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A Bakhtinian Reading of Fantasy Chronotopes in Modern Children's Fantasy Literature

by

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Contents

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Declaration

The material comprising this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Abstract

Drawing on Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope and the interdisciplinary spatiotemporal theories of geocriticism, this study identifies three particular modes of the fantasy spatiotemporality presented in modern children's fantasy works. They are the epic chronotope, the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope and the heterotopian chronotope. Each fantasy chronotope is examined in the specific but interrelated textual contexts of selected children's fantasy works in relation to the three main research questions: (i) How is the fantasy chronotope embodied and strategically deployed in the focused children's fantasy works? (ii) What ideas and values are conveyed by its syntagmatic interplay with other chronotopes that characterise the textual quotidian world? (iii) How do characters, through their spatiotemporal practices, negotiate with the divergent chronotopic values that converge and wrestle in the textual universes?

This study builds on existing works in relation to chronotopic considerations and develops the understanding of the fantasy chronotope in these particular ways: a) It moves the study of the fantasy chronotope from generalities to specific instances, so that the inner diversity of the fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements can be perceived and explored. b) It examines the syntagmatic spatiotemporal relations constructed between the fantasy and the "real" in individual children's fantasy works and their connotations. In so doing, it reveals how each of the identified fantasy chronotopes can be strategically deployed in fantasy cartographies to convey meanings and values. c) This study also delves into the spatiotemporal embedding of human actions that is distinctively shown in fantasy chronotopes. This is done by reading characters' spatiotemporal practices in and their negotiations with the projected fantasy worlds. d) Taking Bakhtin's literary artistic chronotope as the link, my reading of the fantasy chronotopes also demonstrates an interpenetrative and reciprocal relation between fantasy spatiotemporal imaginations and the theoretical interpretations of space and time in geocriticism.

Chapter One

Introduction

The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century is often called "the golden age" of children's literature in recognition of the many childhood classics that children today continue to enjoy (Carpenter 1985: 215-216). Among them, the most enduring ones are fantasy works (Lam 2007). Deviating from the moral tales evangelical writers feverishly published,[1] "a modern genre of children's literature, with its emphasis on the joys of childhood and childish imagination" came into fashion from the latter half of the nineteenth century in Britain (Lam 2007).[2] The early twentieth century witnessed the birth of Einstein's theory of relativity which deeply influenced people's view of the universe and shook the previous belief in absolute truth. The subsequent rise of quantum mechanics in modern science and the prevalence of possible world theory in philosophical studies only further interrogated and disrupted the taken-for-granted unitary central "reality" by suggesting that the actual world we live in is only one of the many possible worlds. Engaging with these new conceptions and hypotheses of the spatiotemporality of our universe, modern fantasy literature for children and young adults, a genre that prioritises a "what if" principle in spatiotemporal imagination, flourished. Different from the directly realistic/mimetic mode of world construction that, as Brian Attebery (1992) states, "attempts to generate, as a primary response, *recognition* . . . [to give] an authentic glimpse into the human condition, at least as manifest in a particular time and place" (original italics, 128), fantasy works

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[1] Early works of Mary Martha Sherwood, such as *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814), *The History of Henry Milner* (1822–37) and *The History of the Fairchild Family* (1818–47) are examples of these moral tales dominated by evangelical themes. Other children's writers who stress the importance of moral tales include Sarah Trimmer and Thomas Bowdler (Levy and Mendlesohn, 2016: 23-24). For more detail about eighteenth and nineteenth century moral tales, see M O Grenby's article "Moral and instructive children's literature" on https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/moral-and-instructive-childrens-literature#authorBlock1.

[2] Lam, Siobhan. "The Rise of Children's Fantasy Literature: The Fate of Moral Tales." *The Victorian Web*. Ed. George P. Landow. 6 Aug. 2007. 18 May. 2012. <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/childlit/fantasy.html>

primarily suggest a way of "seeing things not so much as they are but as they might be or ought to be" (128). They are "directed primarily toward a kind of response we call *wonder*" (original italics, 128), a response that can be generated by both the unknown and the familiar seen in a new light. Therefore, apart from the direct mimesis of the immediate reality, fantasy works present other possible ways of spatiotemporal arrangements that violate realistic rules and that foreground a creative and subversive "play" with space and time. These other ways of literary world constructions and the values embedded arouse my interest. They also precipitate my decision to focus this study on reading some different modes of fantasy spatiotemporality in the context of modern British fantasy literature for children and young adults.

A study of the variegated possibilities of fantasy spatiotemporality matters because, as I will further explain in Section 1.1.3 and Section 1.3, it is this *particular* manipulation of time and the distortion of physical spaces that distinctively characterises fantasy literature. The identification and interpretation of these possibilities can reveal the specific techniques adopted in the fantasy narratives for carnivalistic "playing" with time and space. Beyond that, the reading of the emotions and values expressed by each specific mode of fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements also demonstrates how the "distorted" time and space per se convey meanings in fantasy literature. Therefore, chronotopic reading of fantasy works can facilitate, as shown throughout the analysis of this study, a deeper understanding of the spatial and temporal embedding of human actions presented and imagined in the fantasy narratives.

1.1 Literature Review

Although, as Levy and Mendlesohn (2016) point out, the study of fantasy literature "is relatively recent, and in some way still underdeveloped" (I), this field has observably been given more critical attention over the last few decades. From pioneering attempts to defend and define fantasy, such as, for example, the seminal works of J. R. R. Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" (1964), C. N. Manlove's *Modern Fantasy* (1975), Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975), W. R. Irwin's *The Game of the Impossible* (1976), E. S. Rabkin's *The Fantastic in*

Literature (1976), Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981), and Kathryn Hume's *Fantasy and Mimesis* (1984), the field has grown to include studies from diverse approaches and perspectives.

There are rhetorical studies that focus on examining literary devices and strategies specifically applied in fantasy creation, such as Maria Nikolajeva's *The Magic Code* (1988) in the scope of children's and young adult fantasy literature, also Brian Attebery's *Strategies of Fantasy* (1992) and Farah Mendlesohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) whose investigations cover the whole fantasy genre. There are prototypal and archaeological analyses that trace – in classics or medieval or Norse, Welsh myths – the sources of fantasy images or motifs, and explore how modern fantasy works recycle or rewrite these traditional materials. Examples are Peter Goodrich's "Magical Medievalism and the Fairy Tale in Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* Sequence" (1988), Dickerson and O'Hara's *A Handbook On Myth and Fantasy* (2006) and Attebery's *Stories About Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth* (2014). There are gender studies in which feminist criticisms are in the majority, such as Laura Macineanu's "Feminine Hypostases in Epic Fantasy: Tolkien, Lewis, Rowling" (2015) and Jane Tolmie's "Medievalism and the Fantasy Heroine" (2006). With homosexual characters starting to enter children's fantasy works,[3] such as Dumbledore in the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), critics also see the possibility of conducting double gendered reading of characters, as exemplified by Thompson's (2016) reading of Harry Potter where the stereotypical heteronormative hero described in canonical high fantasy works is interrogated. There are archetypal and psychoanalytical readings, such as David Rudd's *Reading the Child in Children's Literature* (2013), Karen Coats' *Looking Glasses and Neverlands* (1963) and Christine Wilkie-Stibbs's "Imaging Fear: Inside the Worlds of Neil Gaiman (An Anti-Oedipal Reading)" (2013). There are philosophical and theological readings, such as Johnson and Houtman's "Platonic Shadows in C. S. Lewis' Narnia *Chronicles*" (1986) and Jonathan Padley and Kenneth

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[3] The term "children" is understood in this study in the broadest sense of the term to encompass the period of childhood up through adolescence. Therefore, henceforth, all my references to "children's fantasy literature" in the body of this work incorporate the concept of "the fantasy literature for children and young adults," as determined and identified in the title of this thesis.

Padley's "'A Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven': *His Dark Materials*, Inverted Theology, and the End of Philip Pullman's Authority" (2006). There are studies of literary landscapes in which the archaeological and mythological layers of the realistic settings in fantasy works are excavated. Examples are Peter Hunt's "Landscapes and Journeys, Metaphors and Maps: The Distinctive Feature of English Fantasy" (1987), Charles Butler's *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper* (2006), and Jane Carroll's *Landscape in Children's Literature* (2012). There are also studies of the spatiotemporality of the constructed fantasy textual worlds, which are directly related to this current study, such as Lesley Aers's "The Treatment of Time in Four Children's Books" (1970), Maria Nikolajeva's *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature* (1991), and the Chapter "Chronotope in Children's Literature" in her *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996), Alice Jenkins' "Getting to Utopia: Railways and Heterotopia in Children's Literature" (2003), and Anthony Pavlik's "Being There: The Spatiality of 'Other World' Fantasy Fiction" (2011). Critical works that focus on examining time and space in children's and young adult fantasy literature will be reviewed in greater detail in Section 1.1.3. This proliferation of critical voices indicates, as Attebery (1992) also notes, "a growing academic interest in a body of literature that deliberately violates the generic conventions of realism, conventions that not too long ago were generally used as defining criteria for great or serious fiction" (VII).

The aim of this study is to examine three modes of fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements (see Section 1.3 for explanations of these three modes of spatiotemporal structures) which are recurrently but varyingly deployed in world constructions of modern British fantasy literature for children's and young adults. However, before going into detailed discussions, a review of the long-standing debates over the definitions and interpretations of fantasy is necessary to provide a broad view of the field I am dealing with. This can also help mark out the academic and conceptual territory of this study.

1.1.1 Definitions and Interpretations of Fantasy

Critical studies on fantasy take up the use of the term "fantasy" with its broad variety of meaning. It has been treated as a genre, a style, a mode, or a narrative technique (Manlove 1975, Jackson 1981, Hume 1984, Nikolajeva 1988, Attebery 1992, Young 2014). Generally speaking, there are on-going debates over the generic boundaries of fantasy literature. For Irwin (1976), fantasy is "the literature of the impossible" (4); for Rabkin (1976), the polar opposite of fantasy is reality (14). Fantasy defined through its relation to some equally ambiguous and fluid concepts, such as "impossible" and "reality", is a very broad and expansive genre. Its generic boundary is as wide as any fanciful tales, from myths, epics to religious parables, from traditional folk and fairy tales to modern fantasy works, from nursery rhymes to nonsense. There are also critical works on fantasy that, as I am going to review in the following discussion, try to delimit the fantasy genre by listing some essential qualities (Tolkien 1964, Manlove 1975, Todorov 1975, Nikolajeva 1988), and, based on these, differentiate fantasy from its adjacent genres, such as fairy tales, magic realism and science fictions. However, agreement is hardly reached on what these essential qualities are, and sometimes different scholars even give contradictory answers. Some other scholars such as Pamela S. Gates (2003), Farah Mendlesohn (2008), and Michael Levy (Levy and Mendlesohn 2016) see the difficulty in working out a universally valid definition of fantasy, and suggest that the focus of study is shifted from the nature of fantasy to the rhetorical mode of fantasy (Levy and Mendlesohn 2016, 3). They tend to accept Brian Attebery's (1992) model of fantasy as an open and flexible "fuzzy set" of texts that has "a clear center but boundaries that shade off imperceptibly, so that a book on the fringes may be considered as belonging or not" (12). Mendlesohn (2009) later expands this idea by suggesting the possibility of identifying several fuzzy sets in the fantasy genre *per se* (xvii).

The point and purpose of reviewing the on-going debates on definitions and interpretations of fantasy is to reveal the challenge this study faces to define and explain the generic boundaries of its focus. As the following discussion will reveal, modern children's fantasy literature is not only in itself an expansive and evolving fuzzy set that holds fluid boundaries with related genres. It can also be further divided into several fuzzy subsets based on different principles, such as secondary world fantasy, time travel fantasy, indigenous fantasy, animal fantasy, scientific fantasy etc. So rather than attempting to delimit the generic boundary of fantasy specially in service of this present study, I choose to accept its expansive and fuzzy status. I thereby avoid being too ambitious in setting the scope of exploration, which might otherwise result in superficial analyses and biased or overgeneralised conclusions. In the following discussion, after a detailed review of crucial critical interpretations of fantasy, I am going to define and explain my focused scope of children's and young adult fantasy literature in this study. This is done in relation to the terms, notions and views proposed by other scholars in existent critical works.

Early Voices

Tolkien, whose *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) trilogy is widely recognised as one of the classics of fantasy, is among the first scholars who conducted serious studies of the literature of the supernatural. "Fairy stories" is Tolkien's term for fantasy as a genre. He (1964) defines "fairy stories" as "stories about Fairy, that is *Faerie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being" (Tolkien's italics, 5). By fairies, Tolkien means not only the specific imaginary creatures with magical powers, but any manifestation of the supernatural or what he calls "a Secondary World" (13-14). Tolkien also uses the term "fantasy" in his later discussion, but he does not use it to denote a genre, but "a quality essential to fairy-story" (16). It embraces, he states, "both the Sub-creative Art in itself and a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression,

derived from the Image" (16). Fantasy in this sense, to a large extent, refers to the end result of the mental process of imagination, or a product of the mind's capacity to create images of objects not materially present or even possible. Fantasy in this meaning is thus, as Nikolajeva (1988) also notes, rather a feature than a genre (9). When discussing the genre of fairy stories, Tolkien holds that "since the fairy-story deals in 'marvels', it cannot tolerate any frame or machinery suggesting that the whole story in which they occur is a figment or illusion" (6). He also suggests that the presence of human beings, the inhabitants of the Primary World, is essential to the stories of this genre (17-20). As can be seen, "Fairy stories" as defined by Tolkien deviates from traditional fairy tales in that it proposes a two-world structure: an irreducible secondary world with the supernatural or "marvels" as essential elements, and a primary world of immediate reality where human characters, who are in most cases also the focalisers of the narratives, belong to and usually experience transitions. However, one point that needs to be stressed again is that Tolkien's "Fairy stories" exclude works with any hint of psychological realism; that is any allusion or hesitation that the fantasy may be a product of figment, illusion or dream. This hesitation, as will be revealed in my later discussion, is nevertheless a decisive condition of Todorov's (1975) definition of fantasy, or what Mendlesohn (2008) later categories as the liminal fantasy.

Colin Manlove in *Modern Fantasy* (1975) gives a detailed definition of fantasy, that is "a fiction evoking wonder and containing a *substantial and irreducible* element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which *the mortal characters* in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (my italics, 1). Manlove's definition is primarily concerned with drawing boundaries. This is reflected in the modifiers, "substantial and irreducible": he uses these to describe the nature of fantasy elements. Another scholar who defines fantasy in a similar way is Ann

Swinfen. In *In Defence of Fantasy* (1984), Swinfen suggests that "the essential ingredient of all fantasy is 'the marvellous', which will be regarded as anything outside the normal space-time continuum of the everyday world" (5). Although considered by Nikolajeva (1988) as "probably the most satisfactory . . . and adequate description of the genre" (11-12), Manlove's definition of fantasy has also been challenged by many scholars.

Peter Hunt points out in *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction* (2001) that Manlove's definition excludes some fantasy works in which the supernatural is not definitely substantial or irreducible, but is seen as a symbolic extension of the purely human mind (10-11). Hunt gives two examples: Carroll's Alice books (1865-1871) and Masefield's *The Box of Delights* (1935), both of which use the plot device of it-was-all-a-dream ending. There are actually many other recognised children's fantasy works in which the nature of the fantasy elements is equivocal until the very end of the story. In other words, whether the fantasy elements in these works are supernaturally or psychologically generated is largely dependent on protagonists' and readers' interpretations, a narrative technique not uncommonly used in fantasy works to encourage readers' active engagement with the production of meaning. Examples are Alison Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* (1939), Mary Norton's *The Borrowers* (1952), Shaw's *Walking the Maze* (1999), and Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2015). In his later study of the historical evolution of English children's fantasy in *From Alice to Harry Potter* (2003), Manlove also includes almost all the titles listed above as works of fantasy literature, although this contradicts his previous definition of fantasy as containing a *substantial and irreducible* element of the supernatural or impossible.

Manlove and Swinfen are not the only scholars who face challenge and dissent in their

understanding of fantasy. Another example is Tzvetan Todorov's structuralist study of fantasy in his *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973). As Jackson (1981) observes, rather than understand fantasy through its relation to the real, Todorov tries to give a theoretical definition of the genre by offering a systematic formulation of the poetics of fantasy (26). In his work, Todorov (1973) draws a clear distinction between the marvellous (which predominates in a climate of belief in supernaturalism and magic), the purely fantastic (in which no explanation of unnatural objects or events can be found) and the uncanny (which explains all strangeness as generated by unconscious forces). He insists that the epistemological uncertainty/hesitation in protagonist and reader is the essence of the fantasy genre. The hesitation/equivocation, according to him, is not merely a thematic feature, but is incorporated into the structure of the work to become its defining element:

> The fantastic requires the fulfillment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is entrusted to a character . . . the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations. (33)

The first and third of these conditions are claimed by Todorov to constitute the literary fantasy genre, while the second is an optional constituent (33-36). Todorov's definition of the fantastic as a genre, by claiming hesitation as its intrinsic feature, contradicts Tolkien, Manlove or Swinfen's descriptions of fantasy given above. It also arguably runs the risk of over-defining the fantasy genre to texts with special insights into the individual psyche. Brian Attebery (2012) also points this out by saying that "the genre Todorov examines . . . is not what most English-speakers call fantasy; rather it is a rather specialized brand of eerie fiction in which the reader never knows for sure whether events are natural or supernatural" (89). Following Todorov's theory, a large

number of children's and young adult fantasy works, in which the "hesitation" is broken or not specifically represented, would probably fall under his category of the marvellous. Examples are C. S. Lewis's *The Last Battle* (1956), Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* (1965-1977) sequence, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* (1997-2007) series, Diana Wynne Jones's *Chrestomanci* (1977-2006) series and Philip Pullman's *His Dark materials* (1995-2000) trilogy, and many more.

Rosemary Jackson also comments in her *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981) that Todorov's scheme "is useful for distinguishing certain kinds of the fantastic, but its polarization of the marvellous and the uncanny leads to some confusion" (32). This is because, for Jackson, "to see the fantastic as a literary form, it needs to be made distinct in literary terms, and the uncanny . . . is not one of these – it is not a literary category, whereas the marvellous is" (32). Therefore, rather than a genre, she suggests the fantastic be understood as "a literary *mode*" that sits between "the marvellous" and "the mimetic", and that confounds elements of both ends (original emphasis, 32-35). Her description of these three literary modes is reminiscent of the two literary impulses – mimesis and fantasy – suggested by Kathryn Hume (1984). Although published chronologically earlier than Hume's work, the three literary modes described by Jackson can be deemed as an othering/thirding of Hume's distinction between fantasy, "the desire to change events and alter reality", and mimesis, "the desire to imitate, to describe events, people, situations, and objects with such verisimilitude that others can share your experience" (20). It is worth noticing that Hume also argues for a more fluid relationship between the two impulses of the realistic and the fantastic, by stating that different types of fiction may exhibit "a characteristic blend or range of blends of the two impulses" (20). Nikolajeva, who largely follows Manlove's definition of fantasy, also points out in *The Magic Code* (1988) that hesitation or belief is "mostly a matter of interpretation," while "*the breaking of the natural laws* is . . . for many scholars the

key to the notion of fantasy" (original italics, 10). Michael Levy and Farah Mendlesohn comment that Todorov's definition of the fantastic in *Children's Fantasy Literature* (2016) is of "lesser utility", compared with delineations of the concept offered by Jackson, Irwin and Hume (3).

New Voices

While the debate over the definition and delimitation of fantasy is long-standing, most recent criticisms on children's fantasy literature conducted by, for example, Brian Attebery (1992), Peter Hunt (2001), Pamela S. Gates et al (2003), Farah Mendlesohn (2008) and Michael Levy (Levy and Mendlesohn 2016) see the difficulty in defining literary fantasy. Peter Hunt (2001) suggests that the difficulty in defining the fantasy genre is that "'fantasy' is the ultimately relative term" (10). This ultimate relativity is evidenced by the fact that "all fiction (and a good deal of non-fiction) is in a sense fantasy . . . at a lesser extreme, one could reasonably include in the category of fantasy any fanciful tale, from myth to religious parables, from the folk tale to the absurd, from nursery rhymes to nonsense" (10). From the perspective of reader response, Hunt argues that "one person's fantasy is another person's norm" (10), which further reveals the intrinsic fluidity of the term fantasy and the improbability of reaching an undisputed definition of it. Hunt also observes a tradition "for books on fantasy to begin with a collection of definitions, marking out academic or conceptual territory," which makes the act of defining fantasy a "fairly defensive exercise" (9-10).

Observing the use of the term "fantasy" with its broad variety of meaning in critical works, Brian Attebery in *Strategies of Fantasy* (1992) coins three different uses of the term "fantasy" within its literary applications: fantasy as a nearly universal impulse (that is fantasy as a mode); fantasy as a still-evolving genre; and fantasy as a strict storytelling formula (1-11). He suggests that the genre of fantasy sits in the middle

ground between mode and formula (10). Attebery also makes clear in the book that he uses the term "fantasy" to designate the genre, and "fantastic" for fantasy as a mode. Here, note that Attebery's definition of "fantastic" is different from Todorov's or Jackson's, as it does not specially emphasise the existence of hesitation experienced by characters or readers in interpreting "strange" events, and it covers what Todorov and Jackson consider as the marvellous. Therefore, following Attebery's definition, the fantastic as a mode, a nearly universal impulse, can be broadly applied in different but interrelated genres (such as myths, fairy tales, gothic or horror fictions, science fictions, etc), with the genre of fantasy as only one of them.

In *Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults* (2003), Gates, Steffel and Molson mainly treat fantasy as a mode, if we refer to Attebery's differentiation, so that they consider fantasy as a very broad and expansive genre (1). They suggest that it is not an easy task to "isolate the essential qualities of literary fantasy and devise a universally valid definition" (5). The path to the completion of this task, according to them, is "strewn with paradox, if not outright contradiction" (5). The long-standing debate on the generic definitions of fantasy reviewed above may confirm this argument. Realising the difficulty in reaching a universally acceptable answer about what fantasy is, Gates, Steffel and Molson elaborate what they consider to be six qualities (or to be more exact possibilities) of literary fantasy. The six qualities can be briefly summarised as: 1. Fantasy can be imitative and derivative; 2. Fantasy can be original and creative; 3. Fantasy can be considered a conservative force; 4. Fantasy can be an effective agency for change, renewal, and liberation; 5. Fantasy can dare aspire to the ideal, the transcendent, and luminous; 6. Fantasy can be subversive (5-7). As indicated by the six qualities described, Gates et al try to define fantasy by offering possibilities of what literary fantasy *can* be and leave this set open to embrace more possibilities. However, although fantasy interpreted in such a broad sense may effectively escape most

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challenges that Todorov and Jackson face, it still has its potential limitation. For example, since Gates et al see fantasy as a very broad genre, encompassing both the traditional fairy tales and modern fantasy works; they claim that "the first literary fantasies for children and young adults appear in the nineteenth century with the publication of works by Hans Christian Andersen and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*" (4). One might question why and how the works of Andersen and Carroll's *Alice* – though unquestionably within a broader umbrella definition of "fantasy" – could sit comfortably in the same space, and how their provenance and authorship could possibly coincide.

Facing the on-going debate about the generic boundaries of fantasy, Attebery (1992) suggests a new method of defining it. Rather than a fixed set delimited by strict boundaries, he considers the genre of fantasy as a "fuzzy set", a notion originally proposed by logicians for a more flexible means of categorisation. The elements of a fuzzy set have degrees of membership, in which case it means a set whose core can be identified but whose edges are ambiguous. Hence, Attebery suggests that the genre of fantasy, as a fuzzy set, can be defined "not by boundaries but by a center" (12) that radiates. The core/centre he identifies is Tolkien's form of fantasy (14-15), and it is identified through a survey among fourteen fantasy scholars made up predominantly of his contemporaries. Although Attebery clarifies in his work that this survey is rather "an unscientific experiment" (13), this method applied to identify the core of a genre still begs questions.

Attebery's use of the fuzzy set in defining the fantasy genre is both supported and challenged by Farah Mendlesohn (2008, 2016). On the one hand, Mendlesohn speaks highly of his contribution in introducing the concept of fuzzy set into fantasy study and considers this more flexible model of categorisation very practical. However, on

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the other hand, Mendlesohn and James in *A Short History of Fantasy* (2009), as well as Mendlesohn and Levy in *Children's Fantasy Literature* (2016), also challenge Attebery's definition of fantasy, not for its lack of utility, but for its designation of *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) as being at the core of the genre, irrespective of the rapid shifts in the field over time. Levy and Mendlesohn (2016) points out that "the original material (the survey pool) on which it (Attebery's definition of fantasy) was based was biased by the selections of respondents and texts, and . . . it reflected a very specific moment in time" (3). This specific moment, according to the history of children's fantasy literature traced by Levy and Mendlesohn (2016), is the post-war period approximately between the 1950s and 1980s (133). Moreover, they point out that the "Tolkienization" trend is actually much more obvious in the US than in the UK or commonwealth countries (134). Also, Levy and Mendlesohn observe that, "the classic 'Tolkienization' of the genre was never as strong in children's fiction as it was to be in the adult genre" (134). This argument is true, if it is considered especially in the environment of British children's fantasy literature, and when we consider those contemporaneous award-winning fantasy works that are not in Tolkien's style. Examples are Mary Norton's *The Borrowers* series (1952-1982) and Lucy M. Boston's *Green Knowe* series (1954-1976).

Therefore, in *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008), while agreeing that fantasy is a fuzzy set, Mendlesohn also argues: "rather than a single fuzzy set, from which fantasy moves from genre to slipstream, we can actually identify *several fuzzy sets*" (my italics, xvii). The four fuzzy sets she identifies, based on her structuralist study of the rhetorics of fantasy, are the portal-quest, the immersive, the intrusive, and the liminal" (xiv). Mendlesohn's classification is primarily determined by the means by which the fantastic enters the narrated world (xiv-xix). In the portal-quest fantasy, another realm is entered through a portal, and "the fantastic is *on the other side* and does not 'leak'"

(xix). In the intrusion fantasy, the fantastic intrudes upon the represented everyday world and disturbs it. The story arc usually involves a negotiation with or defeat of the fantastic (Mendlesohn 2005: xxxii). In the immersive fantasy, the fantastic world becomes the primary world for all the participants and is constructed as such. The magic just is, with no explanation, and it is accepted by all participants as natural, rather than unnatural. Finally, in the liminal fantasy, reader and protagonist may have very different ideas about what is fantastical and Todorovian hesitation (see Section 1.1.1 for explanation of Todorovian hesitation) underpins the rhetoric (Mendlesohn 2008: xix-xxiv; Levy and Mendlesohn 2016: 5-6). Mendlesohn suggests in her study that taxonomy needs to be understood as a useful analytical tool to explore the internal diversity of the fantasy genre, not as an end in itself (2008: xv). In her case, the four fuzzy sets identified are used to reveal different ways in which a text becomes fantasy. Claiming that her categorisation represents only one possible taxonomic understanding of the fantasy genre, Mendlesohn further clarifies that genre markers (whether tropes or patterns) are constructions imposed on literary works. The same groups of texts may be susceptible to quite a different way of categorisation (xxv).

Apart from Mendlesohn's taxonomy, there are many other suggestions of categorisation based on different principles. Todorov's (1973) and Jackson's (1981) differentiation between the marvellous, the fantastic, and the uncanny (the mimesis in Jackson's case) which I have introduced above, can be taken as one of the possibilities; Distinctions proposed by other scholars between the genre of fantasy (in a relatively narrow sense) and its adjacent categories such as fairy tale (Lanes 1976, Nikolajeva 1988 and 1996, Gates et al 2003), science fiction (Cameron 1981, Nikolajeva 1988) and magic realism (Chanady 1985, Rudge 2004) are also practical models of identifying the different but interrelated fuzzy sets that constitute fantasy in a broad sense. These extant taxonomic understandings of the fantasy genre, as the following

discussion will reveal, help clarify and define the particular fuzzy set of fantasy works that my study specially focuses on.

Science fiction is identified as one of the adjacent genres of fantasy. It is a general understanding that fantasy is the realisation of the *impossible*, the supernatural. This distinguishes it from science fiction, a genre of speculative fiction, that explores the potential consequences of scientific innovations and attempts to realise what might be possible in the future (Levy and Mendlesohn 2016: 3). Similar to the distinction made by Eleanor Cameron (1981), Nikolajeva (1988) suggests that,

> Science fiction is involved with events and devices which, though impossible at present, may be conceivable within the frames of science and technology. Science fiction almost always produces some kind of rational explanation of the irrational events. (13-14)

While identifying the differences, critics also notice that fantasy and science fiction have some common features and similar narrative elements, which foster quite a few borderline cases. Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979) offer these borderline cases the term "science fantasy" which "differs from science fiction in that it is basically fantasy that employs science in several rather specific ways" (4). This term is borrowed by Nikolajeva, Levy and Mendlesohn in their own critical works. Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000) and Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* (2001) can be taken as examples of these borderline works. Relatively speaking, the former is arguably closer to fantasy, for the many mythic and magic elements adopted and its sparing use of (pseudo)science or hypothesis; the latter is very close to the plot mode of science fiction, for its description of a futuristic, steampunk version of London that survives a "Sixty Minute War" (which strongly insinuates nuclear war) and that can only maintain itself by dismantling other cities for resources. Other examples of science fantasy that also present more characteristics of science fiction include Jone's *A Tale of Time City* (1987) and Pratchett's *Discworld* series (1983-2015).

Literary fairy tale is identified as another adjacent genre of fantasy (in a narrow sense). Following Selma Lanes's (1976) distinction between "fairy tale" and "fantasy" (12-13), Nikolajeva (1988) suggests that "the principal difference between fantasy and literary fairy tale is the structure of the universe in these genres" (12). While acknowledging the close generic connection between fantasy and fairy tale, she argues that,

> The best way of distinguishing between fairy tales and fantasy is thus that fairy tales take place in *one* world where, within the frames of the genre, everything is possible: animals can talk, wishes come true by magic, people can fly etc. All these supernatural elements are taken for granted, and never does the protagonist wonder at them. (original italics 13)

> In fantasy two worlds, a real one (*primary*) and a magic one (*secondary*), are involved. The ways they are connected may be different and constitute a variety of fantasy types. Within the magic world supernatural creatures or events may occur and are accepted, but against the background of the primary world they are apprehended as being out-of-place and always cause a sense of wonder. (original italics 13)

This point is further stressed in a chapter ("chronotope in children's literature") of her later work *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996). In it, Nikolajeva claims,

> Fantasy, on the other hand, has a link with reality and our own time and place, and its characters are most often ordinary children. The magical passage into another world and subsequent magical adventures in this other world create a contrast to reality. The other world has a time of its own, independent of the "real," or primary time. In other words, we can distinguish fantasy from the fairy tale depending on whether there is a one- or two-world structure in the chronotope (123).

Based on her observation of the fundamental two-world structure that characterises what she considers as literary fantasy, Nikolajeva (1996) invents a new term, that is,

the "secondary chronotope[4] fantasy" (123), to cover what are normally referred to as secondary-world fantasy and time-shift fantasy. By "secondary chronotope," Nikolajeva does not imply that the fantasy works contain only one magical world. They can also present the structure of "a multitude of secondary worlds," or its counterpart "a multitude of secondary times" (Nikolajeva 1988: 40-42).

As can be seen, literary fantasy defined by Nikolajeva covers a relatively narrower range of texts. The adjacent categories she distinguishes from literary fantasy are sometimes considered by other critics (Attebery 1992; Gates et al 2003; Levy and Mendlesohn 2016) as components of the fantasy genre in a very broad sense. However, even so, the distinction she identifies between fantasy and other related categories (fairy tale and science fiction) – whose close generic connections are simultaneously recognised – is still a useful tool for further in-depth studies of the inner diversity of the fantasy genre.

1.1.2 The Focused Scope of This Study

As I mentioned at the very beginning of Section 1.1, my reading of the different modes of fantasy spatiotemporality does not intend to cover the whole range of British modern children's and young adult fantasy literature. Within it, the scope I am interested in and concentrate on is a particular fuzzy set, the core of which can be roughly defined as fantasy works with the "two-world structure" suggested by Nikolajeva (1996). This means that what Cameron and Nikolajeva define as literary fairy tale, that takes place in one magic world where the supernatural elements and beings are taken for granted, will not be considered in this present study. While

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[4] The notion of "chronotope" was introduced into literary criticism by the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) to describe the indivisible unity of space and time presented in a literary work. Since Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope is one of the theoretical underpinnings of this current study, full explanation of this notion will be offered later in the methodology section.

borrowing the term "two-world structure" from Nikolajeva's study, my understanding of it has several differences from hers and needs to be clarified. First of all, Nikolajeva's explanation of the "two-world structure", as revealed by the above extracts, strongly implies a mutually-independent and purely contrasting relationship between the mundane world and the magical world. This generalisation, while being practical for differentiating fantasy from fairy tale, does not fully reveal the inner diversity of the "two-world structure." In other words, the "real" world and the magical world are not always imagined as contrasts to each other in fantasy works. They are, in fact, related to and interacting with each other in many different ways, as will be revealed by my detailed readings of the focused texts throughout this thesis. Therefore, when using the term "two-world structure" to define my focus, I see it not as an expression of binarism, but a dynamic structure that contains multiple possibilities of spatiotemporal configurations. This point is also where I think Nikolajeva's chronotopic study of children's fantasy literature can be further explored and refined. I will unpack this point later in Section 1.2, in relation to the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

Another point I feel necessary to stress again is that the term "two-world structure" does not imply the existence of only one magical secondary world in the textual universe. As clarified by Nikolajeva (1988), fantasy works can also present the structure of a multitude of secondary worlds or a multitude of secondary times (40-42), and she gives the following examples: Nesbit's short story "The Town in the Library in the Town in the Library" (1898), Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew* (1955), *The Last Battle* (1956), Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), the Arden dilogy (1908-1909), and Boston's Green Knowe series (1954-1976). In relation to her paradigm works, Nikolajeva's analysis, to a large extent, treats a multitude of secondary worlds/times as replications of *the* magic secondary world/time in her "two-world structure", that

is, as quoted above, "a contrast to reality" (1996: 123). In this study, I take into account another mode of fantasy multiverse that deviates from the examples given by Nikolajeva. This mode of multiverse is projected as a multi-dimensional space-time continuum where worlds carrying alternative histories and counterfactuals converge and jostle, and where our familiar quotidian world only actualises one of an infinity of possible time-streams. While this mode of multiverse also juxtaposes the "real" world and a multitude of secondary worlds, it simultaneously interrogates the taken-for-granted central "reality" and subverts the simplistic binary understanding of the "real" and the fantasy. Examples of works with this subversive mode of multiverse include Pullman's *The Subtle Knife* (1997), *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), and also Jones' *Witch Week* (1982), *Conrad's Fate* (2005).

While Pullman presents a slightly distorted version of our quotidian world through the human character Will Parry, Jones' Chrestomanci series are mainly set in worlds where magic is taken as normal (Jones 2001: author's note). Our quotidian world, which is encoded as 12B in Jones' multiverse, is not given direct descriptions in the narrative. It is only implied as the source from which the problematic world depicted in *Witch Week* diverges. This means that Jones' works sit in the borderline between the genre of fantasy (in a narrow sense) and "magic realism" defined by Chanady (1985) and Rudge (2004). Chanady suggests that in "magic realism," the supernatural events are introduced in a realistic manner and are placed on the same level as an ordinary occurrence (1985: 36). Characters and the narrative voice ignore the strangeness of supernatural events or objects and do not seek explanation (Rudge 129). World constructions/projections of magic realism take on similar characteristics of what Mendlesohn (2008) describes as "immersive fantasy," in which, as introduced in Section 1.1.1, the fantasy world becomes the primary world and the magic is accepted by all participants as natural. Works of magic realism sit out of the vague boundaries

of my focused fuzzy set of fantasy works which, as mentioned above, are specially characterised by the "two-world structure." This is also the main reason why I select Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000) rather than Jones' works as focused texts for detailed reading of the particular mode of multiverse mentioned above.

So, to further clarify, the group of modern fantasy works for children and young adults that this study specially focuses on share a fundamental "two-world structure." This structure is characterised by the *co-presence* in the narrative of a "real" world that generally mimics our quotidian reality, though sometimes with slight distortion, and at least one fantasy world/realm that to varying degrees violates realistic rules and reasons. The fantasy world/realm may be manifested as a, or several, secondary space[s] imbued with mythic elements and magic creatures. It may also be manifested as a, or several, secondary time[s] that is often embedded in a period of history and/or a piece of memory. The latter type of fantasy worlds embodied as secondary times contain relatively few supernatural elements except for the time travel actions per se. Here, as clarified by the discussion above, I by no means imply a purely dualistic or antithetic relation between the "real" and the fantasy, neither do I take for granted the existence of an absolute, unitary "reality." In fact, my reading of the different modes of fantasy spatiotemporality, as will be indicated later in Section 1.2, concerns the diversified syntagmatic interrelations built between the imagined fantasy world and the represented quotidian world. I argue through detailed readings of the focused texts, especially in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, that close interactions of these two main space-time continuums, with the boundary between blurred, transgressed or even erased, prompt interrogations, decentring and disruptions of an absolute central "real" functioning in texts as a stable referential basis.

With this possible misunderstanding clarified, my reason for stressing the "two-world structure" is that, apart from building secondary worlds, literary cartographies in this specific group of fantasy works show additional consideration of how the magic worlds can possibly be connected to and have different degrees of interactions with

our quotidian reality. These connections and interactions constructed between these two space-time continuums in fantasy narratives, as well as the awareness and values reflected by each way of construction, are what I intend to explore in this study. Also, this particular spatiotemporal structure, that is the *co-presence* of the "real" and the magic worlds in the textual universe, distinguishes my focused scope of fantasy works from works of fairy tale and magic realism that are quite often also included under the large umbrella of the fantasy genre (Gate et al 2003, Mendlesohn 2008). The difference is that, in works of fairy tale and magic realism, the connection between fantasy other worlds and our quotidian reality is largely latent and metaphorical (Chanady 1985, Nikolajeva 1988 &1996, Rudge 2004). This connection can only be inferred and revealed through interpretations which normally take into account such extratextual factors as the political, social and cultural contexts of the work, and sometimes also the background of the author. However, how children's fantasy works allude to or react to the historical contexts against which they are produced is not the primary concern of this current study,[5] whose main focus lies on interpreting the literary/textual "maps" presented particularly by fantasy narratives from a perspective that combines Bakhtinian chronotopic reading and geocritical reading. In fact, sometimes (but not always), the referential connection between fantasy literature created following the "what if" principle (Attebery 1992: 128) and their historical, social and cultural background can be loose. Hume (1984) observes that, "[i]f the non-real is your focus, you have no stable point of reference, and the individuality of each departure from reality, each creation of something new, renders chronology irrelevant" (xii). Hume's argument may be too general, but still it reveals the inventiveness and potential

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[5] There are some contextual studies of children's fantasy literature that relate children's fantasy works to their social, cultural and historical contexts. See Manlove's *From Alice to Harry Potter* (2003), Charles's *Four British Fantasists* (2006) and Levy and Mendlesohn's *Children's Fantasy Literature: An introduction* (2016) for details.

spontaneity of fantasy writing.

So far, I have given a broad view of the critical background of fantasy and have defined the focused scope of this study in relation to and in dialogue with ideas and concepts proposed by other scholars. In the next section, I am going to review critical works that specially focus on reading time and space in children's and young adult fantasy literature. These are the critical voices that my study is built on and actively engages with.

1.1.3 Critical Studies of Time and Space in Children's Fantasy Literature

The study of time and space, the two coordinates of narratives, in the context of children's literature has drawn more and more critical attention over time. The following recounting of some critical readings of space and time in children's fantasy literature, which this current study is built on and in dialogue with, reveals this growing interest. In extant critical works, time and space are often treated as two independent indicators of stories, and are discussed separately. Some critics concentrate on identifying characteristics and metaphorical connotations of different temporal structures. For instance, an early study by Lesley Aers (1970) examines the time machineries presented in four time-slip fantasy works, from the protagonists' "continuous and solid" experience in the secondary time exemplified by *The Gauntlet* (1951) and *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), to the intermittent and vague experience with the characters "slip[ping] away at almost any moment" (Aers 71) as presented in *A Traveller in Time* (1939) and *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958). Some of her ideas are very inspiring, such as "the sense of a connection with people of the past" (70), "the pain of seeing into the future" (71), ancient objects that have remained to "re-establish the link" between past history and present life, and "the sense of loss" aroused by time as a "vehicle for nostalgia" (72). However, in her study of the different temporal structures of time travels, Aers does not consider the spatiotemporal configurations of the locales where protagonists experience temporal displacement. This is where I think spatiotemporal readings of time-travel fantasy works can explore further. The reading

of these locales, especially when they are constructed as inhabited spaces that are seized upon by the partiality of the time travelers, can help reveal why a specific form of temporal displacement experience is triggered.

Other scholars who contribute to the discussion of time in children's literature include Virginia Zimmerman and Maria Nikolajeva. Zimmerman (2009) examines embodiments of the "trace" in the context of children's literature. "Trace" is a concept proposed by Paul Ricoeur (1988) to refer to a mark of something passed that has a continued presence and that, by forging a connection to the past, "orients the hunt, the quest, the search, the inquiry" (120) in the present. Examples of the trace include fossils, treasures, footprints, scars, etc. Images of this "materialised" and "solidified" time frequently appear in children's fantasy works, as exemplified by the ancient amulet in Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), the Grail in Cooper's *Over Sea, Under Stone* (1965), the four treasures in Garner's *Elidor* (1965), Harry Potter's scar on his forehead and Melstone House that Andrew Hope has inherited from his grandfather in Jone's *The Enchanted Glass* (2010). Zimmerman's study of traces exemplifies explorations and interpretations of time at the micro-level. She is more concerned with how child characters find strength in their relationship with the past; and how the understanding of the past is fundamental to the formation of identity. Her concern is actually shared by some fantasists such as E. Nesbit in her time travel works, and Susan Cooper whose *The Dark is Rising* sequence (1965-1977) instill a strong sense of the mythic history of Wales in both characters and readers, and also her *King of Shadows* (1999) that presents the healing power of the past. Knowing and understanding the past, either embodied as national, familial or personal history, is undoubtedly significant for the formation of identities. However, this current study interrogates a kind of "absolute past" (Bakhtin 1981: 13) in which some epic secondary worlds imagined in children's fantasy works are localised. This absolute past is characterised by determinacy, conclusiveness and finality. It keeps an impenetrable boundary from the present experiences and excludes alternative possibilities. The indubitable prophecies that generally dictate the time line of events, as will be further discussed in Chapter Two, are the most pertinent embodiment of the absolute past in fantasy works.

In her book *From Mythic to Linear*, Nikolajeva (1991) takes a relatively broad view in her investigation of time in children's literature. She locates literary texts "in a continuum from texts involving nonlinear time (*kairos*), typical of archaic or mythical thought, toward linearity (*chronos*), typical of contemporary mainstream literature" (1). Although acknowledging that cyclical, eternal, and mythic time is still used in contemporary literature "for parodic or carnivalesque purposes" (5), Nikolajeva asserts that "contemporary western children's fiction is written from a philosophical viewpoint based on linear time" (5). Her trace of the change from circular to linear narrative in children's literature is based on "the degree of accomplishment of initiation, 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). This process is briefly summarised in Nikolajeva's discussion as "kairos, kairos-chronos-kairos, chronos" or "utopia, carnival, collapse" (10). Nikolajeva's identification of and distinction between kairos and chronos in children's literature inspires this current study, especially the different shaping effects of these two temporal structures on narrative and characterisation. However, one reservation I have is towards the absolute incompatibility of kairos and chronos that seems to be suggested by Nikolajeva's discussion, that is, at a certain point of the narrative, the temporal pattern is *either* kairos *or* chronos, cyclical or linear. In Chapter Three of this thesis, using *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) as the example, I will explain that these two forms of time, while contrasting with each other in nature, actually can co-exist at a specific moment of story. This happens when they are situated in a "thirdspace", a concept put forward by Soja (1996) to refer to any open and creative space that rejects simplistic dualism, that embraces paradoxes, and that follows the logic of "both/and also . . ." (5-10; See Section 3.5.2 for full details of thirdspace).

Whereas "a modernist aesthetic seemed to enshrine temporality as the most important dimension" (Tally 2013: 3), the study of space has attracted more critical attention since the late twentieth century. This is a phenomenon that corroborates Foucault's (1986) claim that "the present epoch will, perhaps, be above all the epoch of space" ("Of Other Spaces" 22). Jane Carroll (2011) also observes the rise of "landscape study,"

studies that interpret the "inhabited, viewed, remembered, or imagined" (2) literary landscapes, in the context of children's literature criticism since the end of the Second World War. She claims that "[w]hereas time was the chief concern of the Victorian fin-de-siecle and the early years of the twentieth century . . . in late twentieth and early twenty-first century a shift in literary perspective has refocused critical attention away from narrative structure or character and towards the geographical settings of texts" (1-2). Here, I think it is necessary to point out that while the rise in critical works of space in children's literature is undisputed, Carroll's assertion that critical attention has moved away from narrative and character may be an overstatement. In fact, rather than being replaced, studies on narrative structure and character in children's literature are still fairly large in number. Examples are Nikolajeva's book *The Rhetoric of Character in Children's Literature* (2002), her article "Beyond the Grammar of Story, or How Can Children's Literature Criticism Benefit from Narrative Theory" (2003), and also *Telling Children's Stories: Narrative Theory and Children's Literature* (2011), edited by Michael Cadden, which is a comprehensive collection of essays on the narrative strategies used in children's literature creation. In fact, in her own close reading of Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising Sequence* (1965-1977), Carroll also discusses interactions between geographical settings and characters, suggesting that literary landscapes are constructed as a result of human action rather than a mere coincidence of geography. She states, a character's "close relationship with her[/his] environment is bound up with her[/his] ability to impress herself [/himself] upon her [/his] surroundings and to accept the impact of environmental factors on her [/his] life" (Carroll 2011: 180). In view of these, I find that rather than being observed separately, geographical settings, actions and identities of characters, as well as narrative structures are more often considered as interdependent factors of a story. Therefore, these elements are more often examined and interpreted by critics in an integrated manner, even if their primary concern might be one of them. This situation can be exemplified by the following studies of the fantasy alternative worlds in children's literature I am going to review.

Immel, Knoepflmacher and Briggs (2009) suggest that studies of fantasy's alternative geography should concern themselves with the "figure of the child" (Immel et al 226).

It is usually through the perspective of the child characters that the fantastic landscapes, whether strange or familiar, are "most fully realised" (239). Paul Fox (2007) also observes the deep interpenetration of the characteristics of space and the identities of characters. In his reading of *Peter Pan* (1911), Fox interprets Neverland as "a liminal space" in a state of change, since this imaginary island varies a good deal according to the different desires of its "dreamers". The inconclusiveness and indeterminacy of Neverland, in turn, make it a space with "continuing potential for creating those identities beyond the stereotypes of the real" (266). This is reflected in Peter Pan's provisional and fluid identity induced by his constant forgetting of the past that determines self-identification (260-261). Fox argues that, for Peter, "every moment of self-identification becomes an instance of creative potential rather than the recognition of a predetermined subject" (260). Alison Waller (2010), in her interpretation and comparison of two instances [Bawden's *Carrie's War* (1973) and Lewis's *Prince Caspian* (1951)] in children's literature where characters return to a significant landscape from their past, focuses on exploring "how environment and identity are co-constructed" (304), especially through memory. Using the term "revenant" (304) to express a character's revisiting of a childhood landscape, Waller argues that the revenant can bridge the gap between past and present, the old self (childhood) and the new (adulthood), and, "in bridging that gap, maintains it, thereby creating a new, intermediate space" (305).

As can be seen, in their interpretations of literary landscapes, critics see the interactions between space and character as being of great significance. They explore how child characters impress themselves upon their surroundings, and how environmental factors simultaneously exert shaping effects on the character's formation of identity. This mutual shaping between space and character is also stressed by Bakhtin in his theory of the literary artistic chronotope. However, rather than a bilateral relation, Bakhtin strongly suggests the importance of including another coordinate of narrative, that is the axis of time into synthetic consideration. He insists that in literary works, "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought out, *concrete whole*" (my italics, Bakhtin 1981: 84) to organise and condition the representation of the fictional world and characters moving through it. The intersection of these two

axes "determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature . . . [which] is always intrinsically chronotopic" (84). Bakhtin therefore appeals to critics to explore and interpret the *trilateral* relation between time, space and character presented in literary works, which is briefly summarised by him as the study of "literary artistic chronotopes" (83). Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope underpins my analysis of the spatiotemporality of worlds constructed in selected modern children's fantasy works. Following his suggestion, time and space will be considered and examined as two inextricably meshed coordinates of narratives throughout this thesis.

One approach that is frequently applied in the study of alternative worlds in children's literature, especially in high fantasies, is intertextual analysis. Readings from this approach focus on identifying the ancient myths, legends, medieval and other classical works that are drawn on by authors when constructing the fictional worlds. Beyond that, some studies also investigate how authors engage with these classical sources to create new imaginary spaces that relate to or react against concerns of their own times; and how these reconfigured pieces of sources take on new life by serving the author's particular vision. There are quite a few critical studies from this perspective. Here I will only give some examples whose main concern is fantasy works. Stuart Lee and Elizabeth Solopova (2005) trace key passages in original medieval literature that possibly contribute to Tolkien's Middle-earth, the setting for *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55). Tony Watkins (1972) identifies the elements of Celtic mythology and Grail legend that are probably drawn upon by Garner when building the secondary world in *Elidor* (1965). He also investigates how Garner, in his stories, absorbs the quintessence of myths and "transmutes them into new metaphors and symbols of experience" (58). Maria Sachiko Cecire (2015) discusses how Lewis draws together and engages with sources as diverse as medieval travel narratives, accounts from the Age of Exploration, Shakespeare, and Edwardian children's literature to establish his fantasy domain in *Narnia* series (1950-56), especially in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952). She examines how the reconfigured pieces of Lewis's sources take on new life by serving his particular vision of an ideal England; and also how they go on to inform future iterations of national and cultural expressions of identity. When examining how writers borrow symbols and metaphors from classics

to create new literary worlds that fit their own desires, or what Henry Jenkins (1992) briefly describes as "textual poaching" (27), critics often choose a limited number of texts as objects of their studies. The reason for this is probably that spatial imaginations in children's fantasy literature have presented very diverse forms of "textual poaching."

Exploring the possible classical sources behind the imagined landscapes helps decode connotations of some symbols and metaphors hidden in discourses. Hence this approach can reveal a deeper, intertextual layer of meaning implied in the alternative worlds constructed in some children's fantasy works. But meanwhile, we should also note that there are many kinds of fantastic narratives. They do not all follow the conventions based on medieval romance, Welsh legend or Northern European mythology that more often operate in works of high fantasy characterised by "a fully built (secondary) world, with epic adventure, and almost always some kind of pseudohistorical setting" (Mendlesohn 2005: xxx-xxxi). Studies of the worlds constructed in what is normally referred to as low/domestic/indigenous fantasy works can further reveal the diversity of the imagined landscapes in children's fantasy literature. Another point that needs to be clarified is that, although both take literary landscapes as objects of their studies, the intertextual analysis of "textual poaching" is different from the chronotopic approach that this current study applies. This is because the former is more concerned with how authors, in their creation of fantasy landscapes, draw upon or rewrite elements of the classics, while the latter concentrates on examining the spatiotemporal characteristics of a literary landscape. This includes the interpretation of the particular characteristics of its spatiotemporal relation; the values reflected by this spatiotemporal relation; and the interactions between this space-time continuum and characters who inhabit and experience it.

The close inter-relationship between children's literature and cultural studies has facilitated the penetration of the ideas of cultural geography into readings of textual landscapes in children's literature. Cultural geographers, such as both Tony Watkins (2005) and Jane Carroll (2011), consider real/physical landscapes as at once geographic and historical, natural and cultural (Watkins 67, Carroll 2-3). The catalyst that converts a physical land into the image of landscape is people's experience of and

interaction with that land (Gussow and Wilbur 1971, 27). This means that landscapes, as summarised by Carroll, constitute a "spatial interface between human culture and physical terrain" (2). Based on this, in research, cultural geographers always "connect the very idea of landscape to its historical development" (Mitchell 1994, 61), to the "important axes of cultural differentiation (such as race, gender and national identity)" (xix). Watkins (2005) observes that, "for scholars of children's literature and media, perhaps the most relevant research from cultural geography is that which involves 'reading the landscape'" as a kind of "text" (67-68) with inbuilt symbols and metaphors. In his article "Landscapes and Journeys," Peter Hunt (1987) also asserts that "places *mean*" (11 original italic) in English children's literature. Echoing the ideas of cultural geography, Hunt claims that English landscapes, the "re-treading ancestral ground", with concrete, deep-rooted, and multi-layered cultural symbols embedded, have provided a subtext for the journeys portrayed in English fantasy (11-12).

Drawing upon ideas of cultural geography, Carroll (2012) suggests that literary landscape also exists as "a shifting palimpsest on which traces of successive inscriptions from the complex experience of place may be read" (3). In her *Landscape in Children's Literature* (2012), combining the approach of cultural geography, morphological study and topoanalysis [originally proposed by Gaston Bachelard (1958)], Carroll identifies and examines four main topoi that she considers "central to the landscapes of British children's fantasy" (13). They are the sanctuary (sacred and domestic space), the green space (gardens, farms, wilderness), the roadway (streets, roads), and the lapsed space (caves, graves, ruins). Following the method of cultural geography, Carroll traces the origins of these four topoi back to their earliest inceptions in medieval and pre-modern literature. She then examines their roles in late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first century children's literature. Apart from the study of the historical and cultural depth of each topos, Carroll also gives a detailed analysis of the symbolic and literary functions of these four topoi as manifested in Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* Sequence (1965-1977). Carroll's discussion unfolds in a very systematic and organised way. I observe that her interpretation of the four main topoi at some points resonates with and, to some extent, enriches Bakhtin's earlier

identification and discussion of a few minor chronotopes (including the chronotope of the road, the chronotope of the castle, the chronotope of parlors and salons, the chronotope of the provincial town, and the chronotope of threshold) (1981: 243-58), especially in the dimension of space and in the context of children's literature, although this resonance with Bakhtin's work is not recognised by the study. Admittedly, as the following discussion reveals, Bakhtin's theory of the literary chronotope is not the theoretical basis of Carroll's reading of literary landscapes.

There is a fundamental difference between Carroll's understanding of space-time and Bakhtin's on which this study is based. In her work, Carroll claims that "we cannot form an idea of landscape except in terms of its time relations as well as of its space relations" (3), a statement that also suggests a combination of time and space in the study of literary landscape. But it should be noted that, by "time relations," Carroll refers to "the history (or the complex strata of time) underlying the textual landscape" (3). This is embodied in her discussion as the exploration of the intertextual provenances of the aforementioned four main topoi and the series of changes they have undergone over the historical time. Therefore, the time that Carroll explores in her literary landscape study is *diachronic* or *historical*, that is, the intertextual literary histories accumulating in the fictional landscapes. It is a time dimension that is different from the intra-text temporal structures that this current study is primarily concerned with. Based on Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, this study mainly examines how time is materialised in and fuses with space to organise different forms of imaginative worlds in modern children's fantasy works. Therefore, the time primarily examined in this study is a framing device of the narrative. Beyond this, in her study, Carroll focuses exclusively on, as she declares, the representations of "physical and tangible spaces" (5) in children's literature. This is another point where this current study deviates from hers, as the chief concern of this study is a reading of the spatiotemporality of fantasy worlds/realms imagined in children's fantasy literature. By saying this, I am not implying that there is no representation of physical spaces in fantasy works, or they are not important. But still, it is *this particular* manipulation of time and the distortion of physical spaces that, I claim, distinctively characterises fantasy literature and is the distinctive focus of my study. Also, in her

reading of the four categories of geographical/ physical space, Carroll concludes that the four topoi she examines "have remained stable in their form and symbolic function from the time of their earliest inception to that of their most recent expression" (184). Although the fantasy chronotopes also have certain degrees of continuity in the aspects of style and rhetoric (hence people sometimes describe a fantasy work as in Tolkien's style or in Nesbit's style), they are still, as products of the creative, elastic and unrestrained human imagination, primarily characterised by their variability. A slight adjustment to the spatiotemporal configuration of a certain mode of the fantasy chronotope, as my discussion in each of the following chapters will reveal, may cause a change in its connotation and the value it conveys.

Pavlik's article "Being There" (2011) introduces Soja's (1996) idea of "thirdspace" from the discipline of political geography into the reading of the spatiality of other worlds in children's fantasy literature. He examines a particular kind of other world that "may not, in fact, be 'other' at all" (Pavlik 2011: 238) for the child protagonists. The most obvious characteristic of the fantasy works that Pavlik concentrates on is that the child protagonist experiences no shock, no sense of being out of place when unexpectedly exposed to an alternative world that is supposed to be strange and unfamiliar. On the contrary, [s]he displays a kind of surprising calmness and "a sense of ownership" (246) of the fantasy world. Using *Sendak's* picture book *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) as the main example, Pavlik interprets the wild jungle that Max imaginarily projects onto his bedroom as a literary representation of Soja's thirdspace, that is a "simultaneously real-and-imagined" (Soja 11) space that is enacted by the spatial experiences and spatial imaginings of the child protagonist. These "other" worlds presented as thirdspaces, Pavlik explains, are "personally *authentic spaces*" (original italics 246). They are "real" in the sense that they are conceived by protagonists in the course of their motions, and "they have an actual effect in terms of shaping the ways protagonists are seen to understand and act upon and within the space" (246).

Although, in the limited space of an article, Pavlik only studies a certain type of other world in children's fantasy literature, the interdisciplinary method he uses has placed

the reading of literary space in a wider field of discussion, where it could engage with and benefit from thinking about space from other disciplines. Likewise, in my reading of fantasy chronotopes, apart from Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, I also draw on the thinking of geocriticism (Westphal 2011 and Tally 2013) which proposes new perceptions of space-time relations observed and theorised in such disciplines as geography, architecture, urban study into literary map readings. The relevance of Bakhtin's theory of chronotope and geocriticism, as well as the necessity and benefit of commingling these two theoretical perspectives in my study will be explained later in Section 1.2. While Pavlik mainly draws on spatial theory to offer new interpretation of fantasy landscape, my reading of the fantasy chronotopes suggests and demonstrates a *reciprocal* relation between fantasy spatiotemporal constructions and the theoretical interpretations of space and time. Section 1.3 and 1.4 will discuss this point in detail.

Maria Nikolajeva (1996) introduced Bakhtin's theory of the literary chronotope into the reading of children's literature. She suggests "a chronotope – the unity of time and space in the text – is a formal category, an instrument to be used for text analysis . . . Studying the evolution of time-space relations in children's literature allows us once again to state that narrative structures are becoming more and more complicated" (151). In *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996), Nikolajeva examines, in a rather cursory fashion, several chronotopes in children's literature, including the fantasy chronotope, the male and the female chronotope in classical works, the big city chronotope, the small-town chronotope, the chronotope in historical and the retrospective novels, the chronotope of picturebooks, and the chronotopes constructed by individual writers such as Tove Jansson and Alan Garner. After briefly describing the characteristics of each of these chronotopes, Nikolajeva concludes that "from relatively simple structures with a concrete place and a logically arranged, chronological action in epic stories, the chronotope develops into an intricate network of temporal and spatial relationships, which better reflect our own chaotic existence" (151). Nikolajeva's discussion inspires this current study, especially her call *for more critical attention on the spatial-temporal arrangements in children's literature*. Each of the chronotopes Nikolajeva has identified is complex and diversified enough to be

developed into a book-length study, and in her call for more critical attention to this complex question of chronotopes she has implicitly acknowledged that there was not sufficient capacity in her own study to exhaust the possibilities.   For the fantasy chronotope, Nikolajeva mainly concentrates on differentiating it from its adjacent genre fairy tale from the perspective of spatiotemporal structures. This broad view makes her overlook the inner diversity of the fantasy chronotope *per se*. Therefore, moving on from what Nikolajeva has already achieved, I will, in this study, zoom into the fantasy chronotope and give a more in-depth observation of its diversified forms in the context of modern children's fantasy literature. Through detailed readings of different modes of fantasy chronotopes, including their diverse manifestations and deployments in modern children's fantasy works, my discussion will reveal that the fantasy chronotope is a dynamic set that embraces multiple possibilities.

Martha Thindle (2013) is another scholar who specially studies the fantasy chronotope. Comparing Enid Blyton's and Eion Colfer's works, which are used as representatives of conventional and contemporary children's fantasy fictions respectively, Thindle asserts that the conventional fantasy tradition of Blyton, characterised by "the relatively simple, uncomplicated magical world" with idyllic setting and linear time (7), has been replaced by the more futuristic fantasy in Colfer that more often includes urban settings, manipulations of time and inter-accessibility of parallel worlds (6-8). Although Thindle's observation reveals some new characteristics of the chronotopic construction in contemporary children's fantasy works, her discussion is nevertheless biased by a preconceived developmental model. Beyond that, generalising from the particular may be considered as another limitation of her study. After all, what Thindle considers as "conventional" fantasy chronotopes are actually still recycled in contemporary children's literature, while urban settings and manipulations of time also appear in E. Nesbit's fantasy works. As previously discussed, children's fantasy literature is a broad, expansive genre with a long history and blurring boundaries with related genres, such as fairy tale, magic realism and science fiction. Given this, I do not, in this current study, attempt to exhaust all possibilities of the fantasy chronotope constructed in this genre. Neither will I trace its evolution over time in the long history of children's fantasy works as Martha Thindle (2013) does in her study, because this

approach runs the risk of imposing some preconceived overviews on the genre by reducing the vast array of children's fantasy works into a canon of particularly valued texts. Rather than linear progression, I consider a dynamic vector-field pointing radially away from the origin as a more appropriate semiotic description of the interrelations among fantasy chronotopes constructed in children's fantasy literature. As shown in the diagram on the next page,

A "valorised," self-contained mythic world concerning itself with glorious deeds and heroic destiny dominates the narrative.

The epic chronotope transposes its conclusive, fatalistic structure onto the represented quotidian world, and erases contingency and openness.

The "novelisation" of the epic chronotope

Time travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" mode

The "fantastic" time travel chronotope

The epic chronotope is literally brought into intimate interactions with the textual quotidian "reality."

The epic chronotope

Time travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" mode

The heterotopian chronotope

Ontologically flickering textual worlds where mutually exclusive sequences of events are simultaneously actualised

Projected multiverses that juxtapose an infinity of interrelated and incommensurable "realities"

Carnivalesque chronotope where the seemingly incompatible existents meet, fuse and generate alternative possibilities

Fig. 1

* This splitting and expanded vector-field is a semiotic representation of the diverse possibilities of fantasy chronotopes. The dotted circle at the centre of the diagram denotes the core of this vector-field, that is the violation of the "realistic" laws and rules governing our world of everyday experiences. This is also the very fundamental spatiotemporal characteristic of the fantasy chronotope. However, as to how and to what extent this violation is embodied in the world constructions of children's fantasy works, there could be a wide variety of possibilities. Each possible way of spatiotemporal violation, that is each specific form of the fantasy chronotope, can still be strategically deployed in narratives to shape (and to be shaped by) events and actions in divergent ways. These vast possibilities of the fantasy chronotope are shown in the diagram as the many centrifugal arrows. The solid arrows denote the possibilities identified and examined in the capacity of this current study, while the dotted arrows represent other possible forms of the fantasy chronotope that may be revealed and explored by further studies.

* Terms such as "epic chronotope," "heterotopian chronotope," "novelisation" and so forth will be explained later in Section 1.3 and 1.4.

The open and discursive nature of the vector-field requires that studies on it should focus more on identifying and interpreting its diversified possibilities than attempting to achieve a comprehensive overview of it. This point will be further discussed in the next section, in relation to the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

1.2 Theoretical/Methodological Framework

This study is basically a case study of the different possibilities of fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements presented in British modern children's fantasy work with the particular "two-world structure" (see Section 1.1.2 for explanation of the "two-world structure"). My critical reading has two main theoretical underpinnings. The first one is, as already mentioned earlier, Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, an idea that is mainly discussed in his long essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (FTC henceforth, 1981), and is further developed in other two works, namely "Epic and Novel" (1981) and "The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism" (BSHR henceforth, 1986). The FTC essay was largely written during 1937 and 1938,[6] but published in Russian only in 1975 (Renfrew 2015: 112, Morson & Emerson 1990: 405) after Bakhtin appended a "Concluding Remarks" to it. The other two essays were written between 1938 and 1941, and were originally published in Russian in 1975 and 1979 respectively (Renfrew 115). In FTC, Bakhtin introduces into literary and cultural studies the concept of "chronotope," a term originating in science and mathematics. The word "chronotope" is a blending of the Greek terms "chronos" (time) and "topos" (place), and it is defined by Bakhtin (1981), in the domain of literary study, as "the *intrinsic connectedness* of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (my italics, *The Dialogic Imagination* 84). As is often quoted,

> 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

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[6] Bakhtin's essays about the idea of literary artistic chronotope were largely written between 1924 and 1941, and the original publication of the essays was hampered by the vagaries of the life of the author, who was subjected to Stalinist purges and forced into internal exile in Kazakhstan (Morson & Emerson 1990: 18).

and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. *This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators* characterizes the artistic chronotope. (my italics 84-85)

While this close connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships, as the core of Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, is stressed by nearly every critic who draws on this theory for literary studies, another equally significant point may easily be overlooked. Immediately after the extract cited above, Bakhtin states that "the chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic" (85). This reveals another focus of Bakhtin's theory of chronotope, that is the stress of "the relation of people and events to time and space" (366), as Morson and Emerson (1990) point out. So, it is a complex *tripartite* relationship between time, space and the images of characters that Bakhtin explores by raising the concept of literary artistic chronotope. Renfrew (2015), in his reading of Bakhtin, also observes this third dimension of the chronotope by suggesting that "the chronotope is a way of differentiating and classifying the ways in which the image of the human subject, inseparable from but irreducible to the body that occupies space and moves through time, is represented (but not finalized) in the literary text" (113).

This additional concern about how actions of characters are related to the fictional space-time continuums may help explain Bakhtin's clarification that he borrows the term "chronotope" from Einstein's theory of relativity "for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely)" (1981: 84). Abbott (2008), in his study on narrative, further discusses Bakhtin's use of the term chronotope and asserts that "his [Bakhtin's] coyness is appropriate":

> The chronotope is a *literal* description ("not entirely a metaphor") because in narrative we usually have a steady stream of literal renderings: things and events seen in space and happening through time. But . . . it is also a metaphorical description ("almost a metaphor") in the way it covers still more that happens in narrative that cannot be graphed on axes of time and space. (165)

By saying "still more," Abbott refers to the different layers of mental worlds or awareness stacked up in narration or in Bakhtin's words "the mind of culture inscribed in narrative" (Bakhtin 1981: 115). All these mental worlds cannot be presented without

the dimensions of time and space, yet in consciousness they take on a new kind of being, coming together in ways that exceed the coordinates of time and space. As Abbott (2008) describes, "going from point A to point B in almost any narrative is not just a matter of time, nor of space, but also something that can only be expressed figuratively as, say, a piling up of layers upon layer of awareness" (167).

In other words, rather than seeing time and space as neutral, abstract coordinates as scientists may possibly do, Bakhtin, in his use of the term chronotope, insists that literary artistic chronotopes are more than indifferent and static backgrounds, but possess "values" (1981: 243). They are the variety of possible ways in which the relations of people to their worlds (which are shaped fundamentally by space and time) are understood and artistically represented in literary works. Based on this understanding, Bakhtin proposes and demonstrates a kind of chronotopic reading of literary texts that examines not only the spatiotemporality of the context in which characters are placed, but also how the context actively shapes actions and events, and how characters, through their discourses and actions, negotiate and interact with the context. Following this, in the discussion of each main chapter, my close reading of the fantasy chronotopes in selected children's fantasy works explores and emphasises the interactions and mutually shaping effects of characters and the imagined spatiotemporal contexts. This "trinity" of space, time and the images of characters that characterises Bakhtin's theorisation of the literary artistic chronotope is also graphically displayed in the following discussion.

While the intrinsic connectedness of time, space and the human image is always the kernel of chronotopic analysis, Bakhtin's understanding of what precisely is a literary chronotope goes through some changes over time, influenced by and interweaving with other categories and concepts of his thinking. These include "heteroglossia" that describes the diversity of speech within a single language (1981: 67), and "dialogism" that describes "the interactions of several consciousnesses" (18) that are not only laid out compositionally in literary texts, but also "permeate all human speech" (40). In other words, rather than a self-contained and self-sufficient category discussed only in the more frequently quoted FTC essay, the notion of the chronotope runs throughout

Bakhtin's thinking. It is extended in his reading of Goethe's typical Bildungsroman and in his comparative study of epic and novel. The concept of literary chronotope also gets refined after Bakhtin merges it with his thinking on dialogism and carnival. Literary studies from the approach of Bakhtin's chronotope should, above all, have a full understanding of the elasticity or stratification of this concept before applying it.

First of all, the notion of the chronotope can refer to the *major/generic* chronotopes that "define genre and generic distinctions" (85). This is also how Bakhtin initially understands literary chronotopes. In his discussion of the variety of spatiotemporality presented in ancient European novels, Bakhtin (1981) elaborates, for example, the chronotope of Greek romance, the chronotope of ancient biography and the chronotope of chivalric romance, and he considers these extracted chronotopic structures as genre markers. The epic chronotope and the novelistic chronotope interpreted and compared by Bakhtin in "Epic and Novel" (1981) also exemplify these major/generic chronotopes. While the generalisation of the dominant chronotopic features of a genre may give an overview of how a specific style of writing normally understands and represents the relation of people to their spatiotemporal contexts, nevertheless it can hardly exhaust all the possibilities, even in the domain of a single genre. Due to this, the generalisation of major/generic chronotopes may easily run the risk of prioritising a presupposed centre of the genre that is occupied by some "valued" texts and, to one extent or another, pushing other possibilities to the periphery. In other words, the descriptions of generic chronotopes run the risk of falling into a kind of homogenous, hegemonic grand narrative that suppresses alternative possibilities.

In his typology of the literary chronotopes that have evolved through the history of European literature, Bakhtin seems to realise this potential risk half way through his discussion. While the first half of his essay FTC is devoted to the generalisation of the chronotopic features of a series of *genres*, the latter half of it (excluding the "Concluding Remarks" appended later in 1973) narrows down to scrutinise the chronotopic characteristics of a single author, that is what Bakhtin considers as exceptional, but extremely important, the "Rabelaisian chronotope" (197-342). Later in the essay BSHR, continuing with his discussion in FTC, Bakhtin interprets the

40

specific chronotopic features of Goethe's Bildungsroman. The gradual narrowing down of the scope of chronotopic study, from genres to individual authors, reveals that by now Bakhtin has discerned the multilayers of kaleidoscopic spatiotemporal relations that each single genre may contain. However, this inner chronotopic diversity of individual genres cannot be fully observed or revealed by the study of major/generic chronotopes, whose primary concern is to describe how the fundamental chronotopic structures differ across genres. This limitation probably makes Bakhtin realise the necessity to refine his understanding of the literary artistic chronotope, in order to delve into "other chronotopic values having different degree and scope" (243). Therefore, in the "Concluding Remarks" that Bakhtin added to the essay FTC in 1973, he further narrows down the scope of his chronotopic study, and enumerates a series of "minor chronotopes", also referred to as "chronotopic motifs" (252), that relate to and supplement the major categories he has previously identified. These minor chronotopes include the chronotope of the road, the chronotope of the castle, the chronotope of parlors and salons, the chronotope of the provincial town, and the chronotope of threshold.

Although Bakhtin only briefly sketches out his thinking on minor chronotopes in FTC, the arguments of this section require special attention. This is because, in this further development and refinement of his thinking on literary chronotopes, Bakhtin recognises the value of exploring the links between his two great concepts of dialogue and chronotope. Different from the previous larger vision of generic chronotopes, in his discussion of minor chronotopes, Bakhtin adjusts his perspective to observe the syntagmatic deployments of spatiotemporal relations. In so doing, a significant new field for chronotopic inquiry is opened. In it, Bakhtin discovers the diverse and inexhaustible possibilities of minor chronotopes that co-exist and interact with each other in individual literary works. He argues that,

> 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)

As can be seen, while novels of the same genre may share certain spatiotemporal features in their presentation of fictional worlds, each of them is simultaneously defined and particularised by a series of minor chronotopes, each influencing the whole to differing degrees. Merging his thinking on language and chronotope, Bakhtin suggests that, just as diverse speeches of heteroglossia may confront each other dialogically, so may diverse chronotopes. In other words, the interchronotopic relations in a literary work, for example, the relations of inclusion or juxtaposition, of dominance or conflict, in all their various nuances, are *dialogic* in nature. The specific way in which the minor chronotopes are deployed and organised in the novel, as Bakhtin argues, will define the way its narrative is structured (250). Beyond this, the "dialogues" between chronotopic values, which are normally triggered by the character's actions and movements among different chronotopes, will also reversely exert a shaping effect on the images of characters. It is thus clear that in his discussion of minor chronotopes, Bakhtin still insists the close interconnectedness, or more accurately, the mutual shaping between the matrices of chronotopes and the images of characters.

So far, I have elaborated Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, the main theoretical underpinning of this current study. Based on this premise, in my close readings of the fantasy chronotopes in selected focus texts, the temporal and the spatial coordinators will be examined as an inseparable whole, and their interactions with the actions of characters will also be explored. I suggest that a triquetra (a trefoil knot, in other words) interlaced with a circle as shown below is perhaps a most vivid graphic representation of this close connectedness of space, time and the images of characters in Bakhtin's theorisation of the literary artistic chronotope.

Time

Space

Images of Characters

The kernel of Bakhtin's theory of literary artistic chronotope
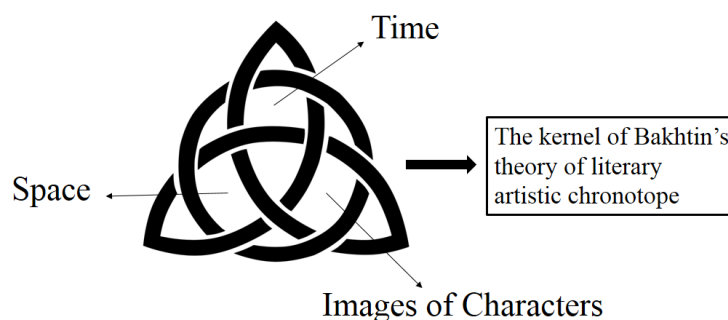
Fig. 2
* The trefoil knot consisting of three interlocked loops is known from ancient times as triquetra. Triquetra is a word derived from Latin *tri-* (three) and *quetrus* (cornered). A triquetra interlaced with a circle in the centre was originally used by the Celtic Christian church as a symbol of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Here, I borrow this "trinity knot" to represent the kernel of Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope. While the three elements (time, space and images of characters) each takes up a corner of the triquetra, the added circle going through the three interlocked loops emphasises the close connectedness and unity of these three elements of Bakhtin's literary artistic chronotope.

This intrinsic nature of the concept of the literary chronotope, that is the close connectedness of space, time and the images of characters, is also inherited and stressed by Nikolajeva and Thindle who, as reviewed in the last section, also study children's fantasy literature from the approach of Bakhtin's chronotope. However, I observe that in their critical works, the fantasy chronotope is mainly examined from a bird's eye view. To be specific, following Bakhtin's description of major chronotopes as genre markers, Nikolajeva (1996) focuses on generalising the fundamental chronotopic features that characterise the genre of children's fantasy literature; Thindle (2013) attempts to give an overview of the evolution of the fantasy chronotope from conventional children's fantasy works to contemporary ones. As can be seen, both Nikolajeva and Thindle devote their studies to answering big questions, such as what fundamental spatiotemporal characteristics have differentiated fantasy from other related genres (fairy tales, science fiction, etc.), and how the fantasy chronotope has changed over time; questions that exist on the macro-level of generic/major chronotopes.

As previously mentioned, however, the concept of the generic chronotope only describes part of Bakhtin's thinking on the literary artistic chronotope and,

furthermore, an especially early part of it. A complete understanding of this theory requires that critics should pay equal attention to Bakhtin's later arguments about the unlimitedness, or in his terminology "unfinalizability (*nezavershennost*)" (1984: 166), of chronotopic possibilities, and his observation of their co-existence and complex interactions within the limit of individual works. Based on this observation, I suggest that, apart from providing overviews, future studies might also explore the open, dynamic, and polytropic nature of the fantasy chronotope by identifying and interpreting its concrete manifestations and deployments in fantasy works. As I briefly point out in the last section, the most appropriate semiotic representation of the fantasy chronotope is a mobile and discursive vector-field that points radically away from the origin and that always bears an infinity of possibilities. Specific to the fantasy chronotope, the origin of this vector-field can be described as the varying degrees of violation of the commonly accepted (but not necessarily correct) rules and principles that govern the "normal" space-time continuum of our everyday world. This is because it is the very fundamental spatiotemporal characteristic that is shared by almost all concrete forms of the fantasy chronotope. However, as to how this violation is specifically actualised in individual fantasy works, there could be a wide variety of possibilities. For example, the violation can be presented as the existence of a parallel and self-contained mythic or magic world; the intrusion of the "abnormal" (not necessarily in an absolute sense) into the represented quotidian worlds; the time travel; the projection of an ever-expanding multiverse that juxtaposes bifurcating "realities", and many more other possibilities. Each possible way of spatiotemporal violation, that is each specific form of the fantasy chronotope, may still have different degrees of shaping effects on events and actions. This perception depends on how it is strategically deployed in the narrative and its interchronotopic relation with other chronotopes in the textual world.

On this basis, this current study advocates close observations of the inner diversity of the fantasy chronotope by identifying its various forms of manifestation in children's fantasy works. For each specific form identified, its particular spatiotemporal configuration and the values it carries are examined; the different ways it relates to and interacts with other chronotopes, especially chronotopes of the represented quotidian

worlds in individual fantasy works, are also explored. Since the fantasy chronotope is an "unfinalised" and still evolving vector-field with a labyrinth of proliferating possibilities, it is extremely challenging and actually not necessary for a single study to exhaust all its possibilities, even in the specific scope of modern children's fantasy literature. The main task for each close observation is to give an in-depth and thorough analysis of the specific forms of the fantasy chronotope that it identifies. Where necessary, it also challenges, refines, or complements the interpretations from previous observations, thereby making itself dialogically related to the latter. As a whole, all these close readings will continuously identify and elaborate new possibilities of the fantasy chronotope, and in so doing gradually enrich our understanding of this open and still-evolving vector-field. This refined study of the variability of spatiotemporal relations within a single generic chronotope which I am adopting here demonstrates the essence of Bakhtin's thinking on minor chronotopes. It interrogates and, to some extent, even potentially disrupts the relatively unitary descriptions of generic chronotopes.

While my refined study of some different modes of the fantasy chronotope is theoretically based on Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the literary artistic chronotope, I am also fully aware of the limitation of this theory, especially when applied to the reading of some children's fantasy works whose world structures take on postmodern characteristics. On the one hand, there is no doubt that Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope, by considering time and space as two inextricably meshed coordinates of narratives, contributes to stimulating the rethinking, reinterpretation and revaluation of the spatial relations in literary works. Rather than considering space as static, empty, and mere background to temporal events, Bakhtin believes that space also possesses heterogeneity, and different spatial relations may exert different shaping effects on events and actions. By bringing critical attention to the configuration of space in literature, Bakhtin can be regarded as a forerunner of the postwar "*spatial turn*" (original italics, Tally:12-13) or "spatiotemporal revolution" (Westphal 13) that, as Foucault (1986), Soja (1996), Cosgrove (1999), Westphal (2011) and Tally (2013) all observe, reasserts the critical importance of space in literary and cultural studies. This is also the reason why Westphal (2011) remarks Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope as

"a great asset" (27) in the field of literary theory that, he considers, "has registered the largest deficit in spatiotemporal approaches" (26). However, on the other hand, perhaps still circumscribed by the main voice of his era, that is "the modernists' great fascination with time" (Tally 2013: 37), Bakhtin specially stresses in his discussion that "in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time" (1981: 85). This means that for Bakhtin, time is the autonomous and dominant principle in the chronotope, while space, though worth equal critical attention, is still subordinated to and responsive to the movement of time (86).

The insistence on the dominance of time in the chronotope is a limitation of Bakhtin's theory, because under its guidance, Bakhtin's close readings of several literary chronotopes have appreciably given precedence to the examination of temporal relations, such as the adventure time that characterises the Greek romance, the absolute past that characterises the epic, and the cyclical time that characterises the idyllic chronotope, etc. As to the spatial dimension, although Bakhtin never neglects its importance, his discussion on it still lacks the thoroughness and depth that he has given to the study of time. Beyond that, the preconception about the supremacy of the temporal dimension also renders Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope "somewhat less operative when dealing with the postmodern" (Westphal 18) literary works. This is because, influenced by (and simultaneously contributing to) the *spatial turn* taking place in people's understanding of the world since around 1973 (Harvey 1990), postmodernist fictions, as Tally (2013) argues, are more engaged with projecting new forms of spatial relations and spatial practices that subvert many of the former certainties (16-17). Among these certainties, the leading ones are the predominance of the diachronic time in our daily life, physical experiences and cultural languages (Jameson 1991, 16); the concomitant teleological trajectory of progression (Westphal 14), and the linear perspective taken in the interpretation of the world and the representation of reality (Tally 18).

Children's fantasy works, especially those published after the spatial turn, also take on the characteristics of the new spatiality implicit in the postmodern by projecting heterogeneous, disordered, and logically problematic fantasy worlds. We see the

projection of ever-expanding "multiverses" that suggests the spatialisation of infinite series of diverting, converging, and parallel times and that obliterates a unified central "reality" functioning as a stable referential basis. Examples are Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), the focused texts of this study, and also, following a broad understanding of fantasy, Diana Wynne Jones's magic realism *Chrestomanci* series (1977-2006) and Terry Pratchett's science fiction *Discworld* series (1983-2015). Beyond that, the textual "real" world can also be ruptured from inside with bifurcating mutually-exclusive events and existents jointly, though paradoxically, realised in the same fictional world, as exemplified by Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2008) and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013). To interpret the spatiotemporality of these postmodernist fantasy worlds, I feel it necessary in my study to draw upon critical theories of what Bertrand Westphal (2011) and Robert Tally (2013) jointly define as "geocriticism" to complement the historical limitation of Bakhtin's description of the literary chronotope. This further development of the theory of the chronotope, with the aim of enabling it to analyse new space-time relations presented in literature and art, is also what Bakhtin expects to see in future chronotopic studies. For him, the literary artistic chronotope is a theory of becoming, not of being. In FTC, he envisions that

> We do not pretend to completeness or precision in our theoretical formulations and definitions. Here and abroad, serious work on the study of space and time in art and literature has only just begun. Such work will in its further development eventually supplement, and perhaps substantially correct, the characteristics of chronotopes offered by us here. (1981: 85)

The term geocriticism was originally coined by the French literary critic Bertrand Westphal (2011) in his book of the same name to describe an interdisciplinary approach to the study of spatiotemporal representations (30-31). This approach blends literature with geography and other spatial sciences, such as architecture and urban studies, and makes them reciprocal. Westphal observes that since 1970s, geographers have been more interested in literature and they more often take literary texts as geographic references, although with a predilection for realistic/mimetic works. "Among the mass of written documents on which geography relies, literature has attained a place of honor as a field of investigation" (31). Against this background,

Westphal (2011) argues that "since all literature is in space, regardless of its thematic development" (33), studies on literature should also take into account the spatial and geographical fields, especially in the postmodern condition when the consideration of spatiality becomes an essential part of any critical inquiry (34-36). The infiltration of geography and other spatially oriented critical theories into literary studies can "bring out the hidden potentialities of space-time [the imagined space-time continuums] without reducing them to stasis" (73).

Westphal's most distinctive contribution to geocriticism, especially in the domain of literature, is, as Tally (2013) observes, "the particular 'geocentric' or 'geocentered' approach that he espouses" (141). The geocentric approach[7] requires that studies should establish in advance a particular place to be studied, such as a neighbourhood, a city, a region, or even a country, and then gathers and analyses a broad and diverse range of texts that in some way represent it (Westphal 112-115). As can be seen, Westphal's geocentric approach advocates that critics should take a multifocal position (114) in their observations of a given referential space. This is because, for Westphal and also for other geocritical scholars such as Foucault (1986), Lefebvre (1991) and Wegner (2002), even the image of a particular place, a specific topos, is not homogeneous, but comprises discursive and multiple layers of meaning which are contributed by not only an interwoven matrix of human interactions, but also different forms of spatial representations (Westphal 148-150; Lefebvre 85; Wegner 182; Foucault 23). Based on this, Westphal believes that the more perspectives admitted, the more likely one is to achieve a diverse, well-rounded and possibly unbiased image of the spaces and places involved. It is also worth noting that, although the geocentric approach, as its name implies, undoubtedly gives precedence to a novel understanding of space, Westphal does not neglect the intrinsic connection of time and space by clearly indicating that "spatiotemporality" is one of the premises and foundations of

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[7] Note that Westphal's "geocentric/geocentered approach" is not identical with the "geocritical approach" to literary spaces later suggested by Robert Tally. Tally understands and describes "geocriticism" as a melting pot of various interdisciplinary spatial theories and practices, including not only Westphal's geocentric approach, but also theories of Lefebvre, Bachelard, Foucault and Soja, etc. I have given detailed explanation of this point in the following discussion.

geocritical practices (122).

As an embodiment of the spatial turn in literary and cultural studies, Westphal's geocentric approach, by stressing and observing the heterogeneity and diversity of space, complements Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope which, as mentioned above, gives precedence to the axis of time. His understanding that the image of any geographical locus is constituted by multiple forms of representations and thereby possesses discursive possibilities, inspires this current study. Following Westphal's inclusive perspective, I also treat each specific form of the fantasy chronotope discussed in this study as a still-evolving open set that not only already has different embodiments in literary texts, but also is in the process of generating new possibilities. This means that rather than taking the viewpoint of determinism that attempts to exhaust the object of research in the quest for absolute completeness, this study aims to identify and scrutinise *possibilities* of the fantasy chronotope and meanwhile keep this discursive vector-field open for further exploration.

While Westphal's geocentric approach is an important contribution to readdressing the balance between time and space in literary and cultural studies, his main focus lies on the examination of the *"real" geographical locus*, including the multi-angled representations of these geographical loci in literary texts. However, representations of the geographical space are only part of what literature does in spatial constructions. There is a full range of other spatial imaginations stretching from, as Tally (2013) observes, "Dostoevsky's 'real' St. Petersburg or Faulkner's 'fictional' Yoknapatawpha County to Tolkien's 'fantastic' Middle-earth" (144), and specific to the realm of children's literature, we could add on Lewis's Narnia, Garner's Elidor, Pullman's multiverses, Gaiman's fantastic graveyard, and many more. Due to this, Tally points out that "Westphal's narrowly geocentric approach fails to encompass" all these other spatial representations in literature which are not straightforwardly mimetic and which nevertheless also "offer important sites for geocritical explorations" (114). Recognising this limitation, Tally suggests expanding Westphal's description of geocriticism to embrace the variety of spatial theories and practices proposed by other critics and thinkers who, to one extent or another, also contribute to the spatial turn in

humanities and social sciences. These include Gaston Bachelard's phenomenological investigation of the domestic space, such as its rooms, the cellar, the attic, the corners, etc., in *The Poetics of Space* (1969); Raymond Williams' (1973) interrogation of the conceptual dichotomy that has long influenced the literary cartographies of the country and the city; Foucault's (1982) spatial analysis of power and knowledge, and his description of "heterotopia" which refers to a disordered space that is capable of accommodating several incommensurable and incompatible possibilities (1986: 25); There are also De Certeau's (1984) examination of how the act of walking makes the city an experienced and lived space; Henri Lefebvre's (1991) study of the production of social space, and under its influence Soja's (1996) idea of "thirdspace" which combines aspects of the "real" and the imagined spaces while also going beyond them.

By expanding geocriticism to encompass aesthetic, cultural and political thinking of spatiality from a diverse range of sources, Tally (2013) redefines geocriticism as "a constellation of interdisciplinary methods designed to gain a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the ever-changing spatial relations that determine our current, postmodern, world" (113). This concern about spatiality, as Tally argues, is not limited to the representations of the "real" world or the creations of more mimetic or accurate maps on which Westphal's narrowly geocentric approach focuses. It also extends to other modes of spatial representations that are not straightforwardly mimetic, because, specific to the realm of literature, "writers are not constrained to produce only a realistic portrayal of the world" (144) to help us make sense of it. This broader spatial concern is the very reason why I think Tally's reinterpretation of geocriticism has made this theory, or more exactly this cluster of multi-angled spatial theories, more applicable for the analysis of fantasy landscapes. As salutary counterparts and complements to the realistic literary cartographies, fantasy landscapes are mainly projected following the "what if" (Attebery 1992: 128) principle and they are primarily characterised by a deliberate violation of the taken-for-granted "realistic" rules that govern people's quotidian understanding of space and time. Since geocriticism described by Tally is a melting pot of critical theories and practices that analyse "the real and fictional spaces that we inhabit, cross through, imagine, survey, modify, celebrate, disparage, and on and on in an infinite variety" (2011: X), a good

knowledge of it can shape our perspectives and make us what Tally describes as "critical readers" (2013: 79) of, in relation to this study, fantasy landscapes.

Critical readers equipped with interdisciplinary and multi-angled views on space are not passive receptacles for the spatial messages transmitted by the text. They are *literary geographers* who actively interpret the textual map and detect "the often shifting and transient meanings" (79-81) in it. In so doing, critical readers are capable of bringing out the potential of a literary space by proposing new readings of it that even the writer, who is in some sense also the "cartographer", may not foresee. This geocritical reading of literary space is, in fact, also what Westphal (2011) suggests by stating that the arrangement of spatial elements is "prefigured in limbo, configured by the narrative, then refigured by the reader" (35). Being such a critical reader, I am going to draw on the spatially oriented theories of geocriticism (which, I stress again, do not deny the equal significance of time) as a necessary complement or extension of Bakhtin's theory of chronotope, to guide my reading of the different modes of the fantasy chronotope. By theoretically blending Bakhtin's chronotope and Tally's geocriticism in literary spatiotemporal studies, time and space can truly be examined as two equally significant coordinates that frame narrative and convey world-views.

1.3 The Aim of This Study and Research Questions

Integrating Bakhtin's chronotopic approach and geocritical approach, my study intends to bring fantasy spatiotemporal constructions into dynamic, reciprocal dialogues with the interdisciplinary theoretical interpretations of space and time. On the one hand, my discussion throughout this thesis demonstrates the way in which theoretical thinking of space and time, when applied to interpreting textual "maps", reveal innovative readings of fantasy works. On the other hand, my analysis also reveals how the variegated fantasy literary cartographies offer other possibilities of spatiotemporal representations, that is, other geographic references constructed following the "what if" principle, for theoretical investigations. To this end, I have chosen to scrutinise three particular modes of the fantasy chronotope that are recurrently but varyingly deployed in world constructions of modern children's

fantasy works. These three modes of the fantasy chronotope are:

a. the epic chronotope
b. the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope
c. the heterotopian chronotope

Each of these chronotopes is explained in more detail below. They are identified in consideration of the different spatiotemporal configurations of the fantasy and the "real" in textual universes, thus they encapsulate divergent possibilities of the "two-world structure" (See Section 1.1.2 for detailed explanation of the "two-world structure"). As well as their basic spatiotemporal characteristics, my main concern in this study is to explore and answer, in relation to them, and through detailed readings of focused texts, the following three questions:

1. How are each of these three modes of the fantasy chronotope varyingly embodied and strategically deployed in the focused fantasy works?

2. What ideas and values are conveyed by their divergent relations to and complex interactions with other chronotopes that characterise the represented quotidian worlds?

3. How do characters negotiate with different world-views (or chronotopic values) that converge and wrestle with each other in the textual "heterochronic"[8] universes?

The reason for selecting these three modes of the fantasy chronotope is that they present, as will be revealed in the following discussion, three main ways of violating the "realistic" spatiotemporal rules in fantasy world projections. Another equally important reason is that they also show divergent yet relevant and comparable

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[8] The word "heterochronic" derives from Bakhtin's term "heterochrony" (*raznovremennost*) which, as introduced in Section 1.2, denotes the coexistence and interplay of different chronotopes within the limits of a single work (1981: 252-53). Please note that this is a different word from Foucault's term "heterotopia" (or heterotopic) which, as will be shown in the following discussion, refers to a disordered other space that accommodates several incommensurable and incompatible possibilities (1986: 25).

possibilities of how the fantasy worlds/realms can be spatiotemporally related to and interact with the represented quotidian "reality" to convey meanings, ideas and values. These three modes of the fantasy chronotope are defined by drawing mainly on thinking and concepts from Bakhtin's discussion of the literary artistic chronotope, theories of geocriticism and Todorov's and Jackson's interpretations of "the fantastic" – though other critical perspectives are brought into the frame as and where appropriate through the study. Here I will only briefly explain these three concepts. More detailed and thorough analysis will be given later in the discussion of each main chapter.

The concept of **the epic chronotope** is derived from Bakhtin's discussion of the spatiotemporality of the epic genre. However, this spatiotemporal structure is still "recycled" and adopted as a "building block" for world constructions in some heroic fantasy works for children and young adults, works that draw heavily on elements of ancient myths and legends. According to Bakhtin (1981), the epic chronotope is oriented to the distant/absolute past and is "walled off from all subsequent times by an impenetrable boundary" (16). It is absolute, complete, keeping an insurmountable distance from both the writer's and readers' quotidian realities. "[P]reserved and revealed only in the form of national tradition" (16), the epic chronotope is always valorised to a "sacred and sacrosanct" (16) position, demanding to be evaluated in the same way by all and with a pious attitude. Rachel Falconer (2010) later adds in her Bakhtinian study that the epic chronotope concerns itself with "glorious deeds and heroic destiny" (113). Among these three modes of the fantasy chronotope discussed in this study, the epic chronotope spatiotemporally (but not necessarily metaphorically) keeps the farthest distance from the quotidian reality where the human protagonists or readers reside.

The **"fantastic" time-travel chronotope** is based on Todorov's (1973) definition of "the fantastic," and Jackson's (1981) later development of this term as a literary mode rather than a genre. According to them, "the fantastic" exists between "the marvellous" which predominates in a climate of belief in supernaturalism and "the uncanny" ("the mimetic" for Jackson)" which explains all strangeness as generated by unconscious forces (Todorov 32-34, Jackson 24). Borrowing the extravagance of the one and the

ordinariness of the other, "the fantastic" exists in "the hinterland between the 'imaginary' and the 'real'" (35), that is in the indeterminate liminal space that subverts unitary vision and introduces confusion, hesitation and alternatives. The "fantastic" time-travel chronotope is then, to put it concisely, primarily characterised by a "hesitation" between supernatural and psychological explanations of the eccentric temporal displacements. This hesitation is presented in narratives and may be experienced by characters. There are two reasons for selecting this specific mode of fantasy chronotope. On the one hand, instead of building alternative mythic or magic worlds, the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope, as almost all time-travel chronotopes do, anchors in the "real", but simultaneously interrogates any reductive generalisation of the "real" as an absolute, unitary or stable concept. By making time reversible, the time-travel chronotope actualises what Stanislaw Lem (1985) describes as "chronoclasms" (140), a term which denotes the subversion of the dominance of the chronological order and the linear causal chains. On the other hand, what makes the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope special is that it additionally mingles with the trans-temporal aspect of the psyche, that is the inner worlds of characters normally embodied in stories as memory, daydream, dream and hallucination. This particular characteristic is the very point that entails the indeterminacy on the nature of characters' temporal displacement experiences. This equivocation also places the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope in an indeterminate and less definable grey zone between the marvellous and the uncanny, where the imaginary and the "real", the supernatural reading and psychological reasoning no longer absolutely exclude each other.

The heterotopian chronotope is, as its name suggests, mainly based on Foucault's (1986 &1989) conceptualisation of "heterotopia." Foucault describes "heterotopia" as a "disordered" space "in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry" (1989: xix). Specific to literary cartographies, the heterotopian chronotope refers to the projection of an inconsistent, discontinuous and precarious space-time continuum in which incommensurable and mutually exclusive possibilities/ "realities" are jointly actualised (Foucault 1986: 24-26; McHale 1987: 44-45). It thereby suggests a subversive way of world building that violates the conventional law for constructing literary worlds, that is the law of "the

excluded middle" advocated by Umberto Eco (McHale 1987: 33), which stresses the intrinsic logicality, coherence and credibility of the constructed worlds. The law of "the excluded middle" requires that "every proposition must be *either* true *or* false of a possible world . . . [and] cannot be *both* true *and* false" (original italics 33). Deviating from this either/or logic, the heterotopian chronotope, by accommodating incompatible and conflicting propositions, practice what Soja (1996) describes as an inclusive and creative "both/and also . . ." logic (5). In it, "there is a perpetual jostling and jockeying for position among a plurality of simultaneously present worlds" (McHale 1987: 142), with no single world designated as an embodiment of the unified central "real." The heterotopian chronotope is thereby characterised by a polyvalent ontological structure in which no solid or reliable referential basis is provided (McHale 1987: 101; Tally 2013:151). Based on this, in fantasy works that adopt heterotopian chronotopes, the "real" and the fantasy are mingled with increasing intimacy. In this sense, they create what Soja has identified and named as alternative "thirdspaces" (Soja 1996: 5) that transcend the simplistic binarism, and which I will bring to bear as an added dimension to my interpretation and analysis of the heterotopian chronotope. Beyond that, the ambiguity and paradox intrinsic in heterotopian chronotopes also tend to lay bare the constructedness of the projected literary worlds, which brings an extra metafictional layer of meaning into fantasy stories.

As mentioned above, my study of these three modes of the fantasy chronotope attempts to bring spatiotemporal arrangements of fantasy narratives into reciprocal dialogues with the particular mix of interdisciplinary theoretical interpretations of space and time I have brought to bear upon this study. The theoretical bases of these three modes of the fantasy chronotope offer anchors and guidance for my chronotopic readings of selected modern children's fantasy works. However, in no sense does this imply that literary cartographies are subordinate to or mere passive implementations of established theoretical thinking of space and time. The true situation is that, as my readings of the focused texts will reveal, the extracted and theoretically-based fantasy chronotopic structures are creatively "fleshed out" and their possibilities stretched, when they are adopted and "reprocessed" in the variegated literary cartographies of fantasy works. In other words, the variable and innovative fantasy literary

cartographies contribute to keeping the basic fantasy chronotopic structures discussed in this study dynamic, mobile, productive and dialogical. In consideration of this reciprocal relationship between theoretical deliberations of spatiotemporality and literary world constructions, my discussion of the three fantasy chronotopes is centrifugal and emanative. Taking them as the focuses of my exploration, this study, as indicated by the research questions given above, intends to examine how they are varyingly manifested and flexibly adopted in concrete fantasy world constructions; and how their dialogical interactions with other space-time continuums – which generate different "constellations" of chronotopes – prompt divergent spatiotemporal experiences. Answering these questions requires detailed readings of these three fantasy chronotopes against the concrete, "heterochronic" textual contexts in which they are embedded. This determines that the method of case analysis, that is detailed and systematic readings of the relevant and representative children's fantasy works, would be more operative for achieving the aim of this study.

1.4 The Selection of Primary Texts

The primary children's and young adult fantasy works that I have chosen for this study are the following: C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), Susan Cooper's novel *The Dark Is Rising* (1973), Alan Garner's *Elidor* (1965), Alison Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* (1939), Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958), Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2008) and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013). These focused texts are selected because they firstly share the fundamental "two-world" spatiotemporal structure that, as I have indicated in Section 1.1.2, defines the priority of this study. Secondly, they behave as relevant and representative cases that bring out the potential of the three modes of the fantasy chronotope emphatically examined in this study. Close readings of their spatiotemporal configurations can reveal how each of the three theoretically-based fantasy chronotopes can be flexibly and strategically deployed in concrete literary cartographies to convey meanings, ideas and values. In this sense, the

theoretical perspectives adopted and the focused texts selected are reciprocal.[9]

To be specific, Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), Cooper's novel *The Dark Is Rising* (1973) and Garner's *Elidor* (1965) are selected for exploring possibilities of the epic chronotope (see Section 1.4 for the definition of the epic chronotope) in Chapter Two. The spatiotemporal structure of *Narnia* mainly demonstrates the "monologue" and dominance of the epic chronotope in fantasy world construction. In this work, the epic chronotope is embodied as a self-contained mythic other world that is prioritised and valorised in spatiotemporal arrangement. It exists outside of the represented quotidian world the description of which takes very limited discourse time, and is mainly related to it in a metaphorical sense. In *The Dark Is Rising* and *Elidor*, the epic chronotope which concerns itself with glorious deeds and heroic destiny is brought into direct interactions or conflicts with the textual "real" world that concerns itself with the prosaic details of everyday life. The world structure of *The Dark Is Rising* abridges the distance between the epic chronotope and the textual quotidian world. It achieves this effect by projecting the former onto the spatial layout of the latter, which to some extent stimulates interplays and transgressions. It also presents how the epic chronotope, when taking the dominant position in "dialogue," can transfer or impose its conclusive, fatalistic structure onto the represented everyday world of experiences, hence erasing its contingency, openness, and alternative possibilities [or "presentness"/ "eventness (*sobytiinost*)" in Bakhtin's terminology (Bakhtin 1981: 14; Morson 2010: 94)]. Garner's *Elidor* presents a different inter-chronotopic power-relationship in which the absolute authority demanded by the epic chronotope (which is often embodied as the authoritative ancient

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[9] I have clarified in Section 1.1.2 that works of fairy tale, magic realism and science fiction – sometimes also classified as fantasy literature in a broad sense – are not considered in this study. Even so, there are still other children's fantasy works whose spatiotemporal configurations may take on the characteristics of the three fantasy chronotopes I am discussing in this study. They might even display new possibilities of how these three fantasy chronotopes can be embodied and deployed in fantasy creation to convey ideas and values. However, all these potential other possibilities just testify my conception of the fantasy chronotope as a still evolving and radiating vector-field whose possibilities cannot be "finalised." Therefore, while these potential other fantasy works may be considered as candidates for further study, I have chosen to concentrate on examining the selected children's fantasy works mentioned above on grounds of the necessity for close and detailed textual analyses and the capacity for this study.

prophecies in high fantasy) is interrogated and revaluated from the lens of the protagonists' contemporary reality. In so doing, this work demonstrates what Bakhtin describes as "the novelization" (1981: 6) of the epic chronotope by inserting into this "ossified" structure "an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving" (7) present-day immediate reality of the textual quotidian worlds.

Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* (1939) and Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) are selected for examining the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope (see Section 1.4 for the definition of the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope) in Chapter Three. In both works, the experiences of time travel are described as being intimately entangled with characters' inner worlds that also possesses the temporal structure of "chronoclasms" (see Section 1.4 or Section 3.2 for explanation of this term). This particular characteristic arouses "hesitation" (Todorov 1973: 33) or "epistemological uncertainty" (Jackson 1988: 29) in readers and sometimes also the time travelers themselves, as to whether the temporal displacement experiences are supernaturally or psychologically generated. This equivocation, as indicated in Section 1.4, features the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope particularly examined in this study. In *A Traveller in Time*, time travel is experienced by the protagonist who enjoys solitary daydreaming and it is spatially embedded in a secluded, idyllic space seized upon by all the partiality of the first-person narrator's aspirations. This configuration primarily (but not unequivocally) prompts a psychological interpretation of the temporal displacement as an outward expression of the time traveller's inner state of being. Drawing on Todorov's diagrammatic representation of the changing forms of fantasy, I suggest that the spatiotemporality of Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* demonstrates the time travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" mode. In *Tom's Midnight Garden*, the protagonist who experiences temporal displacement and the dreamer/ "constructor" of the time-travel chronotope have different identities. This split, with the intervention of another perspective, breaks the physical and psychological solitude of the time traveler, and concomitantly precludes the unequivocal "naturalisation"/ normalisation of the time travel experience as pure psychological activities. This narrative arrangement also makes the time travel chronotope an open space for communication, mutual

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understanding and even potential fusing between, in the case of this work, the old and the young, the past and the present, the adulthood and the childhood. Considering the relatively more supernatural power that is adopted to actualise the temporal displacement in *Tom's Midnight Garden*, the spatiotemporal configuration of this work then demonstrates the time travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" mode.

Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2008) and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013) are selected for exploring possibilities of the inconsistent and discontinuous heterotopian chronotope (see Section 1.4 for the definition of the heterotopian chronotope) in Chapter Four. In these three focus texts, the fantasy and the "real" elements are mingled with increasing intimacy in world-building, so that any desire for a solid referential basis of "reality" or normalcy would be thwarted. In Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, the heterotopian chronotope is embodied as an ever-expanding "multiverse" in which an infinity of interrelated and incommensurable possible worlds bearing alternative history or counterfactuals coexist side by side. Within this projected multiverse, our everyday world of experiences (which is represented with slight distortion, but is still recognisable) is only one of the many possibilities. With bifurcating reality templates jointly actualised in the multiverse, the spatiotemporal configuration of *His Dark Materials* decentres the absolute homogeneous "real," pluralises the textual "reality" and demonstrates a polyvalent ontological structure. Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* is selected, because it presents more intense and condensed heterotopian zones. In this work, the heterotopian chronotopes are specifically embodied as a fantasy heterogeneous graveyard where a living boy is adopted and raised by ghosts, a vampire and a werewolf. Another embodiment is the literally carnivalesque "Danse Macabre" (Gaiman 2008: 144-145), that is the festival of dancing with Death, which temporarily merge the world of the living and the world of the dead. While in Pullman's multiverse, the incompatible ontological possibilities are juxtaposed and simultaneously separated in parallel worlds, in the heterotopian chronotopes imagined in *The Graveyard Book*, mutually exclusive ontological possibilities meet, fuse and generate alternative beings in the limited space of one fictional world. The spatiotemporal configuration of another Gaiman's work *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* demonstrates a most unstable and

subversive possibility of the heterotopian chronotope. In this work, the textual "real" is ruptured from inside with mutually-exclusive sequences of events simultaneously, though paradoxically, actualised in the same period of story time and in the same textual world, each being no more legitimate than the other. More specifically, events are narrated, then erased and reprojected, hence the same event is described as happening in two irreconcilable and bifurcating ways; Likewise, projected existents – such as locales, objects and characters – can have their existence revoked. This paradoxical and self-erasing way of world building hesitates between the representation of a world and the metafictional foregrounding of the very act of telling. It tends to lay bare the "writerly" qualities (Barthes 1970: 4), that is, the constructedness of the projected world, making it ontologically unstable and flickering.

In Summary

In my Introduction chapter, I have, first of all, given a broad view of the critical background of fantasy. In relation to this, I have defined the specific fuzzy set of modern fantasy works for children and young adults, that is works with the particular "two-world structure," on which this current study focuses. The reason for this selection is also explained. Following this, I have reviewed extant critical studies of time and space in children's fantasy literature that are directly related to the topic of my study, and have explained how this current study is built on, in dialogue with, but more importantly deviates from these extant voices to offer new critical discourse of fantasy spatiotemporality. After describing these critical contexts from which this study emerges, I have then elaborated my two main theoretical underpinnings which are Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, and its contemporary complement geocriticism put forward by Bertrand Westphal and later refined by Robert Tally. Commingling these two theories, my critical reading of the fantasy chronotope aims at bringing spatiotemporal arrangements of fantasy narratives into reciprocal dialogues with the interdisciplinary theoretical interpretations of space and time. To this end, I have identified and defined, by drawing on ideas and concepts from a mix of theoretical interpretations of space and time, three particular modes of the fantasy chronotope that are recurrently but varyingly deployed in modern fantasy

works for children and young adults. They are the epic chronotope, the fantastic time-travel chronotope and the heterotopian chronotope. They encapsulate three divergent yet relevant and comparable possibilities of the "two-world structure" that characterises the focused scope of this current study embedded and addressed in and by the three research questions raised. With all these fundamental points clarified, now it is time to proceed to the main chapters where I will closely examine and analyse each of the identified three fantasy chronotopes against the concrete, "heterochronic" textual contexts of selected fantasy texts for children and young adults.

Chapter Two

The Epic Chronotope

2.1 Introduction

In his essay "Epic and Novel" (1981), Bakhtin examines and elaborates the spatiotemporality of the epic genre. He argues that the epic chronotope is an antiquated and canonical spatiotemporal pattern that has long since completed its development and that has "a hardened and no longer flexible skeleton" (Bakhtin 1981:3). He identifies three constitutive spatiotemporal features of the epic chronotope: First of all, time in the epic chronotope is not relative to the present or the future, but is characterised by a "temporally valorized epic/absolute past" (16). The word "absolute" indicates that this past is not in the sense of the chronological or historical past, that is, it is "not localized in an actual historical sequence . . . [but] contains within itself the entire fullness of time" (19). The epic past is, as explained by Bakhtin, whole and complete, "lack[ing] any relativity, that is, any gradual, purely temporal progressions that might connect it with the present" (15). It is also "walled off from all subsequent times, and above all from those times in which the singer (author) and his listeners (readers) are located" (16). This boundary that is immanent in the absolute past makes it spatiotemporally distanced and closed as a circle. "Inside it, everything is finished, already over" (16). This does not mean that there are no movements in the epic chronotope, but that events in the absolute past are predetermined and conclusive. They are always parts of some larger plans/designs that can be embodied as the authoritative ancient prophecies or the previsions of witches, sorcerers or fortune tellers. Bakhtin argues that, located in this absolute past, the epic world has no place for any openendedness, indecision, or indeterminacy. Its events lack "eventness" (*sobytiinost*)/ "presentness", one of Bakhtin's terminologies that refers to a sense of "becoming," and the openness to indeterminacy and alternative possibilities (Bakhtin 1981: 14). By saying *temporally valorized* epic/absolute past, Bakhtin means that the absolute past is "a specifically evaluating (hierarchical) category" (15). It presupposes that "in the past, everything is good: all the really good things occur *only* in the past"

(original italic, 15). In this past-oriented world-view, "'beginning,' 'first,' 'founder,' 'ancestor,' 'that which occurred earlier' and so forth are not merely temporal categories but valorized temporal categories, and valorized to an extreme degree" (15).

That the valorised epic past is preserved and revealed only in the form of national tradition (16-17) is described as the second constitutive spatiotemporal feature of the epic chronotope. The significant point here is not simply that the epic worlds draw heavily on myths and legends – the preservation of ancient memory – as sources for images and elements of events. What matters rather is its reliance on the "sacred and sacrosanct" position of the impersonal tradition, which means it requires to be evaluated in the same way by all and demands a pious attitude toward itself (16). Raised to this authoritative plane, the epic world of the absolute past, according to Bakhtin, is distanced from personal experience and excludes any other individual, personal point of view or evaluation. It therefore "displays a profound piety toward the subject described and toward the language used to describe it" (17). This demanding of reverence also determines the nature of the "epic distance" (17) – that is, the third constitutive characteristic of the epic chronotope. By epic distance, Bakhtin refers to the insurmountable distance between the lofty epic world and the flowing, transitory, "low" present in all its openendedness (20). This distance exists not only in the epic material, that is, in the events, the heroes, the clothing, the etiquette, and the style of speech described, but also "in the point of view and evaluation one assumes toward them" (17-20). Thanks to this epic distance which guarantees authority and privilege, the world of epic is isolated from personal initiative in understanding and interpreting, from new insights that may bring change. It achieves "a radical degree of completedness not only in its content but in its meaning and its values as well" (17).

In his analysis of the epic chronotope, Bakhtin concentrates mainly on theoretical expositions and does not include any examples to help further clarify his points. My discussion in this chapter explores possibilities of the epic chronotope by scrutinising its specific embodiments and deployments in three selected children's fantasy works. They are Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), Cooper's novel *The Dark Is Rising* (1973) and Garner's *Elidor* (1965). These selected texts are representative for

examining the epic chronotope because, in them, the epic chronotope takes up different proportions of and exerts disparate impact upon the narratives. As the following discussion will reveal, the *Narnia* series mainly exemplifies the absolute dominance of the epic chronotope, embodied mainly as a self-contained mythic secondary world for heroic adventures, in fantasy world construction. The other two works present possibilities of blending the epic chronotope into some larger spatiotemporal patterns, through which its possible connections to and interactions with the primary quotidian world are actualised and emphasised. Taking these three works as cases for scrutiny, the discussion of this chapter intends to reveal that the spatiotemporal structures of these selected texts, on the one hand, either wholly or partly embody the characteristics of the epic chronotope generalised by Bakhtin; but they also, on the other hand, "stretch" the possibilities of the epic chronotope, as graphically denoted by the diverging arrows in the diagram fig.1.

This "stretching" of possibilities is mainly reflected in two aspects. Firstly, the fact that the epic chronotope is effectively adopted as the main spatiotemporal structure of some secondary worlds imagined in modern children's fantasy literature, stimulates a re-evaluation of Bakhtin's absolute dismissal of this "canonized" literary chronotope (1981: 6). In his discussion, Bakhtin describes the epic chronotope as a "finished, congealed and half-moribund" (1981: 14) structure that is not compatible with the "heteroglossic," "openended" modern reality (7), and its heroes "hopelessly ready-made," bounded, preformed, "lacking any ideological initiative (34-35). Based on these observations, he considers the epic chronotope to be in every respect inferior to the "novelistic"/ "humanistic" chronotope, a concept coined by him to encapsulate a mode of literary world construction that anchors "not in the distanced image of the absolute past (as the epic chronotope does) but in the zone of direct contact with inconclusive present-day reality" (39), and that accentuates human initiative and personal experience. All these very abstract concepts will be given detailed explanations in later discussion here. At this stage, I will only briefly give one of my main arguments in this chapter, that is, the "canonical," "monoglossic" and "valorized" epic chronotope – deemed by Bakhtin as no longer desirable in modern literary creation – is in fact inherited and still "recycled" in modern fantasy works for children

and young adults. More significantly, as will be revealed through the close readings of the three selected texts, the epic chronotope turns out to be an operative spatiotemporal pattern for constructing a certain kind of fantasy worlds/realms. This specific kind of fantasy worlds normally draw on myths and legends as their sources of elements, and heroic adventures as the main events. The conclusiveness of the epic chronotope as well as its valorisation of the national tradition and its demanding of reverence – characteristics that are disapproved by Bakhtin for their exclusion of personal re-evaluation and alternative possibilities – make it instead an applicable chronotopic structure for portraying the great shaping power of ancient myths and legends (embodiments of national memory and tradition) on the spiritual and moral maturation of child heroes/heroines. This theme of education which shows the benefit of knowing the past and learning from traditional wisdom, also achieves very effective expression when it is combined with the spatiotemporal pattern of the epic chronotope. This is because, as the following close reading of the *Narnia* series will reveal, the determinacy and absoluteness of the epic chronotope, as well as the spatiotemporal distance it keeps from the intricate, fluid immediate reality, creates a relatively detached and stable context for narrators to convey and instil (but not discuss or interrogate) certain values and ideologies. This adoption of the epic chronotope in structuring the secondary worlds with relatively obvious didactic overtones, reflects how children's fantasy works have preserved this canonical spatiotemporal pattern and have woven it into modern literary world imagination.[10] This also partly demonstrates how, as I mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, children's fantasy literature

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[10] I am aware that the imagination of fantasy worlds with the structure of the epic chronotope and a recognisable theme of education is not an invention of modern children's fantasy works. It can be traced back to works of the Victorian period, such as Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863) and MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), which are beyond the focus scope of this current study. However, the Narnia world created by Lewis, an author whose imagination is "baptised" by reading MacDonald's fantasy works (1955: 168-171), can be taken as a modern extension of the secondary worlds constructed in the abovementioned early children's fantasy works, whose didactic tone is relatively obvious. This is because they are all imbued with recognisable Christian images and overtones [but not "allegory" as the real author Lewis strongly denies (1982: 58)]; they are all spatiotemporally distanced from the primary quotidian world and are related to it mainly on a metaphorical level; and the main theme conveyed by the adventures and events taking place in these secondary worlds is the moral and spiritual maturation of the protagonists, which is normally realised by taking on some certain good qualities, such as faith, courage, honesty, etc.

stretches the possibilities of Bakhtin's interpretation and evaluation of the epic chronotope.

The other way in which children's fantasy works broaden the possibilities of the epic chronotope is by literally bringing the epic secondary worlds (that concern itself with glorious deeds and heroic destinies) into contact and interactions with the present[11] quotidian reality of the textual primary worlds; that is, as I mentioned above, adopting the epic chronotope as a building block to build some larger spatiotemporal patterns. The main feature of these larger spatiotemporal patterns is the interplay of different chronotopes and the "dialogues" between disparate or even conflicting world-views. The two focused texts *The Dark is Rising* and *Elidor* – in which the depictions of the primary quotidian worlds take much more discourse time than that in the *Narnia* series – demonstrate two different kinds of interplay between the epic chronotope and the represented quotidian worlds. In *The Dark is Rising*, there is no independent or self-contained mythic other world. All events, both the prosaic details of everyday life and the fantastic heroic adventures, take place in "Thames Valley," a small county near the River Thames where people live an idyllic country life. In other words, the epic chronotope is, to a large extent, projected onto and fused into the everyday world of experience, although the occasional "freezing" of time in the latter while the epic events unfold might still suggest a sense of boundary. Gradually "invading" and permeating the primary quotidian world, the epic chronotope also transfers to it "the time-and-value contour of the past, thus attaching them to the world of fathers . . . of ancestors and founders" (15), to the mythic past and ancient memory. Therefore, as the plot progresses, the everyday life of Thames Valley is increasingly disturbed and eventually stagnates due to a strong snowstorm strike, a disaster that only the completion of some prophetic epic events and the fulfilment of heroic destiny can bring to an end. By drawing close the distance between the epic chronotope and the primary quotidian world, *The Dark is Rising* demonstrates how the experience of

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[11] Note that the word "present" here is used as a relative concept. It refers to the textual present time in which the primary "real" worlds of the fantasy works are set. In other words, it refers to the present reality of the imagined child protagonist(s)'s, not ours.

heroic epic events and the knowledge of the mythic past make the protagonist better prepared, both physically and mentally, for coping with problems in their own present-day immediate reality. This deviates from the world-view conveyed in the *Narnia* series in which the spiritual maturation of heroes and heroines takes place totally in a secondary world, and is described as a prerequisite for eventually leaving their own world and entering a heavenly other world which incarnates the eternal, transcendental "reality."

While the spatiotemporal structure of *The Dark is Rising* presents one possible "dialogue" between the epic chronotope and the represented quotidian world by giving priority to the "voice" and the point of view of the former, Garner's *Elidor* demonstrates another possibility. In it, the epic chronotope is not only experienced, but also questioned, analysed and re-evaluated by child protagonists from the viewpoint of their contemporary reality and based on their personal experiences. This is vividly presented by the four protagonists' disparate reflections on, interpretations of and reactions to the epic events they have experienced. With the epic chronotope "contemporized" (Bakhtin 1981: 21), "it is brought low, represented on a plane equal with (the protagonists') contemporary life, in an everyday environment" (21). This results in the surmounting of the hierarchical epic distance, an absolute distance that valorises the world of the epic and that isolates it from personal initiative in understanding and interpreting. Based on this, the spatiotemporal structure of *Elidor* shows the possibility of breaking the semantic stability of the epic chronotope by inserting into it "an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality" (7) of the textual quotidian world, a process described by Bakhtin as the "novelization" of the epic chronotope (6).

The formation of disparate interplays and dialogues between the epic chronotope and the primary quotidian world is also determined by the specific spatiotemporal characteristics of the latter. Drawing on Bakhtin's description of the chronotope of the provincial town and the chronotope of the Guillotine, my following detailed discussion reveals that the idyllic country life of the primary world depicted in *The Dark is Rising* shares many similarities with the characteristics of the epic chronotope, thus

facilitating a fusion. However, in *Elidor*, the sense of change, movement and "becoming" permeates nearly every corner of the primary world. This is better perceived in light of Michel de Certeau's interpretation of the act of walking in the city in his *The practice of everyday life* (1984). The openendedness and polyglossia that characterise the primary quotidian world of *Elidor* induce its intense and persistent confrontation with the deterministic, monoglossic and largely imperative grand narrative of the epic chronotope.

While children's fantasy works exemplified by the three focused texts have preserved the epic chronotope in modern literary world imagination and bring new possibilities to its ossified structure, textual analyses from the perspective of Bakhtin's epic chronotope, as the following discussion will reveal, also bring new critical discourses to these selected children's fantasy works.

2.2 The Epic Chronotope Embodied in the Focused Fantasy Works

As I mentioned in the Introduction to this chapter, the epic chronotope has varying embodiments in the focused fantasy works. The value or world-view it carries exert different degrees of influence on the narratives.

2.2.1 The Epic Chronotope Embodied in *The Chronicles of Narnia*

The fantasy world of Narnia imagined by Lewis takes on most of the characteristics of the epic chronotope. This is reflected in the following several aspects. To begin with, the world of Narnia is depicted as a self-contained mythic other world that is spatiotemporally distanced from the child protagonists' present-day reality. It is projected into the distant past of the Middle Ages, with human beings, mythic beasts and talking animals living in the same space. For most of the story time, this secondary world is spatially isolated from the textual primary world which is set in the 1950s England. Momentary connections of these two worlds are occasionally established when the child protagonists are *summoned* by Aslan or the princes of the Narnia country to carry out some heroic missions. These include saving Narnia from the danger of invasion or usurpation, and completing an adventurous voyage to the End of the World. In other words, the child protagonists do not have much control over when

and how they would be transferred into the Narnia world. There are no fixed portals between the two worlds. Even the wardrobe made from the wood of a Narnian apple tree can only bring the Pevensie children to Narnia when they are needed to *actualise a prophesy* that can save Narnia from an eternal winter. Any attempt to transgress the boundary between worlds, especially for evil purposes or by wicked means, is punished, as exemplified by Jadis and Uncle Andrew. Transgressions out of curiosity or even for seeking help are not encouraged either. Digory must complete a mission – which is also a test of his faith in and loyalty to Aslan – to atone for bringing Jadis, the evil white witch, into the newly created Narnia, even though he seems to have no other choice (Lewis *The Magician's Nephew* 2001: 83-84).[12] Also, in *The Silver Chair*, Jill originally thought Aslan had answered their call for help by letting them into his country. However, Aslan replies to her with his authoritative tone: "You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you" (558), a clarification reflecting his absolute control over the boundary of Narnia. This absolute control is also reflected when Aslan successively tells Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy that they are too old to come back to Narnia again and must begin to learn to know him by another name in their own world (*Prince Caspian* 418; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 540). A further evidence is in the last book when Aslan stands by the Door – a gigantic sorting device and a symbol of boundary – and makes judgements on whether the coming creatures can enter the "real" Narnia or vanish into the blackness (*The Last Battle* 749-751). As can be seen, although protagonists are given the privileges of entering the world of Narnia when they are summoned, there is still a strict boundary between Narnia and the textual quotidian world. As Uncle Andrew states, Narnia is

> a really Other World – another Nature – another universe – somewhere you would never reach even if you travelled through the space of this universe for ever and ever – a world that could be reached only by Magic. (*The Magician's Nephew* 21)

This description of the relation of Narnia to the primary world, together with the great

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[12] The 2001 version of *The Chronicles of Narnia* – a collection including all seven Narnia stories – published by Harper Collins is used for citation in this thesis. The Narnia books were originally published between 1950-1956. From now on, for continuous citations from this work, I will omit the publishing date, but will give the title of the specific story I am referring to for readers' convenience, unless they are already mentioned in the text.

lion Aslan's control of the boundary between them, suggest that Narnia is to a large extent spatially walled off from the textual quotidian world.

As to the aspect of time, the world of Narnia has its own time that runs much faster than the time in the textual quotidian world. Readers are told in *Prince Caspian* that although only a year has passed in England, 1300 years have passed in Narnia (330). This huge "time difference" guarantees that the child protagonists' adventures in Narnia only exist in the form of memory in their "real" time. They leave no substantial traces which otherwise may arouse suspicion and intervention of normal people around.[13] This design, to some extent, has the effect of strengthening the boundary between worlds. It "protects" the world of Narnia from the potential interrogations and evaluations from alternative points of view. Beyond that, the world of Narnia also has its own history, its own beginning (when Aslan creates it out of nothing) and ending (when Aslan destroys it into blackness and emptiness), which are irrelevant to the present-day "reality" of the primary world. In this sense, Narnia is a secondary world that contains within itself the entire fullness of time. If we consider this with its distanced medieval and mythic setting, as well as its spatial isolation from the textual present reality as explained above, it is reasonable to argue that the world of Narnia is located in the absolute past that characterises the epic chronotope.

The conclusiveness and finality of the absolute past is also reflected in the temporal structure of the world of Narnia through the prophecy which foretold the outcomes of future events and the fates of characters. For example, in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the ancient prophecy that foretold the coming of the Golden Age of Narnia is handed down in old rhymes:

> *Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,*
> *At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,*
> *When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,*

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[13] Readers may think that Jadis's intrusion into the textual quotidian world leaves some traces of the fantasy. There is no doubt that her desire to conquer the earth does cause a great disturbance. However, readers are also told that in the textual England, Jadis discovers that her magical powers do not work, although she retains her superhuman strength. So, in the eyes of the police and onlookers, she is just a robber with great strength, not a powerful witch.

And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again.

When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone
Sits at Cair Paravel in throne,
The evil time will be over and done. (original italics, 146-147)

What this ancient prophecy foretold turns out to be exactly how the plot unfolds later in this story. By foretelling the coming of the invincible Aslan and the coronation of the Pevensie children, this prophecy, as an embodiment of divine omniscience, gives assurance, hope and courage to Narnian talking beasts and the child protagonists to overthrow the cruel totalitarian rule of the white witch. It also implicitly gives assurance to the outside readers that – whatever ups-and-downs the protagonists may experience in their journey to actualise the prophecy – there must be "a joyous turn" (Tolkien 1964: 81), a happy ending for them. This assurance may create a relatively relaxed reading experience. Tolkien asserts that it is the nature of "fairy stories" to end in what he terms "*Eucatastrophe*," that is a joyous turn produced by a "sudden and miraculous grace" (81-83). Based on Tolkien's ideas about fairy stories, Schakel (2005), in his reading of the *Narnia* books as fairy tales, suggests that the presence of *Eucatastrophe* in the stories "offers a basis for hope and is an instance of evangelium, of good news" (30). While Schakel offers one possible reading of the "evangelical" prophecy, I have a different interpretation when examining the prophecy from the perspective of Bakhtin's ideas about the absolute epic past. I suggest that the epic prophecy – although having the merits of offering hope and assurance, of arousing the hero's/heroine's courage and the sense of responsibility, of consolidating their faith – also imposes a definite and "finalising" (Bakhtin 1981:237) frame on both the development of events and the destinies of characters. Giving away the main plot and the happy ending at the beginning of the story, the epic prophecy, to a large extent, reduces suspense. This is because, in the conclusive prophetical temporal structure, the potential alternative outcomes of the main events – that is, the other bifurcating plotlines which are not actualised in the story, but which may linger in readers' minds

for some time before they reach the given resolutions [14] – are largely excluded. Following this line of thinking, the epic prophecy, to a large extent, reduces the "presentness"/ "eventness" (the sense of becoming and openness as explained in Section 2.1) of the events in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, as it makes the present and the future moments of the Narnian world as determinate and irrevocable as the past. It is in this sense that Bakhtin considers the absolute epic past to be finished, "as closed as a circle" (1981: 15).

In other books of the *Narnia* series, the conclusiveness and determinacy of the absolute past have other more moderate expressions which are not as straightforward as the epic prophecy discussed above. They are the *signs* given by Aslan – the creator and the true king of Narnia – who incarnates the power of omniscience and omnipotence, and who must be obeyed. In *Prince Caspian*, when the Pevensie children get lost on their way to join Caspian, Aslan indicates to Lucy, the youngest of the children and the one least involved in making decisions, by his expression that he wants them to go in the opposite direction from the one they have chosen. At first, the other children who do not see Aslan prefer to rely on their own resources (their memories of the Narnian landscape and Peter's pocket compass) and their own judgements. However, the result of going their own way is, as portrayed in the story, a long, tiring walk, an attack by some sentries of the usurper Miraz, and a time-wasting return along the way they had come. It later turns out that the only way to find the right direction is to follow the signs given by Aslan. In a sense, Aslan's signs are an implicit form of prophecies, because they must be, or eventually must be, followed and actualised. His signs determine the "right" trajectory of events in the story.

A similar example is in *The Silver Chair* when Aslan assigns Jill a task of searching

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[14] For example, without the knowledge of the ancient prophecy, readers (especially the ones from other cultural backgrounds who are not familiar with Christian images or biblical stories as myself at an early age) may be quite concerned and worried about the future of Narnia when they are told that Aslan is killed by the followers of the White Witch. They may well think that the chance to save Narnia from eternal winter is very narrow. Only later when they read the resurrection of the Lion, can they give a sigh of relief. However, the happy ending disclosed by the epic prophecy in advance renders such concern or worry unnecessary.

for Prince Rilian and gives her four signs as guidance. Failing to recognise the frail old Caspian, Eustace and Jill miss the first sign and do not receive "the good help" mentioned by Aslan, but they still receive help from the owl Glimfeather and his folk who carry them to the northern border of Narnia. However, without the good help, their journey into the land of the ancient giants gets really tough and difficult. The tiredness and hunger wear down their willpower and make them subject to the Green Lady's temptation of relaxation which is actually a trap. Because of this, they also overlook the second sign, the ruined city of the ancient giants. Both Eustace and Jill pay a heavy price for forgetting and missing the signs. They suffer from tough condition, take some detours, and almost get killed in the castle of Harfang. Only after Aslan repeats the signs in Jill's dream and the children begin again to follow them, does the story go back on track and move on. Manlove (1993) suggests that the four signs given by Aslan instruct the children to distinguish reality from deceptions and illusions, and guide them toward the divine truth (72-78). Schakel (2005), in his reading of the complicated relationship between personal freedom and the need for obedience, points out that the story of *The Silver Chair* stresses the necessity of placing trust on the eternal truth that is with God and that is incarnated by Aslan in the Narnian world. He argues that "obedience to Aslan's directives leads to inner freedom for Jill and Eustace and freedom from slavery for the prince" (73).

Schakel's statement is convincing based on the plot of *The Silver Chair*. However, the interesting point is that it nevertheless reminds me of the sophistry of the cunning Ape in *The Last Battle*. "'What do you know about freedom? You think freedom means doing what you like. Well, you're wrong. That isn't true freedom. True freedom means doing what I tell you'" (685). Does not the true freedom for the Narnians and the protagonists mean, as revealed by the plots, doing what Aslan tells or indicates them? Why can only a replacement of the speaking subject change a similar discourse from sophistry to ultimate truth? Is it all because the righteous, authoritative identity of Aslan is intrinsic and indubitable? By suggesting this possible similarity, I certainly do not mean to categorise Aslan (an embodiment of the good) and the Ape (an embodiment of the evil) into the same camp, although the Ape does try to mimic Aslan's voice. The point I want to raise here is that: by considering the absolute

obedience to Aslan's directives as a way towards the divine truth or personal freedom – hence is beneficial for the child protagonists – previous readings are largely based on a Christian value which justifies the awe, faith and obedience that Aslan demands. However, if we shift away from this perspective and reconsider the signs given by Aslan from the point of view of Bakhtin's idea of the epic chronotope, these signs can also be interpreted as reflections of the absolute and completed world view that characterises the epic chronotope. By demanding a pious attitude and unconditional trust, the signs given by Aslan, as a form of the grand narrative, exclude interrogations and re-evaluations from alternative points of view. They also devalue human initiatives, as the child protagonists are quite often required to give up their own judgements in order to follow the guidance of Aslan.

The epic chronotope is given great priority and superiority in the spatiotemporal configuration of the *Narnia* books. This is, firstly, reflected in the remarkably different discourse-time[15] that is allocated to the depiction of the primary quotidian world and the world of Narnia. In each of the stories, the depiction of the primary quotidian world takes up only a few paragraphs' duration, appearing mainly at the very beginning and the very end of the story.[16] The lion's share of discourse time – also the central narrative of the story – is given to the description of adventures in the grand epic world of Narnia. Secondly, in quite many other-world fantasy works for children and young adults, the primary world that is represented following the principle of mimesis is described as the textual "real," whereas the fantasy world is an embodiment of other

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[15] Discourse-time (or the time of discourse) is a concept raised by Gérard Genette (1980). It refers to the length of time that is taken up by the telling (or reading) of the story (the duration) and the sequence of events as they are presented in discourse (the sequence) (1980: 29-32). It is differentiated from the concept of "story-time" which refers to "the duration of the purported events of the narrative" (Chatman 1980: 96) and which is measured in minutes, hours, days, months, years. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Bridgeman (2007) suggest that the discourse-time can be roughly estimated in relation to the space of the text, that is, the number of lines or pages it takes to treat a particular length of story time" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:52, Bridgeman 2007:54).

[16] By saying that the depiction of the primary world takes up very limited discourse time in the *Narnia* books, I do not imply that the primary world merely functions as a static backdrop, or it is insignificant or dispensable for the story. On the contrary, as I am going to discuss later in Section 2.3.1, the specific spatiotemporal context in which the primary world is placed, as well as the way it is represented (the frame narrative), contribute to bring out the realistic significance of the fantasy world Narnia.

possibilities that externalise personal longings and desires. Examples are Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), James Matthew Barrie's *Peter Pan (and Wendy)* (1911), Maurice Sendak's picture book *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), Margret Shaw's *Walking the Maze* (1999), Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002) and many others. However, in the *Narnia* stories, we see a completely reversed spatiotemporal configuration of the "reality" and the fantasy. Drawing on Plato's ideas, Digory the professor clearly explains to the children the interrelation of worlds, when they go further up and further in to the real Narnia:

> Listen, Peter. When Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan's real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream. (*The Last Battle* 759)

As revealed by the extract, the imagined "real Narnia" – a heavenly idyllic other world where Aslan eventually leads his disciples and followers – is elevated as the absolute and eternal reality. In relation to it, the primary world of everyday experience – the world to which the child protagonists belong and with which readers are more familiar – is, as observed by Johnson and Houtman (1986), an "instantial and insubstantial" (86) shadow, a dream.

The superiority of the real Narnia over the primary "shadowland" *(The Last Battle* 767) of the immediate reality is further strengthened by the widely criticised ending of *The Last Battle* (Pullman 1998, Wood 2001). In this work, the author "slaughters" nearly all protagonists of the whole series in a railway accident and claims they are better off for being dead in their own world, so long as they have got "the right of permanent residence" in the real Narnia (Pullman 1998). This kind of plot design – ending with

the death of protagonists – is unusual[17] in modern children's fantasy works which, as observed by Nikolajeva (2000), normally end with protagonists coming back to their everyday world of experiences, to the modern, linear time (141). The unusual plot design conveys a message that the value and ideology carried by the real Narnia – an ultimate embodiment of the valorised epic chronotope – are of paramount significance for both the narrator and the author behind. Not only are these values more significant than the initiative and the personal judgements of characters as already explained above, they are also more valuable than the lives of characters in their everyday world of experiences. In this sense, the Narnia stories have given great superiority to the epic chronotope and have valorised it to an extreme degree. Quinn (1984) also observes that "the children of Narnia find themselves caught up in a story that is already written. They are like characters in a play who do not understand their roles. Their main task is to see how they fit into pre-existent design" (113). If we examine the characterisation of the *Narnia* stories from the perspective of Bakhtin's ideas about the epic chronotope, it becomes clear that the relative flatness of characters is almost inevitable when the stories are anchored in an epic world. This is because in the epic chronotope, as explained in Section 2.1, meanings and values are complete and determinate, as is specifically presented in the stories as the absolute faith and unconditional obedience Aslan demands. The epic chronotope does not open to human initiative or personal judgement. It demands to be evaluated in the same way by all. This immanent characteristic of the epic chronotope determines that only the role-defined characters – who are given limited inner depth and who are largely subordinate to the plot – can be compatible with it.

Indeed, characters in the *Narnia* stories are to a large extent role-defined. Although there are altogether eight protagonists in the whole series, through scrutiny, it is easy to discover that all these characters can be roughly divided into two camps: the ones

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17 Charles Kingsley has a similar plot design in *The Water-Babies* (1863) by transforming the protagonist Tom, a young chimney sweep, into a water-baby, after he falls into a river and appears to be drowned. But later in the story, after receiving moral education, Tom gets his human form returned as a reward for his kind deeds and he is not permanently detained in fantasy world under the sea.

who have faith in Aslan and obey him all along, and the ones who doubted or disobeyed him in the first place, but were granted mercy and redemption, and eventually return to the "right" course. Susan Pevensie who does not enter the real Narnia with the others at the end of the series could be an interesting exception, but this storyline is not unpacked. Readers are only briefly told through the voices of other characters, with a tone of distinct regret, that Susan no longer believes in Narnia and she is now a young lady who is "interested in nothing except nylons and lipstick and invitations" (*The Last Battle* 741). However, in his letter to a child reader Martin on 22 January 1957, Lewis states,

> The books don't tell us what happened to Susan. She is left alive in this world at the end, having by then turned into a rather silly, conceited young woman. But there's plenty of time for her to mend and perhaps she will get to Aslan's country in the end . . . in her own way.

If this is really how the storyline of Susan would continue, it is then another redemption story of the "prodigal daughter," which means Susan will eventually restore her faith in Aslan and hence join the second camp mentioned above. However, since the story ends without telling this, we can never be sure of that, and I consider this indeterminacy of Susan's future life to be one of the few unfinished, open-ended and promising events depicted in the *Narnia* series.

Given similar heroic missions to test their faith, the child protagonists in the *Narnia* stories are only expected to obey Aslan and complete the missions. There is hardly any deep exploration of their inner worlds, which makes them almost "transparent" or equivalent to the roles that have already been allotted to them beforehand. It seems that their main function in the stories is to enact actions and events which are predetermined by the prophecies or the signs given by Aslan. This point is, in fact, evidenced by Lewis's own words. When talking about the reason for choosing the fairy stories as the form of the *Narnia* stories, Lewis explains that the events of the stories he wants to tell "seemed to demand no love interest and no close psychology. But the Form which excludes these things is the fairy tale" (Lewis 1982: 59). He chooses the form of fairy stories, because it "may say best what is to be said" (57). To put it in another way, the characterisation of the *Narnia* series does not aim at exploring the inner depth of the characters. It mainly serves to convey certain ideas and values that

the author wishes to tell by building the grand epic-like Narnian world.

As to what these ideas and values are, Lewis has also left some clues when he talks about his motives for writing the *Narnia* series. He, first of all, posits two aspects of himself that were at work when he wrote the *Narnia* books: "the author as author" and "the author as man" (1982: 57). "The author as author" simply responds to the promptings of his own creative mind, taking the images produced therein and weaves them into a story (58). Lewis explains that for this aspect of himself as an author, the *Narnia* stories all began with some rather fragmented images: a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, parcels in a snowy wood (58, 64). Not until a magnificent lion Aslan came bounding into it, did the author know how the story would go (64). The Lion "pulled the whole story (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) together, and soon *He* pulled the six other Narnian stories in after him" (my italics, 64). Although Lewis claims that he doesn't know where the Lion came from or why he came, his (maybe unconscious) use of "He" with a capital H seems to disclose the Christian origin of this pivotal image of the whole series. The image of Aslan as an incarnation of the Son of God in the imagined world of Narnia has already been pointed out in many extant studies (Manlove 1993, Jones 2004, Colbert 2005, Schakel 2005). It can also be easily recognised through such pivotal plots as Aslan's creation of the Narnian world; his death for Edmund's traitorous action and his subsequent resurrection; the exhortation and four signs he gives to Jill on the mountaintop; and his final judgements on Narnian creatures. There is no need to list more evidences to support this argument. Lewis explains the obvious Christian subtext that permeates the *Narnia* series in a paradoxical way. He insists that "at first there wasn't even anything Christian . . . ; that element pushed itself in of its own accord" (Lewis 1982: 58). This statement reveals that the author does not deny the biblical allusions in his stories, but he stresses that it is not (or originally not) his intention to write moral or didactic stories that illustrate Christian doctrine. However, later when Lewis talks about the other aspect of the author – that is the author as man – who looks upon a developing story, as it were from without, who discerns the instrumental uses of the story (59), he writes,

> I thought I saw how stories [the *Narnia* books] of this kind could steal past
> a certain inhibition which had paralysed much of my own religion in

childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. An obligation to feel can freeze feelings . . . But supposing that *by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency*? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could.

That was the Man's motive. (my italics, 1982:59)

So, as suggested by the extract, for the author as man, the *Narnia* books are created to convey ideas and values of Christianity, but in a less serious and more intriguing way that could possibly make the somewhat tedious doctrine more accessible and engageable for readers. And, of course, none of Lewis' commentary and supposed intentions as real and implied author of these texts negates the possibility of indeterminate other possible readings by indeterminate numbers of readers (but see also my comment below).

Lewis's ambiguous reflections on his own writing of the *Narnia* series pertinently reveal that even authors can hardly control the meanings and ideas conveyed by their own works. Just as he reminds readers, "you must not believe all that authors tell you about how they wrote their books" (64). Therefore, although Lewis's reflections on his motives for writing the *Narnia* stories shed light on the understanding of the values carried by the epic world of Narnia, it is maybe better to rely on the texts per se. Throughout the series, with Aslan representing the supreme laws and rules of Narnia, Christian theme permeates the structures of plots and becomes a dominant voice. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Jadis abets Digory to take the apple of life back home to cure his dying mother, rather than giving it back to Aslan. This plot obviously alludes to the temptation from Satan in the form of a serpent to eat the forbidden fruit and the subsequent fall of mankind which are depicted in Genesis. However, the difference is that, in Lewis's "supposition" (Lewis 1966: 475), the "son of Adam" resists the temptation and obeys the order of Aslan. *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* presents a journey of physical, emotional and spiritual testing and maturation. It is also a pilgrimage to Aslan's country, which is an embodiment of the ultimate Other-world, heaven. The Christian subtext becomes very explicit near the end of this story, when

Aslan tells Lucy, Edmund and Eustace that he has another name in their own world and they must learn to know him by that name. The name Aslan refers to is obviously the name of Jesus. Aslan also reveals that the very reason for bringing the children to Narnia is to let them know him better back in their own world (541). His sermon to the children further proves that Christian values are the dominant world-view of Narnia. In *The Silver Chair*, the four signs and exhortation Aslan gave to Jill on the mountaintop echo the Ten Commandments Moses received from God. The errand completed by Jill and Eustace to free Prince Rilian and a tribe of oppressed creatures also alludes to Moses's release of the Israelites from slavery. With all these stereotyped values untouched and reinforced, the epic chronotope of Narnia is to a large extent presented as a Christian utopia.

More than enough critical attention on the revelation of Christian images and visions in the series has been given here for my purpose and intention for this study and in the wider critical community. Therefore, I do not see the necessity to give further evidences to justify that the world of Narnia is ideologically dominated by Christian values. What I wish to argue, by bringing together all lines of thought discussed in this section, is that: the spatiotemporal configuration of the Narnian world – that is, as already pointed out, the epic past in which it is localised and the boundary that keeps it from the primary quotidian world – creates a relatively detached, self-contained and ideologically unified context for the conveyance of Christian values. This particular spatiotemporal context is a typical example of the elevated epic chronotope that excludes interrogations and re-evaluations from alternative points of view. It guarantees in its domain the completeness and absolute authority of Christian values.

2.2.2 The Epic Chronotope Embodied in *The Dark is Rising*

Rather than embodied as a whole and complete secondary world, the epic chronotope is projected onto and largely overlaps the landscape of the textual present world in Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising*. Apart from Will's first meeting with Merriman and the Lady which happens in the Hall of the Light, a completely secondary realm summoned by the Old Ones, all other events – including the prosaic daily life and

Will's heroic adventures – take place on the landscape of Huntercombe Village. However, although the two worlds are spatially merged, the boundary between them is still discernible, and this boundary is mainly established and maintained by the operation of time. For example, on the morning of his eleventh birthday, Will is brought back through five centuries to the time of the Royal Forests, when the whole village was a wide-spread white forest. It is also in this other time that Will's other identity as the youngest Old One is revealed and wakened (Cooper 1984: 38-62).[18] At another scene, Will is taken back to AD 1875 by Merriman to read the Book of Gramarye. From this oldest book about the real magic, Will learns the knowledge and skills that later enable him to perform his duty as an Old One (104-106). In the meantime of these two pivotal heroic adventures, adventures that facilitate Will's burgeoning understanding of and identification with his other identity, time in the primary quotidian world is frozen. In other words, these heroic events take place in, as reflected by such time tokens as five centuries before and AD 1875, *the distanced past* that is outside the flowing time of the textual present world. This incompatibility of times suggests a sense of boundary between the primary quotidian world and the fantasy world of the Old Ones.

By saying the distanced past, I am not referring to the chronological past, although the specific time stamps given for Will's trips into the past may create an illusion that his fantasy adventures are anchored in the historical past. It is an illusion because, under scrutiny, Will's activities in each century that he is brought back to are very much confined to the great cause of the small circle of the Old Ones. The tasks he completes are irrelevant to the historical or spatial background of that specific century. This means that the time tokens given (five centuries or six centuries before, or the specific year 1875) are only numbers carrying no substantial meanings in themselves. Even if they are replaced by other time stamps, so long as they still maintain a sense of antiquity, the significance of the heroic events would be intact. The reason behind this,

[18] The 1984 version of *The Dark is Rising* published by the Bodley Head is used for citation in this thesis. The novel was originally published in 1973 and it is the second novel in the *Sequence* of the same name.

I suggest, is that these time tokens are essentially the embodiments of the absolute past. This absolute epic past, as I have explained in Section 2.1, is not localised in an actual historical sequence, but contains within itself the entire fullness of time.

This fullness of time is embodied in the text as "the Circle" of the Old Ones who "are planted only loosely within Time" (See my diagram Fig. 3 below) (60). Merriman explains that the Old Ones can travel through time in any direction. For them, all times co-exist. "The future can sometimes affect the past, even though the past is a road that leads to the future" (60). The synchronic world of the Old Ones can be graphically presented as below:
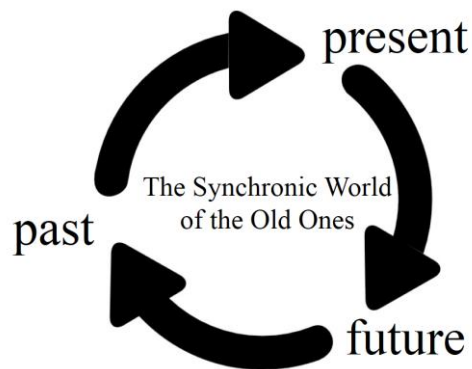
Fig. 3

The capability of the Old Ones to travel to any time – which suggests the possibility of seeing and knowing all times – presupposes that both the present and the future in the world of the Old Ones are "fait accomplis" (accomplished facts). They are as certain as the past. This is because, for each trip in time, the Old Ones must have an already actualised, stable space-time continuum as their landing point. Without this premise, travelling to any time would be a false proposition. Based on this, unidirectional, solid arrows that symbolise determinacy and unitarity are used in the diagram to denote the timeline of the world of the Old Ones. By supposing the present and the future as certain existences rather than a convergence of multiple, wrestling and pending possibilities, this temporal configuration eliminates the openendedness and indeterminacy of the present and the future moments, making them finalised. The conclusiveness of the world of the Old Ones is also reflected in the prophecy which is

frequently repeated in part or as a whole throughout the whole *Sequence*:

> When the Dark comes rising, six shall turn it back;
> Three from the circle, three from the track;
> Wood, bronze, iron; water, fire, stone;
> Five will return, and one go alone.
>
> Iron for the birthday, bronze carried long;
> Wood from the burning, stone out of song;
> Fire in the candle-ring, water from the thaw;
> Six Signs the circle, and the grail gone before.
>
> Fire on the mountain shall find the harp of gold
> Played to wake the Sleepers, oldest of the old;
> Power from the green witch, lost beneath the sea;
> All shall find the light at last, silver on the tree.
> (S. Cooper 229-230)

I have already explained in Section 2.2.1 about how authoritative prophecies – by foretelling the development of events and predetermining the fates of characters – impose a finalising frame on stories. I will not repeat this point here. Apart from this overarching ancient prophecy that is taken by the Light as a "blueprint" for actions against the Dark, the conclusiveness of the world of the Old Ones is also reflected by the prevision of Merriman, the oldest of the Old Ones. For example, even before Hawkin, the human servant for the Light, decides to be a traitor under the temptation of the Dark, Merriman foretells his future betrayal and sighs, "Hawkin, liege man, how can you do what you are going to do?" (120). As can be seen, under this prophetic temporal pattern, it is the past that dominates, because it predetermines future events and, by this, makes the present and the future moment a solely automatic and certain result of prior moments. Deprived of the spontaneity, indeterminacy and unresolved alternative possibilities it should bear, the future in the world of the Old Ones – where all times are supposed to co-exist – is not the future in its real sense. It has, to a large extent, been "castrated" by the grand narrative of the elevated, absolute past.

This valorisation of the absolute past is also reflected in the narrator's particular stress on the sense of ancientness, when describes the great awe Will feels for the landscape,

the objects and the people of the Light he encounters in his fantasy adventures. For example, catching sight of the hedges along the lines of the Chiltern Hills, Will knows that they are "the marks of *ancient* fields – very *ancient* … more *ancient* than anything in his world except the hills themselves" (my italics, 37); The great carved wooden doors that lead Will into the Hall of the Light were "cracked and pitted and yet polished by age" (38); The first time Will meets the Old Lady, he immediately has "an impression of [her] immense age" (39); The Book of Gramarye that has been waiting for centuries to be read by the protagonist is the *oldest* book in the world and it is written in the Old Speech; Also, according to Merriman, what Will belongs to – the Old Ones – "are as *old* as this land and *older* even than that" (my italics 43); The Old Way whose mighty power saves Will from the attack of the Dark has been trodden by the Old Ones for some three thousand years (75). As can be seen, the Light – which also symbolises the good and the noble in the novel – is deeply connected with the ancient, the oldest and the aged, temporal categories that characterise the absolute past. This stress on the power and the authority of ancientness is a typical presentation of the epic world-view in which, as Bakhtin argues, "'beginning,' 'first,' 'founder,' 'ancestor,' 'that which occurred earlier' and so forth are . . . valorized to an extreme degree" (Bakhtin 1981: 15).

Readers are also told that in the world of the Old Ones, the future can sometimes exert influence on the past. This influence is not limited to the ideological level, but is shown to be substantial in the story. For example, Will is told that his quest to learn his place as an Old One must happen in the nineteenth century. This determines that Hawkin, who belongs to the thirteenth century but who is chosen to be an indispensable part of the key to achieve the Book of Gramarye, must be brought forward into an already actualised future to help Will accomplish the learning. This somewhat "tail-biting" operation of time, with the future exert substantial impact on the past, renders the timeline of the world of the Old Ones a closed circuit, as graphically represented by the enclosed circle of the past, the present and the future in Figure 3. Operating within this circle of time, the world of the Old Ones is sufficient to itself, whole and complete. It is, to a large extent, alienated to and unfamiliar with a real sense of the present and the future which are not merely continuations of the past, but also, as Bakhtin argues,

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take on the characteristics of open-endedness, inconclusiveness and unpredictability.

The absolute distance between the world of everyday experiences and the Circle of the Old Ones is not only straightforwardly reflected in the occasional incompatibility of times of these two realms, as I have discussed earlier on in this section. The boundary is also reinforced by the Old Ones' special ability to erase and manipulate the memories of ordinary people. At the very beginning of the story, James's memory of the wild, savage attack he and Will underwent in the wood is neatly wiped (Cooper 1984: 16); When fighting against the Dark's invasion of the church, Will numbs the senses of his brother Paul and the rector, so that they are separated and protected from the fierce battle. Afterwards, feeling difficult to stand the fearful remoteness in Paul's eyes, Will, rather than trying to explain, erases the whole incident from the memories of Paul and the rector, claiming that "his two worlds must not meet so closely" (154); Again, near the end of the story, Will makes Mary forget her scaring experience of being kidnapped by the Black Rider and replaces it with a memory of a super ride on Old George's horse (247). As can be seen, for the only few times that the Circle of the Old Ones is slightly sensed by ordinary people, the Old Ones, out of goodwill, immediately erase their relevant memories. By so doing, the absolute distance that separates the heroic epic events from the everyday experience of ordinary people is restored. This distance ensures the completeness of the Circle of the Old Ones, because it keeps its absolute, deterministic epic world view from being interrogated or re-evaluated by ordinary people based on their personal experiences. As argued by Bakhtin, the epic chronotope, with its reliance on the "impersonal and sacrosanct tradition, on a commonly held evaluation and point of view . . . does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation" and demands only "a pious attitude" (Bakhtin 1981: 16). Echoing this, making ordinary people forget the "abnormal" fantasy events they witness or experience is an effective way of eliminating potential alternative viewpoints at the root.

Destined to be a member of this closed Circle of the Old Ones, Will is constantly told what he should do until he totally identifies with and internalises his new identity. Throughout the story, it is repeated over and over that Will is born to serve a sacred

purpose, to overcome the rising of the Dark as other Old Ones have done. Merriman, Will's powerful mentor, who is also the omniscient explainer of the story, keeps reminding him that, "you are the Sign-seeker, Will Stanton. *That is your destiny . . . Nothing in this world or out of it may stand in the way of that service, because that is why you were born and that is the Law*" (My italics, Cooper 1984: 48-49). Merriman's authoritative voice and prophetic statements render him a spokesman for the deterministic worldview of the epic chronotope which, as explained above, characterises the fantasy realm of the Old Ones. "Recruited" into this Circle where all times co-exist and where the future is as certain as the past, Will is barely given any chance to reflect on this, to a large extent, imposed heroic destiny before unwittingly commencing on performing his duties. For most of the story time, rather than being encouraged to exercise his conscious reason or rely on his own judgements, Will either acts unconsciously or follows the orders of Merriman obediently. He constantly has no conscious awareness of what he is saying or doing, a feeling of being seized by some divine power outside himself. For example, when the Rider from the Dark tempts him to mount the black horse, Will replies "I am out to find the Walker" (30) without knowing what the Walker is or why he says this. He even "heard his own words with amazement" (30). However, even so, he submissively accepts such manipulation without question: "*So that's it*, he thought" (original italics, 30). Also, when Will asks the Walker to hand over the bronze Sign, he again seems to be seized by a mighty power and suddenly stops behaving like an eleven-year-old boy. As shown in the following extract:

> Driven by some unfamiliar part of his mind, without quite knowing what he was doing, Will… stood up as straight and tall as he could and pointed at the Walker, and called out, 'The last of the Old Ones has come… Now, Walker. Unless you would carry it [the bronze Sign] for ever, obey the Old Ones now. *Now!*' (70)

All these abnormalities arouse no suspicion or anxiety in the protagonist. Like his response to the inexplicable sudden happiness he feels when he meets the Old Lady for the first time, Will just takes these abnormalities for granted. In his own words, they just seem "too natural to be questioned" (41). As described in the text, "he [Will] accepted everything that came into his mind, without thought or question, as if he were moving through a dream" (27).

The "surprising *sang-froid*" (Grenby 2008: 151) – that is the protagonist's surprising calmness in face of what should be odd or unfamiliar – and the lack of personal agency render Will a role-defined character who, as Rosemary Jackson (1981) explains, mainly functions as a "receiver of events which enact [s] a preconceived pattern" (33). This preconceived pattern is specifically embodied in the text as the irrevocable heroic trajectory of Will's life that is predetermined by the ancient prophecy cited above. It foretells, even before the birth of the protagonist, how he collects each of the six Signs (wood, bronze, iron; water, fire, stone) and finally completes the Circle of Signs whose power wards off the forces of the Dark. With these heroic deeds predetermined by the grand narrative of the conclusive epic/absolute past, Will is not given much freedom to act of his own will in the first place. Neither is he given any chances to reject or fail the missions. In other words, acting in the epic world of the Old Ones where fate holds all the cards, Will has limited control over his own future. As the youngest Old One, his future is, to a large extent, "ready-made" (uzhe gotov) and as irrevocable as the past. "The single and unified world view" (Bakhtin 1981: 34) of the epic chronotope excludes his potential alternative possibilities and, by so doing, makes him "a fully finished and completed being" (34).

By considering the image of the protagonist "finished and completed," I do not imply that the fantasy heroic events Will experiences have not brought him any change in identity. It is obvious that by the end of the story, Will has grown from a small boy who needs protection and comfort of his family into a powerful, courageous Old One who protects many others by thwarting the rising of the Dark. This physical and mental development is already observed in previous critical studies, such as Jane Carroll's interpretation of the symbolic meaning of Will's journey away from home through the Huntercombe Lane (2011: 114-117). However, what I wish to point out here, by reading from the perspective of Bakhtin's epic chronotope, is that Will's development into an Old One is more an inescapable destiny predetermined by an omniscient, authoritative power outside himself, than an outcome of a series of free, conscious choices made in his autonomous negotiation with the fantasy realm. This is also where my Bakhtinian reading of the spatiotemporality of the world of the Old Ones and the

image of the protagonist deviate from Carroll's reading.

To be specific, taking the Huntercombe Lane – an Old Way whose appearances in different historical times are shown to the protagonist – as a demonstration of the synchronic world of the Old Ones, Carroll argues that, by placing the exposed "palimpsestic" layers of history at one's feet (2011: 94, 115), this Old Way "represents the simultaneity of past and present" (94). By saying this, she suggests that Will's footfall knowledge of the past landscape of the Huntercombe Lane facilitates his burgeoning understanding of this old road and all that it represents in his present time (116). She also argues that the geographically linear Huntercombe Lane – which is described as a narrow track with snow-burdened trees enclosing it on both sides (Cooper 28) – symbolically "channels" Will into his future destiny as one of the Old Ones (115-116). As can be seen, Carroll's reading of the synchronic world of the Old Ones, by emphasising how the hero benefits from knowing the past, focuses mainly on revealing the shaping power of the past on both the present and the future. However, her interpretation overlooks a point that, in the Circle of the Old Ones, the past, the present and the future are unbalanced. As I have discussed above, the past is valorised to too lofty a position that it becomes absolute and dominant, that it predetermines the development trajectory of future events. Concomitantly, the future in the world of the Old Ones is deprived of its inconclusiveness and "unfinalizability" (*nezavershennost*) which, in Bakhtin's view, are its essential qualities (1981: 166). It is hence "castrated" by the authoritative voice of the absolute epic past. While Carroll sees how the linear Old Way "channels" Will into his new, mature identity as an Old One, my Bakhtinian reading argues that this unforked, narrow track, with the world of the Old Ones as its only destination, also limits the potential of Will's future life. It is, of course, a good thing to grow into a world-saving hero, but unless the child protagonist *chooses* to walk down this road, he/she should always be given other choices. Even if he/she chooses to be just normal, it is still more desirable than being defined and finalised by some authoritative external forces. To put it in a topologic way, a more appropriate semiotic description of the future should be a road with multiple forking paths rather than a narrow track with a definite destination.

The role-defined epic hero who is finalised by the single, unified world view of the absolute epic chronotope is reminiscent of Dostoevsky's description, in *Crime and Punishment* (1950), of the state of condemned criminals waiting to be executed in the chronotope of the Guillotine (19-22). These two types of characters, though seemingly irrelevant at the first sight, share a similar kind of hopeless certainty, the certainty of life/fate in the epic chronotope and the certainty of death in the chronotope of the Guillotine. Experiencing the very moments before execution, Dostoevsky tells that "the worst part of execution is not pain, and not even death, but the *certainty* of death . . . [There is] "no escape, and there is no torture in the world more terrible" (Dostoevsky 1950: 20). Based on this experience, Dostoevsky, as Morson (2010) observes, repeatedly stresses in his works that "human life depends psychologically on indeterminacy" (Morson 103), on "the freedom of spirit" (Dostoevsky 2009: 335). Following Dostoevsky's description of the spatiotemporality of the Guillotine, Morson extends the potential danger of absolute certainty into the discussion of utopia, a motif often embedded in the epic chronotopic structure that I am discussing here. She argues that, "most utopianism depends on determinism" and "eliminates the unforeseen" (2010: 105). The life experiences of characters depicted under the utopian motif usually take on the features of "finished products" with every move predetermined and every goal guaranteed. Echoing this, in the focused text, whenever Will is hindered by some danger or threat in his pursuit of the six Signs, there is always someone (the Old Lady, Merriman, Old Georage, etc.) who comes to his rescue, so that he can never fail the missions. In so doing, Will's life proceeds exactly as how it was foretold by the ancient prophecy. No interventions of accidental, unexpected incidents – events that may deviate Will's life from the predestined course – are allowed in the world of the Old Ones, as is clearly conveyed by Merriman's statement that "Nothing in this world or out of it may stand in the way of [Will's] service [as an Old One]" (Cooper 1984: 49). However, "without uncertainty and without the possibility of failure," Morson argues, "there can be no need to strive" (2010: 105). In other words, with everything planned and certain, Will's initiative, efforts and his own choices become less significant. His life is, in a sense, already *past*. As Dostoevsky describes in *A Writer's Diary* (2009), people in a state of absolute certainty, "would suddenly see that they had no more life left, that they had no freedom of spirit, no will, no personality . . .

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they would see that their human image had disappeared" (335).

2.2.3 The Epic Chronotope Embodied in *Elidor*

Among the three focused fantasy works, the spatiotemporal structure of Alan Garner's *Elidor* (1973)[19] demonstrates the weakest control of the epic chronotope over the narrative. Like Lewis's Narnia, Elidor is imagined as an independent fantasy world whose spatial configuration and social structure take on a hefty dose of medieval colour. It spatially keeps a distance from the represented modern 1960s Manchester, the space-time continuum to which the child protagonists belong. Temporally, Elidor operates in its own autonomous time which runs at a different pace from the time in the primary everyday world of experiences. This incompatibility of times, as I have explained above, suggests a sense of boundary between the epic fantasy world and the represented modern reality. Also like the two focused texts I have discussed above, the secondary world Elidor is also set in a fatalistic prophetic temporal pattern. This time, the prophesy is given by an idiot in his fits, another form of divine omniscience embodied as madness. It is written down in an *old* book made of vellum whose leaves are "hard, glossy, and crimpled with age" (Garner 1973: 47), and whose anciency again consolidates its authority. As described by Malebron, another spokesman of the epic world-view, this prophecy is "a dream that no sane man could bear to dream: *a waking memory of what was to be*" (my italics, Garner 48).

> *And they shall come from the waves.*
> *And the Glory of Elidor shall pass with them.*
> *And the Darkness shall not fade.*
> *Unless there is heard the Song of Findhorn.*
> *Who walks in the High Places.* (original italics, 48)

Apart from this prophetic temporal pattern in which the absolute past dominates, the past-oriented value is also reflected in the great cause that the king of Elidor does whatever it takes to complete. This great cause is to restore, as Malebron claims, the past glory of Elidor by bringing back light to this now corrupted, dying mythic land. This nostalgic idealisation of the past is a pertinent expression of the epic world-view

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[19] The 1973 version of Alan Garner's *Elidor* published by Collins is used for citation in this thesis. This work was originally published in 1965.

which, as Bakhtin argues, presupposes that "in the past, everything is good: all the really good things occur *only* in this past" (original italic, 1981: 15). Since my previous discussions on the *Narnia* series and *The Dark is Rising* have elaborated these characteristics of the epic chronotope, here I feel no need to expand these points. My reason for selecting *Elidor* as the last focused text in this chapter is that it presents the possibility of inserting interrogative, disruptive dissonances into the completed, deterministic structure of the epic chronotope and, in so doing, undermines the dominance of its grand narrative. This arrangement is not shown in the epic worlds constructed in other two fantasy works.

First of all, different from the magnificent world of Narnia where mythic animals and talking beasts reside and the sacred, protective Hall of the Light, the epic world of Elidor – with deserted castles and a barren forest – is inanimate, cold and unwelcoming. Its harsh environment, to a large extent, results in Roland's initial denial of the "realness" of Elidor and his initial resistance to integrate into this fantasy world. As I have discussed in Section 2.2.1 and Section 2.2.2, heroes/heroines in the other two focused texts hardly display any obvious sense of alienation or concern when unexpectedly transferred to the unfamiliar fantasy realms. They are not distraught at the separation. Neither do they experience any real sense of culture shock. It seems that they are just recalled to the fantasy realms where they belonged all along, as the ancient prophecies imply. However, in *Elidor*, this surprising *sang-froid* (See Section 2.2.2 for definition of this term) of characters is abandoned. It is replaced by Garner's detailed description of the struggles endured by Roland's blending in with the unfamiliar surroundings of Elidor and the strong sense of isolation this generates.

From the very moment of entering Elidor, Roland is consistently interrogating the "realness" of this other world. He "clutched a handful of gravel and rubbed it against his cheek" (Garner 28) to test if Elidor is only a dreamland. Overwhelmed by the feeling of isolation which is clearly reflected in the narrator's repeated emphasis of "being alone" in two pages of discourse time (28-29), Roland even let himself fall asleep on the cold wasteland. By doing so, he hopes to get away from this other world and wake up in the familiar quotidian world. This strong sense of displacement Roland

is subjected to, I suggest, is engendered by his tight holding of his identity as "Roland Watson, Fog Lane, Manchester 20" (37) – the youngest son of the family – at this stage of the story, and his consequent reluctance to accept the other "reality" imposed by the epic chronotope. Therefore, later in the story, we see that Malebron's authoritative, monologic narration of the history and the topography of the once great Elidor is constantly interrupted by Roland, who at that moment has little interest in this maimed king's story and who insists to check the well-being of his siblings first. The tension lurking in their dialogues imply that these two characters, though both standing on the land of Elidor, actually carry different and hardly compatible chronotopes in their beings. Malebron is the spokesman of the epic chronotope. He concerns only the glorious deeds and heroic duties. For him, the mission of bringing light back to Elidor is more important than the safety of the child protagonists. However, different from his value, Roland represents what Bakhtin terms "a novelistic world-view" which concerns itself with the prosaic detail of the everyday life (1981: 39-40). This divergence in chronotopic values also explains why Roland – who initially questioned the imposed identity as a saviour and who resolutely refused Malebron's order to go inside the Mound of Vandwy – unhesitatingly changes his mind, after being told that his sisters and brothers are trapped in there. Saving his siblings is the priority for "Roland Watson, Fog Lane, Manchester 20" and in his view, only this purpose, not the predetermined heoric destiny, is convincing enough for him to risk the danger. As can be seen, compared with the epic heroes of the other two works I have discussed above, Roland has been given a certain degree of freedom and the initiative to question, to hesitate over, and even to reject the predetermined destiny imposed on him. He finally takes the ordeal of his own free will as the youngest boy of the Watsons who feels obliged to save his siblings, rather than as a saviour of Elidor.

The second dissonance inserted into the epic world of Elidor lies in Garner's depiction of the collective actants. Throughout the description of events in Elidor, Roland is the only focaliser through whom readers see and feel this other land, while the voices of his siblings are silenced. The only information given about them is that they all fail the ordeals, or in other words, they all fail to become what they are supposed to be, the saviours of Elidor. The only reason for this is that they give in to the temptation of

touching the apple blossom, a recognisable symbol of the fall of man. Like Adam and Eve who were driven out of Eden, the three children who metaphorically choose the symbol of humanness are numbed in the absolute and completely finished epic chronotope. Only later, after Roland successfully saves the treasures of Elidor and starts to believe in his heroic destiny, does David promptly and powerfully challenges the authority of prophecy by questioning: "who wrote it?" and "how did he know?" (Garner 48). This dissonance, along with Garner's reservation in clarifying other protagonists' attitudes towards Elidor at this stage, foreshadows the later more intense clash of world-views carried by different chronotopes. This is the main point that I am going to discuss later in Section 2.3.3.

Last but not least, as analysed above, the world of Elidor is very condensed and inanimate. Its spatial scale and spatial distribution are not as grand and complicated as Narnia. The discourse time it is allocated is also very limited. With only three chapters of short descriptions of the protagonists' adventures in Elidor (30 in 153 pages), the narration soon moves back to the primary quotidian world, where the characters are under order to protect the four treasures and where the climax of the plot is placed alongside their fighting against the intrusion of the dark side. This shifting of focus reveals that, apart from the projection of a secondary world, Garner's *Elidor* also gives concern about how the characters will reflect on their eccentric adventures after being sent back to their present world, which is spatiotemporally located in the 1960s Manchester. This spatiotemporal configuration, by facilitating a shifting of viewpoint, brings the epic world of Elidor into dialogues and direct interactions with the primary quotidian world which has maximal contact with the flowing, transitory, "low" present and which is thereby characterised by a sense of movement and becoming. The consequent wrestling of divergent chronotopic values enables the protagonists (and also readers) to observe the epic secondary world from outside through the lens of the open, inconclusive textual present reality. This very process, as I am going to explain further in Section 2.3.3, is described by Bakhtin as "the novelization" (1981: 6) of the epic chronotope by inserting into it "an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness," a living contact with the unfinished, still-evolving present (7).

2.3 The Epic Chronotope in Dialogue

So far, I have explained how the epic chronotope is varyingly embodied and strategically deployed in the three selected texts, which answers my research question a.1 (See Section 1.3 for details). Following this, in this section, I am going to discuss how these focused children's fantasy works also stretch the possibilities of the epic chronotope by bringing it into varying degrees of dialogues and interactions with the textual quotidian worlds, which are again placed in different spatiotemporal structures.

2.3.1 The Symbolic Dialogue on the Level of Awareness

The primary world of the *Narnia* series is placed in England. The whole series covers a time span of nearly ten years, from 1940 to 1949, in our chronological time, with a brief retrospection in the prequel *The Magician's Nephew* about the genesis of Narnia in 1900. At first sight, this background information is easily overlooked, due to the very limited discourse time that is allocated to the description of the primary world; and its seeming subordination to the magnificent world of Narnia that occupies the central narrative and that embodies the valorised ultimate reality. Accordingly, a great number of extant studies focus on reading the projected other world Narnia, including its Christian subtexts (Lindskoog 1973, Walsh 1979, Jones 2004), its mythic sources (Colbert 2005), its Platonic shadows (Johnson and Houtman 1986) and the possible unconsciousness of Lewis implied in it (Holbrook 1991). While the world of Narnia has been examined from diverse perspectives, previous studies have overlooked the underlying interrelation between Narnia and the textual quotidian world. In the following discussion, I argue that, although the two worlds are spatiotemporally separated from each other as I have analysed in Section 2.2.1, they have a kind of dialogue on the level of awareness. A reading of this underlying dialogue can reveal that the spatiotemporal context of the primary world actually endows the projected epic world of Narnia with a kind of realistic significance.

As indicated above, in the *Narnia* series, the primary world where the child protagonists belong is England during the Second World War and the early post-war period. This historical period is extremely unsettling and nightmarish for people from

nearly all over the world. The horrors and traumas from the two bloody world wars kept haunting people throughout this decade. The fear of a third war was continuously inflamed by the increasingly serious armament race, which further deprives people of the sense of security and stability.

Against such a turbulent background, English literature after the First World War represented by the literary trend of modernism, turned self-indulgently inward and concerned little with historical, social and political actuality (Mackay & Stonebridge 2007: 5). Keep, McLaughlin and Parmar (1995) in their discussion of modernism and the modern novel also observe that, modernism marks a distinctive break with "the ordered, stable and inherently meaningful world view of the nineteenth century" and presents "a profoundly pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray." It "abandons the social world in favour of its narcissistic interest in language and its processes. Recognising the failure of language to ever fully communicate meaning, the modernists generally downplayed content in favour of an investigation of form" (Keep, McLaughlin, Parmar 1995, "Modernism and the Modern Novel" Web). Beyond that, its disregard of the conventional expectations concerning unity and coherence of plot and character makes many of its supreme accomplishments, exemplified by Eliot's "The Wasteland," Joyce's *Ulysses* largely inaccessible to the common readers. Such quasi-fascistic "elitism" once drew criticism on modernists for "either flirt[ing] with fascism or openly espous[ing] it" and being "markedly non-egalitarian" (Keep, McLaughlin, Parmar, "Modernism and the Modern Novel" Web).

Disagreeing with the "art for art's sake" ideology of modernism, a new form of realism which stresses the "political and social implications of modernism" rises in British literature in the 1930s and 1950s (Smethurst 2000: 105). This new form of realism is represented by authors such as Aldous Huxley and George Orwell, the mid-century writers who are "pragmatically self-aware about the relationship between writing and public life" (Mackay & Stonebridge 9). Admiring George Orwell's political allegorical novel (or "beast fable" as Lewis describes it) *Animal Farm* immensely (Lewis 1982:114-118, Chapman 2012: 3), Lewis also recognises novels as a culturally vital and politically critical force. He holds the view that culture, history and social politics

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should be reunited, which resonates with C. P. Snow and William Cooper's suggestion to "write novels about Man-in-Society" (W. Cooper 29).

In the *Narnia* series, a political concern can be discerned in Lewis' description of the textual quotidian world. This political concern is, as my following analysis will reveal, what kind of culture and value should be disseminated to the public, especially to children, in the post-war social and cultural context. This concern is reflected in the following details presented in the series. In the stories of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* and *The Silver Chair*, the author undisguisedly expresses his antipathy towards some emerging modern values, especially the new way of education given in the modern, experimental schools. For example, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, after being seriously wounded in the battle against the White Witch, "the Prodigal Son" Edmund is brought back to life by Lucy's cordial. The narrator then states that the healing not only worked on Edmund's body, but also on his soul. Through Lucy's point of view, the narrator further explains that Edmund "looked better than she (Lucy) had seen him look – oh, for ages; in fact ever since his first term at that horrid school which was where he had begun to go wrong" (193). However, in this work, the narrator does not give any clue as to what Edmund's school is like and why it is "horrid."

In the later published *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* and *The Silver Chair*, the author expresses his disagreement with the modern, experimental school in more detail. He describes the Experiment House – a so-called "progressive," co-educational school – as an unpleasant, dull and hopeless place where students doing horrid things (such as bullying the younger grades) are not punished or expelled (*The Silver Chair* 549-551). He also sneers at people running the Experiment House for having "the idea that boys and girls should be allowed to do what they liked," and claims that this has only resulted in an unregulated group of bullies (549). In *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"*, by depicting Eustace, who receives intellectual training in the ill-managed Experiment House, as a disagreeable, mean, lazy and selfish boy before his "Narnian conversion" (425-427), Lewis again criticises this modern way of education for its lack of principles and its neglect of moral values. He also detests its overemphasis on reason

and science, and its devaluing of the significance of myth and imagination. This is clearly reflected in the narrator's satire on Eustace's only interest in books of information that "have pictures of grain elevators" (425); on his stupid teasing of Lucy and Edward's talking about Narnia; on his love of dead animals pinned on cards over the talking beasts of Narnia; and on his preference for "liners, motor-boats and aeroplanes" over the trim and graceful *Dawn Treader* (449). Lewis' disapproval of the modern, experimental school is also reflected in the narrator's somewhat nostalgic complaint: "When I was at school one would have said, 'I swear by the Bible.' But Bibles were not encouraged at Experiment House" (551). This seems to suggest that, for the author, the neglect of the Bible in school is quite inadvisable. Apart from the Experiment House, the narrator also expresses disagreement with other aspects of modern, materialistic culture and values. He sneers at Harold and Alberta's lifestyle as "vegetarians, non-smokers and tee-totallers," their preference of "a special kind of underclothes," their habit of always leaving the windows open, and sarcastically calls them "very up-to-dated and advanced people" (425).

As can be seen, in the very brief description of the textual quotidian world, the author mainly expresses his disapproval of some "progressive" modern values emerging in England during the post-war years. The objectivity of his evaluations is not a concern of my current study. What I suggest is that all these dissatisfactions scattered over the description of the textual present reality reveal the author's political concern about the loss of traditional morals and values, in the field of education and in people's daily life, under the influence of the rising modernism. Based on this, if we consider this concern together with the Christian values that, as I have discussed in Section 2.2.1, dominate the world-view of Narnia, it becomes clear that the textual quotidian world is thematically more than just a realistic backdrop. It discloses, I argue, the political subtext for projecting the mythic secondary world and for describing the child protagonists' quasi-Christian conversion journeys in it. In other words, the epic world of Narnia ruled by a powerful, "infallible" lion – who largely incarnates and conveys the supreme spiritual truth of Christianity – can be interpreted as the author's response to what is perceived to be the rampant modern, materialistic values of the post-war realistic world, as he represents in the frame narrative. It is in this sense I suggest the

existence of the textual quotidian world has the effect of bringing the spatiotemporally closed, self-contained epic chronotope into a symbolic dialogue with the represented post-war reality on the level of awareness. In so doing, this particular spatiotemporal arrangement endows the epic world of Narnia with a kind of realistic significance.

2.3.2 The Provincial Village Infiltrated by the Epic Chronotope

The chronotopic structures of the other two focused texts *The Dark is Rising* and *Elidor* present more direct, intense and complex interactions between the epic chronotope and the represented quotidian worlds. In Cooper's novel *The Dark is Rising*, the epic chronotope is projected onto and largely overlaps the landscape of the textual present world. Although, as discussed in Section 2.2.2, a boundary between the two realms is still maintained by the Old Ones' supernatural skills of time travel, the freezing of time and the manipulation of memory, this boundary is, to a large extent, porous. The rising of the Dark is heralded by the restlessness of farm animals (Cooper 1984: 9-11); The Tramps' Alley, which is "ugly" in the eyes of normal people, turns out to be one of the "noble" Old Ways whose mighty power saves Will Stanton from the attack of the Dark; The final violent invasion of the Dark is also actualised in the textual quotidian world as a besieging heavy snowstorm that completely isolates Thames Valley and threatens the safety of local people. The relevance and interweaving between the epic events and the textual present-day reality are further reflected by the plot that Will's quest for the six Signs "must all along be fulfilled within [his] own time" (100), rather than in some distanced and self-contained other world. Beyond that, in the course of completing his grand mission of defeating the Dark, Will also saves his own family and neighbourhood from fear and danger. By abridging the distance between worlds, the spatial configuration of *The Dark is Rising* encourages transgression and mutual infiltration of the epic chronotope and the textual quotidian reality.

The primary world of *The Dark is Rising* is set in Huntercombe, a provincial and old village where people live a pastoral life. No specific chronological time is given, but we can roughly infer from the availability of a television set and central heating that it is probably between the 1960s and 1970s. However, compared with this historical time

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at the macro level, the narrator focuses more on telling the "micro" time of an annual ritual – Christmas season specifically – that the story is embedded in. Since "ritual" in itself implies the periodic recurrence of same actions and activities, the time actualising it is concomitantly presented as being primarily cyclical. The cyclical movement of time is also reflected in the Huntercombe villagers' adherence to traditions and their insistence on keeping their customs and habits, as shown in the following details.

For example, Mrs Stanton "relies on the chicken-money each year to help pay for eleven Christmas presents" (Cooper 1984: 9). For Will, "it was an annual ritual" that "the day before Christmas Eve being the day when he was certain of having birthday present money from assorted aunts and uncles to spend [on] . . . shopping for Christmas presents in Slough, their nearest large town" (65). Every year, the family gets a Christmas tree from the Dawsons' yard. For the ritual of singing Christmas carols, the exchange about whether Robin should go with others "has been repeated annually for three years" (87). Mrs Horniman who "laid a good stock" of sixpences insists on the tradition of giving children a silver sixpence every Christmas, "coolly disregarding changes in the currency" (90). For her, it "wouldn't be Christmas without sixpences" and her stock would be enough for her lifetime (90). Old Miss Greythorne, whose family has been living in Huntercombe village for centuries, insists on sitting "in the same high-backed chair" every Christmas Eve while the children, each holding up a lighted candle, are asked to stand and sing "in her great stone-floored entrance hall with all the lights turned out" (88). Every year after the carol, Miss Greythorne asks whether the children would like a little Christmas punch and the children would always say yes. As described by the narrator, "the question was traditional, and so was the answer" (122). This cyclical structure of story time is also reflected in Will's arrangement of his leisure activities according to the turn of the seasons. Every year before the winter is three-quarters done, he creeps into the dell in Huntercombe Manor to look at the snowdrops that grow everywhere between the trees, and then in the spring he returns to stare at the daffodils (58).

The temporal configuration of Huntercombe village, by stressing the iteration of ritual

events and habitual actions, primarily suggests a sense of stability and inheritance. The centripetal movement of time along the circle of the day, of the week, of the month, of a person's entire life (Bakhtin 1981: 248), on the one hand, fosters local people's strong attachment to this village. That is, a strong sense of belonging to their small, self-contained, self-perpetuating community, embodied as people's identification with and adherence to the culture and values it represents. This idea of "roots," of being owned by a place, as Butler observes, often "seems to be offered in conscious distinction to the fluid and migratory lifestyle characteristic of modern industrial society," especially in the works of the war "traumatized" authors, such as Cooper and Garner[20] (Butler 2006: 110-112). Experiencing, as children, the fear, the chaos, the unpredictability and the disorientation induced by constant evacuations during World War Two (Butler 2006: 8-13), these authors have an immediate feeling of the desire for a secure and stable living environment.[21] However, on the other hand, this "place-loyalty" (113), that is the allegiance to the spirit of a particular place, sometimes also has "side effects." This happens when the loyalty is polarised into intolerance, exclusiveness and rejection, a conservative attitude that may ideologically trap a place in an over-stable state of absolute certainty. In other words, the overwhelming cyclical movement of time that characterises Huntercombe and that preserves a sense of stability also results in the isolation this remote village from the shaping of the

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[20] In his reading of four British fantasists, Butler (2006) argues that, apart from Cooper, another fantasist who also presents in his works this idea of a strong attachment to a place, is Alan Garner. Examples are his children's fantasy work *Red Shift* (1973) and his later non-fantasy novels *The Stone Book Quartet* (1976-1978), which are both set in Garner's hometown Cheshire (111-113). This particular similarity in Cooper's and Garner's rhetoric of spatial imagination also partly explains my selection of Garner's less renowned fantasy work *Elidor* as another focus text of this chapter. Its juxtaposition of the modern, urban setting and the medieval, epic world creates, as my following discussion will reveal, a strong inter-chronotopic tension that is hardly observable in the dialogue between the epic chronotope and the quotidian world in rural setting.

[21] Butler also claims that Diana Wynne Jones is an exception (2006: 107-108). In many of her science fictions and science fantasy works, such as *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986) and *Castle in the Air* (1990), Jones portrays dislocation and alienation as fundamental aspects of the self, rather than as external or abnormal experiences that may happen to it. See Charles Butler's *Four British Fantasists* (2006) for further details. However, it is also necessary to point out that the sense of place/place-attachment is, in fact, also conveyed in Jones' later work *Enchanted Glass* (2010), which is published after Butler's study. In this work, Jones depicts how the hero Andrew Hope unravels the mystery of Melstone House – the "field-of-care" he inherits from his grandfather – by walking its boundaries and how he, in the process, gradually understands his magical responsibility to protect this land.

progressing, linear time. In his discussion of the spatiotemporality of the provincial town, Bakhtin suggests there is scarcely any unexpected "meeting" or "parting" in the cyclical temporal structure, hence no changes can be generated, "only 'doings' that constantly repeat themselves" (1981: 247). Bakhtin's argument might be too general, but this immunity to changes and the consequent ancientness of a place can easily be discerned from the narrator's description of Huntercomb.

For example, although the textual present world is set between the 1960s and 1970s, readers are told that the television set is never turned on in the Watson's family during Christmas, as it is thought to be "an irrelevance" (Cooper 1984: 79); Also, Miss Greythorne still keeps the old gas stoves after the installation of the central heating, in the belief that the old house does not "approve" (192) or, in other words, is incompatible with the modern electric power. The low mobility of the population, together with the remote spatial locale of this village, only further isolates Huntercombe from the modern, industrial society. Due to this, a strong sense of ancientness permeates this provincial village. Tramps' Alley, or the Oldway Lane, has been trodden for some three thousand years; Miss Greythorne's family has owned the Huntercombe Manor, the great house of the village with ancient brick walls and Tudor chimneys, for centuries; Beyond that, lots of residents have lived in this small village for more than fifty years, some families even for generations. Apart from the slight decrease in forest cover, the flow of time can hardly be sensed in Huntercombe village.

Based on my discussion above, it is not difficult to discover that the spatiotemporality of Huntercombe village shares many similarities with the characteristics of the epic chronotope, which is embodied in this text as the Circle of the Old Ones (see Section 2.2.2 for details). The cyclical movement of time which prioritises the past – the preservation of tradition and heritage – echoes the valorised absolute past that characterises the epic chronotope; The spatial remoteness which makes Huntercombe village largely sufficient in itself and isolated from modern life, also resembles the absolute distance that maintains the "completedness" of the epic chronotope. These similarities in spatiotemporal configuration also penetrate into the level of chronotopic values, which means that the conclusiveness and finalisation of the epic world-view

also, though to a lesser degree, find their expression in the chronotope of the provincial town. To be specific, while describing people's strong attachment to the land of Huntercombe village and their insistence on local culture and values, the narrator also obliquely reminds how easily the sense of belonging to a particular place can slide into intolerance and exclusiveness.[22] This is not only reflected in Huntercombe's rejection of the influence of modern, industrial society, which I have discussed above. It is also reflected in Mr. Stanton's almost intuitive, slight hostility towards Merriman when they first meet in Miss Greythorne's house where people take refuge against the besieging snow sent by the Dark. This subtle emotion is captured by Will:

> 'Funny,' Will said, as they picked their way through. 'Things are absolutely awful, and yet people look much happier than usual. Look at them all. Bubbling.'
> 'They are English,' Merriman said.
> 'Quite right,' said Will's father. 'Splendid in adversity, tedious when safe. Never content, in fact. We're an odd lot. *You're not English, are you*?' he said suddenly to Merriman, and Will was astonished to hear *a slightly hostile note* in his voice.
> 'A mongrel,' Merriman said blandly. (my italics, Cooper 1984: 177)

The centripetal force generated by the cyclical temporal structure and the spatial isolation, on the one hand, preserves and solidifies the spirit/heritage of Huntercombe village, the identification with which partly constitutes local people' identities. On the other hand, it also draws a boundary between this remote village and the outside world, a boundary that repels the infiltration of other ideas, values and cultures. This exclusiveness and the consequent absoluteness also characterise the world-view of the epic chronotope.

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[22] The sense of place, especially the mythic history of landscapes, presented in Cooper's works is well recognised (Manlove 2003: 129-130; Butler 2006: 112-117; Carroll 2011: 7-10). Cooper's description of her deep homesickness after emigrating to America and her strong attachment to her places in the United Kingdom (especially Buckinghamshire and mid-Wales) has also been widely quoted in critical studies. However, as an expatriate herself, Cooper also sees how closely related the allegiance to a particular place can be to intolerance of or disdain for other people's ideas and values. She explores this contradiction more deeply in her science fiction *Mandrake* (1964), but in *The Dark is Rising*, she also obliquely makes this point (see my following discussion in the main body). What Cooper suggests is flexible and porous boundaries of a place that accommodate loyalty to one's own heritage without implying a corresponding rejection of other people's. She warns in her paper presented at the annual meeting of Children's Literature New England, "boundaries should be flexible; convincing but symbolic . . . a really rigid fence, wall, or limit is no longer a boundary, but a constraint" ("Considering Boundaries" 2001). This contextual information, I think, supports my textual analysis in the main body.

These similarities in spatiotemporality reduce the distance between the epic fantasy world and the primary quotidian world, paving way for the gradual permeation of epic events into the daily life of Huntercombe village. As the story develops, the epic chronotope gains increasing control over the land of Huntercombe. This is reflected in the more frequent and intense confrontations between the Light and the Dark, which severely disturb and even paralyse the ordinary daily life of local residents. The fight at the church, a sacred place, is only the beginning of the panic. The ultimate epic battle between the two sides, representing the absolute Good and the absolute Evil respectively[23], make the provincial village subjected to the strike of a creepy blizzard. The heavy snow blocks the road, knocks out the power, hence completely isolates the village from the outside world. This can be metaphorically interpreted as the formation of an absolute epic distance, a tight boundary that walls of the village from the modern, industrial society. Due to this, life in Huntercombe is, to a large extent, devoured by and trapped in the absolute epic past which, as my discussion in Section 2.1 and 2.2.1 reveals, does not encourage human initiative or personal judgement. Correspondingly, threatened by the snowstorm that gets worse every minute, "normal" people of Huntercombe can do nothing more than take refuge in Miss Greythorne's old house. They gather together in terror and helplessly wait for the Old Ones to "break the power of the cold, stop the snow and cold and frost, and release this country from the hold of the Dark" (Cooper 1984: 178) by finding the Sign of Fire. It seems that the extreme coldness and the complete isolation gradually drain off the vitality of this provincial village, transforming it literally into a frozen backdrop for the unfolding of predetermined epic events. As presented in the story, only Will, the Sign-seeker's completion of his heroic mission – which fulfills the epic prophecy – can bring the disaster to an end. This reflects the relatively dominant voice of the epic chronotope in its "dialogue" with the chronotope of the provincial town that characterises the textual

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[23] See Susan Cooper's article "There and Back Again Tolkien reconsidered" (2002) for her own explanation of the traces of moral absolutism in her works. Garner also writes in *The Voice that Thunders* (1997): it is inevitable that the experience of war – a time at which "daily life was lived on a mythic place: of absolute Good against absolute Evil" (17) – should leave traces on writers' imagination.

quotidian world.

Another evidence of the superior position of the epic chronotope in *The Dark is Rising* that is manifested by my focus upon it in this chapter, lies in Will's perception and understanding of his own identity. Protagonists who shuttle between worlds can be considered as a reflection of the interactions between different chronotopes. This is because, in their very "beings," the divergent chronotopic values converge and the tension between them is externalised. There was a short period of time when Will, whether wittingly or not, hovers between his two identities. The tension between them makes him decide to draw a clear boundary between his two worlds (See my discussion on this point in Section 2.2.2). Also, when facing dangers in this early stage, Will still needs to be repeatedly reminding himself of his new identity as a powerful Old One in order to overcome the fear. "Who are you? He [Will] asked himself – and answered: you are the Sign-seeker" (Cooper 1984: 150). As the story develops, and echoing the increasingly stronger control over the narrative of the epic chronotope in focus here, Will also becomes more convinced of his other identity as a powerful Old One with world-saving responsibility. By the end of the story, when the battle between the Light and the Dark temporarily comes to an end, Will is already very comfortable with his new identity. Therefore, when Merriman says "Come, Old One, remember yourself. You are no longer a small boy." Will affirmatively replies: "No, I know" (244). This reflects that by then Will no longer views himself as a young boy, and has totally internalised his other identity as an epic hero, as what other epic characters such as Merriman and the Old Lady see and know in him. Since that moment there is no tension in his identity because he has completed the transformation from one stable identity to another.

This transformation presents Cooper's understanding of the home-leaving quest as an indication of the end of childhood and "a metaphor for growing up" (Cooper 2004: 23). This preconceived developmental mode of personal growth – from a timid, sensitive boy to a powerful, responsible man in Will's case – finds its best expression in the context of the epic chronotope that concerns itself with glorious deeds and heroic destiny. Its intrinsic valorised position endows this development into physical and

psychological maturity with a sense of sacredness, and its conclusiveness, to some extent, implies the necessity of this process. By projecting the epic chronotope onto a real-world setting, the spatiotemporal configuration of *The Dark is Rising* demonstrates the possibility of merging the epic fantasy events with the local mythic history of a particular place. This particular chronotopic arrangement – with the epic heroic adventure offering the protagonist a better knowledge of the very land he/she lives on and in – helps convey an idea (or an assumption) that knowing the past is beneficial for children's identity formation in their immediate present-day reality.

2.3.3 The "Novelisation" of the Epic Chronotope

Garner's *Elidor* presents another kind of "dialogue" between the epic chronotope and the primary quotidian world which is set in modern urban area. It foregrounds the persistent, irresolvable wrestling of these two chronotopes and an intense confrontation of the different values they represent. This mode of chronotopic interaction, as my following discussion will reveal, endows the story with a sense of open futurity. It also urges both the protagonists inside and readers outside to examine and interpret the fantasy events from their own particular viewpoints and based on their personal experiences.

The sense of movement and "becoming" permeates nearly every corner of the primary world of *Elidor* which is spatiotemporally set in 1960s Manchester, when this old industrial city was undergoing a post-war regeneration programme. It is thus a transitional period for the city. In the description, the narrator specially focuses on depicting a demolition area where the bomb-damaged Victorian buildings are pulled down to make room for the new buildings. Butler (2006) in her contextual reading relates this demolition area to the Manchester slum clearances, which she argues symbolises "the death of a community" and its local culture (112). This is one convincing interpretation. However, since death and renewal are closely related concepts, I suggest a more future-oriented reading that also sees the potential dynamic possibilities for reconstruction possessed by this temporarily void and lifeless land. In other words, an exuberant vitality is converging and flowing underneath the surface,

in the veins of this land, as it is in a state of becoming.

Similar to the changing social background, the four protagonists inhabiting the primary world are inscribed as adolescents, or "adults-in-the-making" (2003: 113) as Hugh Matthew terms it. They are in a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, hence also in an unstable state of becoming. Pulling away from the constraints of home, they start exploring the public streets, a spatial and temporal sphere where people from all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages may converge and intersect (Bakhtin 1981: 243). As Bakhtin describes, the road "is a particularly good place for random encounters . . . People who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet, any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another" (243).[24] These potential unpredictable, random encounters determine that, deviating from the conclusiveness of the epic chronotope, events in the chronotope of the road "are always changing . . . from moment to moment, in ways that are in principle unpredictable" (Morson 2010: 94). Because of this, the chronotope of the road is primarily characterised by what Bakhtin has termed "eventness"/ "presentness"; that is, the quality of contingency, indeterminacy and open-endedness (Bakhtin 1981:14). These particular characteristics then render the chronotope of the road a world of "unfinalizability" (Bakhtin 1984: 166), which means a dynamic, inconclusive space open for alternative possibilities. Time in the chronotope of the road is flowing and future-oriented. It fuses with the space, continuously shapes it, keeping it in an unstable state of perpetual,

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[24] Bakhtin (1981) and Carroll (2011) have different readings of the spatiotemporality of the road. Taking Susan Cooper's works as her paradigms, Carroll focuses on revealing the "depth" of the roadway. She argues that the road, with "palimpsestic layers" underneath, places the exposed layers of history at one's feet. It thereby represents "the simultaneity of past and present" (94). However, Bakhtin's interpretation of the chronotope of the road gives more consideration to the contingent encounters of people taking place on the surface of the road. He thus sees the indeterminacy and openness that also characterise this chronotope. This focus reflects Bakhtin's special emphasis on the close connectedness of people and events to time and space in his understanding of the literary chronotope (See Section 1.2 for full explanation and graphic representation of Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope). Carroll's and Bakhtin's different readings also suggest that a particular place/landscape (no matter geographical/ real or fictional) can demonstrate different spatiotemporal characteristics across specific literary works, depending on what events and actions are projected onto it.

indeterminate movement.

When discussing the chronotope of the road, Bakhtin also briefly mentions the metaphorical expansion of the image of the road as a course: "the course of a life" in which the "fundamental pivot is the flow of time" (1981: 244). Based on this, I suggest that the minor chronotope of the road, with its dynamic, inconclusive and productive characteristics, echoes the unstable but promising "in-between state" of the four protagonists in *Elidor*. These "adults-in-the-making" who are in what Victor Turner terms a "liminal" situation (1969: 95), are undergoing a creative reshaping stage of their identities. They are divesting themselves of attributes of their former state in preparation for acquiring new. This "liminal" situation, like the chronotope of the road, exists in the gaps of the ossified social and hierarchical structure and is, to a large extent, governed by contingency and spontaneity. It is thus, as Aguirre, Quance and Sutton suggest in *Margins and Thresholds* (2000), "an autonomous zone" (9), which is on the one hand unstable and unsettling, but on the other promising and full of possibilities created by contingent encounters.

Some other details in the story may further reveal the sense of becoming that dominates the textual quotidian world. During the one year story time, the Watson family moves from the house in Manchester city to a country cottage, only to find that it soon stands in a suburban road. Beyond that, according to the conversation among the protagonists at the very beginning of the story, this is not the first move for this family: "Remember how it was last time we moved? Newspapers on the floor, and everyone sitting on packing cases" (Garner 1973: 11). As can be seen, even home in Garner's depiction is no longer a place that can offer a sense of stability, but a space undergoing constant changes and movements. The unstable state of transition frequently requires the protagonists to face new possibilities and adapt to new circumstances in life.

Based on my discussion above, I suggest that the primary world of *Elidor* is constructed as an open space that pertinently exemplifies the spatiotemporal features of what Bakhtin describes as "the novelistic chronotope" (1981: 39). Unlike the epic chronotope which is oriented to the absolute past, the novelistic chronotope concerns

itself with the prosaic detail of everyday, with the incomplete and evolving present that "denies an authentic conclusiveness" (20). It is a zone of maximal contact with the flowing, transitory, "low" present in all its openendednesss. Bakhtin argues that "when the present becomes the center of human orientation in time and in the world, time and world lose their completedness as a whole as well as in each of their parts . . . they unfold as becoming, as an uninterrupted movement into a real future, as a unified, all-embracing and unconcluded process (30). Anchoring in the flowing present-day reality, the novelistic chronotope is a spatiotemporal pattern that is oriented to the future. In it, "every event, every phenomenon, every thing, every object of artistic representation loses its completedness, its hopelessly finished quality and its immutability that had been so essential in the world of the epic 'absolute past'" (30). They are permanently in a state of movement and becoming, which in turn makes the novelistic chronotope dynamic and vibrant.

Since the novelistic chronotope is anchored in the prosaic detail of everyday, the heroes, as well as the readers, are placed on the same plane with the represented world. This positioning of heroes and readers surmounts the epic (hierarchical) distance and makes the represented world approachable and open to personal experience. Contrary to the pious attitude demanded by the aloof and detached epic chronotope, the novelistic chronotope permits an individual point of view and personal evaluation. It is thus a sphere where divergent discourses and voices converge and wrestle.

Such human initiative in understanding and experiencing a space is highlighted in Garner's delineation of the primary world of *Elidor*. At the very beginning of the story, the four protagonists' attention is drawn by a mechanical city map, a "geometrical or geographical space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions" (Certeau 1984: 93) created by urbanists and architects. By turning the wheel, the children find that all the streets of Manchester are included in this two-dimensional overview of the city structure. However, in this panoramic view of the city, places can only be differentiated and identified by such abstract symbols as names and iconic glosses. Beyond that, everything included in this totalising projection is immobile and flat, with no depth. Such modern maps organised by technical procedures, as Michel de Certeau argues,

constitute "a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a 'state' of geographical knowledge" (121). Unlike ancient maps,[25] which are mainly drawings outlining the "log" of the journey on foot (120), modern maps erase the pictorial figurations of the spatial practices that produce it. It is "made possible by the flattening out of all the data in a plane projection" (94), and by disentangling itself from indeterminate and intertwined daily behaviour. The modern map, as an embodiment of the static geometrical space, "colonize(s) the space" by eliminating the operations in temporal dimension, and thereby degrades the dynamic city space into an ensemble of the "homogeneous and isotropic" (117) places geometrically projected on a flat surface.

In the story, the city map offers a panoramic view of Manchester seen from a totalising and celestial eye. This is analogous to what Certeau illustrates as seeing the whole of Manhattan city from the summit of the World Trade Centre (91-92).[26] The eye/I is lifted to the highest vantage point on the scene, and capable of hovering above the urban panorama, looks down like a god. But meanwhile, as this celestial eye has been lifted out of the city's grasp, it also detaches itself from any corporeal involvement or what Richard Sennett calls the "bodily experience" of the city (1994: 15). It is thus an "incorporeal" eye that transforms the city from a "lived" space by which one is "possessed" into some plain graphic data statically lying before one's eyes. Seeing from such a totalising and incorporeal eye, the operation of walking or wandering, that is, the activity of passers-by, is transformed into some homogeneous, static points and curves on the map. The inanimate, univocal and determinate geometrical space exemplified by the modern map, in some respects, resembles the unified, "congealed and semimoribund" (Bakhtin 1981: 17) structure of the epic chronotope.

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[25] The medieval maps for pilgrimages, including only the rectilinear making out of itineraries, along with the stops one was to make (cities which one was to pass through, spend the night in, pray at, etc.) and distances calculated in hours or in days, are used by Michel de Certeau as an exemplification of ancient maps. He suggests that these ancient maps are predominantly "memorandum(s) prescribing actions" or "drawings articulate(ing) spatializing practices" (120). Another example he uses is the fifteenth-century Aztec map describing the exodus of the Totomihuacas.

[26] The point was made before the destruction of the New York World Trade Centre in 2001.

These chronotopic features mentioned above may help explain why the mechanical city map soon loses its appeal to the child protagonists who, in Garner's depiction, desire "bodily experience" of the space and so commence a tour to walk through the city streets. Unlike the technological system of a coherent and totalising space exemplified by the city map, walking, as an elementary form of the experience of a city, opens up another kind of spatiality, "an 'anthropological,' poetic and mythic experience of space" (Certeau 1984: 93). The vertical and detached bird's (celestial)-eye view of the broad panorama of the city is replaced by a horizontal street-level human-eye view unfolding in a horizontal axis. As Cereau states, "the ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below'," below the thresholds at which a totalising visibility begins (93). Beyond that, the walkers or the practitioners of the city "whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text'" (93) can experience the space sensuously through not only vision, but also smell and touch. It is thus a kind of corporeal experience of the space in its true sense. In *Elidor*, the primary world is mainly spatialised by the protagonists' bodily experiences of the city. Take the description of the back street for example. The protagonists initially get access to it through the smell of the boxwood and rotten fruit. "Mm," said Nicholas, "It looks a bit niffy to me" (Garner 13). Then the close-range street views unfold before them, the store-house lit by unshaded bulbs, the grimy streets, the crumpled paper in the gutter, etc (13). The hot and stale air pumped out from the fans into the children's faces only further deepens the antipathy felt by the protagonists. It is through such multi-sensatory corporeal experiences of the walkers that the back street is presented and spatialised.

The act of walking taken by different individuals, at different time and along different trajectories can generate multitudinous possibilities of spatial perceptions. These different spatial perceptions then have the potential to shape the city into diverse modalities. The walker, by choosing a specific trajectory, picks out and actualises certain fragments in the space and skips over other possibilities (Certeau 98-99). Even walking along the same trajectory, different walkers, each as a unique and complicated synthesis of the social class, the cultural background and the personal factors such as

age, gender and personality, may insert different "references and citations" (101) into the space. This then will generate divergent spatial experiences. Again, even with the same walker taking the same route, his/her states of mind for each tour and different encounters on the road can still make the spatial perception of each walking unique and unrepeatable. Based on this, walking, which in essence is "a spatial acting-out" of immobile places, has the effect of manipulating spatial organisation. It can enlarge some elements in the space randomly and let others "shrink" or disappear. In this way, space is fragmented into discrete singularities with uneven density, which undoes the coherence and totality that characterise the canonical geometrical representation of a particular space.

In *Elidor*, choosing to take a shortcut, the protagonists diverge from the prosperous main streets in the central business district and accidentally walk into a rancid and messy back street where they have never been. They head toward Thursday Street, a place randomly chosen on the city map for its uncommon name, only to find that they are actually walking into a desolate demolition area with empty and broken houses (Garner 1973: 14). As can be seen, with the protagonists touring around the city, the represented Manchester is no longer a static and legible plain projection on the map, but unfolds horizontally along with the children's corporeal movement in it. The places traversed by the tour are animated by the different spatial perceptions of the characters, which are presented as a mingling of the sense of unfamiliarity, uneasiness, fear and some excitement. In this way, the primary world of *Elidor* has been transformed into a "lived" space molded by individual practices in the temporal dimension. It is thus again a good exemplification of the inconclusive novelistic chronotope that is open to the investigation of personal experience and perpetually in the making.

With the four protagonists being sent back to their own world to protect the treasures, the main setting of the story is, as I have indicated in Section 2.2.3, shifted from the world of Elidor to the daily life of the Watsons in the textual present world. This switch stimulates a literally intense confrontation, on both physical and ideological levels, between the epic chronotope and the novelistic chronotope. Moving in, family night, family dinner, Christmas carol and Christmas party: these prosaic details are set against

the previous massive spectacle and noble heroism of the secondary world Elidor. Likewise, the everyday world of experience is also not peaceful, but is constantly disturbed by the power of Elidor manifested as electromagnetic disturbance and static electricity. Through such interplay, the grand narrative of the epic chronotope which demands that the children fulfill their predetermined heroic destinies is constantly interrupted and suspended by the spontaneous occurrence of the trivial domestic affairs. Its authority and certainty are consequently undermined. With the events in the novelistic chronotope continuously cutting through the fissures and causing suspensions, the originally unified and self-contained epic world is opened up and becomes "dialogised" (Bakhtin 1981: 7). Its interactions with the inconclusive novelistic chronotope make itself exposed to the unfinished, still-evolving modern reality of the textual present world, which then results in the dissolution of the absolute epic distance. This process, with the epic chronotope being related to and examined from the viewpoint of the flowing, transitory, "low" present, is described by Bakhtin as the "novelisation" of the epic chronotope. Different from the novelistic chronotope which is a specific mode of spatiotemporal structure, "novelisation" is a conversion process of the epic chronotope in which the "'high' literature" usually embeds (4). During this process, a sense of contingency, indeterminacy and open-endedness is inserted into the originally congealed and half-moribund structure of the epic chronotope.

The surmounting of the absolute distance brings the epic world of Elidor into a dialogic zone, making it approachable for the interpretations of normal people from different perspectives. Their multiple voices – which may confront each other dialogically – challenge and undermine the single, unified world-view of the epic chronotope. This is vividly reflected in the four protagonists' different reflections on their fantasy experiences and their divergent attitudes towards the world of Elidor, after being sent back to the primary quotidian world.

Nicholas, the eldest child, soon loses interest in protecting the treasures after they come back. This is clearly reflected in his "critical" interrogation on both the fantastic world Elidor and the maimed king Malebron who risks the children's lives for his great cause.

> "Is it any better than our world? It's all mud and dust and rock. It's dead, finished. . . And you should think about him [Malebron] a bit more, too. Did he care how we made out as long as he found his Treasures? He sent us trotting off into that Mound one after the other, but he didn't go in himself. What right has he to expect us to spend the rest of our lives like – like broody hens?" . . . "He was just self-centred."
>
> <div align="right">(Garner 1973: 85-86)</div>

Beyond this, Nicholas also questions the realness of their adventure in Elidor. Through the reading of relevant psychological books, he would rather believe that the fantastic experience was actually a "mass hallucination" (Garner 92) caused by the sudden collapse of the old church. Even later, when he can no longer deny or ignore the invasive power of Elidor, Nicholas is still reluctant to accept the imposed errand or predetermined heroic destiny. Facing Roland's confrontation, he either evades the topic or quibbles that he can think what he likes. For him, a peaceful and quiet life is his desire. Due to this, until the very end of the story, Nicholas never cares about the well-being of Elidor, or the imposed other identity as a hero. His only wish is to discard the troublesome treasures and bring life back to normal.

David is a positivist. He investigates Elidor from a scientific perspective. On the one hand, he is, like Nicholas, reluctant to recognise the "realness" of Elidor as it goes against the principle of science; on the other hand, he also cannot ignore the uncommon phenomenon that science cannot explain. For example, the motor car of the Watsons is suddenly started with no one turning the ignition; the TV, transistor and radio break down simultaneously by the electromagnetic disturbance; the electric razor, the washing machine and the electric food mixer all work by themselves with no power supply, etc. If these incidents have not convinced him of the "realness" of Elidor, the further invasion of the epic world embodied as the intermittent static electricity under the rose bed and the hoof marks left by the unicorn on the bridge make him realise the serious situation they are in. He thereby changes his attitude to help Roland figure out how the enemies use the power to fix the treasures. However, different from Roland, David does not do this to save Elidor as he is ordered to. He does this because the increasingly fierce disturbance on normal life makes him realise that even if they may have finished with Elidor, Elidor has not finished with them (128). He chooses to protect the treasures, so that they can have the chance to get these trouble-making

treasures back into Elidor. This, in his view, is the only way that they can really put an end to the Elidor business and save themselves from any further disturbance of it. Therefore, similar to Nicholas, what David cares for is also their present life in the everyday world of experience. Even if both of them finally recognise the existence of Elidor, they still choose to be only David and Nicholas of the present prosaic life, not the epic heroes whose fates have been predetermined by the prophecy.

Roland is the only one of the four protagonists who keeps his faith in Elidor all along. After successfully saving his siblings from the Mound of Vandwy, Roland is no longer a timid young boy, but has become more decisive and courageous. His experience in Elidor has made him embrace the other heroic identity that he strongly resisted before. Since then, he firmly believes in his heroic destiny and faithfully performs the mission predetermined by the prophecy. In other words, now he is more of the saviour of Elidor than "Roland Watson, Fog Lane, Manchester 20." This may help explain the tension in his relationship with the other protagonists after coming back to the ordinary life. As discussed above, both Nicholas and David choose to live in the present without being disturbed by Elidor or manipulated by the prophecy. However, Roland's continuous obsession with the Elidor affairs and his insistence in convincing others to think in the same way make himself a shadow of Malebron, the king of Elidor, in the secular world. This severely unsettles his siblings, who would rather avoid discussing this topic with him. It seems that although having physically got back to contemporary reality, Roland is still mentally immersed in the epic chronotope. His identification with the world-view of the epic chronotope, embodied as his obsession on actualising the prophecy, is the primary cause of his isolation from people around him who prefer to live in the open-ended present. As the title of the first chapter "Thursday's child" implies, Roland is the only "Thursday's Child" of Elidor who chooses to spiritually live in the absolute past.

Helen is almost silenced throughout the story. Her attitude towards Elidor is pure escapism. She refuses to discuss anything about Elidor with anyone, and never intends to figure out what really happened. Like her parents, totally ignoring the abnormal phenomenon is her way to mentally protect herself from the anxiety induced by the

clash of conflicting world-views. As can be seen, the four protagonists in *Elidor* each holds a particular attitude towards Elidor. It seems that getting back to the modern society, to their present life, is more than just a simple switch of place for the children. More important, they are encouraged to investigate and re-examine the grand narrative of the epic chronotope through the lens of modern reality and based on their divergent personal experiences. In other words, the child protagonists of Garner's *Elidor* are given the freedom to question the authority of the epic prophecy. They are also given the freedom to choose whether they would like to accept the foretold other identities as the saviours of Elidor.

David Rees, in his reading of Garner's works, suggests that *Elidor* shares the basic plot structure of Lewis' Narnia stories. He states that:

> In *Elidor*, as in the Narnia stories, four rather uninteresting children are taken to lands ruined by the powers of darkness, which need the children to help restore them to their former grandeur. Was Garner attempting to rewrite Lewis, using the same idea for what he thought were better ends? Or was the parallel less conscious? The answer is not clear. (1979: 284)

Whether *Elidor* is a conscious rewriting of the Narnia stories is not a concern of my study.[27] However, my reading of the work still responds to Rees' doubt, because I have revealed the fundamental differences between these two works in the aspects of spatiotemporal configuration and the characterisation of the collective actants. It is indisputable that both stories contain such epic elements as grandeur and heroism. While these elements run throughout the narrative of the *Narnia* series and constitute its main theme, they only express, as revealed by my discussion above in this section, half of Garner's concern in *Elidor*. What is more significant for him is the collisions and interactions of epic elements and events with the quotidian "reality" of modern, material world. As he vividly describes his method of fantasy writing,

> The Modern, material world is the effective setting for Fantasy. An arbitrary time in a never-never-land softens the punch. For example, if we are in

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[27] In fact, Garner strongly denies this assumption and he is always at pains to, as Butler observes, "put blue water between himself and Tolkien, and indeed C. S. Lewis" (2006: 26). Garner (1970) makes it clear that he "loathe[s] the *Narnia* books . . . [and] that Lewis does not write fantasy the way [he] write[s] it" (18). However, this is only the author's own understanding and interpretation of his work. Since the author can no longer control the meaning of a text, his denial cannot declare the intertextual readings void.

Eldorado and we find a mandrake, then OK, so it's a mandrake: in Eldorado anything goes. But, by force of imagination, compel the reader to believe that there is a mandrake in a garden in Mayfield Road, Ulverston, Lancashire, then when you pull up that mandrake it is really going to scream; and possibly the reader will, too. (1968: 591)

Also, as revealed above, Garner employs heteroglossia (See Section 1.2 for the definition of this term) when shaping the images of the collective actants in *Elidor*. This marks that it is another deviation from the Narnia stories, because in Narnia, the child protagonists are mainly encouraged to identify with the absolute world-view of the epic chronotope (that is embodied as the authority of Aslan), hence increasingly act like one person. Susan Pevensie is an exception, but her unusualness is criticised.

One more point needs to be clarified before I end this chapter. The novelisation of the epic chronotope does not imply an elimination of the epic chronotope or the world-view it represents. The main aim of this process is to break the boundaries to the maximum degree possible and makes the epic chronotope accessible for the examination, interrogation and interpretation of human practices. It thereby enlivens the epic chronotope and inserts into it more possibilities and meanings without stifling the originally predetermined one. Therefore, in *Elidor*, through the voice of Roland, the world-view of the epic chronotope is preserved, but simultaneously mingled with and challenged by other voices. This juxtaposition and mutual interactions of multiple voices are the very characteristic of the novelistic chronotope. Through such "novelisation" process, the spatiotemporal anchor of the fantasy work *Elidor* is moved from the somewhat nostalgic absolute past to the heteroglossic and open-ended present.

Based on this, I consider the rather abrupt and ambiguous ending of *Elidor* to be a finishing touch. Unlike the coronation of the heroes in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the child protagonists in *Elidor* do not receive such glory or honor at the end of the story, but are, as Catherine Butler observes, left "stranded alone with the broken windows of a slum, with nothing tangible to show for their experience" (2012: 228). While Catherine Butler deems this ending as a somewhat disappointing "brutal demobbing" of the protagonists, my Bakhtinian reading sees it as another reflection of the inconclusive, open-ended world-view of the novelistic chronotope. This is because

this unfinished ending leaves the story open to the further investigation of readers whose diverse interpretations from multiple perspectives may insert another layer of "heteroglossia" to the whole story.

In Summary

Taking the *Narnia* books, *The Dark is Rising* and *Elidor* as focused texts for detailed explanation, I have examined in this chapter the varying embodiments of Bakhtin's concept of the epic chronotope in modern children's fantasy works. My close reading of the selected fantasy works reveals that the canonical epic chronotope described by Bakhtin is not only preserved in the world construction of modern children's fantasy works; its possibilities in application are also broadened when it is brought into different modes of interactions with the represented quotidian reality. The epic chronotope encapsulates one form of the fantasy chronotope that is characterised by an easily discernible demarcation between the fantasy and the "real." In other words, readers can easily distinguish the "marvellous" (See Section 1.1.1 for Todorov's and Jackson's definitions of this term) epic fantasy world/realm embedded in the mythic past from the textual "real" world that basically mimics the everyday world of experiences. This binary relation between the fantasy/the marvellous and the "real"/the mimesis is, however, transcended in the fantastic time-travel chronotope, another possibility of the fantasy chronotope, that I am going to discuss in the next chapter. Concentrating on a play of the linear, chronological order, the time-travel chronotope features other realms located not in the distanced, self-contained secondary worlds, but anchoring in our everyday world of experiences. They are presented as embodiments of the historical past or personal memory; that is, the "realness" in another dimension. The time-travel chronotope thereby normally contains the least fantastic or magic elements.

Chapter Three

The "Fantastic" Time-travel Chronotope

3.1 Introduction

Instead of constructing the self-contained epic other realms that are, to one degree or another, distanced from the primary quotidian reality, the time-travel chronotope – another mode of the fantasy chronotope I am discussing in this chapter – engages in fracturing the textual "real" world per se from inside by breaking down the chronological order. Along with the protagonists' alleged movements in time, the time-travel chronotope juxtaposes the textural past, present and sometimes even future, so that different forms of the "real" converge and intertwine with each other in a complex way. Based on this, the time-travel chronotope anchors itself in the "real" and interrogates any reductive generalisation of the "real" as a unitary, stable and definite concept.

Nikolajeva (1996) claims in her study of the fantasy chronotope that "time and space relations are in fact identical in both secondary-world fantasy and time fantasy, and we can discern the particular features of the genre and its evolution much better if we refrain from the division" (123). In reaching this conclusion, Nikolajeva nominates C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Edith Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet* (1906) and *The House of Arden* (1908) as representatives of the two sub-genres. The limited number of fantasy works included can hardly support Nikolajeva's rather general argument. In this chapter, I question Nikolajeva's view by identifying and discussing the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope, a particular mode of time-travel chronotope in which the act of temporal displacement is intricately intertwined with the "trans-temporal aspect of the psyche" (Hoffman 2009: 111). Through my close reading of the focus fantasy works *A Traveller in Time* (2007)[28] and *Tom's Midnight*

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[28] The 2007 version of Alison Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* published by Jane Nissen Books is used for citation in this thesis. This work was originally published in 1939.

Garden (2008),[29] my discussion will reveal that time fantasy, although it may share some similarities with the secondary-world fantasy in spatiotemporal structure, still possesses its own particular chronotopic characteristics, and these can lead to the thematic dimension that secondary world fantasy works may not be able to cover.

In his study of the narratology of time-travel, Gomel (2009) argues that "time travel requires the equivalence of the past and the future, just as the three spatial dimensions are equivalent" (335). Such equivalence and co-presence of the past and the future then generates a logical paradox: if the time traveler sees the future, then the future must already exist and is thereby inevitable; but with the pre-knowledge of the future, the time traveler also sees the potential horrors and dangers that lie ahead, which means that he/she is fully capable of interfering with the future events and may take actions to bring about an alternative future. If the future is affected, the question comes back to the starting point of the logical loop: which space-time continuum has the time traveler been to at the very beginning? Where is the future he/she sees?

This logical paradox is described by Gomel (2009) as "a Möbius strip of causality" (335). It is intrinsic in the time-travel chronotope which, as just mentioned, is an enclosed time loop where the past, the present and the future are no longer presented as a linear, irreversible progress, but are equivalently juxtaposed and intimately interactive with each other. This unique temporal structure, which is termed by Stanislaw Lem (1985) as "chronoclasms" (140), effectively paralyses the linear causal chains and overturns the dominance of the chronological order. However, along with this promising feature, the intricate Möbius strip of causality that is intrinsic in the time-travel chronotope also make it daunting and sometimes even risky for authors to use in story-telling. By saying it is daunting, I mean the "chronoclasms" and consequent causality paradox of the time-travel chronotope may threaten to undermine the coherence of the narrative, which is normally guaranteed by a clear, coherent causal

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[29] The 2008 version of Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* published by Oxford University Press is used for citation in this thesis. This work was originally published in 1958.

chain threading though it. Therefore, adopting the time-travel chronotope in story-telling is like planting a bomb. Its full development would severely break the coherence of the narrative and unravel it into discrete pieces.

Owing to this, some literary works on time travel, especially the ones whose implied readers are children exemplified by Edith Nesbit's early time-travel fantasy works *The Story of the Amulet* and *The House of Arden*, flinch when facing this potential threat. They thereby retreat into an acquiescent consensus that time travelers, though privileged to experience the past or the future events, cannot in any way interfere with or make changes to these events. This holding back is just the "risk" that I was referring to in the last paragraph. Although it helps authors effectively skirt around the intricate causality paradox generated by the "chronoclasms," it also inactivates the time-travel chronotope into what Stephen Kern (1983) describes as a frozen "space-time continuum" (206). In this frozen "space-time continuum," every moment and every event are determined and immutable (206). Based on this, Gomel argues that this "castrated" version of time travel dramatises "a philosophy of determinism, which implies that there is only one 'true' narrative of history, and thus the seeming open-endedness of the future is an illusion" (2009: 335). Since the future alternatives are foreclosed, the time-travel chronotope loses its possibilities and vitality, and is degraded into a completely finished and dead time loop. It then essentially bears little difference from the epic chronotope which is, as discussed in Chapter Two, also characterised by determinacy and conclusiveness. Due to this, in such frozen space-time continuums, the reversing of the unidirectional progress of time becomes far less subversive than it can be. This relatively conservative version of the time-travel chronotope – though it preserves the coherence of the narrative – may render the individual actions futile and impotent to generate any essential change to the grand narrative of history. In Gomel's words, characters "strangled" in this static and dead time loop are "hollowed out by the impossibility of meaningful action" (346). They are more the passive spectators than real participators in the inevitable events.

Apart from this "castrated" time-travel chronotope, there are other forms of time-travel chronotopes presented in both science fictions and fantasy works, which tactfully

wrestle with the causality paradox of "chronoclasms." However, these two genres achieve this by different means and at different degrees. To be specific, science fictions exemplified by Stephen Baxter's *The Time Ships* (1995) adopt a more direct approach. They look outwards and build an intricate "multiverse," that is a multi-dimensional space-time continuum that resembles a vector field pointing radially away from the origin. In this "multiverse," "alternative history" or "counterfactuals" are embedded in "the infinity of possible time-streams coexist[ing] side by side" (Gomel 347-49). By this, the dominant monologue of the grand narrative of history together with the linear causal chain that it relies on are undermined and neutralized.

However, these features of the time-travel chronotope presented in science fictions, such as the infinite splitting of time-lines, the existence of counterfactuals, the resulting fragmented narrative and the subject's loss in the labyrinthine "multiverse," are not commonly used in time-travel fantasy works created for children and young adults. Only some postmodern children's literature exemplified by Pullman's fantasy work *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), Jones' magic realism work *Chrestomanci* (1977-2006) series and Pratchett's science fiction *Discworld* (1983-2015) series touch upon the "multiverse" structure in spatiotemporal arrangements. I will further discuss this point in Section 4.2. One reason behind this may be that these subversive features in chronotopic construction are generally considered, though not theoretically verified, too challenging and disturbing for child readers to understand. This may draw forth the power relationship issue between the adult author and child readers that is intrinsic in children's literature, an issue that has already been well studied in previous criticism. Examples are Jacqueline Rose's often-cited book *The Case of Peter Pan, Or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984) and Beatrice Turner's more recent reinterpretation of the classics in her article "'Which is to be master?': Language as Power in Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-glass" (2010). In her article, Turner discusses the image of child as innocence, inexperience and a lack of knowledge created by adult authors – the arbiters of language – in the literary texts, and the unreachable, unspeakable "real" children remaining beyond the text. Therefore, it is not necessary to repeat their arguments in this present study.

As briefly mentioned above, time-travel fantasy works have their own particular way of wrestling with the "chronoclasms" and the consequent causality paradox. Instead of looking outwards into the "multiverse" for answers, time fantasy works turn inwards and build what I name as the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope. By adding the word "fantastic," I am referring to Todorov's definition of "the fantastic" and Jackson's later development of this term as a literary mode rather than a genre. As already introduced in Section 1.1.1, according to Todorov, the fantastic exists between the purely marvelous (events are supernatural, superhuman, magical) and the purely uncanny (events are understood to be strange because of the deceiving mind of the protagonist) (Todorov 1973: 32, Jackson 1981: 31). As shown in the diagram below,
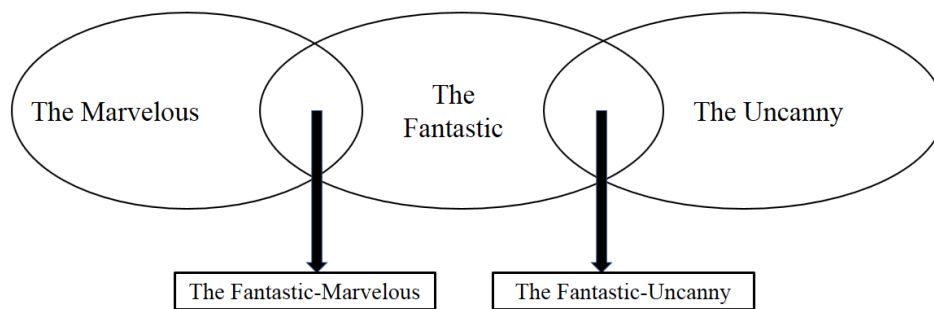
Fig. 4

Following Todorov, Jackson suggests defining the "fantastic" as a literary mode/form "between the marvelous and the mimetic, borrowing the extravagance of the one and the ordinariness of the other" (Jackson 1981: 35). The fantastic thus "exists in the hinterland between the 'imaginary' and the 'real'" (35), an indeterminate and fluid liminal space that subverts unitary vision and introduces confusion, hesitation and alternatives.

Todorov's and Jackson's interpretations of the term "fantastic" is the theoretical basis of what I refer to as the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope. In this particular mode of time-travel chronotope, the temporal displacement is either embedded in or intertwined with the characters' inner worlds which are embodied as memory, daydream, dream, hallucination, madness, etc. It is self-evident that people's inner worlds are not governed by chronological order, but by the "inner Chronos" that,

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according to Eva Hoffman, "can bring back the past in a flash, or shuttle from the present to a notional future, or meander in other, less easily charted directions" (2009: 84). Its analogy to the "chronoclasm" temporal structure of the time-travel chronotope always entails "epistemological uncertainty" (Jackson 1981: 29) in readers and sometimes even the protagonists themselves, as to whether the time travel truly happens or if it is merely the product of the subjective mind. This ambiguity is vividly presented in both of the focus texts – Alison Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* and Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* – selected for detailed discussions in this chapter, but more intense in the former. Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* is chosen for reading the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" form, which strongly hints at a "naturalisation" of the character's temporal displacement experiences as having subjective and psychological origins. However, paralleling with this, some dissonances also paradoxically scatter across the story, which necessitate a supernatural explanation. These dissonances problematise and resist the foreclosure of a straightforward psychological interpretation that otherwise would reduce the fantastic time travel experiences into merely the delusion of a fevered mind. As shown in the following details in the text:

At the outset of *A Traveller in Time*, Penelope, the heroine as well as the autodiegetic narrator, reports that every detail of her extraordinary time travel experience was "clear as light" (Uttley 2007: 13). This statement seems to suggest a supernatural explanation. However, immediately following this, the heroine switches to narrate how, from an early age, she got intense excitement and satisfaction by imagining things and inventing tales, "certain that they were true" (15). This detail then surely casts doubt on the reliability of this first-person narrator. When retrospecting her eccentric temporal displacement, Penelope's perception of the past of Thackers constantly and ambiguously sways between seeing, hearing, imagining and dreaming, which makes it quite difficult to judge whether she truly experienced the time travel or it was just another fascinating tale invented by her imagination. Sometimes, she is quite sure that the journey she had taken "was neither dream nor sleep, . . . but a voyage backward through the ether" (85), while other times even she doubts that it was just a dream journey. As she said, "Sometimes I must have made the journey unknown to myself,

when I slept. I, who had always been a dreamer, seldom awoke in the long nights at Thackers" (129). What seems to support this psychological explanation of the time travel is that, for most of the time, Penelope's journeys back into the past end up with either her waking up from a deep sleep or revival from faintness. However, even so, readers still cannot ignore the "sweet and disturbing scent" of the musk planted in the garden of another age that comes back with Penelope to the present (85); the wrist-watch that stops ticking in the past and Penelope's plausible description of her corporeal experience of the past. Based on this, interpreting Penelope's time travel experiences as mere products of her imagination would be too arbitrary and not totally convincing. The attitudes of Penelope's mother and Aunt Tissie towards the heroine's unusual experience, far from helping to clarify the nature of Penelope's temporal displacement, further intensify its uncertainty and ambiguity. While they all believe that Penelope has inherited the special ability in "second sight" from their ancestors, they also regard her as a dreamer, who has just imagined too much. As can be seen, the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" form, on the one hand, seemingly persuades the readers to consider the character's time travel as pure daydreaming; but on the other hand, it also paradoxically contains latent dissonances that do not fit into such stable and determinate generalisation. This equivocation on the very nature of the temporal displacements generates hesitation in readers and, to some extent, encourages alternative readings.

Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* is selected to discuss the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" form, in which time travels are to a large extent presented as having truly happened, violating the realistic/physical spatiotemporal laws. Even so, it is still different from the time-travel chronotope in its "pure marvellous" form in which characters' temporal displacements are inscribed as unequivocally generated by some supernatural power embodied as magic or pseudo-scientific time machines, as exemplified by Nesbit's time fantasies and Jones' *A Tale of Time City* (1987). Like the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" form I have just discussed, the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" form also defies the unitary and coherent generalisation. By mingling characters' inner worlds with their time travel experiences, it also leaves some unsolved dissonances that resist the straightforward

supernatural reading and that insinuate the possibility of psychological explanation. In *A Traveller in Time*, there is an overlapping of the identities of the narrator and the time traveler, a plot design which suggests that the so-called temporal displacements may be just the imagination of the story-teller. However, in *Tom's Midnight Garden*, an impersonal omniscient narrator is used. Its relatively objective and distanced voice tends to persuade readers to accept the supernatural nature of Tom's time travel experiences.

In *Tom's Midnight Garden*, traces of the supernatural power acting on Tom's time travel experiences are more easily observable than that in *A Traveller in Time*. For example, the backyard for dust bins and car parking changes into a lively garden every night when the grandfather clock strikes thirteen; The pair of skates that is taken back into the past by Tom can paradoxically coexist with their past incarnation. Although the nature of the midnight garden is revealed to be Mrs Bartholomew's dreaming memories, however, how Tom enters her dreams and leaves traces in her memory can only be explained by resorting to the intervention of some supernatural power. Even with these strong evidences, there are still some points which suggest a reasoning of Tom's temporal displacements as psychological effect. For example, the use of memory and dream as the spatiotemporal carrier of the time-travel chronotope strongly implies an alternative possibility of naturalising the time travel experiences as pure products of subjective mind. Beyond that, Tom's invisibility and incorporeality in the garden, together with his eventual exclusion from the garden again throw doubts upon the supernatural nature of his time travel.

As can be seen, through the intertwining of the time-travel chronotope and the inner worlds of characters, an ambiguity as to whether the protagonists' time travel experiences are supernaturally or psychologically generated is brought into the narratives. This equivocation problematises the nature of the time travel and characterises the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope that interests me here. It also places this particular time-travel chronotope in an indeterminate and less definable grey zone between the pure "marvellous" and the pure "uncanny," where the supernatural and psychological readings no longer absolutely exclude each other. The

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"fantastic" time-travel chronotopes characterised by this equivocation skillfully steer around the challenge of the causality paradox intrinsic in the "chronoclasms." This also differentiates some time-travel fantasy works from most time-travel science fictions which, as discussed above, are more inclined to solve this paradox by virtue of pseudo-science, a specific embodiment of the pure marvellous. Gomel, in his discussion of time travel, considers the time-travel chronotopes that "self-consciously engage with the psychological implications of the chronoclasm" as conservative and less subversive (2009: 347) compared with the labyrinthine "multiverse" constructed in science fictions. However, based on my discussion above, I suggest that the intertwining of the time-travel chronotope and the inner Chronos – which stimulates an epistemological hesitation on the nature of the time travel per se – is a pertinent reflection of the very nature of the "fantastic" as argued by both Todorov and Jackson.

It is also necessary to clarify that the narrative technique of explaining eccentric happenings as the character's dream or imagination is also present in some classic children's fantasy works such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1965) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). The difference is that in Carroll's works, the naturalisation of the fantasy realms is achieved by Alice's waking up from a dream. This plot design completely removes the potential for a supernatural explanation, and leads to a clear-cut either/or logic which underpins a coherent, unified and authoritative single way of seeing.[30] Different from this, the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope, by introducing the ambiguity on the genesis and nature of the time travel, tends to build a complementary relationship between the supernatural and psychological interpretations of the fantastic. Through the blurring of the rigid demarcating boundary and the dissolution of the separating categories, the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope advocates an inclusive both/and logic. It subverts the coherent, single-viewed monological interpretations and encourages a kind of "dialogue" or "wrestling" between alternative readings. This "dialogue" then subdivides the

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[30] In *Through the Looking-Glass*, the either/or logic has less control over the narrative. This is reflected in the relatively open ending of the story, with Alice, waking up from a nap, recalling the speculation of the Tweedle brothers, that everything may have been a dream of the Red King. Alice might herself be no more than a figment of the Red King's imagination, just as he might be hers.

"fantastic" time-travel chronotope into the "fantastic marvellous" and the "fantastic uncanny" modes, as exemplified by the two focus texts I have briefly discussed above. In these two specific modes, either a psychological or a supernatural interpretation is implied by the narrative as taking precedence over, but not excluding the other.

So far, I have described the particular characteristics of the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope from a macroscopic view. In Section 3.3 and 3.4, drawing mainly on Bachelard's (1958) idea of the oneiric house and Soja's (1996) concept of the thirdspace, I will give detailed examinations of its two embodiments in the concrete contexts of the focus time-travel fantasy works. Based on this, in Section 3.5, drawing on Heidegger's explication of existential/ontological temporality, I will go further to discuss the divergent understandings of the temporality of childhood presented by different modes of time-travel chronotopes.

3.2 Restoring the Connectedness of Time and Space

As to the specific spatiotemporal characteristics of the time-travel chronotope, existing studies are heavily weighted towards a separate analysis of the temporal axis, including the interpretations on the anti-chronological operations of time and their metaphorical implications. To be specific, some critics demonstrate how the special configurations of time in time-travel fantasy works incarnate the non-linear, disordered and fragmented psychological time of the characters. For example, in her article "The Treatment of Time in Four Children's books," Lesley Aers (1970) describes the temporal structures presented in E. Nesbit's, Philippa Pearce's and Alison Uttley's time-travel works respectively, including their connotations and the protagonists' responses to their temporal displacement experiences. In *From Mythic to Linear* (2000), Maria Nikolajeva examines the "Kairos" embodied in *Tom's Midnight Garden* as Mrs. Bartholomew's dreaming of her childhood garden. She also discusses how the child protagonists' obsession with the eternity that characterises the mythic time reveals their inner fear of growing up so unavoidably leading to "the insight of their own inevitable mortality" (103-09). In the same book, Nikolajeva also discusses the cyclical temporal structure of Penelope's time-travel experiences in Uttley's *A*

Traveller in Time. She identifies two modalities of the psychological impact on the protagonists induced by the temporal displacements. According to her, the "typically male pattern" is that "the protagonists become morally better, wiser, stronger; that they acquire better chances of coping with their problems in the primary world," while in the female pattern represented by Penelope in *A Traveller in Time*, protagonists tend to experience a split in identity (153-57).[31] Other scholars have focused on revealing the contemporary ideologies in the notion of history that are reflected in the time-travel temporal structures. For example, in "History from Below," based on Raphael Samuel's discussion of "living history," Tess Cosslett (2002) analyses how the perceptions of the past presented in children's time-slip fantasy works echo the recent shift in historical consciousness.

As discussed above, previous studies of time-travel fantasy literature for children and young adults have thoroughly interpreted its anti-chronological temporal patterns and their metaphorical implications. However, to my knowledge, the other equally important dimension of the chronotope that is the configuration of space has been to a large extent overlooked. Since the theoretical underpinning of this present study is Bakhtin's insistence on the intrinsic connectedness of spatial and temporal relationships, my discussion of the specific characteristics of the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope intends to restore the close relatedness of space and time. It therefore commences with an examination of the chronotopic structures of the locales where the protagonists' temporal displacements take place.

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[31] Nikolajeva's argument about the interconnection between gender and time travel experiences is largely developed from her previous differentiation and description of "the male and the female chronotopes" (125-26) in an earlier published book titled *Children's Literature Comes of Age* (1996). Here I use the word "gender", not the biological term "sex", to indicate that the differentiation between masculinity and femininity is made on a psychological and social level. By referring to a "male" pattern of time travel experience, Nikolajeva appears not to use the word "male" in its biological level, but refers to the psychological characteristics expressed by the word 'masculinity', though she does not clarify this in her work. Here I only wish to remind readers that differentiating the male or female pattern of the time travel experiences does not necessarily mean that all boys in time-slip fantasies follow the male pattern, while girls all conform to the female pattern, as masculinity and femininity are socially constructed characteristics that can be owned by both sexes in varying degrees. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding, I prefer to express this differentiation as the masculine and feminine patterns of time travel experiences.

The secondary world fantasy literature is normally characterised by a vertical expansion of space, which is embodied as either a self-contained secondary world existing beyond the represented mundane world or a "parasitic" secondary realm projected onto it. By contrast, space in time-travel fantasy works, in most cases, does not seek such outward extension or overlaying, but turns inward to explore the inner temporal depth of some normally confined locales. The reason behind this, I suggest, is that in such delimited areas, the diachronic operation of time – the intertwining relationship of the past, the present and the future – is "amplified." Therefore, we see the image of old houses – as confined spaces – in many of the time-travel fantasy works, such as the two focus texts of this chapter and also Lucy Boston's *The Children of Green Knowe* (1954). Other embodiments of such confined spaces include the enclosed "boarding school" as exemplified by Penelope Farmer's *Charlotte Sometimes* (1969) and some relatively detached historical places, such as the Globe Theatre in Susan Cooper's *King of Shadows* (1999). These later variants of the confined space where characters experience temporal displacements have no significant differences from the image of the old house which can be regarded as the archetype of such confined spaces in children's time-travel fantasy works. Based on this, I only take the archetypal old houses presented in the two focus texts as examples for discussing the chronotopic features of the confined locales constructed as the spatial carriers of time travels. Another reason for choosing these two texts is that, although both are set in old houses, the interior chronotopic structures of Thackers inscribed in *A Traveller in Time* and Mrs. Bartholomew's big house in *Tom's Midnight Garden* are actually quite different. The former is more isolated from the outside world and is largely immune to the progress of history, while the latter is crowded round with newer, smaller houses and experiences obvious changes under the influence of the prevailing modern way of life. Through close reading, I am going to demonstrate how the specific chronotopic characteristics of such spatial carriers can penetrate into and resonate with the temporal structures of the protagonists' time travels.

3.3 Time-travel Chronotope in the "Fantastic Uncanny" Mode

3.3.1 The Idyllic Chronotope as the Setting for Time Travel

In Uttley's *A Traveller in Time*, Penelope's time travels mainly take place in the country house known as Thackers Farm where her ancestors served the noble family of Babington for generations and have stayed ever since. Thackers, as the spatial carrier of the time-travel chronotope, is described as sitting in a secluded and peaceful countryside surrounded by hills and woods, the natural barriers that insulate this land from the madding crowds outside. In many aspects, as my following discussion will reveal, Thackers takes on the spatiotemporal characteristics of what Bakhtin describes as "the idyllic chronotope" (1981: 224). First of all, according to Bakhtin, the idyllic chronotope is spatially characterised by a single strictly delimited place that is nourished by a kind of unchanging natural surroundings – the native mountains, fields, rivers, forests (225-232). This concrete little spatial corner of the world is always "limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world" (225).

In both the Elizabethan time that Penelope travels back to and the textual present, Thackers is described as such a self-contained, peaceful place away from the bustle of the outside world. In the Elizabethan time, it protects people from the disturbance of the religious conflict between Christianity and Catholicism, from domestic political power struggles and from the naval battle against the Spanish Armada. Although Anthony Babington's attempt to free Queen Mary of Scotland through an underground tunnel threatens to disrupt the enclosedness and tranquility of Thackers, a miraculous heavy snow comes over just in time to cover the traces of digging when this treasonous plan is at the verge of being exposed. In so doing, Thackers prevents the potential infiltration of the investigators from the outside world, an invasive force that would otherwise breach its boundary, undermine its seclusion and imperil people's peaceful life.

In the textual present, Thackers as the home of Aunt Tissie and Uncle Barnabas, maintains its characteristics as a secluded, self-contained and peaceful land located far

away from the bustling capitalist world of London. Although the outside world has entered the mechanised era, in Thackers, carts are still used as the basic means of transportation. Daily life here also remains centred around agricultural production which heavily relies on "the unmechanized nature of idyllic labor" inherited from "the feudal or post-feudal society" (1981: 226-233). This is another characteristic that constitutes Bakhtin's description of the idyllic chronotope. Beyond that, riding, singing and hunting are still people's main recreations after farm work just as they were centuries ago. If we compare the present life of Aunt Tissie and Uncle Barnabas and the life of the people who lived centuries ago in Thackers, no significant changes can be discerned, which to some extent explains the time traveler Penelope's smooth switching between times.

In the aspect of time, Bakhtin suggests that the idyllic chronotope is primarily characterised by a kind of "organic time" (1981: 228) or "folkloric time" (225) that describes the cyclic rhythm of nature (225). This cyclical movement of time is innate in the primitive and unmechanised feudal mode of agricultural production that, according to Bakhtin, normally characterises people's way of life in the idyllic chronotope and that "creates a real link and common bond between the phenomena of nature and the events of human life" (227). This cyclical rhythm of natural time dominates life in Thackers, and it is most pronouncedly manifested in people's labour in both the past and the present life. To be specific, every day, cows need to be milked; calves, hens and pigs need to be fed. Other works such as spreading manure in the field and haymaking need to be done seasonally over the year. With such endless repetitions of its own circles of certain events, the progressive force of history hardly leaves any traces in Thackers. This eternal cyclicity of time also induces what Bakhtin describes as "the unity of place in the life of generations." This means that the idyllic chronotope has the potential of "bring[ing] together and even fus[ing] the cradle and the grave . . . and bring[ing] together as well childhood and old age . . . the life of the various generations who had also lived in that same place, under the same conditions, and who had seen the same things" (225). The unity of place "weakens and renders less distinct all the temporal boundaries between individual lives and between various phases of one and the same life" (225).

This unity of place in the life of generations is also vividly presented in the description of Thackers. According to Penelope's narration, over three hundred years, Thackers Farm has undergone very limited change. The River Darrand has always bubbled through this land, nourishing its people; the inside layout of this ancient house and the field around it have kept almost the same appearance over centuries; many of the aged things such as the warming pan, the giant jar for snow-white lard, the old frying-pan, and the oak table are still in use as they have always been by generations of people. These small objects could even tell some perilous tales about this old house if they could speak, as both Aunt Tissie and Aunt Cicely observe (Uttley 2007: 50, 68). This strong sense of inheritance and preservation pervades life in Thackers and separates this land from the shaping of the progressive forces of history. Another manifestation of this unity of place is the physical appearance of people living in Thackers who are bonded by kinship. Despite a more than three hundred years' gap between them in chronological time, Aunt Cicely could still tell that Penelope is definitely a Taberner from her "dimple in the cheeks . . . the crooked way of smiling . . .the round mouth, and the little twist to [her] eyebrow" (32) which have always been the stamps of the Taberner family. Likewise, in Penelope's eyes, Aunt Tissie in the present life and Aunt Cicely in the past also look so similar that she sometimes confuses them.

Based on my discussion above, I consider Thackers Farm to be an embodiment of Bakhtin's description of the idyllic chronotope. Its spatial enclosedness, timelessness and internal unity make it an antithesis of what Bakhtin describes as "the frivolous, fragmented time of city life" (228) that emphasises change, progress and a perpetual renewal of life.

3.3.2 The "Unlocalised" Idyllic Chronotope as a Literary Illusion

Bakhtin's analysis of the idyllic chronotope sheds light on the discerning of the spatiotemporal structure of Thackers as an enclosed and self-contained space outside of time. Raymond Williams' discussion, in his widely cited work *The Country and The City* (1975), of the image of the pastoral, tranquil and delightful old English country

repeatedly recalled in literary works will be used in this section to reveal the origin and essential nature of this idyllic chronotope. As already introduced above, one of the most significant features of the idyllic chronotope is its innate bond between the phenomena of nature and the events of human life, which is commonly reflected in the unmechanised agricultural production inherited from the feudal or post-feudal society. Bakhtin's description not only highlights the link of the idyllic chronotope to the country way of life, but also gives some clue to the past-oriented nature of the idyllic chronotope. Based on this, Williams' interpretation on the literary image of the old English countryside, the incarnation of the idyllic chronotope that frequently appears in literary works as exemplified by Thackers Farm, can help further clarify this point.

In his study of the literary images of the English country and city, Williams notices that, the country "has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue" (1975: 1). In literary works of different periods, the English country life has always been presented as an embodiment of the lost "good old days" (12), or "the happier past" (43) that exists only in people's retrospect or memory. In his journey of tracing the origin of the purely tranquil, innocent and pastorally delightful country image in English literary history, Williams insightfully points out that such idyllic English country life is actually "unlocalised" in both space and time. This is because as he moves back in time, he is "consistently directed [by the literary texts] to an earlier and happier rural English," so that he could find "no place, no period, in which we [he] could seriously rest" (35). Based on this, Williams suggests that this tracing of the root of such idyllic English country with delightful natural bounty can only lead all the way back to the mythic and pastoral Eden, "the well-remembered garden" (12) where "all things come naturally to man, for his use and enjoyment and without his effort" (31).

This characteristic of being "unlocalised" then generates sharp skepticism in Williams who goes further to interrogate the essential nature of the idyllic rural ideal. Similar to Bakhtin's description of the idyllic chronotope, Williams also finds that the earlier and happier rural England inscribed in literary works always celebrates the patterns of living under "a feudal or an aristocratic order" (35). However, on this point, Williams goes a step further by discerning that what is celebrated here is not "what the country

was really like" (18) under the feudal or post-feudal order, but an idealised picture of it prettified by "a certain way of seeing" that exposes and amplifies only the best side of the old country life, while keeping any miseries, any hard or brutal side of it extracted and concealed (19). This characteristic is clearly shown in Penelope's retrospection of Thackers Farm. Through her point of view, only the best side of country life in Thackers is presented: its peace and tranquility, its closeness to nature and the genuineness of its people. Without any accounts of backbreaking farm labour or natural calamities that may cause large drops in agricultural output, life in Thackers, according to Penelope's description, is always carefree, with the surrounding nature almost providing everything necessary for people to consume and enjoy. For example, the cornfields turn yellow every autumn. The woods offer oak, hazel, dark holly, as well as deer and jays for people to hunt. The Darrand and Dove Rivers supply plenty of fish for people's dining table. As can be seen, presented through the perspective of Penelope, Thackers is to a large extent a variant of the archetypical garden of Eden. As a typical representative of the "unlocalised" rural ideal, Thackers in Penelope's narration embodies, what Williams calls, "a neo-pastoral dream . . . an idealisation of actual English country life and its social and economic relations" (26). The fundamental nature of this "neo-pastoral dream" is then a mental creation, or as Williams put it "a conventional literary illusion" (19) mainly shaped by and highly relying on a certain way of seeing, an idealistic perspective.

Having discerned the nature of the idyllic country image generalised in literary works, Williams then proceeds to discuss the ideologies that induce such literary idealisation. He finds that the literary illusion of the lost old English country with its tranquility, natural bounty and moral values is always "celebrated as an explicit contrast to" the life in the present city (27) which is then commonly generalised as a place with the disturbance of war, the cold practice of usury, the political chaos, and "the utilitarian reduction of all social relationships to a crude moneyed order" (35). Based on this, Williams suggests that the literary reversion to an irrecoverably ordered, uncorrupted and happier old country life under a prettified feudal order can be understand as "a stick to beat the present" (12). It is *retrospect as aspiration*" (42) that is primarily used to express people's dissatisfaction with and their desire to retreat from the present

bourgeois world commonly represented by the industrial and mechanised cities under capitalist orders.

Direct description of the industrial side of London as a capitalist big city does not figure much in Uttley's *A Traveller in Time*, but Penelope's incompatibility with city life and her inner urge to live away from London are clearly indicated. Physically, she feels the rain soaking her to the skin, causing sore throat. The fog chokes her when she fumbles her way to school. Under this environment, she gets one cold after another, until she is finally very ill (Uttley 20-21). Mentally, despite living in London with her family, Penelope is indulged in staying alone and imaging that she is living another life from her own, "in a forest far away from London with birds singing round me [her]" (17-18). Penelope's desire to retreat from her present life in the city is so strong that she pushed her mother's letter to Aunt Tissie deep down into the pillar-box "with a fervent prayer" (22), expecting that Aunt Tissie will accept their request to spend the summer in her country house. Then, immediately after getting a positive answer from Aunt Tissie, Penelope's "sore throat miraculously disappeared" and she became "quite well the very same day" (23). All these details indicate the protagonist's dissatisfaction with the city life in London where, as she complains, it is "always difficult to find a place to think without being noticed and questioned" (22). Along with this, what is also manifested is Penelope's keen aspiration to find a pastoral retreat in nature, far away from the city's fizzing and buzzing.

This aspiration to live a life totally different from her life in London makes the laborious side of the farm work and the realistic concerns of the country folks such as the losses of stock, the light crop, the price hike in raw materials caused by the hard winter (23) totally invisible to Penelope; but they do exist in the discourses of other countrymen. Similarly, in Elizabethan Thackers governed by feudal orders, the social relations between the aristocratic landowners who consume and the populace who produce is also idealised in Penelope's narration as harmonious and peaceful. All the potential class contradictions or conflicts are simply extracted. Beyond this, the typical phenomenon that Williams discusses as "the feast" offered by the aristocratic landowners as a kind of charity to the poor labourers is also inscribed in Penelope's

narration as a "social compliment" (Williams 1975: 33) of the aristocrats' generosity. However, such seemingly generous "feasts", as Williams points out, is a form of "charity of consumption" commonly inscribed as a part of the rural ideal which covers up "all uncharity at work" (31). As he states,

> The charity of production – of loving relations between men actually working and producing what is ultimately, in whatever proportions, to be shared – was neglected, not seen, and at times suppressed, by the habitual reference to a charity of consumption, an eating and drinking communion, which when applied to ordinary working societies was inevitably a mystification. All uncharity at work, it was readily assumed, could be redeemed by the charity of the consequent feast. (31)

All these details mentioned above support my argument that as a typical embodiment of both the idyllic chronotope described by Bakhtin and old rural ideal discussed by William, the idyllic Thackers Farm presented through Penelope's narration is essentially a literary illusion. It is a mental creation that, to a large extent, gives expression to the protagonist's aspiration to retreat from the present bustling city life into primitive peace and tranquility. Based on this, we can already, to some extent, detect the power relationship between the protagonist and the time-travel chronotope constructed in Uttley's *A Traveller in Time*. With the image of the Thackers, the spatial carrier of the time-travel chronotope, mainly presented through and shaped by Penelope's idealistic perspective, it largely acts as an externalisation of the pastoral rural ideal that the protagonist eagerly aspires for. It is thereby subordinate to the point of view of the autodiegetic narrator "I" who holds the power of discourse.

3.3.3 Daydreaming Sheltered by the "Oneiric House"

Based on my discussion above, I go further by arguing that the secluded, self-sufficient and timeless Thackers on which the protagonist projects her rural ideal is an embodiment of the "oneiric house" (Bachelard 1969: 15). The "oneiric house" is described by Gaston Bachelard as a poetic image of a primitive "felicitous" and "heartwarming" space (xxxi, 10). It is an absolute refuge that is engraved by the composite of memory and imagination, or "daydreaming" (5-6) as Bachelard puts it.

In his topoanalysis of the intimate domestic space, Bachelard closely examines the

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poetic depth of the image of the "oneiric house" – also referred to as "the primitive abode" (9) in his discussion – that is generated by the intimate poetic revery of our childhood home, "the house we were born in" (17). By saying "the house we were born in," Bachelard does not refer to the specific and corporeal birthplace, but an archetype of the sheltered refuge, as exemplified by Thackers, with the characteristics of "original warmth" and "material paradise" (7). In it, the protected individuals can "experience a type of repose that is pre-human," and that is "approaching the immemorial" (10). Based on this, the poetic image of the childhood house Bachelard talks about is "imbued with dream values" or "imagined values" which remain even after the house is gone (17). To inhabit oneirically the house we were born in then means more than to inhabit it in memory, to recollect the scattered memories of our birthplace into an objective description, but means living in this house that is gone in memory but recaptured through "poetic daydreams," through a combination of memory and imagination (5-10). As Bachelard states, the "oneiric house" is "a house of dream-memory, that is lost in the shadow of a beyond of the real past" (15). By this, he means that the "oneiric house" is not an indifferent space holding only its positivity, but an inhabited or lived space seized upon by "all the partiality of the imagination" (xxxi) that deepens, augments and even gradually replaces the recollections we have experienced (32). The "oneiric house" is thus a poetic image constituted as a synthesis of the recollected and the immemorial, an "imagined recollection" (32) that transcends our memories of all the concrete houses in which we have found shelter. It retreats all the way back into the primitive and immemorial land of "motionless childhood . . . (with) fixations of happiness" (5-6). In this remote region, memory and imagination are intertwined, each one working for their mutual deepening.

In *A Traveller in Time*, the concrete and corporeal house that Penelope was really born in is located in London. It is a city dwelling where, as already mentioned in 3.3.2, the protagonist finds no sense of belonging and so always dreams of escaping. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard describes city dwellings as "oneirically incomplete" (26), as they "lack cosmicity" (27). According to him, with the houses "no longer set in natural surroundings, the relationship between house and space becomes an artificial one. Everything about it is mechanical and, on every side, intimate living flees" (27).

Echoing this, in *A Traveller in Time*, London as a typical representative of the city image is incompatible with the dream or imagined values that characterise the "oneiric house." It is a place where fairies, an embodiment of the product of the poetic imagination, can no longer live but troop away (Uttley 111); and where the "second sight", which can be construed as a metaphor of the poetic revery, is distained as "moonshine" or "country superstitions" (19). Clearly Penelope's real birthplace in London does not offer a felicitous shelter that allows her to dream in peace. The oneirically incomplete characteristic of the city dwellings also explains Penelope's complaint that in London it is always "difficult to find a place to think without being noticed and questioned" (22).

However, in Thackers, Penelope finds an ideal resting-place for her solitary daydreaming; this enclosed country land surrounded by woods and hills and isolated from the bustling city life resonates with her tranquil solitude. At the beginning of her narration, Penelope discloses her isolation from people around her.

> My sister Alison was older than I and had different interests, and my brother Ian, who was near me in age, was her companion, so I was left very much to myself. I was a delicate girl, and often had to miss school. I was small, too, for my years, and this separated me from the others who were tall and strong. (14)

Though most of time being on her own, Penelope never feels lonely or upset. On the contrary, as she tells readers, she enjoys being alone because she can indulge in inventing tales and pretend that they are true (15-20). This is exactly an example of Bachelard's "poetic daydreaming" which, he explains, can only happen in "the moments of solitude" (Bachelard 16-17) and which "derives direct pleasure from its own being" (6). Thackers, as a spatially enclosed and self-sufficient country house surrounded by nature, provides the tranquil solitude enjoyed and desired by the daydreamer, and thereby offers an ideal natural shelter for Penelope's creative revery. Thanks to this, an intimate bond is formed between this ancient house and the daydreamer, which triggers, as Penelope describes at the beginning of the story, her "voyage backward through the ether" (Uttley 2). Penelope is "attuned to" (106) Thackers, so she understands the language of this old house. Meanwhile, "the house's entire being" also opens up, faithful to the daydreamer (Bachelard 15), seeking to be

inhabited "in its reality and in its virtuality, by means of thought and dreams" (5). By saying that "Thackers is my home, not London" (Uttley 83), Penelope reveals that, instead of her real birthplace in London, she deems Thackers as her childhood home, her corner of the world where she finds a sense of belonging and can dream in peace.

Another point which should not be overlooked is that the first-person narrator "I" in the text is Penelope as an adult. The whole story can also be read as the grown-up Penelope's imagined recollection of her childhood house with promised stability, tranquility, warmth and happiness. So, by narrating Thackers, the adult Penelope is actually delineating her oneiric house that exists "on the very limits of memory, beyond memory perhaps, in the field of the immemorial" (Bachelard 13). Through retrospective daydreaming, which is a fusion of memory and imagination, the adult Penelope oneirically travels back to Thackers, the land that "holds childhood motionless in its arms" (8), "motionless the way all immemorial things are" and finds comfort by "reliving memories of protection" (5-6). This is again reminiscent of Bachelard's viewpoint that, the concept of childhood per se is "certainly greater than reality . . . It is on the plane of the daydream and not on that of facts that childhood remains alive" (16).

Based on the above analysis on the specific chronotopic features of Thackers, I conclude that time travel embedded in such intimate space exemplifies the time-travel chronotope of the fantastic uncanny mode. By reading the protagonist's temporal displacements in such physically and psychologically inhabited space, readers are actually invited to examine the inner topography of the speaking being, as I am going to further discuss in Section 3.5.3.

3.4 Time-travel Chronotope in the "Fantastic Marvellous" Mode

As discussed above, the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" mode is usually understood as conjured and coloured by the protagonist's subjective mind; however, the time-travel chronotope can also be autonomous in itself and out of the control of the child protagonist. The time travelers then, to a large extent, relate to this

chronotope by involuntarily filling in a predesigned position in it. I have already explained in Section 3.1 how this latter form of the time-travel chronotope I am talking about – that is the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" mode – differs from the time-travel chronotope in its pure marvellous form as exemplified by E. Nesbit's early time-travel novels and Jones' *A Tale of Time City* (1987). To avoid misunderstanding, I think it is necessary to reiterate the "liminality" that specially characterises what I have defined as the *"fantastic"* time-travel chronotope. The "fantastic" time-travel chronotope stands in the fluid and ambiguous middle ground between the two opposite drives to either naturalise the eccentric temporal displacement as merely the product of a "restless" mind or simplistically attribute it to some extrinsic supernatural power. Based on this, the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" mode I am discussing here differs from the pure marvellous mode mainly in the "degree," in its "in-between" position on the scale polarised by the uncanny and the marvellous. With a supernatural explanation of the time travel predominating, it does not completely exclude a potential alternative psychological reading which is supported by the uncompromising dissonances that disrupt the absoluteness and generalisation in the production of meaning.

Early in Section 3.1, I have already briefly introduced how such ambiguity and indeterminacy in the nature of the time-travel chronotope are presented in Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden*. Here, through close reading, I am going to show that this ambiguity is mainly caused by the split in the identity of the time traveler Tom, a young boy around ten years old and the "dreamer" Mrs Bartholomew, an old lady in whose memory the midnight garden exists. This intervention of a second perspective, which breaks the unity of the protagonist as both the time traveler and the potential mental "designer" of the time-travel chronotope, is the main difference between the time-travel chronotope presented in Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* and in Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* I have already discussed in Section 3.3.

Since extant criticisms on this Carnegie winning children's classic are great in number, I think it is necessary to clarify at this stage the distinction of my reading of the spatiotemporality of the midnight garden from relevant previous studies. As Maria

Nikolajeva (2000) observes in her study of the work, many scholars such as David Rees, Neil Philip and Raymond Jones have discussed the "*Puer Aeternus*[32]-motif" reflected in *Tom's Midnight Garden* (103). Based on their discussion, Nikolajeva herself deems the midnight garden as a reproduction of Peter Pan's Neverland, a paradise-like "magical *enclosed* garden (a *locus communis* of pastoral)" evoked by Mrs Bartholomew's nostalgic memories (original italics 103), a symbol of lost childhood. Wilkie-Stibbs (2003) interprets the midnight garden as an idyllic, secluded and enchanting space out of time. It offers Tom a temporary retreat, liberation and opportunity for caprice from the confined, ordered, and tedious life in the Kitson's flat that is "compounded by uncle Alan's perpetual appeals to reason and rationality" (90). Margaret Rustin and Michael Rustin (1987) consider the midnight garden recalled by Mrs Bartholomew as an embodiment of the past into which the story projects "a more spacious and humanly connected environment" (34). They also observe the contrast between this "unified, hierarchical, safe" garden close to nature and the "blank and uninteresting suburb of the [textual] present day" (34). At the individual level, while the association of the midnight garden to "a pre-pubertal Garden of Eden" (34) is also perceived in their study, the Rustins additionally suggest that the midnight garden is not a purely idealised pastoral world that symbolises all the positive feelings (35). It is also a "compensatory space" that protects Hatty against the sorrow of bereavement, against her loneliness and rejection by her aunt (28). This is the point where the Rustins think Pearce's midnight garden differs from the classic secret garden portrayed by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911). Despite the differences in specific critical point of view, previous studies have fully discussed the contrast between the converted house in the textual present and the midnight garden in memory. These two chronotopes have been interpreted as embodying several groups of binary oppositions: the "real" and the imagined (or the memory); present and past; urban decay and healing nature; adulthood and childhood; order and freedom; the linear teleology of the masculine time and the repetitive circles of the feminine time, etc.

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[32] *Puer Aeternus* is Latin for "eternal boy." In mythology, he is a child-god who is forever young.

Apart from these neat distinctions, some critical studies observe the "liminality" (Turner 1964: 46) of the midnight garden. Based on Sheila Egoff's definition of the "enchanted realism" (1981: 99), Hamer (2003) interprets the midnight garden as a confined, enchanted and liminal place where "the lines between fantasy and reality become blurred" (para. 3). Drawing on Winnicott's object relations theory, the Rustins consider the midnight garden as "a metaphor of imaginative, dream-like space, [that is] related to [what Winnicott describes as] the space *in between* internal and external reality" (my italics 1987: 36). My reading of the spatiotemporality of the midnight garden is based on but deviates from these extant interpretations. I argue that, compared with the in-between liminal space which suggests a temporary, transitional period between states, Soja's concept of "thirdspace" (1996: 5), that suggests an inclusive "both and also" logic (15), can better reveal the spatiotemporal characteristics of the midnight garden.

3.4.1 Thirdspace Accommodating Logically Paradoxical Timelines

Soja (1996) conceptualises the thirdspace as "a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange . . . [that] can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered . . . to be incompatible, uncombinable" (5). According to him, the thirdspace, as a product of a "thirding"/Othering of the traditional dualistic (material/mental; real/imagined) thinking about space, responds to all simplistic binarisms by interjecting an-Other set of possibilities. It is thereby engaged in disordering, or to be more exact deconstructing, the either/or logic, together with the categorical closures implicit in it. By using the word "deconstruct," Soja emphasises that "Thirding as Othering" is by no means reductionist, in that "the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives" (5). Given this, Soja's concept of the thirdspace is rooted in an open, inclusive and creative "both/and also . . . " logic. It radically rejects the misguided purification and simplistic dichotomisation that, as he observes, have long restrained spatial thinking (20). It has also contributed to open up more alternative possibilities for our spatial imagination.

The midnight garden constructed by Pearce, as my following discussion will reveal, is a concrete exemplification of such open, inclusive thirdspace that combines several groups of polarised opposites. To begin with, different from Nikolajeva's (2000) and Wilkie-Stibbs' (2003) interpretations, I observe that time in the midnight garden moves both unsequentially as Tom perceives it and in a linear, chronological order as Hatty experiences it. Nikolajeva (2000), in her reading of the text, suggests that the time in the Kitsons' flat and in the midnight garden exemplify the binary opposition of the "chronos," the chronological time, and "kairos," the mythical time (105). Wilkie-Stibbs (2003) conceives the dreamtime of "liberation and caprice" activated by Mrs Bartholonew as existing in the fissure of the "ordinary" time dominated by a linear teleology. It is, she argues, manifestly unsequential and "out of joint," which recalls Kristeva's idea of "woman's time" that embrace repetitive cycles and eternal recurrence of the nature (93). These readings also seem to be supported by the narrator's (and also Tom's) comments on the difference between time in the Kitsons' flat and in the garden, as shown in the extract below:

> In the Kitsons' flat Time was not allowed to dodge about in the unreliable, confusing way it did in the garden – forward to a tree's falling, and then back to before the fall; and then still farther back again, to a little girl's first arrival; and then forward again. No, in the flat, Time was marching steadily onwards in the way it is supposed to go: from minute to minute, from hour to hour, from day to day. (Pearce 98)

On the one hand, it is convincing that life in the Kitson's flat incarnates the linear, regulated movement of time that demands strict causality and rationality. However, on the other hand, I think the general view of the time in the midnight garden as being direct opposite to the chronological, ordinary time is problematic and needs further interrogation. By saying this, I am not trying to challenge or reject the arguments that the midnight garden embodies the mythical time and women's time. What I mean is that both Nikolajeva's and Wilkie-Stibbs' claims tell part of the story. Time in the midnight garden is, as I am going to discuss, more ambiguously configured.

It is through Tom's point of view that the unsequential movement of time in the midnight garden is given most attention and emphasis. However, apart from the overt

violation of the chronological order experienced by Tom, we also should not ignore the fact that among all the trips taken by Tom to the garden, only two incidents are obviously out of sequence in Hatty's time. One is the appearance of Hatty as a very young recently orphaned child and the other is the storm which fells the fir tree on the night before Hatty's wedding. Apart from these, all the other visits, especially the later ones, actually unfold in a linear and chronological order. This is also reflected in Hatty's gradual growth out of childhood innocence into adulthood maturity, an obvious fact that only Tom is reluctant to face. Another detail which also indicates such developmental movement is Hatty Bartholomew's own narration of her last few meetings with Tom in the garden in the final chapter "A Tale for Tom Long." Through her retelling, the incidents that are experienced by Tom as chronologically out of joint are resequenced back into a reasonable linear order. To be specific, in Mrs Bartholomew's retelling, the fir tree is not, "against all the known laws of Nature," lying fallen at one time, and then be standing up again as it was before it fell (Pearce 56-57). It was struck by the lightning and fell down on the stormy night before her wedding when, as Mrs Bartholomew claims, she sees Tom in the garden for the last time. However, in Tom's timeline, this was the first night he sneaked into the midnight garden. Therefore, combining Harry's and Tom's experiences, the movement of time in the midnight garden is paradoxically both linear and out of sequence.

3.4.2 **Thirdspace: The Eternal and Changing Midnight Garden**

In the aspect of spatiality, the midnight garden is both an enclosed, protective Edenic retreat for childhood innocent play, and a place of growth that connects to the more exciting yet potentially threatening outside world of grown-ups. Tom, from his point of view, mainly perceives the midnight garden as an idyllic retreat for childhood carefree and joyous play. However, his subjective point of view is strongly coloured by his yearning for his own garden at home shared with Peter, especially after being "exiled" from it for the quarantine of measles. Although Aunt Gwen's food is a great enjoyment, Tom is still suffocated by the tedious orderliness of the daytime and Uncle Alan's obsession with reasons and rationality. The longing for liberation and company induced by the over-protective, oppressive, but benevolent love of the Kitsons only

deepens his fascination with the mysterious midnight garden existing in the gap of "ordinary" time. When he visits, the garden may be at any time of a day and in any season, indeterminate, unpredictable, but enchanting and pleasant. It is an ideal temporary retreat that gives Tom some breathing space from the regulated and monotonous daytime life in the, what he perceives as, "unwelcoming" modern flat (Pearce 5). Accordingly, onto this solitary land of idyllic beauty, Tom projects his deep need for free play and delightful company. This, to a large extent, leads to his subjective perception of the midnight garden as an eternal Edenic land for childhood innocent play, a happy land that is alienated from both the adult world in the sense of personal growth and the modern industrialised world in the sense of social development. Due to this, the midnight garden symbolises the ideal of eternal childhood in Tom's eyes, for which he even wishes to exchange his time in "ordinary" life (163). However, I am arguing that Tom's point of view, while governed by the partiality of his own desire and anticipation, has actually made himself, as well as the outside readers sharing his perspective, blind to the sense of openness and change that is simultaneously embodied by the garden. These other characteristics of the midnight garden are mainly presented through its real owner, Mrs Bartholomew's, experience and retrospective "revery" of her childhood garden.

By using the word "revery" instead of "dream," I wish to convey that Mrs Bartholomew's retrospection of her childhood home as the garden of the Melbournes is too coherent, plain and straightforward to be classified as the Freudian night "dream" which is normally imbued with compressed, displaced and distorted imaginings. It is, I suggest, more like the conscious revery, or "imagined recollection" defined by Bachelard which, as discussed in Section 3.3.3, denotes a composite of memory and imagination seized upon by the partiality of the dreamer's anticipation. In other words, though both the conscious revery and the unconscious nocturnal dream are essentially forms of wish-fulfillment, they achieve this in different ways. The former is comparatively more straightforward and the latter normally takes a detour through condensation and displacement.

Bachelard (1969) defines the poetic revery or daydream as a kind of "projective

behavior" (12). According to him, through the revery of their childhood homes, the dreamers usually tend to "exteriorize their intimate impressions" (12) and project their inner urges and anticipations onto the image of their oneiric abodes. This helps explain why the childhood homes recollected through the revery of different individuals usually take on such similar characteristics as being confined, secure, felicitous and in natural surroundings. Seized upon by the partiality of the dreamers' anticipations, the oneiric abodes recaptured through nostalgic revery are always presented as comforting and heartwarming spaces. They are the fixations of happiness, the sheltered spaces where dreamers can repose in peace and relive memories of protection. Accordingly, any unpleasant memories of past misfortune, pain or suffering become blurred or are filtered out from the image of the oneiric home. Bachelard gives the following example to clarify this point,

> In the past, the attic may have seemed too small, it may have seemed cold in winter and hot in summer. Now, however, in memory recaptured through daydreams, it is hard to say through what syncretism the attic is at once small and large, warm and cool, always comforting. (10)

Echoing Bachelard's interpretation, the midnight garden recaptured through Mrs Bartholomew's nostalgic revery is also coloured by this old woman's longing for her lost but not necessarily happy childhood and her desire for company in the present life. Losing her parents at an early age and unloved by the members of her adoptive family, Hatty actually did not have a happy childhood. She was neglected and isolated. She had no playmate, and was frequently teased by her unsympathetic brothers. Hatty's great terror of her intolerant aunt who would scold her for any inappropriate behaviour also stripped her of a sense of security. Every time she thinks of or is reminded of her aunt, Hatty feels startled and anxious. She would "jump up in a frightened flurry" (Pearce 87) and immediately behaved herself as requested. However, in Mrs Bartholomew's retrospection, these painful and traumatic childhood memories have left very limited traces. For most of the time, especially in the first half of the novel, we read only Hatty's happy play in the idyllic garden with Tom, who logically should not appear in old Mrs Bartholomew's real childhood. He just accidentally enters her life and is thereupon woven into a part of her oneiric garden. Beyond that, the perfect weather in the garden (except for the last stormy night before Hatty's wedding) can be considered as a reflection of Hatty's cheerful state of mind. For most of the time, the

garden was in beautiful summer, exuberant and sunny. Even if it came to the winter season, it was "not a dreary, grey mid-winter, but one shining with new fallen snow" (159), which was just as perfect as the summer weather had been. As can be seen, the midnight dream garden has been endowed with some virtues that may not have objective foundation in Mrs Bartholomew's real childhood. It is thereby more of an idealised retreat recaptured through a fusion of memory and imagination and hence an externalisation of the dreamer's inner anticipations. Due to this, the oneiric garden can always be what the dreamer wishes it to be, which is embodied in the text as an idyllic, felicitous sanctuary that protects, comforts and heals.

So far, I have demonstrated how Mrs Bartholomew's dream garden incarnates Bachelard's oneiric abode. However, as I mentioned above, the midnight garden perceived through Mrs Bartholomew's point of view bears complicated ambiguity and paradox. Some other details shown in the image of the midnight garden render it more than an Edenic primitive abode. To be specific, while the midnight garden is inscribed as a walled happy land for children's innocent, carefree play, it is simultaneously open and connected to the outside world through a secret hedge tunnel that leads to the river Hatty loves. The river is described as flowing all the way downstream, passing the city of Castleford, Ely and finally running into the sea. Its "endless journeying" through the outside world draws Hatty like a charm (Pearce 85-87). Beyond this, as discussed above, the midnight garden is, for both Tom and Hatty, a temporary retreat from the suffocating and tedious adult world. It is a symbol of the ideal land of perpetual childhood, free from the control and interference of grow-ups. Even so, the midnight garden is simultaneously also the very place that witnesses Hatty's gradual but definitely observable growth. A general view of Tom's intermittent visits to the oneiric garden can reveal that throughout their innocent play in the garden, Hatty, whose time marches forward faster than Tom's, is steadily getting mature both physically and mentally. She gradually grows from a girl playing with an invisible friend, into a young lady who is beginning to come out of her solitude, make new friends, try out social pleasures for adults, and finally fall in love. By this, I suggest that the midnight garden, while on the one hand isolated from the adult world, is on the other also an adult forming or nurturing place. It is thereby not a reproduction of the completely closed

and fascinating Neverland that traps its inhabitants in their perpetual stagnation and keeps them from moving on in their real lives. Mrs Bartholomew's oneiric garden is an open space that seeks a compromise between the concomitant but opposite drives to on the one hand perpetually remain in the Edenic childhood garden, and on the other, to leave behind the garden and grow into maturity. It, in essence, shares the paradoxical nature of the grandfather clock placed in the hall that, as Wilkie-Stibbs points out, not only tirelessly ticks from minute to minute, acting out the ordered time that marches steadily onwards, but also paradoxically chimes out the irregular thirteen o'clock that connotes the timeless side of the oneiric garden (2003: 91).

My analysis above has demonstrated that Mrs Bartholomew's oneiric garden, which is described as both enclosed and open, perpetual and changing, is an embodiment of Soja's thirdspace that challenges and disrupts stereotypical dichotomies. However, this is still a preliminary practice of Soja's thirdspace, because it mainly tentatively combines the originally polarised binary opposites without going further to create or restructure new alternatives. Some postmodernist fantasy chronotopes I am going to discuss in the next chapter, such as the ever-expanding multiverse and the carnival chronotope, present more subversive new possibilities that bring Soja's innovative expression of the "both/and also . . . " logic into full play. At this moment, the importance lies in revealing how time travels, when embedded in spaces of divergent qualities such as the oneiric house and the thirdplace, demonstrate different literary contemplations of the temporality of childhood.

3.5 The Thirding/Othering of the Construction of Childhood

Alison Waller discusses two main categories of time-travel fantasy works based on how the narrative past is constructed in them. These two categories are: 1) time-travel works with a "positive" past that is inscribed as a receptacle of "history lessons" from which protagonists learn how to "move on" in their own times; 2) time-travel works with a relatively "negative" past in the sense that it is portrayed as an embodiment of the "ancient danger" that threatens to trap protagonists in its primitivity and timelessness (Waller 37). Henceforth, these two ways of constructing the temporal

displacements in time-travel fantasy works will be referred to as the temporal displacement of the "developmental" mode and of the "stagnant" mode.

3.5.1 The Binarism in Re-presenting the Past

The time-travel works of the developmental mode designated by Waller actually resonate with Humphrey Carpenter's remarks on the typical plot of post-war British children's books. Carpenter concludes that this typical plot usually concerns "one or two children who stumble across some feature of history or mythology which concerns their own family or the place where they are living or staying . . . the children become drawn into it, usually at their own peril, and in consequence achieve some kind of spiritual, moral or intellectual growth" (Carpenter 1985: 218). Although this stereotypical plot development is, as Carpenter states, typical in postwar children's books, it comes into being far earlier than that, which can be traced back to Edith Nesbit's works such as *The Story of the Amulet* (1906) and *The House of Arden* (1908). It is actually still "recycled" in some modern works such as Penelope Lively's *A Stitch in Time* (1976) and Susan Cooper's *King of Shadows* (1999). In these time-travel works, the protagonists' temporal displacements are created primarily out of a preaching impulse and are normally "future-oriented," following the order of the developmental theory. In stories, the plot normally shows that the time travelers returning to the past gain the knowledge that they are supposed to know to move forward into a supposedly "improved" future. Therefore, we see the stereotypical ending over and over again in which the protagonists who are given the privilege to enter and experience the past can never remain in it, but must eventually leave it and move on in their own time.

Under this conventionally developmental framework that demands progression, the past is to a large extent re-presented from a present viewpoint and simultaneously for the present. With the past used as "a constructive educational tool" (Waller 2009: 39) that serves a specific and predetermined preaching purpose, the authors' way of reconstructing the past is essentially very similar to a detective's interpretive work of the past described by Valerie Krips (2000). According to Krips, a detective's recollecting and reordering of the past aims not at "bring[ing] back the past literally or

even replicat[ing] it, but rather to . . . re-cognize it, to place it within an interpretive framework that will wrest meaning from what appears . . . as random and piecemeal" (54). In other words, this form of recollection and interpretation of the past works in such a way that it purposefully selects some fragmentary shards of the past and knits them into a new intelligibly unitary narrative by imposing on them a specific interpretive procedure. It is thereby a "reworking" or "replotting" (54) of the past for the present, during which the past is to a large extent treated as a passive object manipulated by the totalising and generalising interpretive power. This power is specifically embodied in the time-travel children's fantasy works as the principle of the developmental theory that demands a linear and "ordered" progress. Based on this, I suggest that the past reconstructed in children's time-travel fantasy works of the developmental mode mainly functions as a "preprogrammed production line" for shaping socially and culturally recognised adult identities. It is, in this sense, re-presented for and thereby subordinate to the present. Beyond this, I think it is also worth noting that the alleged "improved" future implied by the term "developmental" is normally embodied in the texts as the protagonist's gaining of some prescribed qualities. These qualities are the prerequisite of a socially recognised adult identity that is stable, coherent, but simultaneously predetermined and foreclosed. Based on this, I suggest that it is problematic to assert that the time-travel stories of the developmental mode are "future-oriented," if the future means open and indeterminate with alternative possibilities.

In contrast to such romanticised use of the past as "positively" educational is, according to Waller, the other way of constructing the past in children's time-travel fantasy works in which the past is presented in a somewhat "negative" sense as perilous or even malevolent. It seeks to ensnare the protagonist and prevent him/her from "any further development into maturity and futurity" (Waller 2009: 40-45). I have, in this study, further divided Waller's "negative" mode of presenting the past into another two categories, based on their divergent effects on characterisation. One relatively apparent form is the straightforward re-presentation of the past as "dirty, sordid, tough and hazardous" (40). Instead of being an elevated and idealised educational space, the narrative past turns to corporealise the moments of peril in social,

communal or domestic history. These perilous moments are commonly embodied in the stories as, for example, catastrophes, diseases, death or some terrible conspiracies. Hazardous version of the past, with, in most cases, harsh conditions of life, are hardly attractive or desirable, in that they challenge the time travelers both physically and psychologically, threatening their safety and even seeking to eventually devour their existence in the narrative present. Works with the past constructed in this way include Robert Westall's *The Devil on the Road* (1978), David Almond's *Kit's Wilderness* (1999), and Margret Shaw's *Walking the Maze* (1999). However, although in these works the narrative past, as discussed above, is not presented as positive or instructive in itself, but rather as perilous and disturbing, its impact on characters, I suggest, actually varies little from that of the romantised "positive" past constructed in the developmental mode.

Margret Shaw's *Walking the Maze* is an example of how the two modes similarly affect characters. In the course of her temporal displacements to the past, to the world of the Wolsingtons at Caffelmeade, the heroine Annice Campbell witnesses several creepy scenes: a big fire that almost burns the garden to the ground; fieldmice with their babies smothered in the nest; two girls of the Wolsingtons', Flora and Rosie, one crippled by a bad fall and the other drowned in a pool with big water-lilies. As can be seen, the narrative past, no matter whether really experienced or a product of Annice's imagination, is portrayed as disturbingly depressing, eccentric and hazardous. Even so, there is no substantial difference between this other way of presenting the past and the humanistic way of characterisation discussed above. In other words, the developmental and progressive framework still dominates. As the ending chapter of *Walking the Maze* indicates, Annice's hardly joyous time travels to the past eventually help her understand the great danger of being overwhelmed by Caffelmeade, an embodiment of the past processed and coloured by immoderate childhood "dreaming." Borrowing Aunt Madge's metaphor in the story, if "dreams are like bottled wishes" (Shaw 162), Annice finally realises, after all the disturbing experiences, the importance of putting the cork back to the bottle and her responsibility to choose how she sees the world and "judge what is true" (164). So she decides to let go of Caffelmeade, walk out of isolation and be reconciled with her real friends in her present life (164). This,

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I suggest, reflects that the plot has come full circle back to the standard ending of the developmental mode. These seemingly opposite ways of portraying the past discussed by Waller have been, in essence, serving the same educational purpose. The difference might be that one of them uses "positive examples" to directly shape the characters, while the other takes a detour to teach by warning. It lets the protagonists initially experience the "negative" consequences of deviating from the "developmental framework" before accepting the need to progress into a socially recognised, but rather stereotyped adult identity.

Apart from this straightforward way of portraying the past as perilous, the past re-presented as enchanting and delightful can also be, I suggest, unwittingly and implicitly dangerous. One example is found in ancient Thackers presented in Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* as an embodiment and externalisation of the heroine's past-oriented idyllic ideal, dreamy and alluring, but also primitive and unlocalised. By seeking to trap the protagonists permanently in its prelapsarian innocence and its endless cycle of experiences, the past constructed in this specific mode not only deviates from the developmental framework in a real sense, but also threatens to completely subvert its structure. However, this is realised at the cost of the psychological well-being of the protagonists. In order to subvert the developmental drive in characterisation, it has gone to the opposite extreme by stranding the child protagonists permanently in a state of innocence and stagnation, restraining them from any possibility of change.

3.5.2 Existential Temporality: The Unity of Three Ekstases

Heidegger's explication of existential/ontological temporality may help further clarify this point. In his influential work *Being and Time* (1962), Heidegger expresses his dissatisfaction with both the ordinary perception of time as made up of a series of "nows", and the metaphysical views in which time is interpreted as an object ready to

be known, or an entity that is "present-at-hand"[33] in his terminology. He thereby groundbreakingly explores the primordial meaning of time from an existential or ontological perspective, and reconceptualises time in relation to human existence. Heidegger points out that, ordinarily, time is perceived as a pure and infinite sequence of "nows," with the future as a "'now' which has *not yet* become 'actual' and which sometime will be for the first time" and the past as a "now" that is "no longer" present (Heidegger 373, 376). However, this perception of time is for Heidegger a non-self, inauthentic account of time. This is because in ordinary time exemplified by clock time, "each instant or moment is conceived of as an independent, actually existing point along the line of duration" (Watt 2011: 117). This endless chain of isolated moments, Heidegger asserts, is foreign and insignificant to human being's [34] existential experience. Time conceptualised in this way "is treated as something present-at-hand" in which "significance must be added on to temporal events rather than constituting their very nature" (Gelven 1989: 224).

Heidegger then moves on to reconceptualise the past, the present and the future, the three traditional indexes of time, into what he names as three "ekstases" of temporality in terms of human existence. Among his three ekstases of time, "*Zu-kunft*" (the future), which is translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "coming towards" (Heidegger 1962: 372) is the most important for Heidegger's analysis. By this term, he conveys that to have a future means to be aware of "the self as anticipating, expecting, looking forward toward, as feeling oneself going toward, etc" (184). What Heidegger means here is that the future is insignificant to Dasein's existence, if it simply signifies, in

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[33] Heidegger calls the modes of being for entities other than "Dasein" (Heidegger's terminology for human beings as "determinate entities") "presence-at-hand" or "occurrentness" (*Vorhandenheit*) and "readiness-to-hand" or "availableness" (*Zuhandenheit*). As Wrathall and Murphey summarise in "An Overview of *Being and Time*", entities that are "ready-to-hand" "offer us ready, intelligible modes of use. Most of the things we encounter in everyday life are available. We are familiar with them, and they afford or solicit actions from us in response." Entities that are "present-at-hand" then "are the entities we discover when we abstract from our practical engagement with the world and take up a reflective or theoretical or scientific attitude toward it . . . [they] are defined not by the roles they play in our world but by their inherent physical properties" (Wrathall 5).
[34] A more accurate term for human beings in Heidegger's theory is Dasein, a German word that means "being there" or "presence." Heidegger uses the expression Dasein to refer to the experience of being that is particular to human beings.

any abstract way, a "not-yet now" waiting for Dasein's "arrival on the 'path of time,' as if time were a street on which the objects of our future occurrence already lay in waiting" (184). The future is meaningful to Dasein in the sense that it is one of the ways in which Dasein exists. It is, to be exact, a particular way of existing in which Dasein is aware of and comes toward its own possibilities. In Heidegger's terms, the future is existentially or ontologically meaningful because of Dasein's possibilities, or say because of Dasein's ability to anticipate, to "be ahead of itself" towards its possibilities.

The second in importance to the future among the three "ekstases" is the past, the "*ich bin gewesen*" as Heidegger puts it, which is translated as "I-*am*-as-having-been" (373). Through this term, Heidegger claims that the past is meaningful to Dasein only if it is essentially tied to human existence. Deviating from the ordinary understanding of the past as a "no-longer" now, Heidegger redefines this notion as referring to Dasein's "state-of-mind" (*Befindlichkeit*) that "discloses or reveals the *fact* that Dasein is [not simply a Being-ahead-of-itself, but also has already been] in a world" (Gelven 1989: 79). To be more specific, with the term "state-of-mind" signifying Dasein's awareness of the limits of his actuality, his "thrownness" (Geworfenheit) into a "ready-made" world in which his being is "to some extent determined by conditions and circumstances beyond [his] control" (78), Heidegger stresses that Dasein, although having his own possibilities, cannot live any way he wants to live. He is also aware of the limits of his actuality, the unalterable about his existence. Therefore, as indicated by Heidegger's insistence on "the totality of Dasein's structural whole" (Heidegger 1962: 370), Dasein does not simply exist as Being-ahead-of-itself, but also a "Being-ahead-of-itself-already-being-in-a world" (375).

The present, which has usually been deemed as the only focal point of significance in traditional theories of time, is defined as of the least significant in Heidegger's three ekstases (Gelven 1989: 186). Before introducing Heidegger's insight into the present, I think it is necessary to point out that actually few other theories about time which make the present "the focal point of significance" as Heidegger refers to it, see the present as merely the knife-edged now, the fleeting "nexus between the arriving future

and the departing past" (186). In most cases, the present is considered to be significant in the sense that it is indeterminate, open and imbued with possibilities. An example could be Bakhtin's accentuation of the "presentness" or "eventness" in his interpretation of time that, as already referred to in the discussion of Chapter Two, values a sense of openness, indeterminacy and alternative possibilities (or the "surplus" in Bakhtin's terminology) carried by the present moment. As can be seen, the present that is endowed with significant importance is in most cases essentially future-oriented. Its stress and priority of possibilities actually resembles Heidegger's conception of the future. The only slight difference might be that Heidegger interprets the future from an existential or ontological perspective, and thus focuses on Dasein's possibilities, while Bakhtin's discussion is mainly centred around the alternative possibilities of events that should be open and inconclusive. The term "present" is existentially described by Heidegger as "making present" (*Gegenwart*). By this, he shifts his interpretation from "seeing the present as that in which something occurs, [the fleeting "nows" completely foreign to one's existential experience], to [Dasein's] actual carrying out of an action" (Gelven 186). Dasein's activity of making present then reflects his being alongside and being encountered by entities within the world. Based on this, Heidegger regards "making present" as "the *primary* basis for [our] *falling* into the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand with which we concern ourselves" (Heidegger 376). By this, Heidegger considers his interpretation of the present, which is an indication of Dasein's falling into the everyday world, to be the least important of his three existential ekstases.

The most significant part of Heidegger's existential/ontological interpretation of Dasein's being in time for this present study is his stress on the unity of the three ecstases introduced above. He outlines the existential totality of Dasein's being in time in the following structure: "the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)" (Heidegger 237). By this, he means that along with what he calls the "authentic existence," that is Dasein's "own" unique selfhood, presupposed by Dasein's "coming towards" its possibilities through projection, there is always Dasein's "state-of-mind", that is the awareness of his "throwness" into a world with conditions and

circumstances beyond his control. To put it simply, apart from our possibilities, we also exist with the awareness of the limits of the actuality that we are thrown into. Then "to be authentically one's self", to have possibilities and the freedom of making choices, does not, as Heidegger stresses, "imply a detachment or isolation from others in the world, or from Being-in-a-world . . . for the self, after all, even the authentic self, is by nature *with* others and *in* a world" (Gelven 170). Given this, the "authentic existence" of the self that is, according to Heidegger, grounded in Dasein's freedom to come towards its possibilities (the phenomena of the future) is not incompatible with Dasein's awareness of existing as a "thrown entity" already Being-in-the-world (the character of having been). Their relationship is both contradictory and coexisting. Heidegger compresses this lengthy expression of the existential totality of Dasein into one single term: "care" [*Sorge*] (Heidegger 237). To care, then, means to be ahead of oneself, already involved with entities within the world.

3.5.3 Thirding/Othering in the Construction of Childhood

In light of Heidegger's insistence on the unity of the three ekstases and the existential totality of Dasein's being in time, I am now going to explore, on a deeper level, the underlying existential temporality revealed in the two opposing modes of temporal displacements that I have already introduced in Section 3.5.1. To begin with, the time-travel stories of the developmental mode, in which the past is reconstructed mainly as an educational tool for "producing" socially and culturally recognised adult identities, are essentially "past-oriented" instead of "future-oriented", if being examined from the angle of Heidegger's existential temporality. It is because with the intention of assimilating children into a stable, foreclosed adult identity that conforms to the social expectations, this way of constructing the temporal displacement, instead of encouraging the protagonists to realise their own possibilities, constrains them in the predetermined and dominant form of the personal development which demands the progression out of the innocent childhood into the experienced adulthood. By this, I suggest it has over-emphasised one mode of Dasein's existential temporality as "having been" "already-in-a-world" with conditions and circumstances beyond its control, and consequently breaks the unity of the three ekstases stressed by Heidegger.

To be more specific, for time-travel works of the developmental mode in which a "positive" past is reconstructed to monotonously guide protagonists into a socially recognised and predetermined "improved future", the priority is to make the protagonists realise that they have already been "thrown" into a public world with norms and principles that they are expected to follow. Such excessive and one-sided emphasis on Dasein's "throwness," on its awareness of the limits of its actuality, has to a large extent excluded the openness of the future, or the alternative possibilities that an anticipating, expecting self can come towards. Therefore we see the child characters in time-travel works of this developmental mode always end up with taking on some similar moral or intellectual qualities that a socially and culturally recognised adult identity demands. Seen in this way, the temporal displacements to the past which are designed for some predetermined didactic purposes only function to make the protagonists totally occupied by the world they have been thrown into, while their awareness of self, the ability to "stand out" and go towards their own possibilities are, to a large extent, sacrificed. Such a "non-self-mode" of existence, with Dasein losing its self-awareness and completely abandoning itself to "the impersonal prattle of the 'they' [Das Man]" (Gelven 1989: 69-70), prioritises the past existentially defined by Heidegger as "already-being-in-a-world" by eliminating Dasein's ability to come towards its own possibilities, its future which, as mentioned above, is deemed by Heidegger to be the most significant one of his three ekstases.

In contrast to such over emphasis on Dasein's existentiell[35] as already being-in-the-world, the other form of temporal displacement tends to completely isolate the protagonists from the context of the world that they are exposed to. In works with this form of temporal displacement, the protagonists are inscribed as being stranded in an ideal of eternal childhood, a primitive and immemorial past that exists only in nostalgic revery. Taking *A Traveller in Time* again for example, as the story goes on, Penelope's indulgence in her solitary daydreaming, in the idyllic past of her oneiric house Thackers, only increasingly deepens her isolation from the narrative "real" world that

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[35] In the work *Being and Time*, Heidegger distinguishes between his two terms "existential" and "existentiell" and uses the latter one to describe an ontic understanding of beings in the world.

she has been thrown into. This is clearly reflected in her gradual emotional alienation from even her own family, the Londoners, whose coming to Thackers is equated with, in Penelope's heart, an intrusion into the timeless tranquility of her oneiric house. She thereby internally deems them not as close family members, but "strangers" speaking "a different language with their high polite voices" who "had no right to be" in Thackers (Uttley 2007: 276, 278). Another detail which also reveals Penelope's insulation from the world is her Platonic love for Francis, a phantom in her daydreaming, which hinders her from falling in love with others in her real life. Therefore, at the beginning of the story, as some critics have noticed, we see Penelope maintains her maiden name Penelope Taberner Cameron. In other words, she still holds fast her childhood innocence and virginity even when she is physically a grown-up. As can be seen, Penelope is deeply stranded in her revery of an eternal childhood that is externalised and corporealised as Thackers, her oneiric house. Like a shadow of the heroine, Thackers spatially shares Penelope's isolation from the outside world and temporally shares her stagnation in a kind of primitive past with its timeless idyllic innocence and endless cycle of experiences. It promises a sense of absolute security achieved, however, by excluding any indeterminate and potentially anxiety-provoking changes.

Given this, I suggest Penelope is not only shut off from the world she has been thrown into, but also from the possibilities that she can come towards. In other words, this traveler in time exists as neither "having already been in a world" (the existential past) nor "being towards its possibilities" (the existential future), two most significant ekstases of Heidegger's elucidation of Dasein's existential temporality. Without the awareness of both her "fallenness" and possibilities, Penelope exists, I suggest, in what Heidegger describes and simultaneously criticises as a chain of endless and undifferentiated "nows." Based on this, I consider this specific form of temporal displacement – by alluring and trapping the protagonist into a primitive, ideal past – is perilous. It not only excludes any future-oriented changes and possibilities, but also secludes the protagonist from the "real" world he/she has been thrown into. The acute existential anxiety entailed by this, I assume, is one reason why the "stagnant" mode of temporal displacement is not commonly used in the fantasy works created for

children and young adults, a fact also noted by Alison Waller.

Apart from these two seemingly oppositional modes of temporal displacement which, as discussed above, both result in the existential "incompleteness" of the protagonists, there is another way of constructing the temporal displacement in children's time-travel works. This other way of constructing the temporal displacements, by drawing selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories mentioned above, opens a new possibility that has the potential to reunite Heidegger's ekstases. Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* is a good example. I have already explained in 4.5 that Mrs Bartholomew's oneiric garden, as both an Edenic retreat for childhood play and a place of growth connected to the outside world, is one embodiment of Soja's open and inclusive Thirdspace. The "both/and also . . ." logic advocated by this Thirding/Othering of the literary spatial imagination also penetrates into the level of characterisation. It fosters, I suggest, a Thirding/Othering of the binary literary presentations of the childhood as either the lost past that must be grown out of or an idealistic refuge from adult life that disables any possibility of maturation. Again I wish to stress that the aim of this Thirding/Othering strategy is not to obliterate the binary choices, but to make them subjected to a kind of creative reconfiguration in order to open new alternative possibilities. In *Tom's Midnight Garden*, by seeking a reconciliation between childhood and adulthood, Pearce offers such a reconfigurated other possibility to the literary construction of childhood.

To be specific, Hatty's gradual growing out of the garden into the adult world is echoed by the loss of the Arcadian garden, her childhood home, and the conversion of the ancient house into separate modern flats at the textual present. All these indicate that, in the realistic/physical world, "nothing stands still" (Pearce 221), a wisdom Mrs Bartholomew tells Tom near the very end of the story. Through this, Pearce conveys her recognition of the necessity to change for both people and things to accord with the constantly changing social environments and social expectation. In other words, Hatty's maturation, though it brings a sense of loss to both Tom and the outside child readers, also let them realise the necessity to grow up, to integrate into the society. This, I suggest, just resonates with one of Heidegger's existential ekstases that is Dasein's

awareness of its existence as "having-already-been-in-a-world", the awareness of the limits of its actuality. However, as I mentioned in previous discussion, the most significant point that makes *Tom's Midnight Garden* different from the time-travel stories of the developmental mode is the company Tom gives to Mrs Bartholomew in her oneiric garden. By teaching Hatty how to make a bow and shoot the arrows, by following her into the forbidden meadow, by skating with her all the way to Ely, Tom, like a little fairy, brings childhood happiness back to old Mrs Bartholomew, even if only in her dreamland. Through this, Pearce's fantasy work *Tom's Midnight Garden* conveys an idea that growing up not necessarily mean being locked out of the childhood garden.

Likewise, in *Tom's Midnight Garden*, growing up is not equated with the loss of childhood, a misleading commonsense which presupposes the split between childhood and adulthood. The new possibility that Pearce proposes through *Tom's Midnight Garden* is that men can still be the children they were even in their old ages, as childhood is actually never lost, but always a part of us. It makes us who we are, and can always come back to us through recollection, revery, or dream. Therefore, beyond the constructions of childhood as either the lost innocent past that is doomed to be grown out of or a romantic, idealistic refuge from adult life that restrains any possibility of change or development, *Tom's Midnight Garden* exemplifies the exploration of an-other sense of self that is characterised by the reconciliation between childhood and adulthood. Tom and Mrs Bartholomew's hug at the end of the story vividly symbolises the merging of past and present, childhood and adulthood, two groups of concepts that are actually indivisible in the first place. It is also based on this that I claim the "merging" (the hug) of these two characters, with the awareness of both its possibilities and "thrownness," well illustrates the existential totality of Dasein's being in time that primarily requires the unity of Dasein's "being-ahead-of-itself-towards" its own possibilities and Dasein's awareness of "being-already-in-a-world."

In Summary

Taking *A Traveller in Time* and *Tom's Midnight Garden* as focused texts for detailed explanations, I have examined in this chapter what I describe as the "fantastic" time-travel chronotopes. This particular fantasy chronotope intertwines with the trans-temporal aspect of the inner chronos. Based on this, it is primarily characterised by a "hesitation" between supernatural and psychological explanations of the violation of the chronological order. While the operation of time in time-travel fantasy works has attracted more critical attentions, I have in my study restored the close connectedness of time and space by demonstrating that locales where time travels take place also mean.

A Traveller in Time demonstrates the possibility of embedding the time travel experiences in the protagonist's "oneiric house." The dream values that characterise this space primarily suggest a psychological reading of the protagonist's temporal displacements. It thereby exemplifies the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic uncanny" mode. In *Tom's Midnight Garden*, the unity of the protagonist as both the time traveler and the potential "designer" of the time-travel chronotope is disrupted. The intervention of another perspective makes this work exemplify the time-travel chronotope in the "fantastic marvellous" mode, in which the temporal displacement is primarily, but not unequivocally, suggested as generated by the intervention of some supernatural power. Tom and Mrs Bartholomew (Hatty)'s respective spatiotemporal experiences of the midnight garden – sometimes overlapping, sometimes divergent and complementary – render the garden an embodiment of the open, inclusive thirdspace.

Finally, drawing on Heidegger's theory of existential/ontological temporality, I have revealed that in both time travel of the "developmental" mode and time travel of the "stagnant" mode, protagonists are shaped as being existentially "incomplete." I have also explained how the temporal displacements designed in Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* demonstrate a thirding/othering of this binarism by merging the "developmental" and the "stagnant" ways of representing the past. In so doing,

characters in this work illustrate the existential totality of Dasein's being in time. As I mentioned in the discussion of Section 3.4.2, Pearce's midnight garden is still a preliminary practice of Soja's thirdspace. The heterotopian fantasy chronotopes I am going to discuss in the next chapter – such as the ever-expanding multiverse and the carnival chronotope – present more subversive spatiotemporal possibilities that bring Soja's innovative "both/and also . . . " logic into full play.

Chapter Four

The Heterotopian Chronotope

4.1 Introduction

The "fantastic" time-travel chronotope I have discussed in the last chapter is primarily characterised by the Todorovian epistemological hesitation (See Section 3.1 for the detailed explanation). It sits in the liminal area between the uncanny/"real" (the products of the deceiving mind) and the marvellous/fantasy (fantasy events generated by the intervention of some supernatural power). Although the boundary between the "real" and the fantasy is always blurred in the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope, a primary unified "real" world that generally mimics our quotidian reality is still given to readers as a stable referential basis. This stable referential basis is, I suggest, the premise of Todorov's epistemological hesitation. This is because, only by taking the realistic laws and rules as the criteria, can readers judge if a strange event is psychologically or supernaturally generated, or hesitate about this point. To give an example, in *Tom's Midnight Garden*, Hatty left a pair of skates for Tom who, about fifty years later, finds them in his real present. He then brings the shoes back to the midnight garden and skated with Hatty (who wore the exactly same pair of skates) all the way to Ely. The temporal displacement and the doubling of the pair of skates suggest the intervention of some supernatural power, which determines that this event should be categorised as "the marvellous" in Todorov's scale of fantasy (See Fig. 4 in Section 3.1). The reason behind this judgment is that *the realistic laws* can hardly offer a rational or reasonable explanation that can naturalise this overt violation of the linear sequentiality of time.[36] This example demonstrates how the realistic laws function as the stable referential basis, the explanatory anchor, of Todorov's epistemological hesitation.

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[36] If the appearance of Hatty's skates in Tom's real present is also interpreted as a part of Tom's daydreaming/imagination, this fantasy event may be naturalised into "the uncanny." However, this way of reading is too reductive and lacks adequate textual evidences.

This reliable and stable referential basis for "reality" is undermined in the inconsistent, discontinuous heterotopian fantasy chronotopes that I am going to discuss in this chapter. Among the three modes of fantasy chronotopes discussed in this study, the heterotopian chronotope demonstrates the most intricate and the most subversive way of fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements. The term "heterotopia" is coined by Foucault (1989) to refer to a "disordered" space "in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry" (xix). It is, specific to the literary cartography, an inconsistent and precarious space constructed by juxtaposing incompatible worlds – or "sites" in Foucault's terminology – that actualise *mutually exclusive possibilities*. In so doing, the heterotopian chronotope violates the conventional law of "excluded middle" (See Section 1.3 for the explanation of this term) for literary world building, a rule that stresses the intrinsic logicality, coherence and credibility of the constructed worlds. Detailed explanation of Foucault's conceptualisation of the heterotopia will be given later in Section 4.2.3 in combination with the textual analysis for illumination. McHale (1987) in his study of the postmodernist fictions suggests that in a heterotopia, "hallucinations and fantasies become real, metaphors become literal" (45), so that the "real" is placed, borrowing Derrida's typographical "sleight-of-hand", under erasure (*sous rature*).

The three focused texts selected for detailed explanations of the heterotopian chronotope are Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (2008)[37], Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2009)[38] and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2014).[39] The ever-expanding multiverse projected by Pullman in *His Dark Materials* demonstrates a relatively moderate embodiment of the heterotopian chronotope. This multiverse is characterised by a heterogeneous ontological structure. In this structure, a parallax of possible worlds carrying divergent reality templates and mutually exclusive ontological possibilities, are jointly realised as parts of the textual reality. In so doing,

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[37] The 2008 version of Pullman's *His Dark Materials* published by Scholastic Children's Books is used for citation in this thesis. This work was originally published between 1995 and 2000.
[38] The 2009 version of Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* published by Bloomsbury Publishing is used for citation in this thesis. This work was originally published in 2008.
[39] The 2014 version of Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* published by Headline Publishing Group is used for citation in this thesis. This work was originally published in 2013.

this multiverse, as my discussion in 4.2 will reveal, blurs the "ontological" boundary between the "real" and the fantasy, between our world of daily experiences and the projected "other" worlds, and even metafictionally between the different ontological levels in the structure of the text.

The fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements in Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* demonstrate more intense heterotopian chronotopes. In the textual "real" world, mutually-exclusive existents and events are not only jointly realised, but also intensely jostle with each other. This causes the textual "real" world ruptured and dissolved from inside. McHale (1987) describes this way of world-building as self-erasing or self-consuming. It self-reflexively lays bare the "constructedness" of the projected worlds, and, along with it, the "constructedness" of truth and the uncertainty of the very act of telling. Therefore, worlds constructed in this self-erasing way are themselves ontologically indeterminate and "flickering."

What these heterotopian chronotopes show is a polyvalent ontological structure with "no referential basis" (Tally 2013: 151), but only the incommensurable realities and even mutually exclusive possibilities paradoxically converging and intensely confronting with each other in a literal sense. The focused fantasy works characterised by this heterotopian chronotope seem to suggest a retesting of boundaries within children's literature both in terms of subject matter and narrative technique. If, as McHale observes, the postmodernist heterotopian space "is located nowhere but in the written text itself" (1987: 45), fantasy works – by intrinsically foregrounding a subversive play with world-building – offer an ideal platform to bring out its potential.

4.2 The Ever-expanding Multiverse Projected in *His Dark Materials*

The multiverse imagined by Philip Pullman in his renowned *His Dark Materials* demonstrates some characteristics of the heterotopian chronotope. Previous interpretations of this trilogy are abundant and from various perspectives, such as theological and religious studies, intertextual and rewriting studies, feminist studies,

psychoanalytical studies and archetypal analysis.[40] To my knowledge, readings most relevant to this present study on chronotopes are Sarah K. Cantrell's article "'Nothing Like Pretend': Difference, Disorder, and Dystopia in The Multiple World Spaces of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*" (2010); Margaret Mackey's "Playing in the Phase Space: Contemporary Forms of Fictional Pleasure" (1999) and Maria Nikolajeva's article "Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern" (2003) in which the *His Dark Materials* trilogy is chosen as one of her main focused texts for discussing the characteristics of postmodern children's literature.

Cantrell's study examines, in this trilogy, the "space of possibles," an expression that "signifies the multiple potential outcomes that can result from a series of choices" (Cantrell 2010: 303). The daemons of children who can constantly and unlimitedly change shapes according to temper, mood and situation, as Cantrell suggests, are metaphorical embodiments of the "space of possibles." Other embodiments are Lyra, Will and Mary, the main characters, who are portrayed as having "negative capacity." "Negative capacity" is a phrase first used by John Keats to characterise the capacity of the greatest writers (particularly Shakespeare) to pursue a vision of artistic beauty even when it leads them into intellectual confusion and uncertainty (Keats 1899: 277). By saying Lyra, Will and Mary have "negative capacity," Cantrell means that these characters are "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason" (2010: 316). Different from Lord Asriel, Mrs. Coulter and Father Gomez, characters who negate choices and exclude other possibilities, Lyra, Will and Mary have the tolerance and curiosity for mystery and ambiguity, for the unfamiliar other that exists out of the assumptions of normalcy. These characteristics render their very beings the embodiments the "space of possibles."

Cantrell's thought-provoking discussion on the *internalised or inner* "space of possibles," together with "the combination of chance and choice" in identity building inspires this present study. However, since my priority here is a reading of fantasy

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[40] For readings from these perspectives, see *His Dark Materials Illuminated* (2005), a collection of critical essays on Pullman's Trilogy edited by Millicent Lenz with Carole Scott.

spatiotemporal arrangements, especially the heterotopian features presented in the books, I will in my following discussion foreground, in a literal sense, a chronotopic study of Pullman's ever-expanding multiverse. I argue that the projected multiverse itself already embodies an *ontologically unstable space*, or borrowing Keats's terminology, a "negative" space where multiple bifurcating "realities" are jointly and paradoxically actualised.

This particular aspect also differentiates this present study from Mackey's (1999) interpretation of Pullman's "phase space." "Phase space" is a term introduced into literary study by Pullman himself. It refers to "the untrackable complexity of changing systems . . . to serve as a metaphor for . . . the notional space which contains not just the actual consequences of the present moment, but all the possible consequences" (1998: 47). Mackey, by using the term "phase space" in her reading of the trilogy, refers to a broader hypertext system forming and continuously expanding along with the act of story-telling and reading. This large and bristling hypertext system may include, apart from the possibilities actualised in the original story, "things that might have happened in the plot but did not, aspects of characters or incidents that are known to the author or that can be imagined by readers but that are not laid down in the novel itself" (1999: 20). As can be seen, Mackey's discussion is mainly about the reading experience, which is another ontological level that transcends the text per se. This reading experience can actually turn any literary work into a metaphorical phase space. While Mackey explores the productive potential left in the phase space of the story, my study argues that the multiverse projected in the trilogy, that suggests a joint actualisation of all the equally plausible yet sometimes mutually exclusive alternatives, is already in itself an embodiment of "phase space." In other words, this study examines the "phase space" that has already been constructed and presented *in* the story.

Maria Nikolajeva (2003) uses the term "heterotopia" in her discussion of the spatiotemporal features of Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. Although she stresses that "the 'hetero' of the term "heterotopia" emphasises the dissimilarity, dissonance, and ambiguity of the worlds" (144), I wish to point out that her understanding of

dissonance and ambiguity is mainly on an epistemological level. It is therefore not as "postmodern" as she claims, at least not in the sense of Brian McHale's understanding of "postmodernism" (See below). Nikolajeva's detailed analysis of her focused texts shows that she mainly attributes the indeterminacy and ambiguity of the heterotopian worlds to the application of such literary devices as defamiliarisation, the multiplicity of perspectives and the polyphony or heteroglossia. These strategies of mobile consciousness and the parallax of subjectivities, I suggest, are not postmodernist phenomena. They have already been widely used in fantasy world construction throughout the last century as seen in the previously analysed focused texts *A Traveller in Time*, *Tom's Midnight Garden* and *Elidor*. McHale (1987) also designates these strategies as a modernist canon, that foreground an epistemological or cognitive hesitation, instead of an *ontological* one that characterises the postmodernist fictions in the real sense (43-55). To sum up her argument, Nikolajeva resorts to Todorov's definition of the fantastic, which further reflects that she may misunderstand the nature of Foucault's heterotopia. This is because Todorov's epistemological hesitation, as I have explained in Section 3.1 and at the beginning of this chapter, foregrounds the indeterminacy/hesitation in *understanding* and *interpreting* the projected worlds, while the nature of the postmodernist heterotopia is the ontological uncertainty and ambiguity intrinsic in the very structure of the projected worlds. Based on this, my reading of the heterogeneity of the multiverse projected by Pullman is different from Nikolajeva's. In the following discussion, I will explain how Pullman's heterotopian multiverse – characterised by a polyvalent ontological structure that actualises a pluralised "real" – undercuts and transcends Todorov's epistemological hesitation, a theoretical basis that seems to be no longer applicable for understanding the postmodern fantasy chronotopes.

4.2.1 The Polyvalent Ontological Structure

In *His Dark Materials*, space is not organised around a perceiving subject whose potentially "unreliable narration" may foreground Todorov's epistemological indeterminacy. To be specific, protagonists are no longer the only "chosen" ones who have the privilege to step onto other lands. In the three books of the *His Dark Marterials* series, quite a number of living beings, including witches, angels, armoured

bears and, of course, human beings from different worlds, experience crossing the boundaries between worlds. The "looking glass" through which Alice used to vaguely perceive the other realm is broken into pieces. It becomes, in Pullman's work, holes in mid air, which are either cut by the sharp subtle knife or blasted by virtue of some pseudo-scientific energy. Through these holes, anyone can shuttle among disparate worlds. This indicates that fantasy worlds projected in *His Dark Materials* are parts of the textual reality. They are more corporealised and tangible than the phantoms behind the mirror perceived by the eye/I.

Beyond this, a pluralisation of the "real" can also be discerned in this ever-expanding multiverse. With each possible world being a part of the textual real, the multiple world space no longer implies a potential metaphorical meaning as a parallax of consciousness or subjectivity, but literally a parallax of worlds carrying different ontological possibilities. It presents, I suggest, a polyvalent ontological structure in which incommensurable reality templates are juxtaposed. The textual reality is accordingly pluralised, so that both the characters in the text and the readers outside are deprived of a stable and unitary criterion for differentiating the paranormal from the normal, the impossible from the possible. For example, the first book, *Northern Lights*, reveals that in the "reality" of Lyra's world, daemons are indispensible parts of human beings. Even being a short distance apart may cause unbearable pain to both of them. This explains Lyra's extreme shock and confusion when she sees that Will – from another world very much like, but not identical with ours – can healthily exist without a visible daemon beside him. Likewise, Will, who identifies with another reality template different from Lyra's, is no less astonished when he hears Pantalaimon, Lyra's daemon, speaking to him (Pullman 2008: 379).

From a broader view, the discourse time of the entire first book is devoted to the inscription of events happening in Lyra's world. When reading it, readers are required to suspend judgement concerning the implausibility of the narrative with reference to our everyday world of experiences. They thereby accept, through reading, a new set of criteria for normalcy. Such suspension of disbelief and acclimatisation to new world orders is not unknown in children's fantasy works. As a matter of fact, nearly all

fictional worlds projected in fantasy works call for varying degrees of suspended disbelief from readers. In Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the establishment of new criteria for the "real," as I have discussed in 2.2.1, is strategically used as a way to express the author's social, cultural, or political views. However, the particular characteristic shown in *His Dark Materials* trilogy is that in the second book, *The Subtle Knife*, readers who already feel comfortable with the reality template of Lyra's world are drawn back to a world that largely resembles the spatiotemporal layout of their own world. This is quite an abrupt switch[41] of chronotopic background from a half feudal half mythological world controlled by the Magisterium to a quasi-contemporary England. The later encounter of Lyra and Will, protagonists who come from different worlds, only triggers a crash of these two divergent and incommensurable reality templates, hence a face-to-face confrontation between witch, armoured bear, hot-air balloon, Zeppelin and fridge, Coke, car, traffic lights and computer, the hardly compatible groups of images.

Later in the text, Pullman further expands his multiverse by projecting more worlds with other ontological possibilities, such as Cittagazze, a city haunted by soul-devouring Specters; the pastoral but imperiled world of the mulefa, with its trajectory of evolution that "had favoured . . . large creatures with diamond-framed skeleton" (2008: 667); the world of the dead, built by the Authority, where ghosts are miserably imprisoned, and Lord Asriel's Republic of Heaven, where creatures who believe in a different story of Genesis gathered. It seems that the two sequels of the trilogy only complicate the issue of normalcy by interrogating what the first book sets up as natural, and in this way deliberately thwarts readers' acclimatisation to Lyra's world constructed in *Northern Lights*. Also, among all the projected worlds, none of them can be identifiable as the basic world or "anchor" of the text, relative to which the others are metaphorical. No world is implied as less desirable or hierarchically lower than the others either. Borrowing McHale's words to describe this polyvalent ontological structure deprived of a stable referential basis, "there is a perpetual jostling

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[41] Not until Lyra and Will meet each other later in the world of Cittagazze, may readers figure out the spatiotemporal interrelation between Lyra's and Will's worlds.

and jockeying for position among a plurality of simultaneously present worlds" (1987: 142). No world is designated or implied as an embodiment of the unified central "real." This dissolving of the absolute central "real" and the pluralising of the textual reality is the way how Pullman's multiverse decentres Todorov's epistemological hesitation, which is, as discussed in Section 4.1, premised on a stable referential basis.

The decentring of the epistemological hesitation in world construction is also realised through the obliteration of any explanatory frame narrative. In *His Dark Materials*, "dreaming" is not used as a superimposed stabilising frame that tends to naturalise, hence annihilate the paranormal. On the contrary, dreaming is described as an undesirable state that the heroine Lyra strives to get out of by "waking up." In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, we see the eccentric and unsettling experiences in dreamlands fade away into blurry memories of the protagonist at the end of story. Different from this, Lyra's experience in her dreams turn into clearly remembered promises that later get actualised in the textual reality. Thus we read the following clear and firm discourses even in Lyra's dream.

> *"I'm just trying to wake up – I'm so afraid of sleeping all my life and then dying – I want to wake up first! I wouldn't care if it was just for an hour, as long as I was properly alive and awake – I don't know if this is real or not, even – but I will help you, Roger! I swear I will!"*
>
> *"But if you're dreaming, Lyra, you might not believe it when you wake up. That's what I'd do, I'd just think it was only a dream."*
>
> *"No!" she said fiercely, and stamped her foot so hard it even hurt her in the dream. "You don't believe I'd do that, Roger, so don't say it. I will wake up and I won't forget . . . "*
>
> (original italics, Pullman 2008: 641, 650)

Later in the text, Lyra, at the risk of her life, does thrust into the world of the dead to release the captured ghosts and thereby fulfills her promise to Roger in dream. This actualisation of a character's dream in the textual reality, I suggest, is precisely a parody of the strategy of Todorov's hesitation, a strategy which implies that the projected other world may be pure dream or hallucination of the characters, hence an incorporeal embodiment of their anticipations. This strategy of epistemological

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indeterminacy tends to potentially naturalise the fantasy world into a subworld in the mind. By this, it degrades the ontological level of the fantasy world by making it subordinate to the established central real. Deviating from this, Pullman's way of fantasy cartography turns to literally juxtaposing the possible worlds with diverse criteria for reality *in the same ontological level*. In so doing, it obliterates the existence of a homogeneous, unitary and stable "reality."

4.2.2 "Phase Space" Following the Forking-paths Principle

What makes this polyvalent ontological structure a more creative form of fantasy cartography is that, in it, the possible worlds projected are not just peacefully parallel with each other. Neither do they simply in an agonistic struggle that embodies a direct confrontation between the "real" and the fantasy, the normal and the paranormal. The interrelationship between worlds shows some signs of being mutually-exclusive and paradoxical on an ontological level. This, I will argue, not only has the effect of destablising the projected worlds, but also tends to metafictionally lay bare the "constructedness" of the fictional worlds. Pullman's multiverse demonstrates a moderate practice of such self-consuming way of literary world building. This is primarily reflected in the ambiguous and paradoxical inter-chronotopic relation built between the worlds of Lyra, Will and the mulefa, possible worlds for which Pullman has given detailed descriptions.

To start with, in a museum of Will's Oxford, Lyra sees some exhibited caribou-skin furs which are exactly the same as the one she wore during the adventure in the freezing Arctic of her own world. Also, the Samoyed hunters showed in the photogram are the same ones who caught Lyra and sold her to Bolvangar. Even the rope on their sledge "had frayed and been re-knotted in precisely the same spot" (Pullman 2008: 391). All these details seem to suggest a time travel topos, which means that Lyra and Will may just come from the different historical periods of the same world. Some other details also seem to support this inference. For example, in Lyra's world, the telephone is, as it used to be in our (Will's) world, operated by crank; homes are lit with naphtha; Zeppelin is the fastest transportation. However, even so, the heterogeneous inhabitants

of Lyra's worlds – with human beings coexisting with mythical creatures such as flying witches and talking armoured bears – severely defies this simplistic generalisation. Pullman's inscription of people's exploration of Dust or Shadow, whatever the name, in both worlds also strongly implies that these two worlds are independent and parallel in time. Beyond this, in Lyra's world, Texas is projected as a country, not a state; portions of Western Europe and America are called New France and New Denmark; Oxford and London are part of a country called Brytain. As can be seen, the fact that the physical geography of Lyra's world that is, as Maude Hines argues, both "like and unlike our world [or Will's world roughly], recognizable in some aspects and totally unfamiliar in others" (37), only further complicates the chronotopic relation between these two worlds.

Here, I wish to stress that this chronotopic paradox is not induced by how the two possible worlds are perceived or interpreted. It is deeply rooted in the very ontological structure of the projected multiverse. With these two possible worlds being ambiguously implied as both two phases in the evolution of the same world and two self-contained worlds independent of each other, the multiverse imagined by Pullman realises two "bifurcating, mutually-exclusive possibilities" (McHale 1987: 107). It thereby defies the conventional law of "excluded middles" for constructing unified literary worlds and, in so doing, ontologically destabilises both of the worlds projected.

Lyra and Will are also confused by this ontological paradox lying in the interrelation of their worlds and ponder over this issue. For Lyra, Will's world is disconcertingly both familiar and strange, "with patches of poignant familiarity right next to the downright outlandish" (Pullman 2008: 389). She speculates that maybe there is "only one world after all, which spent its time dreaming of others" (391), a statement with a strong metafictional implication. It is, I suggest, on the verge of "denudating" the fact of another ontological level outside the book that the fictional worlds in the text are constructed/imagined objects of the author through fantasy writing. Apart from this metafictional implication, Will's pondering over this ontological paradox resonates with the core thought of Jorge Luis Borges' "The Garden of Forking paths" (1962). In this work, Borges describes the "forking path principle" in narration exemplified by a

classic Chinese novel that intends to get all the possible bifurcations of a system actualised. According to him,

> In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pen, he chooses – simultaneously – all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in their turn branch out and bifurcate in other times. This is the cause of the contradictions in the novel. (98)

In the second book *The Subtle Knife,* this "forking paths principle," characterised by a "tree-like proliferation – or . . . the labyrinth – of the story's potential and actualized happenings" (McHale 1987: 107), is expressed through the discourses of a child. Realising how many tiny chances had conspired to the encounter of Lyra and himself, and simultaneously realising that each of those chances might have gone a different way, Will conceives,

> Perhaps in another world, another Will had not seen the window in Sunderland Avenue, and had wandered on tired and lost towards the Midlands until he was caught. And in another world another Pantalaimon had persuaded another Lyra not to stay in the retiring room, and another Lord Asriel had been poisoned, and another Roger had survived to play with that Lyra for ever on the roofs and in the alleys of another unchanging Oxford. (Pullman 2008: 541)

This is reminiscent of the "phase space" described by Pullman in the literary context that I have introduced above (See the literature review section in Section 4.2 before 4.2.1). If at this stage, the idea of such "phase space" is merely presented through Will's ruminations, later, by projecting another possible world of the Mulefa, Pullman literally actualises such "phase space" in the textual reality. Through the observation of the focaliser Mary – a scientist from Will's world who has crossed the boundary between worlds – the world of Mulefa presents an alternative "route" of evolution divergent from her own world. As she states, the natural selection in the world of Mulefa clearly "favour[ing] enormous trees and large creatures with a diamond-framed skeleton" (Pullman 2008: 667). This convinces her of the existence of multiple worlds parallel in the textual universe: "If her guess about these universes was right, and they were the multiple worlds predicted by quantum theory, then some of them [exemplified by the world of Mulefa] would have split off from her own much earlier than others

[maybe Lyra's world or the Cittagazze]" (667).

This conclusion simultaneously echoes Gomel's description of the intricate "multiverse" which, as I have already introduced in Section 3.1, refers to a multi-dimensional space-time continuum. It resembles a vector field[42] pointing radially away from the origin, a vector field in which innumerable branching and converging pathways jointly realised. Using science fictions on time travel topos as his paradigm texts, Gomel explicates that in a "multiverse," an infinity of possible time-streams bearing alternative history or counterfactuals coexist side by side (2009: 347-349). This constitutes an absolute violation of the linear sequentiality of time. Pullman's "multiverse" has, to some extent, absorbed this forking-paths chronotopic matrix that pervasively appears in science fictions and that is also expressed as scientific hypotheses in the field of physical cosmology. This just reflects the interpenetration of people's perceptions and thinking of space and time across disciplines.

4.2.3 The Moderate Heterotopian Chronotope

Now it is time to repeat the question raised by McHale,

> What kind of space is capable of accommodating so many incommensurable and mutually exclusive worlds?

His answer is:

> A *heterotopia*. The concept comes from Michel Foucault . . . (original italics, 1987: 44)

Foucault (1986) conceptualises the "heterotopia" in his posthumous essay "Of Other Space," by giving six "principles" of heterotopology. Soja, in his study of the thirdspace, comments that Foucault describes the concept of heterotopia "with unsystematic autobiographical enjoyment and disorderly irresponsibility" (Soja 1996: 159). He suggests that Foucault's "frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent" discussion makes it difficult for readers to separate out "ordered surfaces or axiomatic

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[42] This concept of vector field also inspires my understanding of the "unfinalised" possibilities of the fantasy chronotope.

neatness" of the concept (159). However, from another perspective, this inconsistency and incoherence could also be considered as Foucault's "metafictional" practice in his own writing of the disordered heterotopian structure he observes. The ambiguity in Foucault's discussion, no matter intentional or not, has kept the spatial thinking on heterotopias – borrowing Soja's description of the thirdspace – "open and inclusive rather than confined and securely bounded by authoritative protocols" (163).

According to Foucault, one of the principal characteristics of the heterotopia is that it "is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (1986: 25). Foucault likens the heterotopia to a "microcosm" where, as Soja summarises, "many different spaces converge and become entangled, jumbled together" (Soja 1996: 160). The examples of such heterotopia Foucault gives include the rectangle stage of the theatre, the movie screen, the traditional oriental garden and the rug "onto which the whole world comes to enact its symbolic perfection" (Foucault 1986: 26). Here, another point I wish to draw attention to is Foucault's particular stress in his description on the single *real* place where several different and incommensurable worlds are juxtaposed. This emphasis on the "real place," I suggest, indicates that Foucault's conceptualisation of heterotopia is on an ontological level. In other words, the inconsistency and discontinuity that characterise heterotopias are not primarily caused by the epistemological perspectivism, but are intrinsic in the very being of these other spaces. This differentiates Foucault's discussion from Bachelard's phenomenological study of space which, as the former points out, "primarily concern[s] internal space" (Foucault 1986: 23).

Specific to the fantasy chronotope, the ontological instability that characterises Foucault's heterotopia is embodied as the actualisation and juxtaposition, on the same ontological level of the textual reality, of the disparate worlds encoded by incompatible discourses. As already discussed in the textual analysis above, in *His Dark Materials*, the "real" is pluralised. The textual real world becomes a multiverse where incompatible "real" worlds converge and are jointly actualised. This violation of the rule of excluded middle is not on the epistemological or cognitive level. Its subversive power has infiltrated into the existential or ontological structure of the projected worlds.

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As Foucault states, "heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language . . . because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things to 'hold together'" (1989: xix). Specific to the focused text, it is the conventional rule of literary world construction (the rule of excluded middle) that Pullman's heterotopian multiverse tends to challenge and subvert. Since "world" may give a preconception of being ordered and unified, McHale suggests to use "the zone" instead of the term "world," to designate such disordered, inconsistent and paradoxical heterotopian space. "The zone," as he argues, is characterised by a kind of "ontological perspectivism," that is, a parallax of mutually exclusive worlds and realities encoded by incommensurable discourses. (McHale 1993: 51-55).

While *His Dark Materials* trilogy shows features of what McHale would categorise as the "postmodern" way of world building, I suggest that it is still a tentative and moderate practice of projecting the heterotopian zones. [43] This is because, in Pullman's heterotopian multiverse, the head-on collisions among the different or mutually exclusive reality templates seem to be controlled in low frequency and low intensity. Except for the examples of collision already given above, which may be discerned under some scrutiny, for most of the discourse time the disparate worlds projected coexist peacefully, though paradoxically, with each other. It seems that if readers are not observant enough to specially examine the correlation between the projected multiple worlds, the ontological paradox intrinsic in Pullman's "multiverse" may easily be overlooked. Although mutually exclusive versions of reality are juxtaposed on the same ontological level, they are also literally separated from each other, because each reality template is actualised in a relatively independent and unified possible world. Beyond this, the ending of the whole series, which makes the closing of all "windows" between worlds ineluctable and obligatory, may be promising

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[43] Some of Pullman's later works present hesitation between the representation of a world and the anti-representational play of discourses in world building. These works, exemplified by *Clockwork* (1996), foreground the activity of storytelling by amplifying the effect of metafictional strategy in narrative construction, and as such work on a self-referential basis. For more detail, see Jean Webb's "*Clockwork*, a fairy tale for a postmodern time" in *Introducing Children's Literature: from Romanticism to Postmodernism* (2005) co-authored by Deborah Cogan Thacker and Jean Webb.

for readings from other interpretive angles such as anti-escapism or atheism (Lenz 2001: 11). It is less satisfying for me, as it nearly invalidates all the efforts taken throughout the journey to open awareness to multiplicity and "otherness" by both the characters and readers. The drawing back of the opened possibilities in world building is echoed by the fixed shape of the daemon, a symbol of the externalised conscience or soul, after its owner reaches puberty. As argued by Cantrell, children's daemons are embodiments of the "Space of possibilities" that contain boundless and unlimited potentialities (2010: 167). However, it seems to be inevitable, as revealed by the plot, that most of these possibilities will dissipate along with the maturation of children. The daemon, as the externalised subjectivity, will gradually lose his/her "Space of possibilities" and will finally get a fixed form that can tell what sort of person its owner is (Pullman 2008: 122). This presupposition of an unchanging nature and a fixed subjectivity, just as the closed windows between worlds, attenuate the subversive power of Pullman's heterotopian multiverse.

Based on this, the multiverse presented in *His Dark Materials*, to some extent, alleviates the transgressiveness and inconsistency of the heterotopian chronotope. Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, works that I am going to discuss in the next section, demonstrate more intense heterotopian zones. In these more intense heterotopian chronotopes, the bifurcating mutually-exclusive possibilities are not only jointly realised on the same ontological level. They also intensely interact and jostle with each other. In so doing, the textual "real" world – instead of being expanded into multiple versions of incompatible reality – is ruptured and dissolved from inside and placed "under erasure."

4.3 The Carnivalesque Heterotopia Projected in *The Graveyard Book*

In his fantasy work *The Graveyard Book*, Neil Gaiman explores ontological propositions through his particular form of fantasy literary cartography. The most prominent and unique feature of the chronotope constructed in this fantasy work is, apparently, the setting of an abandoned graveyard with a strongly Victorian atmosphere. This is the home of the protagonist Nobody Owens, a living young boy.

Adopted by the ghosts of Mr and Mrs Owens and given the Freedom of the Graveyard, Bod (short for Nobody) is taken care of by the whole graveyard. He lives with the Owenses in their fine tomb where he is perfectly safe and comfortable beneath the earth (Gaiman 2009: 96). Christine Robertson (2011) describes this underground tomb as an embodiment of the "womb-like, enclosed spaces" that constantly make their appearance in children's literature. It "evoke[s] the feelings of warmth, comfort, and security that a child would naturally experience in a happy, loving home" (168). While Robertson's interpretation is convincing, the fantasy graveyard imagined by Gaiman is, I suggest, more than a pure homey space that offers a return to the prenatally comforting sense of security and stability. A specialised and detailed study of the spatiotemporality of this fantasy graveyard can, I would argue, uncover the undercurrent of heterogeneity possessed by this space.

4.3.1 The General Image of Graveyard as a Timeless Heterotopia

In his elucidation of heterotopia, Foucault has already discussed the heterogeneity of the graveyard (or "cemetery" as he refers to it). In the temporal axis, the graveyard demonstrates what Foucault terms as "heterochronies," a concept that signifies the slices in time "when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (1986: 26). To be specific, as Foucault points out, for the individual, the cemetery "begins with this strange heterochrony, the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which [his/]her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance" (26). Such "quasi-eternity" denotes that in graveyards, "time never stops building up and topping its own summit" (26). Such perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time is vividly presented in the particular fantasy graveyard imagined by Gaiman. For example, the ghosts "living" in the graveyard are depicted as coming from different eras, ranging from as early as the time before the Romans to the last funeral that happened just around thirty years ago. Being around these ghosts, Bod, a living boy, has an unusually detailed knowledge of history. He can write beautifully in the style of copperplate and "greet people politely in over nine hundred years of changing manners" (Gaiman 2009: 168,175). As can be seen, time in the graveyard embodies the sort of "heterochronies" that undermine the normally understood concept of the linear progression of time. It

tends to converge all time – past, present, and future – into a kind of simultaneity. Such indefinite accumulation of time in one place also makes the graveyard an all-inclusive archive with historical intensity, like museums and libraries. But it is itself "outside time and inaccessible to its ravages" (Foucault: 1986: 26). It is, in other words, an immobile place that is antiquated, a point that is also reflected in Gaiman's fantasy graveyard through its observable strong Victorian atmosphere.[44]

As to the spatial aspect, Foucault describes that the graveyard has "the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (24). The graveyard is linked to "all the sites of the citystate or society or village, etc," in the sense that "each individual, each family has relatives in the cemetery" (25). It is thereby not merely a space with a vertical accumulation of time, but also a space with a horizontal cohesion of "inhabitants" who were originally attached to different social sites before death. Examples are people of different ages, genders, religions, races, nationalities and social classes. Hence, the chronotopic characteristics of the graveyard are similar to, though not identical with, the chronotope of the road that I have introduced in Section 2.3.3; a minor chronotope with the potential to collapse social distances and converge in one space the most various people and fates. Echoing this, the ghosts inhabiting the graveyard under Gaiman's inscription are from different classes and with different social identities: Mr Owen was the head of the local cabinetmaker's guild, Josiah Worthington a Politian and Baronet, Nehemiah Trot a poet, and Alonso Jones a traveler. However, whatever their social positions were before death, according to the narrator's description, after becoming a member of the graveyard, they are all given "the Freedom of the Graveyard" which strongly implies the equal and democratic environment of the graveyard. This point is also specifically reflected in how the ghosts decide on whether or not the infant Bod should be given the Freedom of the Graveyard. They debate, with all the 300 voices taken into account,

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[44] For detailed discussion of the Victorian atmosphere of Gaiman's graveyard, please see Christine Robertson's "'I want to be like you': Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*," page 166.

and finally decide by a show of hands (Gaiman 2009: 25). This is a vivid allegorical expression of the intrinsic heterogeneity of the graveyard that, as explained above, abolishes social distance and neutralises the set of hierarchical relations that it happens to mirror.

Despite all these heterotopian features suggested by Foucault, the graveyard in general is an immobile space. While indefinitely accumulating time, the graveyard incorporates only cadavers and spirits that effectively inhabit non-time. It is, in other words, outside time and inaccessible to its ravages. Very similar to the minor chronotope of the castle discussed by Bakhtin that is commonly used as the setting of Gothic novels, the traces of time in the graveyard "bear a somewhat antiquated, museum-like character" (Bakhtin 1981: 246). Here time purely and mechanically piles up, establishing a sort of static or inanimate archive, but never really fusing with and flowing in the space as it does in the chronotope of the road. As already introduced in Section 2.3.3, the fundamental pivot of the chronotope of the road is "the flow of time" (244), which facilitates random encounters and contingent events. These essential factors of the road bring collision between originally separated fates. However, in the heterotopian space of the graveyard, instead of such vitality or mobility that can flesh out the space, we can only perceive a sort of lifeless eternality that makes the space undynamic and immobile. Also in the space of the graveyard, the social distances between the "residents" are literally neutralised by death as the ultimate equaliser, but not by chance that "brews" possibilities and "eventness." The particular graveyard projected by Gaiman was precisely such an immobile place before the "ghosts" adopted the living boy. This is clearly reflected in Mother Slaughter's farewell words to Bod, who eventually must leave the graveyard. "There's not much happens here to make one day unlike the next. The seasons change. The ivy grows. Stones fall over. But you coming here . . . well, I'm glad you did, that's all" (Gaiman 2009: 280).

4.3.2 The Fantasy Graveyard Incarnating the "Carnival Laughter"

What Mother Slaughter means is that the coming of Bod has brought the graveyard vitality and mobility. This living boy's being and the gradual growth of his body

"activate" the flow of time in the cemetery, which then enlivens this space that was in deadly stillness and extratemporal stability. In order to get Bod prepared for his future life outside the graveyard, Silas the guardian not only brings fast food to feed the boy, but also functions as a medium connecting Bod and the world of the living outside the graveyard. To be specific, he corrects Bod's use of old English such as "amn't" and tells him more up-to-dated expressions. He also brings alphabet books, a copy of *The Cat in the Hat*, paper and a packet of wax crayons for Bod to learn reading and writing (33). In Bod's eyes, Silas "knew more than the graveyard folk did, for his nightly excursions into the world that was current, not hundreds of years out of date" (61). Scarlett Amber Perkins, the bright, lonely girl whom Bod befriends, is another source from which Bod gets to know the world outside the cemetery. When together, Scarlett "would tell him stories that she had been read or learned, and sometimes she would tell him about the world outside, about cars and buses and television and aeroplanes" (38). Through her, Bod glimpses the modern way of life outside the graveyard, such as how children normally celebrate their birthdays with "cake or candles or stuff" (35), things that Bod has never heard of. As can be seen, adopting and raising Bod has triggered a kind of dialogue between the worlds inside and outside the graveyard. It not only brings a sense of "becoming" to the timeless graveyard, but also makes this space more inclusive, heterogeneous and indefinite on an ontological level. By saying this, I mean the subversive power of this fantasy graveyard goes further than just neutralising social distance; it also penetrates to a deeper level in ways that transgress and obscure the very fundamental boundary between life and death.

To begin with, the Lady on the Grey – strongly implied as the Angel of Death – should be a rigorous, uncompassionate god guarding the border between life and death. However, she is described in the text as the one who, however paradoxical it may appear, encourages the violation of order and the transgression of the boundary. She urges the dead in the graveyard to have charity (24), to adopt and protect the living boy whose life is threatened. Also, Silas, strongly implied as a vampire walking on the borderland between living and dead, natural and supernatural, is respected by the ghosts and given the right of abode in the graveyard. Beyond this, as members of the Honour Guard whose responsibility is supposed to be "protect[ing] the borders of

things" (284), Silas, as well as Miss Lupescu the werewolf, again paradoxically, volunteers to teach and protect Bod, the very being who straddles the border. All this transgressing and obfuscating of boundaries only makes the fantasy graveyard an even more complex, inclusive, and "hybrid" space. It is, compared with Pullman's ever-expanding "multiverse," a more condensed and intense heterotopian chronotope where incompatible ontological possibilities not only converge and parallel. They also fuse with each other, through which more potentialities are produced.

Based on what I have discussed, I suggest that the graveyard without Bod, while a heterotopian space that invalidates social distance and hierarchical distinction, would be of limited difference from the canonical utopian other worlds exemplified by Lewis' Narnia and Kipling's jungle. It would be another embodiment of the sacred or supposedly "better" space that is projected as a reversal of the often unsatisfying textual quotidian reality. However, this simplistic binary opposition in fantasy world imagination is transcended in Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* by the sense of ambiguity and ambivalence that is infused into the fantasy graveyard. This particular fantasy graveyard, with its deadly conclusiveness and timeless stability disrupted by the intervention of a living boy, has the two faces of Janus.

One of its faces is turned toward the past and sanctions the existing order. It uses death, the ultimate equaliser, to deride and degrade the sense of hierarchy in the world of the living. This sense of hierarchy is represented in the text by the Jacks of All Trades, a cut-throat bureaucratic organisation with seemingly civilised members in black suits and ties, who only try to outwit, outlast, and outplay each other. However, apart from this face of negation and degradation, the fantasy graveyard has an other face that looks into the future, renewing and regenerating. Thanks to the ghosts' volunteering to raise a living child, the graveyard, through negotiating with the world of the living, also absorbs its worldliness and its material bodily elements. For example, eating, which is no longer relevant to the ghosts but definitely the basic need of Bod's body, is given detailed description. Thus, we see bananas, fast food, salad and soup being consumed in the graveyard, a somewhat ludicrous, playful but creative montage consisting of conventionally incompatible images. Beyond this, the symbolic meaning of the tomb

of the Owens as also Bod's "perfectly comfortable" home "beneath the earth" (Gaiman 2009: 87) has been pointed out by Robertson in her study. As briefly introduced at the very beginning of this section, Robertson interprets Owens's tomb as the "womb-like, enclosed space" that "evoke[s] the feelings of warmth, comfort, and security that a child would naturally experience in a happy, loving home" (2011: 168). While this interpretation is convincing, it tells only part of the story. It neglects the recasting and regenerating power of the tomb (or womb) as – if observed through the prism of Bakhtin's thinking – "the lasting symbol of the material bodily lower stratum" that "swallows up and gives birth at the same time" (Bakhtin 1984: 78, 21).

In other words, by parenting a living boy, the tomb of the Owens is no longer a "sterile" image, but "conceives." It combines crib and grave, life and death, and in so doing becomes an ambivalent, indefinite but potential thirdspace where the binary extremes meet and fuse. The fantasy graveyard thereby can be considered as an expression of Bakhtinian "grotesque," that is directly linked to the reproductive lower stratum of the body, the fruitful earth and womb that devour and regenerate at the same time (21). Through contact with a material body, the Owens' little cozy tomb becomes a space where "death and decay relate to birth and growth precisely in terms of 'indissoluble unity'" (Renfrew 2015: 138). Its ambivalent, indefinite nature, while defying the unchanging established orders, also generates a liberating and regenerating power. This is also the core of the carnival grotesque image. This renewing power, according to Bakhtin, has the potential of freeing human consciousness, thought and imagination. It may lead men "out of the confines of the apparent false unity, of the indisputable and stable" (1984: 48) by disclosing potentialities of a different world, of another order and a new way of life (49).

Bod's heterogeneous being can be taken as the fruit of this renewing power. He, although a living boy, is given the Freedom of the Graveyard, with which he "can see in the darkness . . . walk some of the ways the living should not travel" (Gaiman 2009: 32). He also learns to "master Fading and Sliding and Dreamwalking" (32), skills that need to be grasped by the dead. The lessons given by Miss Lupescu about ghouls, night-gaunt, the Hounds of God, the solitary types (63) make Bod understand other

creatures out of the living and dead dichotomy, creatures who are in most cases living on the borderlands. His acquaintance with Scarlett, secret trips into the town and short period school days then make him experience and negotiate with the world of the living. Through this, he gets knowledge of the limitations of his own kind, their greed, fear, and vulnerability. As can be seen, the world of the living, the world of the dead, and even the underground world with mythical creatures converge in Bod. The strict boundaries between them are obscured and the interactions between different world views are also intensified. Based on this, I suggest that Bod's anti-categorised, indefinite and heterogeneous being is an embodiment of "the Aleph"[45] through which we can envision Soja's "thirdspace." As introduced in Section 3.4, the creative thirdspace is a "real-and-imagined" space where "either/or" logic is rejected and where seemingly opposing and incompatible elements are strategically combined to reconstruct new alternatives (Soja 1996: 5). It is an extraordinarily open space with an anti-sequential "all-inclusive simultaneity" (57). In it, borrowing Soja's words, "all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear; [it is] also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood, an 'unimaginable universe'" (56).

Bod's coming makes the graveyard an embodiment of such radically open thirdspace where alternative possibilities are brewed. To be specific, the graveyard with Bod is, I would argue, a thirdspace constructed following the principle of "laughter." This is exactly revealed by the inscription "LAUGH" on Mother Slaughter's headstone. This very brief and seemingly absurd inscription has, according to the narrator, "puzzled the local historians for over a hundred years" (Gaiman 2009: 279). The reason behind this, I suggest, is that the historians are not on the right "frequency" to decode and interpret the meaning of "LAUGH." They are not in the right direction in the first place. By treating the word "LAUGH" practically as an individual reaction to some isolated

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[45] "The Aleph" is a "place" projected by Jorge Luis Borges in his homonymic short story. It is depicted as a tiny shining sphere barely over an inch across through which, though paradoxically, the sum total of the spatial universe is to be found. It is, according to the character Daneri's description, "the only place on earth where all places are – seen from every angle, each standing clear, without any confusion or blending" (Borges 1973: 10).

and specific comic event, the historians concentrate on figuring out the exact object that Mother Slaughter is supposed to laugh at. The failure in doing so then causes their long time puzzlement. To fully understand the profound meaning of this "LAUGH", I suggest, a recourse to Bakhtin's elucidation of the "carnival laughter" is necessary.

"Carnival laughter," according to Bakhtin, is "the laughter of all the people" (1984: 11). It is universal and "directed at all and everyone," including the ones who laugh (11, 12). It is also an "ambivalent laughter." It not only derides and degrades "the protective, timeless stability, the unchanging established order and ideology." It also, more significantly, "stress[es] the element of change and renewal" (80). It is thereby, like the carnival grotesque image, a kind of laughter with liberating, regenerating and creative power. In Bakhtin's work, the "carnival laughter" is closely linked to the material bodily principle of the grotesque (53) that I have already introduced in the discussion above. Its topographical logic is "shifting from top to bottom, casting the high and the old, the finished and completed into the material bodily lower stratum for death and rebirth" (81-82). The fantasy graveyard projected by Gaiman is constructed on such universal and ambivalent laughter. On the one hand, as discussed above, it uses death, the ultimate equaliser, to deride and negate the hierarchic distinction and social barriers among men in the world of the living; on the other hand, the universal "LAUGH" of the graveyard is also directed to itself, because it breaks the tradition to give a living boy the Freedom of the Graveyard, and in so doing, obscures the strict boundary between the living and the dead. Apart from this destructive and subversive "mocking" face that negates, the ambivalent carnival laughter also has, as indicated above, a gay, fanciful face. This gay face frees the eyes from the canonical truth and "gives birth to" other possibilities out of the certain taken-for-granted norms and prohibitions of usual life. The ambivalent, heterogeneous and indefinite being of Bod is an embodiment of such alternative possibilities fostered by the carnivalesque graveyard. He is, in other words, an embodiment of the "carnival truth" (45) whose potentiality of projecting another world, another order and a new way of life makes the existing world suddenly become unfamiliar and alien. This point is vividly reflected in the disturbing feeling that strikes Scarlett after she has a full knowledge of Bod's anti-categorised, indefinite and heterogeneous being. She finally chooses to

walk away, forgets and goes back to her stable normal life.

4.3.3 The Destructive and Regenerating Carnival Chronotope

The intense interactions between worlds are not confined in the innermost being of Bod, but also actualised in the textual real world through a literally carnivalesque "Danse Macabre." It takes place in the town square, with the living dancing with the dead, each to each. This festival of dancing with Death, according to Gaiman's inscription, is "a tradition in the Old Town" that happens "when the winter flowers bloom in the graveyard" (2009: 144-145). It only lasts for several hours, or even "no time at all" (151) according to Bod's perception. This echoes Foucault's description of the heterotopia of the festival that is linked to time in its "most fleeting, transitory, [and] precarious aspect" (1986: 26). The Macabray is hence a temporal "ritual spectacle." It is the most straightforward embodiment of Bakhtin's "carnival festival" that is out of the "normal" everyday lives of both the living and the dead. It may, as revealed by the novel, even be out of the memory of the former. During the Danse Macabre, hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions are temporarily suspended. It involves only bodily participation, a special form of free and familiar contact between people "who were usually divided by barriers of caste, property, profession, and age" (Bakhtin 1984: 10). The carnivalesque Danse Macabre thereby offers the living a chance to temporarily take off their social masks, to experience a kind of real "community, freedom, [and] equality" (9). This is a special type of communication impossible in everyday life (10) which is confined by the norms and prohibitions ingrained in our language. Hence, as revealed by Bod, during the Macabray, the living people barely speak, but only sway, smile and dance as if they are in a dream, as if they are seeing themselves from the outside (Gaiman 2009: 146).

Based on this, my reading suggests that with the old tradition as its disguise, the universal "LAUGH" as the core of the fantasy graveyard has permeated the world of the living. It generates what Bakhtin describes as a "nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical . . . second life outside officialdom" (1984: 6). With the Macabray as its concrete manifestation, the carnival or festival laughter creates a temporal heterotopian

thirdspace, a "carnival chronotope" I would name it. In this carnival chronotope, the world of the living and the world of the dead, the hardly compatible binary extremes, are fused. In this carnival chronotope, the subversive power of laugh penetrates to the very basic ontological level to obscure the boundary between body and spirit, life and death, being and not being. In so doing, it undercuts the archetypal ground on which all simplistic binary oppositions seem to stand.

The spatiotemporality of the carnivalesque Danse Macabre and the fantasy graveyard I have discussed above, demonstrates more condensed but more intense form of the heterotopian chronotope. In these relatively limited space, the binary extremes meet, and the mutually exclusive states of being converge, interact and fuse. Varying mainly in degree, both of Pullman's multiverse and Gaiman's carnivalesque heterotopias exemplify what McHale describes as the *"implicit"* way of "self-erasure." By this he identifies an expression that denotes a kind of postmodern literary cartography in which "two or more – often many more – mutually-exclusive states of affairs are projected by the same text, *without any of these competing states of affairs being explicitly placed sous rature*" (my italics, McHale 1987: 101). However, apart from this relatively "implicit" self-erasure that is mainly realised by *juxtaposing and merging* the normally incompatible, there is actually a more direct self-erasing way of literary world building. It sees the presented events or objects in a projected world being *literally crossed out, placed under erasure*. This strategy is described by McHale as the "strategy of explicit 'un-projection'" (101), and it is also embodied in the world construction of postmodern children's fantasy literature.

4.4 The Self-erasing World Projected in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*

Literary world imagination adopting the "strategy of explicit 'un-projection'" normally presents a world of fixed and discrete objects that is, in the first place, established and given, but then taken away. This "un-projection" or self-consuming effect may be achieved through the following specific strategies. For example, "events maybe narrated and then explicitly recalled or rescinded" (McHale, 1987: 101). In much the same way, "projected existents – locales, objects, characters, and so on – can

have their existence revoked," that is placed under erasure (103). "The sequences can be 'retaken,' descriptions can be 'scrubbed' and projected anew" (106). All these strategies, by "realising two mutually-exclusive lines of narrative development at the same time" (108), demonstrate an absolute disruption of linear sequentiality. The crossed out events or existents, though being cancelled by the "retaken," are not physically removed from the text. They are "still legible beneath the cancelation" (100). This means that the erased events or existents continue to function in the text, even while they cannot be admitted. Their existence produces the effect of splitting the projected world, hence destabilises its ontology. Through such "un-projection" and "retaken," these strategies of self-erasure lay bare the "constructedness" of the literary worlds. In so doing, they also bring a metafictive layer of meaning to the stories.

This postmodern self-erasing way of world construction is not commonly applied in children's literature. This may be due to its decentering of the pure representation of worlds and its defiance of the principle of "making believe." In other words, its anti-representational and subversive "play" with the very act of storytelling, and its intentional frustration of readers' expectation for a stable, reliable referential basis, might be considered to be too confusing and challenging for young readers. Nevertheless, children's *fantasy* works provide a good platform for tentatively practicing this self-erasing mode of literary world building. This is because the fantasy elements such as supernatural beings and supernatural power can be used as some expedient, comforting explanations for the paradoxical "un-projection." In so doing, these fantasy elements alleviate, to one degree or another, the subversive and disturbing effect of the projected destabilised ontological structures. Gaiman's fantasy work *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a good example for examining this literally self-erasing way of world imagination.

4.4.1 The Self-erasing Mode of World Construction

In worlds projected by means of the strategy of self-erasure, events "apparently both do and do not happen"; the same event can happen in two irreconcilably different ways (McHale 1987: 106). This irresolvable paradox is vividly presented in the focused text

The Ocean at the End of the Lane. For example, enthralled and incited by Ursula Monkton, a charming, impeccable boarder in appearance, the father of the boarding family nearly drowns his own son in the bathtub. This is only because the boy spoke against his lover and tried to unmask her true nature as a "flea." Successfully escaping from the attic where he was locked as a punishment, the boy runs to the farm at the end of the lane to seek help from the Hempstocks. This is a family of three ladies who claim to be immortal beings with magical powers, and who claim to come from a mysterious old country beyond the ocean (Gaiman 2014: 52, 57). In order to protect the boy from further trouble or harm, Old Mrs Hempstock performs "Snip and stitch," (127) an advanced otherworldly skill that *erases events that have already happened*. It changes the past by "seamlessly" inserting a completely different version of "reality." Old Mrs Hempstock vividly describes the process: "you'd have to cut the edges out exactly, [and] sew them back without the seam showing" (127). By virtue of this skill, Old Mrs Hempstock "snips" off the drowning incident between the boy and his father. She creates another reality in which the father was not angry with or even worried about the boy, but on the contrary happy for him to stay overnight with the Hempstocks. Accordingly, when the parents drove late at night to Hempstock Farm, their intention is not longer to take the boy home by force or give further punishment, but merely to drop off his toothbrush. However, although the father's almost filicidal behaviour is "snipped" and "the scrap of fabric" that carries this event burned (133), it is not completely removed or cancelled. The boy still experienced it and chooses to remember.

> 'If I burn this,' I asked them, 'will it have really happened? Will my daddy have pushed me down into the bath? Will I forget it ever happened?'
>
> Ginnie Hempstock was no longer smiling. Now she looked concerned. 'What do *you* want?' she asked.
>
> 'I *want* to remember,' I said. 'Because it happened to me. And I'm still me.' I threw the little scrap of cloth on to the fire.
>
> There was a crackle and the cloth smoked, then it began to burn.
>
> *I was under the water. I was holding on to my father's tie. I thought he was going to kill me . . .*

I screamed. (original italics, 133-134)

As can be seen, the drowning incident between the boy and his father is placed under erasure by Old Mrs Hempstock's snip and stitch. This magic skill can be interpreted as a vivid, fantastic and metafictional expression of the very act of literary writing, the process of which also includes the "snipping" and "stitching" of events. For both the first-person narrator "I" who experienced the agony of near-drowning and the outside readers who have "witnessed" and thereby emotionally engaged with it, this snipped event continues to function beneath the cancelation. Therefore, from this point, the story together with the world it constructs starts to split up. It is, however, not the kind of "splitting up" represented by Pullman's *His Dark Materials* in which, as I have discussed in Section 4.2, the textual universe is divided into multiple parallel worlds, each having its particular and relatively unified referential basis. In Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, we see two mutually exclusive versions of "reality" *forming part of the same story-time in the same textual world*, each being no more legitimate than the other. The fictional world is thereby ruptured from inside. In this projected paradoxical world, the father both does and does not try to drown his own son; the boy then both escapes to the Hempstock Farm to seek help and goes there only to stay overnight with a friend. By inserting such irresolvable paradoxes and getting the competing states of affair colliding head-on, the principle of the excluded middle is overtly defied and violated to a maximum degree. The fictional world then, due to such a self-erasing way of projection, becomes ontologically instable and flickering.

The crossing out of the presented events happens again near the end of the story. In order to protect the boy from being hurt and killed by Varmints, the hunger birds, Lettie sacrifices her life. Although Old Mrs Hempstock insists that death, such a "*common*" thing as she considers it, could not happen to the powerful, immortal Hempstocks, Lettie was still "hurt as badly as she *can* be hurt." She was "so close to death" that she is given to her ocean for long time of sleeping and healing (215-217). Maybe to free the boy from feeling sad and guilty, or maybe to avoid questions from neighbours about Lettie's disappearance, Mrs Hempstock erases what has happened and replaces it with an alternative pattern of events. In this reprojection, Lettie has gone to Australia

to be with her father, although in actuality she has no father; the boy, instead of being scared to death, had a lovely time at Lettie's going-away party (221-222). With events being continuously projected and then cancelled and "retaken" like this, the tension among different versions of textual "realities" is further built up inside the fictional world. This eventually results in the disruption of the projected world into some wrestling fragmentary sequences of events that, like pieces of a broken mirror, can hardly be "stitched" into a unified whole.

As can be seen, unlike Pullman's multiverse, in which an underlying centripetal force tends to gradually converge the scattered storylines unfolding in different textual worlds, the self-erasing way of world imagination as presented in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* shows an opposite centrifugal tendency. As the story develops, the projected world undergoes continuous self-splitting and gradually loses control of the meaning it produces. In other words, the fictional world spreads out, gradually overwhelmed and dissolved by the very congeries of letters and words that are used to construct it. The free unruly play of words inserts gaps and paradoxes into the narrative, which severely undermines the unity and credibility of the projected world. Meaning thereupon becomes fluid, indeterminate and sometimes even paradoxical. This postmodernist playful subversion of the notion of a unified version of events also frustrates readers' expectation of a definite meaning *given by* the narrator/author. To reconstruct the fictional world narrated in such a self-consuming way, readers must "engage with the space between the narratives, in order to negotiate a personal version" (Thacker 2005: 144) of reading and interpretation. They are thereby encouraged to share the telling with the narrator or the author who abdicates the authority over the production of meaning. In so doing, the imbalance that seems to be intrinsic in the author-reader relationship of children's literature is to a large extent eased.

Beyond that, this self-erasing way of world construction – with events and existents being paradoxically projected, cancelled and reprojected – also metafictionally foregrounds the "writerly qualities" (Barthes 1970: 4) or the constructedness of the fictional worlds. By this, it calls attention to the uncertainty about the very act of storytelling. As McHale points out, fictional worlds projected by virtue of the self-

erasing strategies hesitate between the representation of a world and the metafictional foregrounding of the very act of telling for its own sake (McHale 1987: 83). He describes this particular kind of hesitation as the "ontological hesitation." Different from Todorov's epistemological hesitation (See Section 3.1 for the detailed explanation), the "ontological hesitation" is displaced from the frontier between the imagined and the "real," to "the confrontation between different ontological levels in the structure of texts" (83). In *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, this metafictional effect – which is also reflected in Old Mrs Hempstock's skill of "snip and stitch" as I have discussed above – is only amplified by the prologue and the epilogue that constitute the frame narrative of the story. In this frame narrative, the adult anonymous narrator "I" revisits the Hempstock Farm and recalls or imagines his childhood memory.

4.4.2 The Self-reflexive Metafictional Frame Narrative

On the surface, this frame narrative seemingly differs little from that of *A Traveller in Time* in which the heroine Penelope – very similar to the anonymous narrator "I" in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* – recalls her extraordinary childhood experiences. Accordingly, readers may overhastily jump to such a conclusion that an explanatory frame is again applied to the central fantasy story to alleviate its subversion effect. After all, they may say, the irresolvable paradoxes that split up the projected world are still only realised in the character's subworld. In other words, there is still a naturalising frame available: the mind of the narrator "I", whose unwitting slippages among memories and anticipations may explain the flicker of the projected world. However, here I wish to point out that the frame narrative of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is not as explanatory or reductive as it seems to be. Instead of replaying the old tactic, it actually adds on a metafictive layer of meaning to the story which only makes the projected world even more indeterminate and flickering.

It is actually not difficult to find the difference between the frame narratives of these two texts, if we put them under scrutiny. In *A Traveller in Time*, the first person narrator Penelope is very eager to convince readers of the authenticity of her story. As she

claims: "to this day every detail of my strange experience is clear as light" (Uttley 2007: 13). Penelope's immersion in her own story, together with the details in her narration that inadvertently expose her indulgence in imagining things, strongly implies the potential unreliability of this first person narrator. These details also prioritise, yet not impose, a psychological explanation for the fantasy other realm as the protagonist's retrospective daydreaming (which is a fusion of memory and imagination as I have discussed in Section 3.3.3). Therefore, although more implicit than the frame narrative of Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* which straightforwardly reveals the nature of the Wonderland as the character's dreamland, the frame narrative of the *A Traveller in Time* still bears a similar naturalising and neutralising effect.

However, in the frame narrative of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, the adult narrator "I" is not so absorbed in his own story as Penelope is, but draws back from it. Instead of functioning as a stable focaliser through which readers can have a relatively unified view and perception of the projected world, the anonymous narrator "I" frequently goes back and forth between the mutually exclusive viewpoints without offering any reasonable explanations. For example, having just finished recalling how Lettie sacrificed her own life to save him from the Varmints, the narrator "I" tends to invalidate his own story by saying, in the present time of the story, that "this isn't how [he] remember[s] it" (Gaiman 2014: 230). Also, one moment the narrator seems to remember that Lettie Hempstock is badly hurt and given to her ocean for a long period healing, then he unexpectedly switches to the reprojected alternative events by saying: "next time Lettie writes from Australia . . . please tell her I said hello" (234). As can be seen, the frame narrative of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* contains no explanatory implications that may provide a unified or uncontroversial understanding of the central story. On the contrary, the adult narrator "I" – by randomly and abruptly switching between some mutually exclusive sequences of events in his narration – only makes the projected world further unstable and obscure. By frequently inserting paradoxes and ambiguity into his narrative, the narrator "I" seems to deliberately "tease" the outside readers by playfully disrupting their expectation of a certain, stable referential basis or a unified view of the projected world.

What is more metafictional is that the adult narrator "I" – instead of waiting to be questioned and interrogated by readers in another ontological level outside the text – self-reflexively ponders on the unreliability of his own narrative at the close of the story. Using the two moons glanced from the rear-view mirror as a metaphor, the narrator metafictionally hesitates over the truth of his own story, and thus the existence of the mystic Hempstock family projected. As shown in the extract below:

> I looked back at the farmhouse in my rear-view mirror, and a trick of the light made it seem as if two moons hung in the sky above it . . . one moon perfectly full and round, the other, its twin on the other side of the sky, a half-moon.
>
> Curiously I turned in my seat and looked back: a single half-moon hung over the farmhouse, peaceful and pale and perfect.
>
> I wondered where the illusion of the second moon had come from, but I only wondered for a moment, and then I dismissed it from my thoughts. Perhaps it was an after-image, I decided, or a ghost: something that had stirred in my mind for a moment, so powerfully that I believed it to be real, but now was gone, and faded into the past like a memory forgotten, or a shadow into the dusk. (235)

According to the previous narrative, the second full moon is made by Old Mrs Hempstock to shine on the back of their house every night. Hence, it can be deemed to be a symbol of the central fantasy story. By self-reflexively hesitating on its nature as truly a second moon hung in the sky or merely an after-image stirring in his mind, the narrator tends to doubt, at the very end of the story, the "real" existence of the Hempstock Farm and its residents who are, however, the main characters in his own story. In other words, it seems that in the frame narrative, the narrator "I" ceases to believe in the existence of the constructed world and the realness of his characters. This may be interpreted as another work of Old Mrs Hempstock's "snip and stitch." However, still, the narrator's sober self-reflection of his own unreliability confuses readers, and frustrates any effort to figure out a unified, definite meaning of the story. On a deeper level, the ambiguity and confusion caused by this narrative frame also has the effect of foregrounding the "constructedness" or "writtenness" of the fictional world. It, borrowing Thacker's words, "calls attention to the storytelling act" (2005:

133) in such a way that the book as a whole expresses a sense of uncertainty about the very act of telling. This is precisely the metafictional layer of meaning embedded in the story that I referred to at the very beginning of this section.

Instead of functioning as a kind of naturalising outer frame that can help explain the ambiguity of the central story, the frame narrative of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* only makes the projected world even more unstable. However, this time the flickering effect is no longer induced primarily by epistemological perspectivism. It is ontological, as it thrusts into the foreground the confrontation between the pure representation of a world and the somewhat anti-representational or metafictional "play" with the very rules of literary world building. This kind of self-reflexive frame, by inserting another layer of ontological hesitation into the story, subverts readers' expectation of a coherent view of the projected world, or a unified closure of the story. In the meantime, this metafictional way of world building, by foregrouding the constructedness and hence the instability of truth, also suggests that "reality" is no more than a never-ending story. This idea is precisely echoed by the words written at the very beginning of the story even before the prologue.

> It was only a duckpond, out at the back of the farm. It wasn't very big.
>
> Lettie Hempstock said it was an ocean, but I knew that was silly. She said they'd come here across the ocean from the old country.
>
> Her mother said that Lettie didn't remember properly, and it was a long time ago, and anyway, the old country had sunk.
>
> Old Mrs Hempstock, Lettie's grandmother, said they were both wrong, and that the place that had sunk wasn't the *really* old country. She said she could remember the really old country.
>
> She said the really old country had blown up.
> (Gaiman 2014: 1)

It seems that the self-erasing way of world building always seeks to outplay itself by continually destabilising and deconstructing the worlds already projected. This actually is echoed by Gaiman's equally ambiguous way of characterisation in this work. On one hand, similar to the images of Mary in *His Dark Materials* and Nobody Owens

in *The Graveyard Book* who are inscribed as having the flexibility and openness of being in uncertainty, mystery and doubt, Gaiman also gives the anonymous boy in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* "negative capability." This is clearly reflected in his willingness to know, to tolerate and recognise Lettie's "truth" that seriously contradicts common sense. For example, while the father scrupulously abides by the logic of facts and reasons by saying that "Ponds are pond-sized, lakes are lake-sized. Seas are seas and oceans are oceans" (Gaiman 2014: 32), the boy, although having doubts inside, is still eager to believe the existence of an ocean, Lettie's Ocean, that is as small as a pond (32). Likewise, he is also open for the possibility of immortal beings who can be older than the moon, as well as the possibility of putting an ocean into a bucket. For all these eccentric beings and events, no clear explanations are offered by the text. The only response given to the boys' endless questions is Lettie's shoulder shrug, a pose that seems to encourage both the boy and readers to accept that "it is what it is." Instead of creating a whole new mythical or fantasy canon for readers to believe in, it seems that the narrator primarily uses the fantasy elements to facilitate the idea that the world might be infinitely larger than and more mysterious than we could presently understand. It can do mysterious things that we may not always, or at least at this stage, know why. Therefore, by exposing readers to an "anchorless" narrative world that is imbued with indeterminacies and paradoxes, the author's suggestion of "negative capability" is evident. This means, to get more knowledge of the world, readers are encouraged to be open to discordant others, to retain the flexibility to remain content with indeterminacies and doubts, without any irritable resorting to fact and reason.

However, different from the other two paradigm texts discussed earlier in this chapter, Gaiman does not stop here. He goes further again by dissolving even the absolute "certainty" of this "negative capability" suggested. There is a thought-provoking scene in the story when the boy experiences an ecstatic but instantaneous feeling of knowing everything in Lettie's Ocean. He would rather remain there for the rest of his life. Using Lettie's Ocean as an epitome of the ocean of knowledge, the author reminds, through Lettie's voice, that:

> "'You can't [stay in the Ocean for ever],' said Lettie. 'It would destroy you.'"

. . . "Dissolve you. You wouldn't die in here, nothing ever dies in here, but if you stayed here for too long, just a little of you would exist everywhere, all spread out. And that's not a good thing. Never enough of you all together in one place, so there wouldn't be anything left that would think of itself as an 'I'. No point of view any longer, because you'd be an infinite sequence of views and of points . . . "   (194)

I would like to end this chapter with Gaiman's self-reflective words on "negative capability" that permeates the book's postmodern literary context that is characterised by an upsurge of the appeal for the opening-up of self to other, for the unfixed and heterogeneous subjectivities in continuous process of becoming. I believe this ongoing literary and also social pursuit for fragmentation, trivialisation and deconstruction, which is positive and benign in itself, may, at certain stage, go through another self-reflexive examination to further outplay itself.

In Summary

In this chapter, I have examined the inconsistent, discontinuous heterotopian chronotopes imagined in three selected postmodern children's fantasy works. These heterotopian zones are characterised by a self-consuming way of world projection that violates the law of "the excluded middle," the conventional law for imagining unified, coherent literary worlds. The heterotopian chronotopes present a literally polyvalent ontological structure in which the "real" and the fantasy elements are mingled with increasing intimacy; and in which our immediate "reality" – very often taken as the referential basis for distinguishing the fantasy from the "real" – is placed under erasure. The ever-expanding multiverse projected by Pullman in *His Dark Materials* exemplifies the relatively moderate heterotopian zone in which incommensurable worlds – as carriers of divergent reality templates – are equally juxtaposed as components of the textual reality. The spatiotemporal arrangements in Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* demonstrate more intense heterotopian structures in which the textual "reality" is ruptured and dissolved from inside. By constructing such unstable and sometimes paradoxical heterogeneous ontological structures, the focused fantasy works demonstrate the possibilities of literally collapsing the "ontological" boundary between the "real" and the fantasy;

between our world of daily experiences and the projected other worlds; and even metafictionally between the different ontological levels in the structure of texts. They tend to, as I have argued, lay bare the "constructedness" of the projected fictional worlds, and along with it also the "constructedness" of truth and the uncertainty of the act of story-telling.

Characters positioned in these heterotopian chronotopes are normally encouraged to have "negative capacity." This way of characterisation resonates with the postmodernist upsurge of building and shaping the unfixed, heterogeneous subjectivities in continuous process of becoming. However, echoing the self-erasing way of world building that always seeks to outplay itself by continually destabilising and deconstructing the worlds already projected, the characterisation in Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* also shows the early seeds of further outplaying itself. This is clearly reflected in its self-reflexive interrogation of even the absolute certainty of the "negative capability" that is advocated by itself.

Conclusion

Taking Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope and the interdisciplinary theories of geocriticism as my theoretical underpinning, I have, in the course of this thesis, identified and examined three particular modes of the fantasy spatiotemporality – which are the epic chronotope, the "fantastic" time-travel chronotope and the heterotopian chronotope – in modern children's fantasy works with the "two-world structure." My reading of the fantasy chronotope is built on, but also deviates from Nikolajeva's (1996) and Thindle's (2013) Bakhtinian readings of the fantasy chronotope, extant critical studies that, as I have reviewed in Section 1.1.3, attempt to generalise the fundamental characteristics of the fantasy chronotope and its evolution over time. My reading has moved from generalities to specific instances, in order to reveal the multiple possibilities of the fantasy chronotope. This is demonstrated by my scrutiny of each of the identified fantasy chronotopes in the specific but interrelated spatiotemporal contexts of the selected children's fantasy works. Under the guidance of three main research questions raised in the Introduction, I have examined, through detailed textual analysis, the varying embodiments of each particular mode of the fantasy chronotope in the selected children's fantasy works. Although each mode of the fantasy chronotope identified in this study almost certainly has and will have more other concrete embodiments even in the scope of children's fantasy literature, the possibilities I have observed already reveal the inner diversity of the vector field of the fantasy chronotope.

In this study, I have also examined, in the limits of each focus text, the syntagmatic interplay between the fantasy chronotope and the chronotope that characterises the represented quotidian reality. This responds to, as I have introduced in Section 1.2, Bakhtin's appeal for observing the "heterochrony" (*raznovremennost*), that is the syntagmatic deployments of spatiotemporal relations (1981: 252-53) at a later stage of his research on the literary chronotope. My discussion has revealed that the syntagmatic interaction of the fantasy chronotope and the textual "real" world leads to, collisions, "dialogues" and sometimes interpenetration of the values they represent.

The different possibilities of inter-chronotopic "dialogues" that I have discerned in the selected children fantasy works further reveal how each of the fantasy chronotopes can be strategically deployed in fantasy cartographies to generate various "heterochronic" structures and prompt varying spatiotemporal experiences.

The benefit of my way of reading the fantasy spatiotemporality is that, by adopting a top-down approach,[46] it better reveals the heterogeneity – that is, the inner diversity – of the fuzzy set of fantasy chronotopes. While the violation of "realistic"/physical spatiotemporal rules is the fundamental characteristic of all fantasy chronotopes (which is the "top"), my discussion in this thesis has revealed the ways in which, and to what degree, the spatiotemporal violation is concretised in fantasy world constructions. It is shown that there can be a variety of possibilities. The identification and interpretation of these possibilities in the three particular modes of the fantasy chronotope I have examined here – and the potentially many others that can be identified by further studies – can continuously enrich our understanding of this open, dynamic vector-field of the fantasy chronotope, which in itself is still in-the-making.

My reading of the fantasy chronotopes has also contributed to bring the fantasy spatiotemporal constructions in the literary field into reciprocal dialogues with the theoretical thinking of spatiotemporality in geocriticism.[47] The link between these two fields is Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope which is the main theoretical framework of this thesis. It appeals for a "*living* artistic perception [of the literary/representational space and time] in all its wholeness and fullness" (1981: original italics 243) and, in a sense, straddles the two fields. My discussion has demonstrated that theoretical interpretations of space and time that I have brought to

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[46] A top-down approach is essentially the breaking down of a system to gain insight into its compositional sub-systems in a reverse engineering fashion. Top down approach starts with the big picture, that is an overview of the system which is formulated, specifying. It then breaks down from there into smaller segments. Each subsystem is then refined in yet greater detail, sometimes in many additional subsystem levels, until the entire specification is reduced to base elements. See "Top-down and bottom-up design" in *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia* for more details.

[47] I have already clarified that, by geocriticism, I am referring to Robert Tally's broader definition of this term to include all the aesthetic, cultural and political thinking of spatiality from a diverse range of sources. See Section 1.2 for the detailed explanation of this point.

bear upon this study not only offer notions, concepts and ideas for my descriptions and explanations of the different modes of the fantasy chronotope. They also provide multiple perspectives and theoretical bases for my interpretations of the diversified syntagmatic spatiotemporal relations between the "real" and the fantasy presented in the selected children's fantasy works. Nevertheless, the point of establishing a dialogue lies in the revelation of a potentially *reciprocal* relation between the two sides. Rather than mechanically imposing the established theories on literary texts, I have in my discussion taken account of the inventiveness of fantasy writing, and have demonstrated how the variable fantasy literary cartographies also, in turn, stretch the possibilities of my three modes of fantasy chronotopes which are largely theoretically based. This is reflected by my reading of each somewhat abstract fantasy chronotope in the concrete, heterochronic textual contexts of the selected children's fantasy works. The focus texts that are grouped in each chapter, on the one hand, have some common spatiotemporal characteristics, the reading of which enables a direct and clear perception of the particular mode of the fantasy chronotope under discussion; On the other hand, the focus texts also demonstrate divergent yet interrelated possibilities of the ways in which a particular mode of the fantasy chronotope can be embodied and deployed in concrete spatiotemporal constructions to convey ideas and values. In this sense, the discussion of each of my focus fantasy works is illuminated by reference to that of the others, both in the same chapter and across chapters.

In the process of working through this thesis, I have found that literary spatiotemporal constructions and the theoretical interpretations of space and time are interpenetrative. This is not limited to the spatiotemporal thinking that is more directly derived from the reading of fictions, such as Bakhtin's theory of the literary artistic chronotope, William's interrogation of the dichotomous relationship of the countryside and the city in literary imagination, and Gomel's interpretation of the "chronoclasms" intrinsic in the hypothetical scenario of time travel. My close reading of the focus fantasy works in the main chapters also includes aesthetic, cultural and political thinking of spatiotemporality from other disciplines. These include Certeau's analysis of the spatial practice of walking in the city, Bachelard's topoanalysis of the intimate domestic space, Soja's conceptualisation of thirdspace, and Foucault's description of

heterotopia, etc. My discussion has shown that each of these interpretations also has resonance in literary spatiotemporal imaginations. This resonance is comprehensible because both the literary constructions and the theoretical interpretations of space-time are based on the perceptions of how humans are related to and act in, borrowing Bemong's words, "their biotopes and semiosphere" (Bemong et al 2010: IV). The difference may be that the former presents these perceptions metaphorically through literary world projections, while the latter expresses them in a more literal way through descriptions, explanations and analysis.

Given this, and by bringing these diverse voices into dialogue, I have also demonstrated in this thesis the potential interilluminating and complementary relation between the literary spatiotemporal constructions and the spatiotemporal thinking proposed by other disciplines. These include: urban study, philosophy, political and cultural geography. On the one hand, the interdisciplinary and multi-angled views on space and time, when adopted for textual analysis, contribute to bring out the connotations and values implicit in the textual "maps." In so doing, they facilitate a deeper understanding of the spatial and temporal embedding of human actions presented in the narratives. On the other hand, literary/fictional world constructions also continuously offer new possibilities of spatiotemporal representations, that is, new spatiotemporal references for geocritical explorations. This is not limited to the realistic representations of the geographical/physical loci, which have already drawn the attention of geocritical studies (Westphal 2011: 113-114; Tally 2013: 144). The variegated fantasy world projections – which follow an inventive "what if" principle and which foreground a carnivalesque "play" with space and time in narratives by violating the realistic rules – offer a full range of other and sometimes subversive possibilities of spatiotemporal configurations. My examination of some of these possibilities in this study thereby stretches the boundary of geocritical study to make it also consider these not straightforwardly mimetic spatiotemporal constructions. In so doing, the effectiveness of the spatiotemporal theories and thinking in making sense of the fantasy spatiotemporality is also tested.

My method of reading the fantasy spatiotemporality may easily be extended. As I have

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explained in Section 1.1.2, the focused scope of this study is children's fantasy works with the "two-world structure," that is spatiotemporally characterised by the co-presence of the "real" and the fantasy worlds in the textual universes. The three particular fantasy chronotopes I have discussed in this study have encapsulated some possibilities of this "two-world" structure. The epic chronotope demonstrates the relatively self-contained fantasy worlds/realms that are spatiotemporally distanced from the represented mundane world in different degrees; The "fantastic" time-travel chronotope demonstrates a more blurred boundary between the "real" and the fantasy by setting the secondary times in history or memory; The heterotopian chronotope demonstrates the most subversive and inconsistent zones in which the textual reality, the stable referential basis, is placed under erasure or ruptured from inside. However, in no sense am I implying that these three modes of fantasy chronotopes have exhausted all possibilities of this "two-world" structure. There may well be other ways of *mapping* the fantasy and the "real" in existent children's fantasy works, and since this genre is still developing, more possibilities will be created for further explorations. The identifications and discussions of these new possibilities can continuously enrich our understanding of the vector-field of the fantasy chronotope, as I have diagrammatically presented in fig. 1. In a broad sense, studies of the fantasy chronotope can offer fantasy readers some knowledge of the specific techniques used in the fantasy narratives for "playing" with time and space. Their interpretations of the emotions, ideas and values expressed by each specific way of fantasy spatiotemporal arrangements in the individual works also show readers – who might be too fascinated by the gripping plotline to perceive – that the "distorted" time and space per se convey meanings in fantasy literature. Beyond that, similar to the situation of the fantasy imaginations of space and time, geocritical thinking of space and time is also in-the-making. This means that more reciprocal "dialogues" may be built between these two disciplines in future studies to offer new interpretations of the spatiotemporality of the variegated fantasy landscapes.

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