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Chronotope in Children's literature

ABSTRACT

In the analysis of literary texts, it is crucial to have in mind the concept of chronotope. Mikhail Bakhtin, a prominent Russian literary theorist, employs the term to analyze the arrangement of temporal and spatial elements within literary texts.

The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Bakhtin's theoretical concept known as "the chronotope" and its impact on literary texts. Furthermore, its impact on children's literature should also be considered. This study aims to address the following inquiries. 1. The concept of chronotope refers to the literary and linguistic notion that combines the temporal and spatial dimensions within a narrative or discourse. 2. The Significance of the Chronotope. 3. In what manner might the concept of chronotope be employed in the analysis and interpretation of a textual work?

The present study is structured into three distinct components. The initial segment pertains to the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope, which encompasses an examination of chronotope itself, its elucidation, and its manifestation as expounded by Bakhtin. Section two provides an elucidation of children's literature and its interconnection with the concept of chronotope. Section three of this study investigates the representation of chronotope in children's literature.

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الكرونوتوب في أدب الأطفال

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الخلاصة:

في تحليل النصوص الأدبية، من المهم أن نأخذ بعين الاعتبار مفهوم الكرونوتوب. يستخدم ميخائيل باختين، وهو منظر أدبي روسي بارز، هذا المصطلح لتحليل ترتيب العناصر الزمانية والمكانية داخل النصوص الأدبية.

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تقديم تحليل شامل لمفهوم باختين النظري المعروف بـ "الكرونوتوب" وتأثيره على

النصوص الأدبية. علاوة على ذلك، ينبغي أيضا أخذ تأثيره على أدب الاطفال بعين الاعتبار. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى الاجابة على الاستفسارات التالية. 1. يشير مفهوم الكرونوتوب الى المفهوم الادبي واللغوي الذي يجمع بين البعدين الزمني والمكاني داخل السرد او الخطاب. 2. أهميه الكرونوتوب. 3. بأي طريقة يمكن استخدام مفهوم الكرونوتوب في تحليل وتفسير العمل النصي؟ وتنقسم الدراسة الحالية الى ثلاثة مكونات متميزة. يتعلق الجزء الأول بالمفهوم الباختييني للكرونوتوب، والذي يشمل فحص الكرونوتوب نفسه، وتوضيحه، وتجلياته كما شرحها بختين. ويقدم القسم الثاني توضيحا لأدب الاطفال وارتباطه بمفهوم الكرونوتوب. يتناول القسم الثالث من هذه الدراسة تمثيل الكرونوتوب في أدب الاطفال.

كلمات مفتاحية: الكرونوتوب , أدب الأطفال , الفانتازيا

2.1. Bakhtinian Chronotope

Mikhail Bakhtin's exploration of the interplay between time and space in novel writing gave rise to the concept of the "chronotope," a notion that fundamentally reshapes our understanding of narrative texts. He asserted that time and space are inseparable and deeply rooted in reality, providing the essential backdrop for specific events to unfold. This idea challenged the conventional view of narratives as a simple chronological sequence of incidents and dialogues and introduced the notion that they exist within a distinct fictional realm, a "literary artistic chronotope." In this framework, spatial and temporal elements are intricately woven into a concrete whole, where time becomes palpable, and space responds to the movement of time, plot, and history.

In his attempts to analyze how time and space can lay an indispensable ground in novel writing, Bakhtin claimed that "Time-space or time-place is the basic projection of a world within which specific events unfold." He, thus; alluded to the fact that those two notions are actually inseparable and reality-based. Consequently, he tried to answer his most thought-provoking question in all this realm: How can the experience of the character be depicted through spatial-temporal configurations and, simultaneously, bringing it to life? This question resulted in a whole new concept known as the chronotope, the temporal literary time in the strategy of narratives.

To investigate deeper in Bakhtin's chronotope concept, it's essential to recognize its philosophical and scientific underpinnings. Bakhtin drew

inspiration from Immanuel Kant's philosophical theories, emphasizing the role of time and space as fundamental cognitive categories in human understanding. Kant's ideas laid the groundwork for Bakhtin's belief that time and space are indispensable for comprehending the world and, by extension, storytelling. Moreover, Bakhtin found resonance in Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, particularly in the idea that the characteristics of spatio-temporal arrangements in narrative realms share principles with the theory of relativity. This insight underscores the intrinsic connection between time and space, both in the real and imaginary worlds, where the chronological framework remains inextricable from the unfolding of events.

Morson and Emerson explain: 'Bakhtin's crucial point is that time and space vary in qualities; different social activities and representations of those activities presume different kinds of time and space. Time and space are therefore not just 'mathematical abstractions'' (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 367). According to Bakhtin, the chronotope is

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope (1981, 84)

In simple words, Bakhtin posits the fundamental premise that narrative texts consist not solely of a chronological series of incidents and verbal exchanges but of a distinct fictional realm. In his studies of Dostoevsky's poetics, Mikhail Bakhtin showed how staircases, thresholds and corridors are places "where crisis events occur, the falls, resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man" (248). Bakhtin lists the many locations in *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky:

The threshold, the foyer, the corridor, the landing, the stairway, its steps, doors opening onto the stairway, gates to front and back yards, and beyond these, the city: squares, streets, façades, taverns, dens, bridges, gutters. This is the space of the novel. And in fact absolutely nothing here ever

loses touch with the threshold, there is no interior of drawing rooms, dining rooms, halls, studios, bedrooms where biographical life unfolds and where events take place in the novels of writers such as Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gontcharov. (170)

Bakhtin's chronotope, therefore, acts as a pivotal parameter for events within narratives. It governs the depiction of settings and organizes characters' actions according to the possibilities of events. Interestingly, different literary genres can be characterized by specific chronotopes, serving as the foundation for distinct narrative strategies. Bakhtin identified six primary literary genres, each with its unique chronotope: the Greek romance, the adventure novel of everyday life, the biography, the chivalric romance, the Rabelaisian novel, and the idyllic novel. These genres are marked by their individual spatio-temporal structures, which influence the nature of the stories they tell. At the beginning of his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope of the Novel", written in the 1930s, Bakhtin characterized the concept of the chronotope as follows:

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Emmanuel Kant's philosophical theories and Albert Einstein's theory of relativity provide the epistemological insight for this specific interpretation of narrative time and space (chronotope.) In their book *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Poetics* (1990), Morson and Emerson explain that Bakhtin took from the philosopher Immanuel Kant the idea that human beings rely heavily upon categories like time and space to comprehend and make sense of the universe, and consequently "indispensable forms of cognition." (367) Modern developments in mathematics and physics strengthened Bakhtin's conviction. As has already been shown, first and foremost, time and space are inextricably linked in both the real and imaginary worlds. This is consequently because, in both worlds, the chronological framework is inseparable from the unfolding of events and the sequence of events cannot be separated from it.

The function of chronotope usually entails ground depiction and organizing characters' actions according to possibilities of events. As such, the chronotope is the parameter of events. However, specific chronotopes characterize particular literary genres, which can each serve as bases for different organizational strategy narratives. Bakhtin illustrates that chronotope is an "intrinsic generic significance

Within the limits of a single work and within the total literary output of a single author we may notice a number of different chronotopes and complex interactions among them, specific to the given work or author; it is common moreover for one of these chronotopes to envelop or dominate the others [...]. Chronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships. (252)

Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope represents a comprehensive endeavor to incorporate the element of time into the recipient's understanding of genre. This framework aims to elucidate the diverse approaches that have emerged throughout history in conceptualizing and portraying the spatial and temporal dimensions of human experience. The concept of the Chronotope refers to its capacity to enable a specific form of discourse by establishing its spatial and temporal time boundaries. In simple words, it is chronotope that allows a certain kind of experience by setting its location and time limits. This is mainly because "the image of man is always intrinsically chronotropic," and this is exactly what makes the emergence of any genre historically significant for Bakhtin.

The chronotope is not merely an abstract idea but a dynamic tool that shapes the very fabric of storytelling. It is a conceptual boundary that establishes the spatiotemporal parameters within which a narrative unfolds, effectively allowing a specific form of discourse to emerge. In simpler terms, it is the chronotope that defines the setting and time constraints, thus dictating the kind of experience that a narrative imparts.

What makes Bakhtin's concept particularly significant is his recognition that the way people relate to the world is intrinsically intertwined with the temporal and spatial context in which their experiences unfold. This insight

underscores the historical importance of the emergence of different literary genres, as they reflect evolving human experiences and the ever-shifting interplay of time and space in the understanding of storytelling. Bakhtin's chronotope, therefore, serves as a vital key to unlocking the historical and cultural significance embedded within genres and narratives.

Concerning Bakhtin's division of genres, a clear and well-structured argument emerges in Greek romance's chronotope, where time and spatial analysis complement one another. Together, they explain the pervasiveness of chance in these stories, giving birth to the "adventure-time" story structure and the peculiar depiction of the protagonist that are hallmarks of the adventure genre. Bakhtin posits that the plot structure of Greek romance commonly centers on two pivotal moments that possess "biographical significance." These instances denote the pivotal moments in which the main characters' encounter one another and experience the onset of romantic affection, culminating in their eventual union through the commitment of marriage. Bakhtin explains that:

The gap, the pause, the hiatus that appears between these two strictly adjacent biographical moments and in which, as it were, the entire novel is constructed is not contained in the biographical time sequence; it lies outside biographical time; it changes nothing in the life of the heroes and introduces nothing into their life. It is, precisely, an extra temporal hiatus between two moments of biographical time (90).

In his analysis of the Greek romance, Bakhtin highlights how the chronotope shapes the narrative structure. He identifies the first encounter and the onset of romantic affection, as central to the plot. What sets this genre apart is the significant gap, a temporal hiatus, that separates these moments, suspending the progression of events and introducing a unique dynamic. In this gap, the narrative is constructed, and Bakhtin contends that it lies outside of biographical time. It is a space where the adventures and exploits of the characters take place, delaying the ultimate realization of longing. Importantly, Bakhtin notes that the escapades in this genre lack enduring consequences, as if nothing had happened between these two moments. The Greek romance chronotope, therefore, introduces a distinctive narrative rhythm, emphasizing the adventures and postponing the fulfillment of desire.

Bakhtin categorizes the two biographical moments as discrete temporal segments due to the absence of any intermediary elements between them. Consequently, the romances do not primarily center on the importance of these two biographical moments, as subsequent novels might, but rather on the exploits that act as a means of creating distance between them and consequently postponing the realization of longing. According to Bakhtin, however, it becomes evident by the conclusion of the narrative that these escapades lack enduring repercussions. — “it is as if nothing had happened between these two moments, as if the marriage had been consummated on the day after their meeting” (89).

Adventure Time exhibits a significant reliance on fortuitous occurrences and is distinguished by a sequence of disruptions to the usual progression of everyday experiences. The aforementioned interruptions serve as instances in which external entities, such as deities, destiny, or chance, intercede and assume absolute authority over the circumstances. The protagonists consistently encounter a multitude of occurrences, thereby suggesting that an individual who is inclined towards adventure is someone who willingly embraces unpredictability and actively participates in a narrative that unfolds in their vicinity. Fortune-tellers, oracles, and dreams hold considerable significance within this genre of narrative due to their reliance on predicting unpredictable chance occurrences.

In conclusion, Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope reshapes readers' understanding of narrative texts by emphasizing the inseparable connection between time and space and how it influences the structure and dynamics of different literary genres. By exploring the different genres of chronotopes, Bakhtin demonstrates how specific spatial-temporal configurations give rise to distinct narrative strategies and thematic emphases, enriching the appreciation of the intricate relationship between storytelling and the dimensions of time and space.

2.2. An Overview of Children's Literature

Throughout recorded cultural history, individuals have grown alongside the books they cherished and learned from. Each phase of childhood is demarcated by distinct educational materials. Familiar narratives are revisited, and new authors are introduced into the educational curriculum. In the context

of ancient Greece and Rome, a child's progression was gauged by their engagement with literature. If one seeks a semblance of "children's literature" within classical antiquity, it is discernible in the texts and stories adapted from the venerable canons of Greek and Roman lives and libraries (Lerer 1).

Children's literature constitutes a distinct literary genre crafted for young readers, centering on ideas and language that are intentionally kept simple. Its primary aim is to impart concepts tailored to children while conveying moral lessons. This genre often employs narratives drawn from traditions, classic fiction, or folklore, curated specifically for young audiences. Notably, these stories often incorporate elements of fantasy, infusing events with imaginative elements that resonate with readers through the presentation of the improbable and supernatural.

The term "children's literature" is employed to categorize a collection of books specifically authored for children. however, a more nuanced comprehension of this definition is needed for those engaged in the study of literature. Modern children's literature, as seen by literary analysts, is generally acknowledged to have begun in the year 1865, when Charles Dodgson, whose pen name is Lewis Carroll, published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. "It was the first novel written especially for children that were purely entertaining, with no instructional purpose" (Anderson 4).

As introduced by several scholars, the endeavor of contextualizing literature within historical frameworks has created inquiries regarding the role of children in it. John Rowe Townsend, a notable figure among these scholars, ventures to call into attention the fundamental presence of children as readers. Rudd David states that this aspect holds more significance than categorizing the specific books that children may read (3).

Furthermore, there exists a school of thought that delves into the significance of children within the realm of literature. Advocates of this perspective contend that children indeed inhabit various literary narratives. When children read and engage with literature, they apprehend and interpret the world without the constraints of cultural limitations or geographical divisions. This viewpoint underscores the universality intrinsic to the books children encounter, highlighting how such literary works transcend boundaries and resonate universally (O'sullivan 13).

Nancy Anderson employs a system of classification for children's literature that hinges on the age of the intended readership. She distinguishes literature tailored for readers aged 13 to 18 as "an adolescent or young adult literature, and literature for youth from birth through age 13 as children's literature" (3). Furthermore, Sandra Beckett introduces the concept of "crossover fiction," a term she herself coined. Crossover fiction pertains to texts primarily targeted at children, which possess the capacity to captivate and be enjoyed by adult readers (and vice versa). Beckett asserts that this genre has gained prominence and significance in the contemporary literary landscape, labeling it as "the prominent genre of the new millennium" (1).

Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson define children's books as "good-quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages, through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction" (2). Therefore, the term "children's literature" encompasses a diverse array of literary forms such as poetry, novels, short stories, and drama, all created with the intention of being read, heard, or witnessed by children and young adults. Clifton Fadiman's definition of children's literature outlines it as a collection of written compositions accompanied by illustrations, crafted to both entertain and educate young individuals (Fadiman 1). This genre encompasses an extensive spectrum of creative works, including globally recognized literary masterpieces, picture books, and simplified stories tailored exclusively for children. Moreover, it encompasses traditional forms such as fairy tales, fables, and folk songs, along with other materials that have their origins in oral transmission.

There are different views concerning the appearance and development of children's literature. Fadiman mentions that children's literature appeared as an independent form of literature in the second half of the eighteenth century and it has been in a primitive level. Its growth has been so luxurious during the twentieth century and is considered with respect (1-2).

John Stephens validates that children's literature has its roots in the adaptation and reimagining of well-known stories specific to various cultures. These encompass folktales, myths, narratives of heroes and heroines, as well as tales featuring adventurous and fictional characters. According to Stephens, the emergence of children's literature can be traced back to the seventeenth century with the publication of collections of fairy tales and religious texts.

Subsequently, the scope of retold stories expanded to incorporate figures from mythology and legend, such as Robin Hood, the knights of King Arthur, and narratives from *The Arabian Nights*, along with modern classics spanning from Shakespeare to Kenneth Grahame and L. Frank Baum (91).

Thus, Children's Literature is a type of literature tailored specifically for children. It address the needs of young and inexperienced minds by bringing religious guidance, moral teachings, and reading instructions that serve as guiding principles on their path to adulthood. During the seventeenth century, Protestant beliefs held that a child's soul is as significant as that of an adult. This belief system prompted the development of a distinct model of children's literature, uniquely suited to young readers (Vollone 176).

Riitta Oittinen's perspective on children's literature provides a comprehensive understanding of its dual nature. She asserts that this genre encompasses not only the literature that children read privately but also the literature that is read aloud to them. This intriguing duality implies that children's literature serves as a bridge between solitary reading experiences and communal storytelling. Children encounter these stories in two distinct ways: through personal exploration, where they immerse themselves in the text silently, and through shared moments when stories are narrated aloud, bringing them to life in the presence of a young audience (4). Oittinen's insight sheds light on the multifaceted manner in which children engage with literature, underlining the significance of both independent reading and the communal tradition of storytelling.

Moreover, Oittinen underscores the dual nature of children's literature by emphasizing its role as both a creation intended for children and a creation consumed by them (4-5). This perspective challenges the notion of literature as a unidirectional form of communication. Instead, it portrays children's literature as a dynamic interaction between authors, creators, and young readers. Children's literature not only targets the younger demographic but also evolves through their interpretations, reactions, and interactions. Oittinen's assertion accentuates the reciprocal relationship between creators of children's Literature and the children that read it.

At its core, children's literature possesses a distinct purpose: catering to the needs and developmental stages of young readers who are not yet drawn to

or equipped for adult literature. It is a realm tailored to the unique cognitive capacities, emotional sensitivities, and curiosities of children. Children's literature serves as a stepping stone, nurturing a love for reading and storytelling while offering content that resonates with the specific interests and sensibilities of young minds. Children's literature serves as a pivotal foundation, guiding young readers towards more complex narratives as they mature both in terms of reading skills and intellectual growth (Ilhomjon 36).

Children's books revolve around the myriad experiences of childhood, encompassing both positive and challenging moments. Regardless of whether these experiences unfold in the past, present, or even future, they ought to resonate with today's young readers. Themes like birthday parties, losing a first tooth, the excitement of growing up, camping adventures, ghost stories, welcoming new pets, dealing with siblings, and navigating family issues are all relatable to contemporary children. Furthermore, children's literature encompasses an expansive array of subjects that, while not inherently part of childhood, pique children's curiosity. This encompasses topics ranging from dinosaurs and Egyptian mummies to world records and fighter planes (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson 2).

However, the notion of what exactly constitutes children's literature remains a subject of ongoing discussion. The boundaries of this genre are not rigid but rather fluid and open to interpretation. For instance, Nancy Anderson's definition of children's literature encapsulates all books authored for children, with exceptions for works like comic books, joke books, cartoon books, and nonfiction texts (Anderson 2). Zena Sutherland's perspective on children's literature characterizes it as comprising books not solely read and enjoyed by children, but also those intentionally written for them, adhering to elevated literary and artistic standards (Sutherland 6). This adaptability reflects the evolving landscape of literature itself and the ever-changing interests and preferences of young readers. While there are criteria that can be used to define children's literature, the broader umbrella includes works that are chosen by children themselves. This recognition of children's agency in selecting and engaging with literature empowers young readers and acknowledges their role as active participants.

The treatment of content plays a pivotal role in defining children's books. Stories centered on childhood, conveyed with straightforwardness, humor, or

suspense, are fitting for young readers. Narratives recounting childhood experiences, presented in a nostalgic or overly sentimental manner, may be less suitable. Similarly, stories depicting children as victims of natural or human-made calamities should emphasize a sense of hope for a brighter future rather than focusing solely on hopelessness and despair in the present moment. Children's literature covers a diverse range of themes and can be expressed through prose and poetry. If the literary work takes a prose form, it is categorized as either fiction (a product of imagination and invention) or nonfiction (based on facts), or it might be a fusion of the two (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson 2-3).

Within the phrase "children's literature," the term "literature" holds greater significance. Primarily, the adjective "imaginative" is implicitly connected to it, implying a realm rich with creativity. It encompasses a vast, ever-expanding domain intentionally designated for a young audience, although this doesn't preclude its relevance to adults. Indeed, adults are an integral part of this landscape: children's books are composed, chosen for publication, marketed, purchased, critiqued, and often shared through reading aloud by grown-ups. Occasionally, certain works also appear to be crafted with adult readers in mind, as evident in the popular French *Astérix* comic series, which humorously parodies history (Ilhomjon 37).

Yet, the primary entity remains the distinct realm of children's literature, akin to a sovereign republic. Alongside this central domain exist certain outlying territories or dependencies: most significantly, "appropriated" adult books that meet two criteria—they are generally read by children and they've significantly impacted the trajectory of children's literature (Ilhomjon 37). This dynamic delineates the intricate landscape of literature tailored for children, highlighting its role as both a specialized realm and a sphere of influence with interactions between various readerships.

Examining the historical panorama of children's literature, Peter Hunt underscores in the introduction of his book *Understanding Children's Literature* that the presence of children's literature is pervasive in contemporary times. However, "children's books have a long history [...] and they absorbed into themselves elements of folks and fairy tale, and the oral tradition" (Hunt 4). He emphasizes that children's literature has an enduring legacy, spanning a significant duration. This genre has assumed a pivotal position, contributing

significantly to cultural and literary landscapes. The classification of distinct types within the history of children's literature can be traced back across centuries, reflecting its enduring influence and evolution.

In the early fifteenth century, the spread of hornbooks marked an educational innovation designed to teach children fundamental elements such as prayers, numerals, and the alphabet. Simultaneously, during this era, the English merchant William Caxton introduced printed books adorned with illustrations to England, granting children their inaugural experience with the joy of reading (Hunt 1). As the sixteenth century unfolded, courtesy books emerged, serving as pedagogical tools to impart moral values, etiquette, and appropriate conduct to children. Among the noteworthy creations of this era was *A Handbook on Good Manners for Children* authored by the Dutch philosopher and writer Erasmus Rotterdam, an exemplary work in teaching virtue and decorum (Lerer 84-85).

The seventeenth century witnessed the emergence of chapbooks as potent resources for both education and entertainment. These chapbooks encompassed small volumes containing an assortment of narratives, tales, poems, and religious materials (McCormick and White 247). The Czech philosopher and writer John Comenius made a significant contribution during this era by publishing *The World of Things Obvious to the Sense Drawn in Pictures* in 1658. This work is hailed as the pioneer picture book for children, marking a crucial milestone in visual storytelling for young readers (O'Sullivan xiii).

The eighteenth century marks a significant milestone in children's literature, with Perry Nodelman often credited as a pivotal figure in this evolution. Nodelman, often hailed as the father of children's literature, achieved this status by publishing *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book: Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy*, and *Pretty Miss Polly* in 1744. His work is widely acknowledged as the first authentic children's book. The century also saw the emergence of other notable children's works, including Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), and Newbery's *Tales From The Arabian Nights* (1791) (Grenby and Immel 144).

The nineteenth century witnessed the flourishing of children's literature, often referred to as its golden age. During this era, authors turned their focus towards creating narratives brimming with fun, adventure, and enchantment.

The celebrated brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, published their *Grimm Brothers Fairy Tales* in 1812, while Hans Christian Andersen earned his stature as the father of modern fairy tales and Fantasy with the publication of his seminal work *Fairy Tales* in 1835 (Wall and Crevecoeur 19).

In the twentieth century, children's literature underwent a significant evolution, establishing itself as a distinct and autonomous field. As Laura Stevenson aptly notes, this evolution manifested in its own designated spaces within public libraries, dedicated graduate programs, and esteemed academic journals (Stevenson 428). This transformation is evident in the contributions of authors such as Roald Dahl with *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970), L. Frank Baum's timeless classic *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), and Dr. Seuss's imaginative creation *And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1937), among other notable literary works.

MalebogoThabong brings attention to children's literary texts. He underscores the paramount importance of tailoring literary content to match the interests, ages, and developmental needs of children. These texts should not only facilitate personal learning but also significantly contribute to enriching children's lives. Importantly, Thabong emphasizes that the significance and value of children's literature extend beyond individual growth, fostering universal and international comprehension across varying ideologies and cultures(Thabong 16). This genre serves as a gateway for introducing children to diverse traditions and novel ideas, expanding their horizons to unfamiliar times and regions. Ultimately, children's literature has the potential to strengthen their bonds with fellow human beings and the surrounding environment.

Children's literature holds the power to shape children's values and attitudes in alignment with their aspirations. The narratives they hear and the stories they read serve as profound vehicles for learning. Immersed in these tales, children embark on journeys of exploration through which they can navigate and comprehend the world they inhabit (Shammas33). This interaction with literature fosters a heightened awareness of their place and engagement within their surroundings, contributing to a richer understanding of their interconnectedness.

Moreover, Tiina Puurtinen emphasizes the multifaceted role of children's literature as a significant conduit for societal, ideological, and educational influences. She contends that didacticism, the art of conveying moral and instructional messages, is consistently present in children's books. This principle of instructiveness, tailored to be "useful" to young readers, is accompanied or sometimes countered by the imperative of comprehensibility. Children's books meticulously calibrate both language and content to match the cognitive abilities and reading levels of their intended audience, thereby striking a delicate balance between pedagogical intention and accessibility (Puurtinen 2).

Expanding on the discussion, Hunt emphasizes that the category of children's literature is not only characterized by its target audience but also by its multifaceted functions, which are inherently geared toward fulfilling the needs of the prevailing culture. He underscores that children's literature possesses a universal quality due to its educative and acculturating functions that resonate across various societies. As children often share common experiences and developmental stages, this universality allows children's literature to transcend cultural boundaries. In doing so, children's literature assumes a significant role in bridging gaps and facilitating an understanding of the cultural differences that exist across societies, thereby offering a valuable means to explore and comprehend "cultural disparity" (Hunt 10).

2.3. The representation of chronotope in children's literature

According to Rosemary Ross Johnston, children's literature can be seen as a form of communication that a society engages in with its young members, but this communication is artistically mediated. This process involves a convergence of real and narrative time-spaces. At its core, this encompasses the temporal and spatial dimensions within the fictional world, the writer's perspective, and the reader's engagement. While these dimensions apply to all forms of literature, children's literature stands apart due to its unique dynamic—it is typically authored by adults for children. Consequently, the organization of people and events in relation to time and space, known as chronotopes, reflects a form of negotiation or dialogue between different generations (138). Johnston further explains:

In fact the chronotope can sharpen our focus in an area where criticism has perhaps been rather fuzzy. In the lives of

grown-ups, childhood is a palimpsestic presence whoseremembered time-space blurs comfortably into myth. Bakhtin's ideas aboutoutsideness warn us that as adults we cannot enter into the cultural time-space ofchildhood, and that we should not want to (138).

In *Children's Literature Comes of Age*, Maria Nikolajeva draws on the concept of "chronotope," borrowed from the works of Bakhtin, to delve into the unique interaction between time and place within narratives. This notion, according to Nikolajeva, constitutes a genre category, implying that distinct forms of chronotopes are particular to specific genres. Bakhtin's insight reveals that each literary mode, historical period, genre, and even individual writer can be characterized based on their distinct organization of time and space.If this holds true, one could argue that the chronotope commonly found in children's fiction tends to embody a dual oppositional nature. It involves spaces or locales that are inherently defined as contrasting or divergent, yet they intersect in ways that imply interactions while maintaining a core sense of separateness(121-22).

According to Jonathan Paquette, the chronotopein children's books offers a powerful framework for self-representation, presenting alternate selves and rediscovered authenticity. It also facilitates portraying a purer identity, especially in organizational contexts. In professional narratives, childhood's chronotope contracts time, revisiting the past to illuminate present situations. This unique past reveals the storyteller from various angles, allowing fictional exploration in different stories. It empowers narrators to uncover alternate aspects of thehistory in simple way, and offering a perspective grounded in the past and relevant to the present(14).

In her book *From Mythic to Linear*, Nikolajevatakes a broad perspective when exploring the concept of time in children's literature. She positions literary texts on a spectrum, ranging from those with nonlinear time (kairos), commonly associated with ancient or mythical thinking, to linear time (chronos), which is prevalent in contemporary mainstream literature (1). Although she acknowledges that cyclical and mythic time is occasionally employed in modern literature for satirical or festive purposes, Nikolajeva argues that most Western children's fiction is rooted in a philosophical foundation of linear time (5). She traces the transition from circular to linear storytelling in children's literature by gauging the success of the initiation process. This progression "grading from

primary harmony Arcadia, Paradise, Utopia, idyll through different stages of departure toward either a successful or a failed mission, from childhood to adulthood” (1).

Bakhtin identifies six distinct types of chronotope in literary works. The first type is the Greek Romance, also known as the Hellenistic romance. It's essentially an adventure story set in a quasi-historical context. In this narrative, a virtuous heroine and her brave lover go through a series of misadventures but ultimately reunite and live happily together. According to Bracht Branham, Bakhtin emphasizes the role of chance as a key factor in the chronotope of Greek romance. This sets it apart from other forms of fiction where the hero typically takes more initiative, as seen in nineteenth-century novels or earlier Bildungsromans (70). the story of Cupid is among the best examples of this type. Cupid's mother, Venus, became incredibly jealous of the human Psyche's beauty. So, she instructed her son to make Psyche fall in love with a monstrous creature. However, Cupid accidentally shot himself with the arrow of love and fell in love with her.

The second type is represented by the ancient novels of Apuleius and Petronius. the works of Apuleius and Petronius can be distinguished generically from the heroic and pastoral romances found in Greek literature. In essence, they maintain connections to romance and other pre-novelistic storytelling traditions, they also offer intriguing foreshadowing of what are typically seen as distinguishing features of modern and early modern novels, like a focus on contemporaneity and specific forms of realism (Branham 52).Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* or Petronius's *The Satyricon* are works with characters that develop plot lines depending on accidents and misfortunes. While the *Golden Ass* is a funny story that can be read and enjoyed by children, *The Satyricon* is not. These novels depend on chance as they represent “one form of the principle of necessity [that] has its place in life itself” (Bakhtin 97).

The third type of chronotope is evident in ancient biographical and autobiographical works, such as Plato's *Apology* and *Phaedo*. However, during earlier times, particularly before the eighteenth century, childhood held relatively little interest in European life writing. While it wasn't as central as it is today, there was a growing curiosity about children's lives. according to Kate Douglas, Childhood was beginning to be recognized as a distinct developmental stage separate from adulthood, which was considered worthy of

exploration. This shift was reflected in literature and art. One early and significant instance of autobiographical writing about childhood is Augustine's *Confessions* (397–400 CE). Concerning Today's famous autobiographies for children, one could list Roald Dahl's *Tales of Childhood* (1984), and the partially autobiographical series, Jeff Kinney's *Diaries of a Wimpy Kid* (2004-2023)

The fourth type mentioned by Bakhtin is the chivalric romance. This literary genre encompasses both prose and verse narratives that gained popularity in the noble courts of High Medieval and Early Modern Europe. These stories are filled with marvelous adventures, typically featuring a chivalrous knight-errant with heroic qualities who embarks on a quest. Over time, the chivalric romance evolved from the earlier epics, with a distinctive focus on themes of love and courtly manners that set it apart from other types of epic literature, which often emphasized masculine military heroism (Cavallaro 4). The chivalric romances usually center around adult stories. however, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is an interesting tale of heroism that offers children the opportunity to read about heroes in adventure.

The fifth type, known as the Rabelaisian novel, is primarily associated with the French Renaissance writer François Rabelais. Bakhtin believed that Rabelais's work, particularly his novel *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, had been misunderstood for many years. In his book *Rabelais and His World* (1984), Bakhtin clarified Rabelais's intentions when writing this novel and conducted an in-depth analysis, focusing specifically on the novel's chronotopic features. The novel explores the unique relationship between an individual and their actions, as well as the connection between every moment of a person's life and the world of time and space. It narrates the adventures of two giants, Gargantua and his son Pantagruel. The work is known for its humorous, extravagant, and satirical style, incorporating extensive erudition, vulgarity, and wordplay.

the sixth type is the ancient idyllic novel. The latter is a type of narrative set in the countryside, where the influence of nature and the simplicity of people play a significant role in the events (Hardin 1). One notable work in this genre is *Daphnis and Chloe*, an ancient Greek novel written during the Roman Empire. It is the sole known work of the Greek novelist and romance writer Longus, dating back to the second century AD. *Daphnis and Chloe* recounts the tale of a

boy named Daphnis and a girl named Chloe, both abandoned at birth with identifying tokens. Daphnis is discovered by a goatherd named Lamon, while Chloe is found by a shepherd named Dryas. Each of them decides to raise the child they find as their own. they go through various events before finding their true parents.

Having mentioned the above types, the discussion now moves to two specific genres, Epic and Fantasy Chronotope. In his essay "Epic and Novel" (1981), Bakhtin delves into the spatiotemporality of the epic genre. He argues that the epic chronotope is an ancient and established spatiotemporal pattern that has reached a fixed and inflexible state (Bakhtin 3). Bakhtin identifies three fundamental spatiotemporal characteristics of the epic chronotope. First, the epic chronotope features time that is not relative to the present or the future. Instead, it is marked by a "temporally valorized epic/absolute past" (16). The term "absolute" signifies that this past is not bound to the chronological or historical past; rather, it encompasses the entirety of time within itself. one can notice such distance between the past of epic work and its presence in the Young Adult books of J.R.R. Tolkien, specifically *The Hobbit* (1939) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1949). while the former chronicles the prequel events of the latter. The storylines of the two books don't cross and each plot is written as a complete whole

As per Bakhtin's explanation, the epic past is whole and complete, devoid of any relativity or gradual, temporal progressions that might connect it to the present. The second feature of the Epic chronotope is that this valorized epic past is preserved and disclosed solely in the form of national tradition, it is revealed through mysterious and tales and local folklore. What's crucial here is not just that epic worlds heavily draw upon myths and legends, which are sources of images and elements for events. Rather, it's the reliance on the sacred status of the impersonal tradition. This means that the tradition must be evaluated in the same way by everyone and demands a reverential attitude towards itself (Bakhtin 16). In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C. S. Lewis reveals the hidden past of the queen and her grim realm through the local narration of commoners. the past is present in the story in the form of folkloric impact.

Elevated to this authoritative level, the epic world of the absolute past, as outlined by Bakhtin, is separated from personal experiences and excludes any other individual, personal perspective, or evaluation. As a result, it exhibits a

profound reverence for the subject being portrayed and for the language used to portray it. This insistence on reverence also shapes the nature of the epic distance, which is the third fundamental characteristic of the epic chronotope (17). When Bakhtin mentions epic distance, he is referring to the unbridgeable gap between the exalted epic world and the fluid, fleeting, and open-ended present. there is a distance between the protagonists and the past they hear about, as well as another distance between readers and these protagonists' world.

In his *Pleasure and Genre: Speculations on the Characteristics of Children's Literature*, Perry Nodelman states that the distinct interplay between space and time in children's literature prompts a fundamental question: Why does children's fiction operate in this particular manner? One possible explanation traces back to the foundational dynamics inherent in children's literature: adults crafting literary works for children. This genre emerges from a shared and fundamental premise: that children possess a distinct identity divergent enough from adults to deserve a particular literature, yet they share enough similarities with their peers that adult writers can create texts that resonate with a collective audience of children, presumably with common traits (11).

Fantasy forms another genre that Bakhtin's chronotope applies to. Maria Nikolajeva states that the reason why we readers distinguish the fantasy chronotope easily is because it is obviously different from the world in which they live. Time and space relations are intricate aspects of fantasy, specifically children's narrative worlds. She further clarifies that "every type of children's text has its own, unique forms of chronotope" (Nikolajeva *CLCA* 122). For instance in the Grimme Brothers' *Fairy Tales* (1812), stories are marked by their distinct palaces, princesses, witches, magical knights and dark or white magic.

Children must determine what remains consistent and reliable, as well as what is subject to change and evanescence, as what happens with Peter Pan and Windy in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911). These intricate matters form the foundation of significant inquiries posed by theorists who investigate how narrative links with and contributes to the society enveloping it. These inquiries delve into how storytelling plays a role in shaping a child's understanding of their surroundings and identity, and how it interacts with the broader time and place that contains them as distinct from the time and place of the story.

There are two significant shifts in the way time and space are depicted in children's writings. The first shift, referred to as the chronotope of the children's novel of fantastic escape from modernist time, involves the transformation of fairy tales, folk stories, and myths into what we now recognize as children's "fantasy" stories. These stories offer an escape from challenging situations (Nikolajeva, *CLCA* 122) this type can be seen in the writings of H. C. Anderson, especially his "Snow Queen," "The Little Mermaid," and "Thumbelina".

The second major shift in the twentieth century, known as the mid-century chronotope of adolescent literature (inspired by Roberta Trites), involves a reimagining of the earlier fantasy narratives. These narratives are reshaped into novels and dialogues that were considered extraordinary when published (Sommers 25). This transition leads to open discussions about once-taboo topics, emerging from the problem novels of the 1960s, a period characterized by the advancement of women's rights, for instance *Waking the Sleeping Beauty* (1997).

In all their forms, childhood stories do create a sense of detachment and their concept of time greatly influences how readers understand work environments, management, difficult decisions and life paths. Childhood narratives allows readers and writers to present themselves as someone else, to express their identity through an alter ego that is distinct, yet intimately connected to the narrator and the larger world they inhabit (Paquette 14).

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