis borrowed elements of mythologies and histories which distinctly mark Narnia: Tumnus, a faun, has works of Silenus on his shelf, denoting Greek and Roman mythological influences (*LWW*, 116); Jadis is described as being descendant from Lilith, a figure from apocryphal Christian mythology (147)<sup>37</sup>; Aslan is constructed God-like, in the Judeo-Christian sense, and Jesus Christ-like (146) as well as parallel to Adonis or Osiris<sup>38</sup>; Nelson goes as far as to extrapolate that Aslan also contains fragments of the Norse myth's Balder whose death, like Aslan's, triggered Ragnarok, a literal interpretation of biblical Apocalypse. Classic examples of borrowed mythos abound; oft left out of the discussion, though, is Lewis' construction of Narnia itself as an inherently medieval society built upon a chivalric code of honor which guides and governs the land itself.

Wriglesworth notes that Lewis constructs his *Narnian* texts as a "medieval compiler [...] reshaping pagan signs and medieval lore into an imaginative and highly accessible Christian context" (29). Cair Paravel is modeled after an idyllic medieval castle replete with grand throne rooms, treasure chambers and a "Great Hall [...] with ivory roof and the west hall hung with peacocks' feathers" (*LWW*, 193); the Pevensies, upon receiving presents from Father Christmas, engage in an epic Arthurian-style battle

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<sup>37</sup> Jean further connects her, through her magic and an unpublished letter of Lewis', to the myth of Circe. What Graham that furthers the mythopoeics is to unravel the mystery of Lewis' exposure to Circe past *The Odyssey* to include Spencer, Dante and Milton – all three depictions of which she sees present between *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (Graham).

<sup>38</sup> Lewis writes in *Miracles*, "Is not Christ simply another corn-king [like] Adonis, Osiris or another? [...] From a certain point of view Christ is 'the same sort of thing' [...] And that is just the puzzle" (181-2).

with Jadis' forces for the four thrones of Narnia, and – after Peter slays a wolf – Aslan takes Peter's sword and essentially knights him. Lewis writes:

'Hand [the sword] to me and kneel, Son of Adam,' said Aslan. And when Peter had done so he struck him with the flat of the blade and said, 'Rise up, Sir Peter Wolf's-Bane. And, whatever happens, never forget to wipe your sword.' (171)

Even Narnia's revival from Jadis' one hundred years of winter seems to pay homage to the Arthurian legend<sup>39</sup> of the Fisher King where the land ails as the king ails and becomes more fertile as he heals.<sup>40</sup> As Aslan approaches, eternal Winter without Christmas finally gives way to Christmas and, eventually, Spring as Narnia thaws and becomes fecund. Jonathan Himes notes that Lewis' fascination with the medieval extended to the Norse culture as well, *vis a vis* the works of William Morris. Lewis' constructions of the End Times where "Morris conceived of heroic societies in the upper stages of barbarism for the romances he wrote" (308). Himes suggests that Lewis' interests in the North, particularly Morris, might mitigate suggestions that Lewis was interested in stories which dealt with the good "overcoming evil" as Morris was neither Christian nor interested in such "pathos and dignity" (308).

And yet, I would suggest that Lewis borrowed from the medieval period specifically due to that interest in pathos and dignity. As Paul Fussell notes, no one who

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<sup>39</sup> A quick survey of Lewis' letters and specifically the essay "Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings*" reminds us of his dedication to Malory, specifically *Morte d' Arthur* (112).

<sup>40</sup> And one cannot mention the Fisher King without giving some passing notice to Caspian's revival in *The Silver Chair* where Caspian, is brought before Aslan at the shores of a stream and is literally reinvigorated by a splash of Aslan's blood upon him (661). He literally becomes "a very young man" again before the eyes of Eustace and Jill, even though he has died and now come back to life as something not a "ghost" and not the Caspian that was prior, but something new (661-2).

served in WWI could see the barbarism shown there and not be inspired towards considerations of “regeneration,” rebirth and “hope” (135). I would suggest that Lewis invokes the chivalric time of the medieval period in an effort to provide children with an escape from the barbarism of the Second World War and provide them with a fantasy world which, while mirroring the world surrounding them, had some sort of code or order about it. His order, of course, is Christianity’s control, and his code is chivalry. Lewis writes, “Christendom has made two efforts to deal with the evil of war – chivalry and pacifism. Neither succeeded. But I doubt whether chivalry has such an unbroken record of failure as pacifism” (*CL*, 252). Chivalry then – both the “heavy cavalry” of King Arthur and the common courtesy of “giving a woman a seat in a train” – is the differential structure between the wars of the twentieth-century and those contained within the Medieval Period (Lewis, “The Necessity of Chivalry”).

I have made much mention of Arthurian romance, but I haven’t addressed Lewis’ connection, or infatuation, with the story of King Arthur, particularly Thomas Malory’s version of him. Malory’s construction of knights and knighthood fascinated Lewis’ sense of decorum concerning warcraft. Within the construct of this warrior of the Middle Ages Lewis seemed to find something with which he could rectify the idea of combat that haunted him from seeing and feeling firsthand the results of WWI. In 1940’s “The Necessity of Chivalry,” he writes, “The knight is a man of blood and iron, a man familiar with the sight of smashed faces and the ragged stumps of lopped-off limbs; he is also a demure, almost a maidenlike, guest in hall, a gentle, modest, unobtrusive man.” The knight, then, represents some compromise between the need and necessity of war and an

order or civility to it. For Lewis, humility and civility were qualities lacking from the contemporary battlefield – elements which rendered modern war as the stuff of savagery:

What, you may ask, is the relevance of this idea to the modern world?

It is terribly relevant [...] the medieval ideal brought together two things which have no natural tendency to gravitate towards one another. It brought them together for that very reason. It taught humility and forbearance to the great warrior because everyone knew by experience how much he usually needed that lesson. It demanded valour of the urbane and modest man because everyone knew that he was as likely as not to be a milksop.

The difference for Lewis was that chivalry, the by-product and guidance of medieval warfare, might produce “hope” in a modern age where war did not seem to have any.

By adjusting the chronotope of the world he creates to fit one that is more consistent with the tenor he approves, Lewis provides his audience an escape from the *horrors* of their reality, but he doesn’t necessarily give them complete escape from the ultimate shared commonplace of war: imminent death. What Lewis saw the Arthurian code of conduct offering the modern day soldier was a sort of “biblical manhood” where a person could find a “healthy synthesis [of] fierceness and gentleness” that he saw in the knights themselves while full-well appreciating that it was their job and duty to die for their king and country (Whitworth 1). Given that Aslan is, in all truth, the land of Narnia’s highest king – the parallels here are somewhat striking in regards to Lewis’ view of putting children in harm’s way on the battlefield. That is, Lewis seems to mitigate the

idea of putting children to war as long as they fight in God's army for the good of God's cause (possibly, in his eyes, the only really *good* reason for anyone to go to war).

As such, I think it is fair to suggest that Lewis modeled Narnia, the time and place itself, to some extent or another off medieval precursors.<sup>41</sup> More to the point, attuning Narnia somewhat ahistorically to Lewis' contemporary time and yet analogously setting it to what Bakhtin called the time of "chivalric romance" allowed him to construct a world built not only around virtuous adventures but one where "time and space themselves become miraculous [...] as in the fairy tale, hours may be extended and days compressed; time itself may be bewitched [...] time can become like dreams, and so dreams themselves take on new functions and influence events" ("Chronotope," 151; Morson and Emerson 400). Here, Bakhtin speaks more of the Greek Romance than the medieval; when he integrates the medieval, time and space become saturated with "symbolic interpretation" where time might even become entirely "excluded from action" ("Chronotope," 156). What this brings to our discussion is manifold but still causal: 1.) Lewis chose a particular blend of types of time (epic, mythological, chivalric) to situate antipodally, yet analogously in time and place (contemporary England compared with a representation of a medieval England), to his current contemporary period. 2.) His choices allow time and place, textually, to take on virtues particular to the stories that had previously held time, textually (such as the idea of knighthood and the code of chivalry being held textually within medieval texts), in particular ways that seem to arrest time. 3.) By framing his stories within these overlapping sets of time, Lewis creates an

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<sup>41</sup> David Jeffery agrees with me here as he finds that the mid-twentieth-century audience developed an unusual fondness for Victorian retellings of medievalism (with Lewis particularly fond of its notion of "romance" and "courtly love") (Martin 78).

opportunity to manifest an idea of a textual time which is marked by contradictory forces (circular time and eschatological time) in his constructed cosmology based upon its connections to the virtues of the opposing time. In other words, Lewis found a way to make mythic time linear by suggesting that to die in service to Aslan (god) was superior to dying for a country fighting a godless conflict in WWII. Lewis presents Narnia not only as a world parallel to ours, but as an *alternative* to ours (particularly to the Pevensies and their family): one which can *end* his modern times as a destination since his mythopoeic/ Christian hybrid world is timeless (or will be once it enters an afterlife).

There are a few textual issues to unpack within that dense set of concepts. First, though not written in chronological order, *Narnia* is a complete telos written from its alpha: “The Lion was pacing to and fro about that empty land and singing his new song [...] And as he walked and sang, the valley grew green with grass (*MN*, 64)”, to its omega: “They all stood beside Aslan, on his right side, and looked through the open doorway. The bonfire had gone out. On the earth all was blackness [...] But when Aslan had roared yet again [...] they heard the sound of the horn : high and terrible, yet of a strange and terrible beauty” (*TLB*, 749). And with Father Time seemingly blowing the horn of Narnia’s Ragnarok, old Narnia is obliterated and “new” Narnia is created. Strangely enough, although the new Narnia, which is essentially the Narnian afterlife, is created through the obliteration of old Narnia, it a world which is almost exactly the same:

“Peter,” said Lucy, “Where is this, do you suppose?” [...]

“If you ask me,” said Edmund, “it’s like somewhere in the Narnian world.

Look at those mountains ahead – and the big ice-mountains beyond them.

Surely they're rather the mountains we used to see from Narnia, the ones Westward beyond the Waterfall?" [...]

"Those hills," said Lucy, "the nice woody ones and the blue ones behind – aren't those very like the southern border of Narnia?"

"Like!" cried Edmund after a moment's silence. "Why, they're exactly like. Look, there's Mount Pire with his forked head, and there's the pass into Archenland and everything!"

"And yet they're not like," said Lucy, "They're different [...] they're more... more... oh, I don't know..."

"More like the real thing," said the Lord Digory softly. (753, 758-59)

The new world is different, though. What has happened here is that Aslan, by obliterating all connections with the "real" world through the destruction of old Narnia, has opened the door to a reality which is *still* Narnia, but is now the "real Narnia" which none of the Pevensie clan had been able to know since they had grown up (759). It is important to remember Aslan's often uttered proviso to visitors of Narnia: as Peter tells the others of his private discussion with Aslan in *Prince Caspian*, "There were things [Aslan] wanted to say to Su and me because we're not coming back to Narnia [...] we're getting too old" (417). Lewis constructs old Narnia as a place of age restriction where the passage of time, on the Earthly plane, restricts the imagination and ages the body (remember that the Pevensies could age and remain in Narnia in *LWW*) and affects the capacity to return to it. But, in new Narnia, a place without "a beginning and an end" (*LB*, 759), all are welcomed as it is a *real* place that exists timelessly. The reason that new Narnia is timeless is that new Narnia represents Lewis' construct of the afterlife

(where time, ostensibly, cannot exist). Everyone in new Narnia is dead (in both Lewis' time and space: all the Pevensie's except Susan have died in the Railway Disasters of the late 40s and early 50s, and in Narnian time: Jill, Eustace et al have been drawn through the Door after Narnia, with them in it, has been destroyed (767)). And in death and life after death, it would seem, goes any concerns of age or the passing of time.

All mythos used by Lewis have an afterlife, particularly for warriors: the Christian heaven, the Greek's Elysian Fields, the Norse Valhalla. All of these afterlives bring the mortals closer to god(s) and outside of the rule of either mortal or fantastic time. In essence then, everything that occurs in the final chapters of *The Last Battle* is, as Nikolajeva dubs it, some form of paralepsis, side stories that do not "take up any of the primary narrative time" (*ML*, 127), since time has effectively ended when old Narnia is destroyed. And while this seems to be an unusual description, given that the example Nikolajeva employs is actually a description of paralepsis rather than an actual occurrence of it,<sup>42</sup> it actually serves as description of the events occurring in Lewis' *Narnian* set quite well. The primary narrative of *The Chronicles of Narnia* really has less to do with the characters themselves, and more to do with the concept of a place: the texts literally *chronicle* the events that occurred in that place which no longer exists to the reader (as Narnia has been obliterated) or to the resident of the representation of our world in the *Chronicles*. In other words, the bulk of the tales surrounding the Pevensies, Eustace, Jill, Caspian, Digory et al really are the secondary narratives coming off the

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<sup>42</sup> She sites the example from *LWW* where the Professor Digory explains to the Pevensie children that Narnia has a separate time system (*ML*, 127). An more usual instance of paralepsis occurring might be as when the reader "reads" the diary entries of Eustace in *DT* which detail events that are not occurring in the narrative at present but account instances of side events which form their own concrete narratives that are additive to the master narrative.

primary narrative of the creation and destruction of a world by Aslan. Further, while those adventures, the bulk of the fantasy itself, did not exactly *not* take up any time (as the time shifts between Narnian Time and Earth Time do have some actual lag between them), what the reader remembers the most from the stories is that the Earthling protagonists' adventures do not actually occur within any Earth time. *Those* stories are the side stories to the larger primary narrative. Even more complex is the consideration of the innumerable mythological referents Lewis employs which occupy an almost tertiary existence beneath the secondary stories that occupy the bulk of the master narrative.

Thus, it is essential to our understanding of the complexity of Lewis' chronotope of fantastic escape time to acknowledge that, as Nikolajeva notes, when Lucy first enters Narnia she does enter into mythic, or as Nikolajeva calls it "cyclical," time where death is, indeed, "reversible" (128).<sup>43</sup> As the Chronicles progress, however, death becomes increasingly more permanent a condition: the destruction of Narnia, the death of the Ape, Reepicheep et al, etc. The mitigating factor<sup>44</sup> from this move from mythic and adventure time to the linear time of eschatology is based upon divine judgment. In using a chivalric topos for Narnia, Lewis allows the elements of the chivalric to bleed, quite literally, into his vision for the world; what we end up with is a world created and governed by a figure outside of time in the Christian sense, as that is how Lewis views his chivalry, in a god

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<sup>43</sup> Consider Aslan's, Caspian's and the possibility of Jadis' resurrection, the revivication of the stone inhabitants of Narnia etc.

<sup>44</sup> I would add my own argument here that the mythopoeic multitude of *Narnia* also lends to the effect of timelessness in the idea of not having any one singular time presented. Instead, *Narnia* is so filled with time (some complimentary, some contradictory) that the concept of a singular field of time becomes impossible, or, perhaps better, unique to the concept of Narnian time.

figure called Aslan. And like the Christian God, in the particular manner that distinguishes the Christian God from Dionysus, Father Christmas, Balder etc., Aslan judges the virtues and merits of those whom he allows into his timelessness after they die: “The creatures came rushing on [through the door]. But as they came right up to Aslan one or other of two things happened to each of them. They all looked straight in his face, I don’t think they had any choice about that” (*TLB*, 751). If Aslan finds fear and reproach, those beings are whipped into the void; if he finds love, they are welcomed into new Narnia. Aslan can choose whom he wishes to let into his kingdom; for example, Susan, whether it be because she has not died on the Earthly plane or whether it be due to the fact that she has embraced more “earthly,” grown-up things, is not welcome yet.

Perhaps Paul Karkainen sums up my point best: “Lewis did not write fantasy with instruction in mind, but he has, in fact, filled his books with characters and events which portray a *variety* of Christian truths” (emphasis mine, 7). It is in that variety where Lewis saw and articulated other myths that anticipated and developed the “true” myth of Christ (Freshwater 42). And while what Lewis does in *Narnia* does not further anticipate the idea of Christ, it would seem to be operating in that same manner of further developing the Christian mythology as part of the normal movement of time, place and narrative. Doris Myers suggests that Lewis may have been attempting to show the power of illustrating how “the ordinary person” could become mythical (187). That may very well be, but I would argue that Lewis tried specifically to provide the ordinary *child* a possibility to escape the extra-ordinarily negative events surrounding his or her life through the fantastic voyage through time and space into Narnia. It is a world which was, in many ways, as troubled as his own, but it was also a world where the author could

control time and space in such a way as to make it a superior alternative to the world he himself inhabited.

#### 4.) Sororal Dialogism and the Discussion of the Taboo in the Problem Novels of

##### Judy Blume

“Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. A radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse, would take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been till now a male prerogative, how we can begin to see and name—and therefore live—afresh.”

-Adrienne Rich, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision”

“To make an omelette you need not only those broken eggs but someone ‘oppressed’ to break them: every revolutionist is presumed to understand that, and also every woman, which either does or does not make fifty-one per cent of the population of the United States a potentially revolutionary class. The creation of this revolutionary ‘class’ was from the beginning the ‘idea’ of the Women’s Movement, and the tendency for popular discussion of the movement to center for so long around day-care centers is yet another instance of that studied resistance to political ideas which characterize our national life.”

-Joan Didion, “The Women’s Movement”

As I move from historical and philosophical considerations of the modernist period to what followed, I couch this final chapter within the context of these two particular women’s remarks from the early 1970s. I feel that they capture the tenor that motivates what I describe as the chronotope of the post-modern problem novel of female adolescence. Both women wrote these lines at the height of re-imagining women’s roles in U. S. social and cultural discourses. Rich plainly states that, in order to progress forward, women needed to revisit their literary and cultural past and re-imagine it, or “see [it] with fresh eyes,” women’s eyes that saw and understood *their* cultural moment, from their prerogative, in order to see their past contemporaneously (540). Didion, much sharper in her rhetoric and polemic, calls this type of thinking nothing short of a

revolution. Her feminism is not one simply of re-imagining the vestiges of literature but revising the notions of womanhood not as a sex, but as a “class” or an “idea” (109). Her essay, “The Women’s Movement,” reminds us that chronotopal shifts are, indeed, revolutionary and built upon the backs of those that came before them. Didion argues that one must understand the flaws and virtues of that history and choose to re-imagine not merely the texts but the social, political and cultural classes that underpin those texts. These women pointed the way in which I will now examine a particular facet of the revolution of American children’s literature into a literature vested in *adolescent* interests. I see the problem novels developed in the 1960s as a direct product of this revisionist feminist culture of “social unrest” in the United States (*DU*, Trites 9). As Roberta Trites notes, the audience of these problem novels is specifically young women whose particular desires in the 60s transformed the texts they consumed into a literature which aided their specific and demanding needs (8).

As with the chronotope of the children’s novel of fantastic escape from the modernist period discussed in Chapter Three, the chronotope of the post-modern problem novel of female adolescence indicates an evolution in the ways of seeing the world in time as time moves in a particular place and to a particular audience.<sup>1</sup> In the late 1960s and 1970s, one can track the movement from narratives that were gendered male and critically seen as children’s novels of fantastic time<sup>2</sup> to a body of work in which a different complex of time, place and gender emerge. Much has been written on the Women’s Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the critics I examine here

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<sup>1</sup> Stephens and McCallum state it plainly: “[Post-]Modern revisionists seek to interrogate the basis of that canonical status [of older, gender male texts] by laying bare the ideologies which underpin the metanarratives of those classical texts” (254).

<sup>2</sup> Nikolajeva, *CLCA*, 124.

choose to focus primarily on the writings of the period as part of second wave feminism. I have no contention with that. Nor do I have a contention with critics labeling the materials I examine as broadly “feminist” by varying definitions.<sup>3</sup> My focus, of course, is on the manifold instances of time, narrative and space *in* these works – not so much on trying to be comprehensive about the period itself. Where I will draw some delineation insofar as my study is concerned is to couch the period simply and neatly under what Russell titles the “New Realism,” a period whereby “honest emotions, franker language and bolder ideas [come] to literature for children” (218).<sup>4</sup> And while I fundamentally agree with him, I do disagree on two basic points: 1.) I assert that the *newly*-developed literature of this time period is not meant for a “children’s” audience, but rather, an adolescent audience.<sup>5</sup> 2.) The ideas that came forth during this time period, ones Russell

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<sup>3</sup> And they do vary. For example, Lisa Hogeland’s idea of the second wave feminist comes from examining popular novels that literally exhibit “consciousness-raising,” (viii). On the other hand, Hilary Crew approaches feminism and “re-visioning” from a theoretical approach grounded in psychoanalysis, examining the problem within “the relationship between teenage girls and their mothers” (Crew 4). Marianne Hirsch labels this idea “the mother/ daughter plot” where “women write within literary conventions that define the feminine only in relation to the masculine, as object or obstacle” (Hirsch 4, 8). Though I take no interest in either’s psychoanalytic position, I do place my theory in Hirsch’s reexamination of Freud’s *Familiroman*, the family romance. For Freud this narrative is “fantasy” where “an imaginary interrogation of origins [...] which embeds the engenderment of narrative within the experience of family” (9). Hirsch revises this concept whereas “the imaginative act of replacing the parent [...] with another, superior figure” occurs as a “liberat[ing]” and re-imaginative experience (9). Unlike Hirsch, however, I believe the superior figure seen in Blume’s work happens to be the reader in conversation with the central female protagonist.

<sup>4</sup> Not that I am insinuating that the New Realism or the second wave of feminism exist, in any way, mutually exclusive of each other. To the contrary, many critics cite the social movements of the 60s as playing an implicit role in the rise of the New Realism.

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that the literature that arose in this time period was exclusively adolescent. My point is that we can see young adult literature arise as a new genre indebted to a new audience in the 60s

admits left little as “taboo,” are far less “realistic”<sup>6</sup> when it comes to young women, and are far more fantastic given the chronotopal boundaries of American culture that young women sought liberation from during the 60s and the 70s. In other words, the young subjects I find in this adolescent literature represent many of the repressed voices and occluded discourses which Rich and Didion allude to, striving to be heard and shared with other young women for the first time open and publicly. This might be a broad way of interpreting the concept of the fantastic, but I would argue that if we can agree from the last chapter that the fantastic “allows the reader ‘escape’ from the locality and reality [...] in a time of crisis where an escape from reality is necessitated,” then we can look at the Women’s Movement of the late 1960s as a particular time of crisis for women where they sought to have their voices manifested and heard by other women. Thus, I feel comfortable in viewing “escape” as providing a space for an audience of young women to be able to seek refuge from a society that would not allow them to publicly discuss sex-determined and specified problems such as they do in the problem novel.<sup>7</sup> That the specifically gendered discourse of the problem novel comes under the same attacks that second wave feminists face does not surprise me.

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<sup>6</sup> Russell states that “realistic fiction *attempts* to portray the world as it is” (emphasis mine 216). That he accounts for a gap in the ability for any author to create verisimilitude that accurately can replicate the real in even the most contemporaneous moment, is why I find him more useful than others who blankly assert that realism in literature is possible. By the same token, I disagree with his contention that realistic fiction “contains no fantasy” (216); in fact, it is the romantic elements of what we will term as the problem novel in our chronotope’s definition that accounts for a large part of that gap between the real and the realistic.

<sup>7</sup> Or, at the very least, the larger social sphere would see such public discussion of such taboo subject matter as unrealistic and potentially threatening to the hegemony of their current moment.

To return to Russell, more important than my disagreements with him is our shared belief that it is within this period that the *bildungsroman*, “a coming-of-age story [where] the protagonist’s growth from a self-absorbed, immature individual [evolves] into an expansive mature human being concerned with the welfare of others,” transforms into what becomes known as the problem novel, a sub-genre of adolescent literature. There is a more specific term for my purpose (but certainly more obscure): the *entwicklungsroman*, or novel of general “growth and development” that shows the protagonist’s character emerge from childhood to a greater maturity – but *not* all the way towards adult maturity which Trites cites as the main difference between it and the *bildungsroman* (*DU*, 9-10). For clarity’s sake, as this is a Bakhtinian reading, I will utilize his terminology (*bildungsroman*) throughout this chapter, but it is crucial to realize that the actual textual growth we see in problem novels is abbreviated. We do not find protagonists arriving at full maturity in these works. What we arrive at is the solution to a particular problem in the development of a young woman’s life, but not to completion (19). That designation is what makes the *entwicklungsroman* the far more proper term for what we examine here.<sup>8</sup> I would point specifically to the ways this literature targets a female audience by focusing on the margins of textual plot as opposed to the center and thus forces the notion of adolescence as a period of maturation but not fulfillment (217).

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<sup>8</sup> More to the point, Annis Pratt makes the contention that “in the *bildungsroman* proper [...] there is the hidden agenda of gender norms where 'adult' means learning to be dependent, submissive, or 'non-adult.' As a result of this conflict, an imagery of entrapment and fear and psychological invasion introduces a nightmare element into texts that also, at the opposite extreme, manifest yearnings for an integration of childhood hopes with adult social possibilities” (16). Again, though, as I agree with Pratt concerning the idea of novels of development vs. novels of maturity, for the sake of keeping a consistent set of terminologies under a Bakhtinian rubric, I, at this time, retain his terminology.

As Russell considers both the *bildungsroman* and the problem novel, he clearly privileges one sub-genre over the other: “Too often problem novels contain predictable plots, shallow characters and trite dialogue. Sometimes they are sensationalized and devolve into melodrama” (218). Within that definition, though, he exposes his own romance concerning the *bildungsroman*; if, in fact, the true standard of realistic fiction is to portray the world as it is, why would, in fact, how could, a reader, or any human being existing within reality or the reality within a text, be expected to grow into maturity by the end of a relatively short novel? This question brackets my interests in time and place within the problem novel. Russell is not the only critic to identify the problem novel as a pariah within children’s and young adult literature; in fact, few would allow the word literature to fall after the term “problem novel.” Marjorie Allen argues that, too often, “the ‘problem’ takes over the novel,” causing the “story” to suffer as little more than subsidiary and secondary (87). Deborah O’Keefe dismisses these narratives as “typical” and “thin,” singling out Blume in particular as “the star of this mass-market realm [of] messy problems [with] characters created from a menu, not understood from within” (187). Charles Duke damns the problem novel with faint praise when he argues that problem novels can offer “sympathetic and realistic perspective” to an adolescent population not prepared to handle difficult subject matter (418). I agree with all of these perspectives to some degree,<sup>9</sup> but I still find the problem novel both defensible and an outright sub-genre defined by gender in its own right.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Allen’s point is accurate – often it is the case that the problems in these novels seem to overpower the narrative. And yet, if we consider that the problem novel is built on the shoulders of the *bildungsroman*, would it not make sense that the protagonist grappled with the dilemma in order to grow?

We can develop a more precise account of the problem novel's place within the history of the literature by considering it as a causal descendant of the previously discussed fantastic prose of the 1950s. In the last chapter, I proposed that the secondary stories of *The Chronicles of Narnia* actually became the focus of the child's interest in the work; paralepsis became of primary importance. And yet, *Narnia* does not come under attack as faulty literature. I would suggest that the reason this occurs is due to the category of literature which *Narnia* usually falls under: fantasy. I would suggest that part of the evolution of the *bildungsroman* into the *entwicklungsroman* into the problem novel is the integration of elements of the chronotope of fantastic escape. It is that sense of unfinalizability of the conflict which grants the problem novel some unique status as a "fantastic," yet realistic, narrative.

O'Keefe agrees, though she probably would not recognize it as a positive critique; speaking on *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, she writes:

With Judy Blume [...] problems like first menstruation or wet dreams were reasonably matter-of-fact: these were just another kind of problem that young people had to handle. That was comforting. An eleven-year-old girl character (and reader) could worry equally about buying a bra and choosing a religion [...] Life included all of this, and it could all be coped with or survived. (187)

"Coped with or survived": O'Keefe chooses an interesting set of words to decry Blume's writing, but she unwittingly strikes at the heart of my argument. Given the purpose of the *bildungsroman*, the specific nature and universality of the mother/ daughter plot, and the empowering extra-literary social and political events of the 1960s and 1970s, it makes

perfect sense for these texts to interrogate the boundaries of novelistic discourse and attempt to operate as surrogates for girls growing into their roles as young women. O’Keefe illustrates that in these types of novels, both the young female protagonist and the reader learn how to grow together. Because of the powerful demands this time period placed upon women, these narratives offer young women some escape from the problems of becoming and being young women; this was accomplished through a process of bonding with characters that critics find fantastic. The characters are fantastic not in their lack of depth or believability, but in the sense that they are empowered in a period where empowerment was not realistic, let alone the public discussion of methods for overcoming female problems. Yet, through the invocation of the young reader as a direct communicant, the female protagonist *could* engage in discourse with someone whom she might try to learn with. These narratives thus become safe havens for adolescents to overcome what Faith Sullivan calls the “ignorance” of adolescence, and to do so in an adolescent’s perspective of a “safer way”: that is, free from adults (82, 84). We can see this process illustrated through some of the work of Judy Blume.<sup>10</sup> She writes text that

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<sup>10</sup> In the last chapter, I made remarks towards other works that fit within the mold of the chronotope I was classifying. In this model of the chronotope of the gendered problem novel, that becomes far more difficult. Looking at the particular problem of young boys, for example, is relatively simple; the list is long and replete: Arguably beginning with J. D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* in 1951 (or, if we’re to consider works written *specifically* to young adults, S. E. Hinton’s 1967 *The Outsiders*), we could easily consider Paul Zindel’s 1968 *The Pigman*, Katherine Paterson’s 1977 *Bridge to Terebithia*, Bev Cleary’s 1984 *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, Jerry Spinelli’s 1990 *Maniac McGee*, Louis Sacchar’s 1998 *Holes* etc. Considering young women, specifically, in the problem novel though is a much more difficult assignment. Paterson puts considerable energy into it (1979’s *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, 1981’s *Jacob I Have Loved*); M. E. Kerr’s 1975 *Is That You, Miss Blue?* actually surrounds its plot around a small unit of young women and an elderly school teacher; and 1971’s portrayal of a young girl’s drug-induced suicide in *Go Ask Alice* by Beatrice Sparks was controversial enough at the time that she left her name off the work. Other works, though, fall into relative popular obscurity: Mollie Hunter’s

contains “a steady mixture of humor and pathos, [...] designed to traverse traditionally difficult [...] subject matter which empathizes with her largely female audience through the first-person perspectives of her young protagonists” (Sommers 263). In the end, we will come to determine that Blume’s contributions to the rise of young adult, or adolescent, literature are not to be discarded without further critical examination.

### **Bakhtin on the Bildungsroman: Connecting the Past with the Problem**

As I have examined in earlier chapters, Bakhtin devotes some time to this subject in his “*Bildungsroman*” essay. He does not quite see the *bildungsroman* in the Freudian sense of a romantic fantasy concerning the family; rather, he seems to view it as a direct descendant of his “novel of ordeal” (14).<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin’s construction of this broad category, Greek and Chivalric Romances, “adventure-heroic novel[s],” and “pathos-filled psychological [...] novels” are all couched within his definition (12-14). The fantasy, therein, seems to operate, if not entirely in a Freudian sense, then as an underpinning of Bakhtin’s historical reconstruction of ordeal novels in his study. Like in those works, the hero, our problem novel protagonist, is placed in “biological time” where she is “test[ed]” (11-12). Interestingly enough, Bakhtin’s commentators mention how he sees these works view the primary identities and characters in the texts as “complete, unchanging and given in advance; qualities are affirmed and verified, but do not emerge or develop” (Morson and Emerson 407). If this is correct, then it would seem that the sensation of an

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1972 *A Sound of Chariots*, Bette Green’s 1974 *Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon, Maybe*; even 1982’s *Dacey’s Song*, which won the Newbery Medal, does not appear anywhere in the criticism as much as problem novel’s attenuated towards boys. I do not have a good answer to the question of why gender seems to play such a large role in the publication of specific types of problem novels, but there does seem to be a bias towards young men.

<sup>11</sup> Otherwise known as the *prufungsroman*.

emergence of growth can only be injected into the prose by the outside party of the reader in direct observation and verification of this affirmation. Nevertheless, as Morson and Emerson state, Bakhtin, here, is primarily concerned with “psychological time” where the consternation of the hero is made visible to us all (407). And this is particularly interesting to my study since, in chronotopal terms, psychological time is time outside of the action of the narrative and placed only within the mind of the protagonist<sup>12</sup>; thus, it is relative inaction and non-occurrence within the actual plot of the narrative itself.<sup>13</sup>

And yet, Bakhtin finds this time in particular to be rich with “subjective palpability” (“*Bildungsroman*,” 15). Here, hero and protagonist seem to come into much clearer definition: the lead character<sup>14</sup> shows a relative disinterest with changing the world surrounding him or her; she is a relative solipsist concerned primarily with the self. Bakhtin states: “The problem of the interaction between subject and object, man and the world, was not raised in the novel of ordeal. This explains why the nature of heroism is so unproductive and uncreative in this type of novel” (16). But, as our earlier distinction between problem novel and *bildungsroman* illustrates, this is still not exactly what the problem novel is. Interestingly enough, Bakhtin presupposes this idea. He mentions a type of “biographical novel” that “has never actually existed in pure form (17); it is a

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<sup>12</sup> In the epic, the hero is a national figure and not an individual, meaning that the hero cannot have a self in any psychological sense.

<sup>13</sup> Think, perhaps, of a Shakespearian soliloquy where the actor takes an aside to discuss the personal thoughts and emotions she is experiencing with the audience. No plot time passes, in fact, plot time in the main narrative literally freezes on the stage while the actress speaks to the audience. When we consider the first-person narratives of Blume, we will come to see that entire narratives are built upon this principle where the actual plot time of the story becomes subsidiary to a psychological time of interior monologue, or, as I argue, dialogue with an audience who cannot speak back.

<sup>14</sup> A term I will only use here as a distinction between the concept of “hero” and “protagonist.”

“family-biographical” novel marked in “biographical time” where events are “unrepeatable and irreversible” (17-18). Here, the protagonist’s “life and fate change, they assume structure and evolve, but the hero himself remains *essentially* unchanged [...] the only essential change in the hero himself is his crisis and rebirth” (emphasis mine 17). This type of novel is considerably more “realistic” than the other types of novels of ordeal I have discussed and exhibits a distinct “congruity of lives taking place at various times,” meaning that the biographical time of the distinct hero can be surrogated by the reader in a way not possible, necessarily, in other chronotopic instances (the adventure, the mythic etc.).<sup>15</sup> And though Bakhtin uses the term “hero” in his description, he goes on further to indicate that the concept of the “hero” within the novel itself “falls away almost completely here”; this leaves room for us to view the lead character as a protagonist as opposed to a failed hero (19).

To be completely accurate, all of what has been described thus far technically falls into the class of the Bakhtinian precursor to the *bildungsroman* as it does not fulfill all the criteria to be seen as the *Bildungsroman* proper. But the key towards what would be seen in the *bildungsroman* is the protagonist’s capacity for change and evolution that acquires “*plot significance* [...] The entire plot of the novel is reinterpreted and reconstructed” (21). This theory of the *bildungsroman* gives particular weight to the capacity with which the problem of the problem novel can gain equal favor with plot, and even, perhaps, gain precedence in the novel. The overcoming of the problem itself

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<sup>15</sup> Part of what makes the problem novel so appealing to young women is its capacity to “re-write” the “traditions, myths and collective stories, or [even] a particular work of fiction” (Sheldon 18). Bakhtin’s theory still holds true in this, then, unrealized form of the ordeal novels that I am coyly hinting at as the problem novel. That particularization occurs in the twentieth-century version could not be anticipated at the time of Bakhtin’s writing; further it can be seen as another variation upon the form.

becomes tantamount to the reading of the narrative and paramount to illustrating the development of the identity (as opposed to simply showing a transformation as some kind of spontaneous realization or entelechy). Instead, internal or, as I augment Bakhtin's definition, cerebral and moral, time is introduced. Literally: "Time is introduced into a person, enters into his very image, changing in a fundamental way the significance of all aspects of destiny and life" (21). I choose to include moral time in Bakhtin's construction of internal, psychological, time since, as Morson and Emerson claim, the hallmark of the *bildungsroman* is showing how the protagonist grows and emerges both in connection to individual changes *as well as* social changes (409). In many such cases in the problem novel, this connection to society implies a moral dilemma or an assimilation into a previously unconsidered moral social state. For example, take the scene where the Pre-Teen Sensations from *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret?* promise to tell *truthfully* when they each first achieve their menarches (97-98). The confession becomes an expression of growth and maturity and something that Margaret takes very seriously. When she later discovers that Nancy has lied about having her first period, Nancy is marked with opprobrium as a "*big fake*" for violating the social pact between the girls in the club with her lies (108). Thus, I would argue that, particularly in reference to sororal bonding, speaking and hearing truth become key marks of success in the *bildungsroman* as it applies to the young female protagonist.

What is particularly interesting about Bakhtin's construct of the *bildungsroman* is his capacity to see it as a multi-tiered, historical structure which evolves into greater and greater spheres of success as the concept of the novel of ordeal develops. For example, his first type of chronotope of the novel of ordeal, the "Idyllic-Cyclical"

(“*Bildungsroman*,” 22), is far simpler than the four which follow it; it is based only in the idea that it constructs the developing protagonist from immaturity to maturity but lacks any real connection to historical time within and outside the novel. Therefore, it is cyclical because novels of this type are particularly generic: all the characters evolve in the same way all the time. This type of chronotope is thought to rarely exist without connection to some other chronotope, which gives it the necessary weight to exist (22). At the other end of the spectrum are novels which co-exist with “historical emergence” by way of emerging alongside “*real* historical time” (23).<sup>16</sup> As Bakhtin notes, it is only here where “problems of reality and human potential, problems of freedom and necessity [...] reach their full height” (24). Bakhtin’s “full height” is the capacity with which a novel can come closest to the “realistic” for both the reader and for the protagonist in the narrative. As I consider the problem novel, particularly many critics’ problems with the problem novel, I agree that Bakhtin’s stratification of the novel of ordeal seems to assuage many of these issues. It might not fall under all the auspices of high literature,<sup>17</sup> but it should be noted that the problem novel is not constructed to have in matters of “high” literary importance be intrinsic to its success. To the contrary, as Bakhtin shows us, by operating and working within more personal matters and publicizing them, the

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<sup>16</sup> “Real,” by which I take to mean time operating alongside the reader’s extra-literary time. In other words, time moves within the novel analogous and contemporaneous to the way time moves outside the novel to the reader. What is particularly sexy about this concept is the idea that, as we have argued earlier, young readers tend to connect and associate with protagonists of a similar age in what they are reading, thus, here they are drawn into bonds with the protagonist they are reading about out of sense of concern, believability and relatability due to the contemporaneous time period and construction of character as analogous to themselves (Russell 224).

<sup>17</sup> The idea of a “high literature” is a concept that I do not believe Bakhtin would have any interest as hierarchies are counter-productive to the concept of a dialogized prose.

problem novel's humble goals achieve success on the merits of its particular audience's needs.

As I now move to further illustrate the complexity of the chronotope of the post-modern problem novel of female adolescence, Nikolajeva reminds me that to immerse a novel in psychological time generally causes the capacity for adventure time to decrease (*CLCA*, 72). Not remarkably, critics tend to argue that young adult novels dealing almost primarily in cerebral or psychological time become gendered female: "discourses on female adolescence [discuss] the psychological dynamics of the relationship" (Crew 4).<sup>18</sup> Crew doesn't define the particulars of that relationship; however, she does tell us that:

The central characters in young adult novels are teenage daughters and sons working through different kinds of conflicts and relationships in their lives including their relationships with parents [...] I have chosen to identify the young adult novel as a specific generic form in that it is most often written [...] for young people and marketed specifically for teenage readers. (6-7)

I do not disagree with her, but I would point out two specific places of interest to my study: 1.) Crew identifies only one form of relationship/ conflict scenario here: that between parents and their children. 2.) She specifically illustrates that, unlike children's books, the novels are specifically marketed to young adults, bypassing their parents (who, as we discussed in Chapters One and Two, are normally within the primary marketing

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<sup>18</sup> To be fair to Crew's work, she discusses how more recent fiction written by women for young girls moves from this plotline to plots specifically dealing with relations constructed around and through "race, gender and class" (4). As this part of her study falls outside of the time period we are considering though, I choose to focus on her work that considers the earlier views of literature of female adolescence.

audience as they are the wage earners and, therein, book purchasers). This shift in marketing is indicative of an extra-literary shift in moral time and psychological time for the audience of these books given that the subject matter is of such a personal nature that it is difficult to even discuss “it” within the privatized family unit. For me, it begs the simple question: “What’s going on in these books that parents are being by-passed as the centrally-marketed target?” The answer helps me to define this new chronotope.

The chronotope of the post-modern problem novel of female adolescence is tied up in the audience shift. Bakhtin tells us that one of the central plots of these novels of ordeal concerns the ability of the protagonist to cope and grow: problem novels reflect the audiences’ ability to associate with said protagonists at the highest level. As Crew indicates, “the *raison d’etre* for adolescent literature is to tell stories ‘about making the passage from childhood to adulthood [...] questions of independence, identity formation and relationships with parents and peers have been identified as central to [these] stories’” (7). In privileging the idea of independence from parents and a *bildungsroman* plot of a quest for selfhood and identity, these novels specifically encourage young girls not to grow through relationships with their parent, but rather, through the similar ordeals their textually-created peers endure.<sup>19</sup> Pratt makes the contention that “the supreme goal of these novels of development [for] younger girls [is to be] given tests in submission in a general way, their older sisters are provided as models of behavior appropriate for success” (14). What she speaks of concerns young women of a marriage-ready age. Interestingly enough she also speaks of these women as protagonists who possess models

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<sup>19</sup> Readers can thus explore problematic issues without fear of reproach or embarrassment from the authority figure of the parent who, arguably, would not be able to understand at the level of a sororal bond due to their hierarchal positioning over the adolescent.

whom they could attempt to emulate; as we will later see in Blume, the norm seems to be that the central young female protagonist *is* the older sibling and seeks models who are not altogether present for her to model. My speculation would be that the sororal bonds the young female protagonist seeks with the audience member represent an isolation, though not necessarily an alienation, only rectifiable through connection with some Other who is outside of the narrative itself. The main reason we will find that this occurs concerns the content of central narrative: the growth of the women, as a topic of a *bildungsroman*, is fraught with societal/ moral taboos. As Brenda Boudreau has argued in the aptly titled “The Battlefield of the Adolescent Girl’s Body,” “the picture of growing up female is overwhelmingly negative [...] common problems confronted by girls in literature in the latter half of the twentieth century [include]: teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, eating disorders and depression” (43). As she suggests, the physical situation of a girl becoming a woman, the developing body itself, “becomes an obstacle to autonomy and self-agency as the girl tries to reconcile her body to the demands of a socially proscribed gendered identity” (43). In essence, the subject matter of these texts is so personal, and conversely so common, that public discourse on the subject matter renders them inherently taboo for discussion even with a young woman’s parents. When we look through *Margaret*, we find many cases of this actually occurring hidden within the purpose for creating the Pre-Teen Sensations: The theft of the *Playboy* and plan to increase their bra sizes (46); the discussion of Margaret’s parents’ aversion to religion (35); and, of course, the famous “menstroooation” discussion (96-98).

Thus, the connection between a “real” young woman and a literary young woman enduring the same problems becomes a place of dialogue between the private and the

public. This “conversation” allows the reader to come to some “control over her own self –representation allowing her to escape” the reality of her own situation through the use of a *realistic* interlocutor in the problem novel (Boudreau 45).<sup>20</sup> Essentially, as the private matters of the home have become *too* private even for discussion between mother and daughter, the daughter takes the conversation to someone who can have the discussion in a public area (the published novel) that still maintains the privacy from public opprobrium that the family fears.

As pertaining specifically to time and space within the novels themselves, the problem novel, as a form of *bildungsroman*, attempts to enact a “transgressive invention of narrative strategies, strategies that express critical dissent from the dominant narrative” (DuPlessis 5). In laypeople’s terms, the problem novel seeks specifically to focus on what should be the paraleptic tales of the central narrative – in our case, the internal/moral conflicts being dealt with in psychological time – and makes them the primary

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<sup>20</sup> One might ask, “Why not simply address the situation under Bakhtin’s theory of the Addressee?” The principle of the superaddressee holds that, even though every utterance must have an addressee (someone who listens), every utterance also has a third listener known as the superaddressee who completely comprehends the utterance as intended, or as Bakhtin writes, “in just the right way” (*PDP*, 126). The superaddressee is the ultimate sympathetic and understanding ear who neither questions nor contests the utterance but grasps, perfectly, the intended tone and message (Bakhtin suggests that praying to God for help operates on the same principle [126]). The problem I have with this in connection to the problem novel is the degree to which the reader can supply the role of the superaddressee to an unequivocal extent. For, while the internal narrative of the Judy Blume novels seem to address this very capacity (for example, Margaret addresses God to solve her problems or, even more complicated, the first-person narrative voice sometimes seems to speak directly to the reader), it seems more likely in this form of *bildungsroman* that the dialogue between protagonist, problem and reader cannot complete superaddressivity by the simple fact that no two children will grow in the exact same way. It is better, I think, to think of the connection as a sort of implied “super-empathy” between the speaker and the reader where a bond exists over a shared instance of understanding, but that bond is by no means perfect, and, by its own bibliotherapeutic nature, must be imperfect to allow for the individual growth and self-building of young adolescent female readers (Shavit 83).

narratives of concern to the audience. The time best spent in the novel for readers in this audience is the time outside of narrative action and in the space between the young female protagonist's ears. Here, seemingly paraleptic stories concerning problems are not only not simply side stories; they are the focus for the audience as these side stories find empathy with the protagonist as justification for both the protagonist's concern and the reader's concern through first-person address. The effect created is a dissolution between the boundaries of the novel where a young female adolescent becomes actively involved with the plotline specifically by the author's design for the intensive purpose of making it the plot.

### **Judy Blume: Into the Mind of a Young Adolescent Female**

Though Blume's young adult fiction raises a mixed reception to say the least,<sup>21</sup> she has found no trouble getting her work into print; since the early 1970s, she has written or edited over 20 books and placed 75 million copies of them into circulation. Besides using her capacity to work with material that is controversial in nature, Blume opens the door for the use of the intimacy of the first-person narrator, or the young female "I," as Renee Curry calls it (95). Curry supports my view that the "I" narrator in young women's fiction becomes both a sort of "cultural ventriloquism" for the author<sup>22</sup> and a "recognition of 'occluded truths' [...] that allow [the reader] to access and read the girl 'I' narrator as

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<sup>21</sup> Blume's preoccupation with taboo subject matter has landed her on many banned books lists. She notes that, upon the composition of her first controversial book, *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* in 1970, she donated three copies of it to her daughter's own library; the principal expunged it from the library almost immediately due to what he deemed as "inappropriate" content concerning "menstruation" (Blume, "Places" 63).

<sup>22</sup> Blume supports this idea of a form of ventriloquism; in the article "Places I Never Meant to Be," she specifically cites writing her early 70s novels as thinly veiled roman à clefs to her own personal experiences growing up (63).

trustworthy, persuasive, and, above all, neither innocent nor tragically suffering from that innocence” (95-6). In other words, Blume’s first-person narrators become, essentially, attractive candidates to invoke and discuss otherwise difficult subject matter with young women and encourage them to reach a self-actualization of their own (95). Jill Walsh calls use of this narrative voice a “mask” the author dons as a “strategy deliberately adopted” to effect her point: as Blume stresses, she intended for her writing at this point in her career to be both confessional and therapeutic, both for her and her reader:

Writing for twelve-year-olds has a lot of appeal. When you’re that age, everything is still out there in front of you. You have the opportunity to be almost anyone you want. I was not yet thirty when I started [*Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret?*], but [by then] I have felt my options were already gone. (qtd in Weidt 48)

It is in that spirit of empathy that Blume reasserts herself as a pre-teen trying to communicate with other adolescents.

In an effort to control the scope of this investigation, I will primarily examine the archetypal problem novel of Blume’s career, 1970s *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret?*, and utilize some of her lesser-known works from roughly the same period to illustrate the author’s use of the post-modern chronotope.<sup>23</sup> Following a brief biographical sketch, I will try to locate the mask of the author within these narratives. I employ elements of Bakhtin’s (auto-)biographical time and his discussion of the novel of

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<sup>23</sup> As I am focusing primarily on the young women’s narratives, I will bypass such works as 1971s *Then Again, Maybe I Won’t*, which deals with male masturbation, and 1974’s *Blubber*, which, though it features a female protagonist, Jill, her bullying of another girl, Linda goes against notions of sororal bonding. 1987s *Just As Long As We’re Together*, though falling outside my primary period of interest, illustrates a better example of this kind of bonding and audience invocation.

ordeal in order to show how these empathic and sympathetic bonds between speaker and addressee serve to bypass parents. In problem novels, the relationship with adults seems to be at the heart of much of the problem in question, and I would argue that this ideology comes strongly out of Blume's own relationship with her parents. Thus, I will show how Blume's variations on the mother/ daughter plot arise both out of her own personal time, her period's time, and within the time and space shared, between author and reader in dialogue with one another through the first-person narrative.

Blume was born Judy Sussman on February 12, 1938 in Elizabeth, New Jersey to Jewish parents: Esther, a quiet, book-savvy housewife, and Rudolph, a dentist. Blume roots much of her fiction in her family life, particularly her father who provided the model for many fictional counterparts with his strong joviality and support for his daughter's imagination.<sup>24</sup> As in many of her novels, though, physical distance between father and daughter proved to be problematic and distressing. Blume's family was forced to move to Florida for two years due to health concerns for her older brother, David; her father remained in New Jersey working to support them.<sup>25</sup> Blume's father's death in

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<sup>24</sup> Although I rely on Hirsch's idea of the mother/ daughter plot, Blume's history requires that we consider the "plot" between Blume and her father as well. In *Daughters and Fathers in Feminist Novels*, Sheldon argues that much of the "mother/ daughter puzzle" arises out of the liberation of the Women's Movement: inherent to that movement is an absence of a strong female presence in the home which consequently leads to a greater development of a young girl's individual voice (13). This voice often comes largely influenced by a father figure or a lack of a father figure (20). The dynamics of this "disintegrat[ing] nuclear family," tends to privilege the father in the home during this time period; consequently a "counter-discourse" arises when authors reflect upon their situation and "re-write" it in light of a current, liberated position (13, 17, 18). Sheldon argues that the resultant effect of the "broken" home of the writer upon the composition in the late 60s, 70s and early 80's is one of "individualism" and the fostering of such liberation in their audience in hopes of having them bypass the author's own pains (16).

<sup>25</sup> Blume's novel *Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself* autobiographically reflects this point in her life.

1959 at the relatively young age of 54, coupled with the death of two of his brothers in their forties, would haunt Blume's prose with the repetition of the themes of parental separation, mortality and isolation.

Blume later attended New York University, where she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Early Childhood Education in 1960: a degree earned to satisfy to her mother's pragmatic wish that she have a career in the event that marriage didn't work out for her. Mrs. Sussman's anxieties were prescient: Judy Sussman became Judy Blume when she married John Blume, a lawyer, in 1959, during her junior year in college, but they divorced after 16 years. Blume describes her marriage as a period where her development was arrested: she was expected to fulfill the role of a domestic homemaker, raising her two sons – Randy Lee in 1961 and Larry in 1963 – and attending to her husband. It was during her marriage to John Blume, though, that the writer began her preoccupation with storytelling and returned to her educational roots. She began writing fiction in 1966 when her children entered nursery school. And while she found some limited success early on (two short stories were published over a three year period), she encountered far more failure, receiving up to six rejections a week from publishers. Undeterred, though, after finding limited success, Blume enrolled in a graduate course at NYU entitled "Writing for Children and Teenagers." The class would lead to her first books: *The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo* (1969), *Iggie's House* (1970) and her revolutionary 1970 opus, *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*.

Though met with a mixed reception due to its incredibly frank verisimilitude in dealing with the onset of Margaret's first period and her internal struggle to find a singular voice for her religious beliefs, the novel was praised as one of the outstanding

books of 1970 by *The New York Times* (Naylor and Wintercorn 52). The book also marked Blume's first forays into censorship as numerous groups sought to have the book banned for its controversial exploration of familial and sororal bonds, religion and the emergence of a nascent sexuality in women.

Much critical discussion has arisen concerning exactly why Blume resonates so well, especially with young women. Blume doesn't offer much explanation to her success; she writes, "Why me; Why my books" (qtd in Gallo, 32). Don Gallo claims it is not the particular success at recreating the style, time or moment of childhood (32). Stephen Garber echoes those remarks, referring to Blume's work as a "gimmick" or "an Ann Landers for the younger set" (56). Gallo disagrees with the prescriptive nature of Garber's claim, but not by much; he says "she is popular because *what* she writes about and *how* she writes it make her characters and their actions more real than anything anyone else writes" (32). Gallo makes a significant distinction here between his harsh criticism of Blume's work and what he finds redeeming: the "hows" of her success don't come in the style; they come in the creation of the characters that serve as arbiters of the message itself.<sup>26</sup> Richard Jackson agrees stating that while the "problems" of her

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<sup>26</sup> I feel obliged to discuss exactly how much critical disdain exists over Blume's writing style in order to stress the distinction between what critics find redeeming about her prose and what they revile. Philomena Hauck damns Blume with faint praise stating that she is *so* readable that "one girl who said she hardly ever read a book through because her *brain didn't work* [...] enjoyed all of [Blume's books] because she could follow every story" (emphasis mine, qtd in Gallo, 9). James Brewbaker reads *Margaret* at face value calling Blume's construction of the protagonist praying to God as "chummy" and filled with "ambivalence [...] reflecting little or no religious context" (82-83). He does concede that Blume allows "experience is the predominant teacher," illustrating Blume's capacity to not be pedantic (84). By the same token, he also finds her worldview "unrealistic and unnatural" (84). As stated above, the *Times* heaped praise upon it; many others were not as generous. *The Book Window* called it "banal in the extreme," while the *Times Literary Supplement* was far kinder, only referring to it as "insufferable" (Naylor and Wintercorn

problem novels are significant, “the real reason for her popularity is that the kids are hearing the books, and they’re hearing other kids” (qtd in Weidt, 21). And while I would strongly concur with Jackson and Gallo, I would amend their statements somewhat. Both view Blume’s work as a simple reception of material through solid characterization; however, I would argue that the characterization itself is tantamount to discussion. The reader finds herself diverted from her own reality by escaping into an offered invitation into someone else’s problems (whom they can relate to). The effect is that the young women reading Blume’s work feel, in many ways, as if they are an active participant in the *protagonist’s* healing process as much as vice versa (Egoff 69,77).

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As we consider the problems Blume attempts to cover in her works, we find an almost unbroken string of common teenage and pre-teenage taboos and angst-ridden topics: masturbation, menstruation, divorce, making friends in difficult situations: bullying, popularity contests and even simply moving to a new location.<sup>27</sup> As stated earlier, what makes her approach to these issues somewhat unique is how she is significantly less concerned with the plot of her fictions and more fixated on developing a rapport with the audience over the issues at hand. For example, take *Margaret’s* opening volley:

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52). All of this leaves one to wonder if a possible explanation for the dearth of recent, or even historical, Blume criticism resides in the fact that most critics seem overtly apologetic to have written any solid critique of her at all.

<sup>27</sup> Another important consideration of the *bildungsroman/ entwicklungroman* categorization itself is that these books are arguably transitional reads – they attempt to help children move into a stage of adolescence, but do not suppose to finish the job. Much of Blume’s audience is girls just entering the stage of 12 to 13; perhaps this is a minor distinction, but the transition between pre-teen and teen years seems to have a particularly viable importance, especially biologically, for young women

*Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. We're moving today. I'm so scared God. I've never lived anywhere but here. Suppose I hate my new school? Suppose everybody there hates me? Please help me God. Don't let New Jersey be too horrible. Thank you.*

We moved on the Tuesday before Labor Day. I knew what the weather was like the second I got up. I knew because I caught my mother sniffing her armpits. She always does that when it's hot and humid, to make sure the deodorant's working. I don't use deodorant yet. I don't think people start to smell bad until they are at least twelve. So I've got a few months to go [...]

But when I groaned, "Why New Jersey?" I was told, "Long Island is too social—Westchester is too expensive—and Connecticut is too inconvenient."

So Farbrook, New Jersey it was, where my father could commute to his job in Manhattan, where I could go to public school, and where my mother could have all the grass, trees and flowers she ever wanted. (1-2)

Margaret's parents, though not explicitly blamed by Margaret in the passage, are, in fact, the cause of the dilemma. Margaret addresses the problem in psychological time and space (in her head) to an ever-receptive God, but the "prayer" is also an immediate invocation to the reader as well. Interestingly, Margaret has no other options for voicing her complaints and concerns – God is the only subject position whom she believes

possesses the capacity to not only understand her but, possibly, alter her fate.<sup>28</sup> The source of the trouble is reaffirmed through the ensuing first-person narrative to the reader: Margaret is moving; it is a move that she does not want to happen; it really privileges her parents much more than her; and she has absolutely no say in the matter whatsoever. Several things happen here. Margaret reaffirms the finality of her situation and her lack of ability to be heard by her parents; they will not change their minds on the issue of moving, and she can only utilize the first-person narrative to describe the events to the reader in a move to gather personal strength to cope. One would think this position would later be occupied by the PTSSs, but, even when she has made friends in her new location, Margaret still openly and regularly confides in both God and the reader. The bonds that should exist between Margaret and her parents are shown to be distanced – Margaret uses a prayer of desperation to God to illustrate her problems and then reaffirms that the psychological problems she attests to are, in fact, her reality by describing them to the audience. She has become “separated” from her parents as their needs trump hers (Hansen 22).

First-person narrative has the capacity to accomplish many things as a narratological choice by the author; here, especially in the internal monologue, it creates an “intimacy” between Margaret and the audience (Stringer 16). By “internal,” I mean that not only does no time pass outside of her mind, but she has no “control” over the outcomes presented to her in the real world time of her narrative (16) – Margaret literally

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<sup>28</sup> As such, God serves as the ultimate superaddressee, past even the young reader who is already being cajoled by Blume into feeling sympathetic towards Margaret’s plight.

invokes conversation with the audience in an effort to order, in some small way, the changes that she cannot control in her world.<sup>29</sup> I have argued elsewhere that

the limited perspective allotted to the first-person internal narrative voice of her protagonists allows Blume to construct their struggle through each novel's particular issue seemingly in isolation; each girl works through the problems of her world in her own mind as only the reader is given access to her thoughts, fears, and, more often than not, self-deprecating humor and embarrassment at the situation. (Sommers 264)

This limited narrative perspective Blume's protagonists offer can even come to a point of direct address with the reader. For example, when the ante escalates and matters of fear, embarrassment and societal reproach reach a breaking point in the protagonist's mind, Margaret bypasses any thoughts of the audience as people overhearing, or listening in on, her life and speaks directly to them. For example, when Nancy Wheeler experiences her first period in New York after bragging that she had already experienced one, Margaret is up in arms at the betrayal; the only people she feels that she can confide this in are the young women reading her narrative: "I couldn't believe it! Nancy, who knew everything! She'd lied to me about her period. She'd never had it before [...] I didn't know what to say. I mean, what can you say when you've just found out your friend's a liar!" (107). Arguments could be raised that the voice here only speaks to herself, but if that is the case then why make mention of the fact that her friend has betrayed her?

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<sup>29</sup> The audience *could* be seen as some sort of superaddressee if one assumes that Blume's use of an internal first-person narrator is simply her talking to herself. I, of course, argue with this simple solution.

Margaret already knows that.<sup>30</sup> I would argue instead that she specifically invokes an extra-literary audience since there is no one else left who can appreciate her situation. Elsewhere, I have argued, “all of this is told to the reader through her internal narrative which only the audience is privileged to; the resultant effect is therapeutic to the reader – while Margaret sympathizes with Nancy, the audience empathizes with her and her responsibility with Nancy’s trust” (Sommers 265).<sup>31</sup>

The question that arises is why exactly does this situation manifest itself in the first place? Just because a *bildungsroman* shows development doesn’t necessarily mean that development must come at the expense of familiar relationships. Hirsch approaches the situation from the position that the post-modern period seeks to dissolve the illusion of a family romance. She posits that the concept of the idealized family, where a daughter could find in her mother a literal superaddressee who not only sees her problems since, presumably, she has lived through them herself, but can and will sympathetically

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<sup>30</sup> Similarly, it is arguable that the “you” here is akin to a self-referential “one,” more so than an actual second-person address. However, given the number of occasions with which Blume directly addresses the “you”s of an audience as opposed to the you of the self, I assert that this incident could also be read as an indication of an address to someone other than the self.

<sup>31</sup> We can see the direct address articulated even more clearly in *It’s Not the End of the World*. Karen literally does not have anyone else to speak with about her mother and father’s impending divorce. Disillusioned by the events in her life, she shares her most intimate details with someone who doesn’t exist in her reality: “Am I wrong to feel that lately Debbie is more interested in my brother than in me? [...] I think Gary Owens likes her. He’s always tugging at her hair. I wish he’d do that to me!” (14). Debbie seems to enact a betrayal upon Karen. Karen already feels as though her family cannot connect with her, and now her friends also seem to not fulfill that function. The audience steps into the role in the form of a direct addressee, invoked with a question of “what do you think?” Obviously, the distance of the page blocks communication, but Crew asserts that this strategy is enticing to the reader and “ideologically powerful” since it “implies that there is a common experience of adolescence that both the reader and the ‘I’ in the text can share” (23).

identify without necessarily offering advice. This model no longer is a normative practice by the late 60s (10). Hirsch argues:

By using the notion of family romance, I treat both motherhood and daughterhood as *story*—as narrative representation of social and subjective reality and of literary convention. I would argue that in [...] post-modernist plots [the mothers] become the targets of this process of disidentification and the primary negative models for the daughter. (10-11)

She attributes the reason for this to the romanticized idea that the “story” of a young woman’s growth in centuries prior has been primarily “fantasy,” a construct which does not survive into the 60s as the questions of the realistic portrayal of the family unit become further called into question as “mythopoeia” (11, DuPlessis 105-07). Both Hirsch and, on the father-daughter plot, Sheldon believe that “the disintegration of traditional nuclear families [have become] more and more common [in the literary] market” (12). Sheldon’s rejoinder to this situation is that authors such as Blume responded to this situation with books that offer “self-help,” or help which arises not from active consultation with another (such as parent or even a friend) but with the reader herself (12). It is Hirsch’s contention that, at the heart of the loss of communication between mother and daughter in the late 60s and early 70s is the idea that, individually, these “self-help” works take on the task of showing girls how to become women, if only in the sense of women as the construction of “gendered subjects within culture” (18).

Hirsch argues that in this revision, “relationships among individuals raised with similar ego structures—are bound to be more satisfying” (133); that is to say, within the mother/ daughter relationship, there is a “a struggle with a bond that is powerful and

painful, that threatens engulfment and self-loss even while it offers the very basis for self-consciousness” (133). Sororal bonds<sup>32</sup> do not threaten the development of a young woman’s subject position and identity – particularly when they come *vis a vis* an audience that is based upon shared experiences. Even the deep-rooted bonds of friendship, as shown in *Margaret*, can fail in the eyes of the maturing protagonist. Though she doesn’t approach this idea from the metanarrative perspective I am proposing, Hirsch supports the concept, stating that “it points to [...] a world of shared female knowledge and experience in which subject/object dualism and power relationships might be challenged and redefined” (133). The power relationships in my argument are those of the developing young mind seeking advice from someone in a distanced, yet lateral relationship – the similarly-aged reader of the problem novel. Consequently, given the nature of the problem novel and its intended purpose, the audience that the protagonist seeks with the reader is the same audience seeking “self help” from the depiction of the character’s problems. In that way, by directly invoking a literary/ extra-literary sororal bond between protagonist and reader, the literal topos of the problem novel is not governed by plot structures; the topos is governed by the shared psychological place and time between the speaker and the addressee professing empathy and sympathy.

As Hirsch argues, the “rejection” of the mother creates further uncomfortable places in the plot of the problem novel (136). We find this discomfort scattered throughout *Margaret*. For example, the protagonist’s parents object to her Grandmother Simon attempting to locate Margaret within a religion (Judaism). Both parents are atheist

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<sup>32</sup> Hirsch uses the term “lesbian” where I say “sororal,” both meaning same sex bonding (a type of homosociality) (133).

and want Margaret to somehow discover, *ex nihilo*, religion wholly upon her own (39). This particular problem adds a further wrinkle to Margaret's conversations with a god of no specific religious construction. As she is brought up atheist and charged with finding her own religion, she creates god as more of a "confidant" than a religious deity (Sommers 266). In many ways, "god" becomes a placeholder for the actuality of her parents. Margaret comes to assume that God will always be there for her when she needs him: "*Why do I only feel you when I am alone*" (AYTGIMM, 120). She also assumes that she can bargain with God, whereas she cannot with her strict parents: "*Are you still there God? See how nice my bra looks now? That's all I need – just a little help. [If you help my breasts to grow] I will be really good around the house God*" (82). When "god" does not come through on her requests for promises, she rejects him as being just as unreliable and problematic as her friends, her parents, and even her grandparents: "I was never going to talk to God again. I was through with him and his religions" (134). The non-italicized text is the internal dialogue of Margaret's first-person voice speaking to the audience; although unable to respond to her, they operate as the sympathetic ear she requires at the particular time. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the reader associates with Margaret's dilemma, though they may or may not completely agree with her and her motivations. But, through using Margaret as a surrogate for their own associations with similar problems, the audience can use Margaret in the same capacity as she uses them: as a momentary escape from the realities of their particular situation as they mire themselves in the counseling (empathic and sympathetic) of the other who requires them.

We can find another example of this escape in 1972's *It's Not the End of the World* and 1987's *Just as Long as We're Together*. As Weidt points out, the two books work

remarkably well together as both deal with the similar problem of parents *trying* to tell the young female protagonists about an impending divorce. Weidt asks, “But how do you tell the children? Awkwardly or not at all is the answer in both cases” (70). Therein lies the crux of the young female protagonist’s issues with their parents – communication gap:

Mom said, ‘I have something to tell you [...] I wanted to tell you before, but I couldn’t. It isn’t easy for me to say this and it won’t be easy for you to understand...’ [...]

Mom took a deep breath and said, ‘Daddy and I are separating.’ [...] I felt tears come to my eyes. I told myself, don’t start crying now Karen, you jerk. Not *now*. [...]

‘A divorce!’ I said, when I hadn’t planned on saying anything. ‘You wouldn’t! You wouldn’t get a divorce!’ Then I started crying for real and I jumped up from the table and ran through the restaurant. (30-1)

As can be seen, the events are both shocking and painful for Karen to bear. Worse, her Aunt and Uncle, though somewhat useful in helping her manage the situation, cannot successfully surrogate the mother’s position in helping her to comprehend events any better. Trying to explain why the divorce will occur, Aunt Ruth tells Karen, “Karen... there are some things that are very hard for children to understand” (32). As one might expect, Karen finds this answer totally unacceptable and indicative of the failures of adults in her reality to aid her position. She rejoins Ruth’s comment with a piece of interior dialogue to the audience: “That’s what people say when they can’t explain something to you. I don’t believe it. I can understand anything they can understand”

(32). The audience here likely does not believe in a pre-teen's capacity to understand the complexities of the adult world any more than they themselves can, but what resonates with the reader, particularly with the young female reader, is the emotional complexity of the situation – what O'Keefe dubs “the miasma of guilt” (182) and Allen calls the “anxiety associated with unwanted isolation” (187). Effectually, the audience here “fills the void” of this isolation from adults by being a receptive ear to which Karen can cry out (103). Karen seeks information about her parents divorce; she feels more comfortable about the situation if she possesses more information about it (72).<sup>33</sup>

Stephanie Hirsch, the young female protagonist of *Just as Long as We're Together*, illustrates the reader's subject position within the novels best, whether she is dealing with her parents' separation or her own separation from her best friend, Rachel Robinson. The set up is almost identical to Karen's, but her father plays the role of Karen's mother:

‘Stephanie,’ Dad said, “sit down.’

There are times when you know you're going to hear something that you don't want to hear. Something that you've kept yourself from thinking. I sat on the edge of my bed, chewing on the insides of my cheeks.

Dad paced the room. Finally he sat beside me. ‘I know you've guessed by now...’

‘Guessed what?’

‘About Mom and me... about our separation.’

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<sup>33</sup> She also believes it will aid her in trying to stop her parent's divorce.

‘What separation?’

‘This separation,’ Dad said, sounding impatient, “About how we’re living apart for a while.’

‘No!’

‘I thought you knew,’ Dad said, shaking his head

‘What am I supposed to be... some kind of mind-reader?’ (131-32)

While the gap in communications is somewhat obvious, what is really telling is how Stephanie begins to note both her Dad’s impatience and the feeling of grim foreboding that precludes the conversation. Stephanie soon shows us, through tell-tale “you”s, which, while in reference to herself, also acknowledge the audience as being spoken to, that both her mother and father were so preoccupied with their own troubles that neither of them took the opportunity to actually tell her what was happening (132-33). Worse, as Stephanie listens at the door, eavesdropping, she hears that, rather than expressing concern for her, her parents are greatly more concerned with whose fault it is (133).

Frustrated by relationships both familial and sororal throughout almost the entire text, Stephanie simply breaks down into complete direct address with the audience when she comes to places where she experiences misunderstanding. For example, concerning Alison Monceau’s popularity, she says:

I have never understood what makes some kids so popular. I’ve been trying to figure it out for years. Almost from the first week of school you could tell Alison was going to be the most popular girl in our homeroom [...] I’ve made a list of reasons why.

1. She is very friendly.

2. She never has anything bad to say about anyone
3. She doesn't have bad moods.
4. She laughs a lot.
5. She is funny. (94-95)

The list continues on, almost excruciatingly. The reader can sense, and visibly see, the jealousy as well as the respect, especially considering that #2 is an attribute that Stephanie herself cannot attest to having. What is particularly interesting is that Stephanie considers Alison a friend, but does not confide these highly complimentary attributes to her. In fact, Stephanie depicts Alison in a way that almost makes her appear too perfect to understand the problems of someone as ordinary as herself (which, as the passage illustrates, is a false truth: she possesses a remarkably analytical eye, even if she cannot spot her parent's marriage dissolving).

Ultimately, the point that I hope resonates here is that Blume creates these protagonists as significantly flawed so the reader can relate to them. I must reiterate that Blume *creates* these characters; she is an adult and mother, and, as Curry notes, she tries specifically to help others escape the pains she had to endure by providing them with a set of literary anecdotes for young girls to attach upon. It is of no real debate that Blume's plots are unoriginal – in fact, I would argue that is exactly their point. In designing these narratives as simple, almost everyday affairs, she wants them to appear as normative and commonplace as possible as a strategy for coping and survival. It is almost as if she tries to create characters who say: “I survived, and so will you... And if you will lend me your ear, my survival will be a little less difficult, and so might yours.”

And yet, at some point one might ask, “But where is the growth?” The answer: I

do not believe a reader ever finds true growth in the problem novel; that is part of its particular charm and, arguably, its appeal. The *bildungsroman* purports to show the maturation of a young adult. I would argue that the problem novel of the 1960s obliterates that romantic fascination by showing young women *struggling* to become better young women and attempting to grow but not necessarily achieving all those ends. At the end of *Margaret*, Margaret does get her period, but that does not make her feel complete; as she says, “Now I am growing for sure. Now I am *almost* a woman” (emphasis mine 148-9). She does not stop praying to God for help after she menstruates, but she does treat God with a bit more respect than she had previously, thanking him for not “missing” the event (149). By no means does Blume try to assert that all her character’s problems are over, but, one particular problem has reached its resolution. One particular young woman has found some relief, not through divine intervention, but by waiting. The bulk of *Margaret* is essentially the protagonist waiting for her moment of menstruation to begin. When it does, the book ends. The heft of the text is little more than Margaret trying to learn, to find someone in whom to confide her deepest feeling and emotions and, ostensibly, to wait until the problem solves itself. Blume’s conception of the problem novel is not that her young female protagonists are grown up by novel’s end; rather, they are *growing* up, just as the young women who read of their exploits are. I am not prepared, at this time, to completely acknowledge this movement as full-blown *entwicklungsroman*; I prefer to consider the problem novel to exist within Bakhtin’s as yet unnamed tier of novel of ordeal. That construction allows for the problem novel to integrate other elements of the types of ordeal novel without concrete designation. The work I see Blume as accomplishing here supports this idea as it is not an issue of finding

a concrete, permanent solution, but one of getting by day to day before the next problem arises.

## **Conclusions, Questions and Future Considerations on Chronotope and Children's and Young Adult Literature**

At my study's close, I cannot say that I have given the subject complete treatment. At little over one hundred and fifty-five pages, I certainly hope I would not have reached the end of any findings, but, like Bakhtin at the close of the original "Chronotope" essay, I chose to finish as I came close to approaching my goals, even if I did not reach fruition. Like Bakhtin before me, I reserve the right to continue my explorations, revise my evaluations at a later date and, hopefully, to flesh out my examination further as this project becomes a book length study.

That having been said, I do believe this study has shown one set of possible traces of Bakhtin's "form-shaping forces" in the genres of fantasy and the problem novel in the twentieth century (*PDP*, 271). Bakhtin understood the idea of genre itself as a way of seeing the present world while still carrying the traces of "earlier creative thinking" (Morson and Emerson 307). That is what this current project has attempted to accomplish – to start looking at the post-modern moment of young women's adolescent literature and trace it back through her ancestors to a reasonable point of genesis. I certainly could have pushed back further in time and space into the Rousseau-ian moment,<sup>1</sup> and it will certainly be my hopes in revision and further investigation to bring this study into the twenty-first century.

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<sup>1</sup> Likewise, in Chapter One, I redacted a figure who, late into this project, I discovered, but did not have sufficient time to explore: Lev Vygotsky. As I understand it, Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist in the twentieth-century, takes on Piaget's theories on a child's development and reverses it, suggesting that the growth of an individual takes a trajectory towards increasing socialization.

But this initial volley into the discussion of the formation of new chronotopes in children's and young adult literature does not go by without having left open places for further consideration. I would like to address some of those issues, briefly, here. Dialogism is a subject within these pages that I have intentionally kept on a very short leash. Chapter Two begins to deal with these issues as it addresses ideas of totalitarian monologism inherent to older forms such as the epic and, arguably, the folk tale, but a more replete discussion of heteroglossia (languages held within language) and polyglossia (the differences that can be seen between and among national and endorsed languages) would further the historical connections Baum has with those who preceded him by further stressing the notion of Baum's direct consideration of a child audience. It would be especially helpful in considering the movement from the Grimm Brothers' project and the similarities and differences seen when Baum "Americanized" the concept during novelization. Likewise, there is a very good argument to be made that the specific identities of *Marchen*, fairy and folktales all have very different and specialized characteristics that can place them along a hierarchy of specificity and size. Others use the terms interchangeably; some of the critics I use and entertain add only fleeting caveats to differentiate between the groups. Given that this study is as enamored as it is with tracing the lineage of particular genres and genre types, this subject merits further investigation. For, while Bakhtin does not concern himself hierarchies when he considers textual examination, Baum did choose to look specifically at folk tales and fairy stories while largely excluding *Marchen* tales.

Likewise, Chapter Three opens a literal Pandora's Box of further considerations. Lewis is such a replete character in his own right that much biographical information was

intentionally occluded in order to arrive at *Narnia* without writing a dissertation specific to him. Upon a recent trip to Indiana University – Northwest, a faculty member pointedly asked me if I was familiar with the argument that Lewis came upon the name “Narnia” through his study of ancient Latin poets – where the name of the town, Narnia, now Narni, is mentioned almost a dozen times. Having gone through at least three biographies of Lewis in the course of this research, I honestly admitted that I had not run across this information (neither had any of the other children’s literature faculty). It is not a proven fact; in fact, it is considered apocryphal to the canon of *Narnia*’s creation and evolution at best, but it shows how voluminous a figure and a subject Lewis is. Similarly, trying to come to grips with even the most essential, seemingly innocuous, questions surrounding Lewis opens an entire universe of potential new avenues of discovery: To Lewis, what exactly is the Christian Church (Catholicism? Anglicanism? organized Christianity in general?), and, bearing that in mind, how does that factor into his considerations of eschatology? Further, since Lewis is so mythopoeic in his novel construction, does it matter if we see him as being more argumentative with one sect of Christianity than any other? And how would any of those answers figure into reading his idea of apocalyptic or revelatory time?

There are many more questions. Likewise, there are also more chapters left to include and research as my project matures. For example, it was difficult to stop this project short of beginning an endeavor into multi-cultural literature. Culture as a topic, to me, explores more than simple question of race, ethnicity or geographical boundaries; all of those are certainly tied up into one’s sense of a culture, but as we continue into the twenty-first century, even the question of “What exactly constitutes ‘culture’?” becomes

something admirable and worthy of consideration. Whether that question and examination becomes a subset or analogous investigation of the same time period that Chapter Four deals with or a chapter unto itself is something I specifically want to deal with in the future. It is difficult to examine the 1960s and 70s with an eye towards only *one* of the operating socio-political movements of the period; surely the civil rights movement bears equal examination. But one could also equally ask the questions: “What about picture books?,” “What about books constructed with hybridized audiences like the *Harry Potter* series?,” “How does children’s and young adult literature change in America after the events surrounding 9/11?”

All of these questions give the reader an idea of where the next stages of my research lie. Since Nikolajeva first opened the door to use of chronotope in children’s and young adult literature many have followed. I hope I have added some new perspective on the matter by presenting an examination of chronotope within these works in a way that does not merely end at literary structuralism but operates more in the fashion of trying to attain a historical poetics, as was Bakhtin’s original project. In the same manner, Bakhtinian investigations of this subject matter are in no way limited to chronotope; in fact, as much as I wish to reconsider and bolster my work with a stronger look at dialogism, I would be hard-pressed not to consider laughter, carnival and polyphony when I think and write about someone like Judy Blume. And, I, myself, might be an excellent example of a self-reflexive fool, in the Bakhtinian sense, for even bringing up such ideas at the end of one formidable project. Then again, these are the possibilities Bakhtin offers me and offers the study of children’s and young adult literature. It is my hope that I may explore these among many other topics in the future.

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