

THE CONTAINMENT OF CHILDHOOD:
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary dissertation draws on scholarship in the fields of Cultural Studies, Political Science, Translation Studies, Comparative Literature, and Children's Literature in order to scrutinize the political and cultural significance of the figure of the child in novels published for young audiences in Europe and the US since the 1970s. The figure of the child, lacking a political voice yet needing to be indoctrinated into adulthood, occupies a temporary space that poses a challenge to conceptions of the citizen and the nation-state. Texts for children reflect the child's peculiar status through their two-fold containment of childhood: the child is defined through the genre and thus contained by it, but these texts also contain, or include, the marginalized figure of the child and all its counterhegemonic potential. Even as I note the complicity of children's literature in the project of nation-building, I aim to highlight the subversive tendencies of the genre that have been particularly pronounced in children's books since the 1970s.

Drawing on M. M. Bakhtin's analysis of social heteroglossia and dialogization in the novel, I propose to conceive of children's books, and the ways in which they contain the child, on a spectrum that moves from the didactic to the dialogic, with the former emphasizing the adult's power over the child and the latter demanding an engagement with the child's voice and subject position. My dissertation thus intends to intervene in current debates in children's literature scholarship on the child/adult binary, the construction of childhood, and the tension between conservatism and subversion. Although I focus on examples of children's literature, my project has several larger ramifications for literary criticism and Cultural Studies: a critical analysis of the voice of the child can help to enhance current debates on rights, citizenship, and the nation-state. In moving towards a more comprehensive model of children's rights and the politics of childhood, my project thus attempts to bridge the perceived gulf between politics and children's literature and to foster a dialogue between political theory and children's literature scholarship.

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INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A DIALOGICAL ENGAGEMENT
WITH THE CHILD'S VOICE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was conceived in the late 1970s, drafted over the next decade, and adopted unanimously in 1989. The convention, which has been ratified by 192 countries – all but Somalia and the US – represents the most quickly and most widely signed international treaty in history (Howe 142). It puts forth the so-called three Ps, granting children rights of protection, provision, and participation. The CRC thus moves beyond its predecessor, the 1959 Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which included only the child's rights to protection and provision. Reflecting a shift in the attitude towards children that manifested itself in the 1970s, Articles 12 to 17 of the CRC promote the child's participation rights, including the right to freedom of expression and the right to access "information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers." These articles affirm a child's right to her own voice and that this voice deserves a space in which it can be heard. The child's right to participation, however, often stands in conflict with the child's right to protection. Article 17 of the CRC in fact illustrates this tension, as it asserts the child's right of "access to information and material from a diversity of national and international resources," including children's books, but simultaneously curtails this right by emphasizing the importance of protecting the child from materials that could prove potentially harmful: in order to promote the child's "social, spiritual and moral well-being," Article 17 continues, States Parties shall "[e]ncourage the production and dissemination of children's books" but also develop "appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being." Article 17 thus points to the ambivalence that pervades contemporary constructions of childhood and child/adult relations. At the same time, it underlines the precariousness of children's books as a genre expected to, on the one hand, protect children from information deemed appropriate for adults only and, on the other, encourage children's participation in a dialogue with adults.

This two-directional pull between protecting the child and allowing for the child's agency and expression is an inherent feature of texts for children, and it is particularly apparent in the representation of the child's voice in these books. Children's literature, I propose, in fact offers a space for the voice of the child,

though of course not for the unadulterated voice of the real child but rather the adult-constructed voice of a child character. When this voice of the child is given a space in a text for children, it demands from the reader a serious, dialogical engagement with the child's agency and subject position. The space allotted to the representation of the child's voice varies from text to text, depending largely on the agency attributed to the child character, but all children's books *contain* this voice both through their *containment* of it, as they control, define, and restrict the child as a controlled subject, and as they include and depict the subversive presence of the child in the *content* of the text. The more these texts work towards the *containment* of the child, the less space will be allotted to her voice; and the more the texts employ the child's ideological position in the world as their *content*, the larger the space for her voice becomes.

The tension between controlling the child, on the one hand, and allowing for the child's agency, on the other, informs our contemporary construction of childhood. This construction has in the West developed over the last two centuries, which saw a consistently increasing separation between the child's and the adult's spheres. As the rise of the modern nation-state gives rise to the need for a homogenous citizenry, the indoctrination of the child into a national hegemony becomes imperative and is reflected in the creation of a mandatory education system and in the notion that the child has a right not to liberty, but to custody, protection, and provision: as the nation's youngest members, children need to undergo a lengthy process of socialization through the school and the family, before they reach the age of majority and can actively engage in politics and decision-making. Children's literature participates in this process. The child needs to become literate, both literally and figuratively, as she learns how to read and create meaning correctly, prior to growing into a full-fledged adult citizen. This "regulation of meaning," as David Bleich points out, "is . . . bound up with the exercise of power. It was just as Carroll's Humpty Dumpty said: meanings are utterly subjective, and what counts is who is master" (qtd. in Oittinen 69). As teachers, parents, and writers, adults exert power over the child and regulate the meaning-making process. However, such a view of the child as only a passive being imprisoned in the adult's custody is limited, neglecting the child's agency and her potential participation in the creation of meaning that the CRC values and encourages.

Yet because children lack the full political rights of adult citizens, they are typically constructed as apolitical, and this same assumption permeates ideas about children's literature as well, so that the genre is often considered to somehow remain outside the political realm. Though politics is often thought of as one of the adult secrets or taboos that should be kept from children, children's literature is necessarily steeped in ideology, even when politics appear to be absent: as Julia Mickenberg and Philip Nel have observed, "[s]tories that uphold the status quo (arguably the majority of works published for children) may not seem political, but they represent efforts to teach children that the current social, political, economic, and environmental orders are as they should be" (1). Because children's literature is often thought of as apolitical, however, both the subversive and especially the conservative tendencies of the genre can go largely unnoticed. In focusing on the child's voice and the space texts for children allocate for it, my project intends to foreground the political dimension of these texts, making visible both those instances in which the child's marginalized voice speaks, demanding a dialogical engagement with the child's subject position, and those in which the child remains largely silent and subject to a didactic indoctrination into the adult's world. The former are particularly explicit in children's books that have appeared since the 1970s, the decade in which the genre underwent an ideological shift as more and more writers incorporated issues surrounding children's rights as well as larger social and political problems into their texts.

According to the standard historical account, children's literature made its first appearance with John Newbery's publication of the story of Jack the Giant Killer in 1744, but children's literature established itself as a genre deemed worthy of academic study only in the 1970s, the decade in which renewed UN deliberations on the rights of the child began as well. In the wake of the social revolutions of the late '60s, the writing for children as well as its criticism were transformed and began to focus more explicitly on the relationships of power inherent to the child/adult binary, with some texts highlighting the flaws of the adult world and questioning, even working against, the child's indoctrination into a national hegemony. A resurgence of an interest in childhood moreover led to greater attention to children's rights and gave rise to the children's liberation movement that aimed at granting children rights typically reserved for adults, such as the right to vote or the right to choose one's

own education. The ideas put forth by child liberationists such as Richard Farson and John Holt are reflected in the writing of children's books from the 1970s onward, as social and political issues that affect the child are incorporated more explicitly into the texts. The repercussions of the children's liberation movement are also visible, I believe, in the United Nations' CRC that was conceived in the late '70s and that, through its incorporation of participation rights, reflects a shift in ideas about childhood when compared to its 1959 predecessor, the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which focused exclusively on rights of provision and protection.

This shift away from the construction of the child in need only of the adult's custody, protection, and provision and towards an understanding of the child as a potential participant in society is reflected in children's literature scholarship as well. While earlier critics of children's literature, typically educators and librarians, were concerned mostly with the texts' didactic function and evaluated them based on their perceived effect on a child's socialization and development, since the 1970s scholars have studied the production, dissemination, and translation of children's literature with particular critical attention to the child's agency and the adult's role as a gatekeeper of the texts. Contemporary children's literature scholars continue to question the genre's role in establishing a one-sided domination of the adult over the child. According to Perry Nodelman, the consistent presence of the "hidden adult" in texts for children fulfills a homogenizing function and presupposes the existence of a clearly defined child/adult binary, a binary that is often evoked in children's literature scholarship in order to underscore the socializing and didactic functions of the genre. Ultimately, he concludes in his comprehensive definition of children's literature, the genre is "both conservative and subversive, and it subverts both its conservatism and its own subversiveness" (243). Other critics, such as Mickenberg and Jack Zipes, suggest that the genre is home to truly subversive texts, too, and that it has the potential to subvert even the adult's power over the child. Zipes, for instance, analyzes the return home at the end of the Home/Away/Home Again plot, a recurrent and typically conservative plot pattern in children's literature, as possessing subversive potential that can point towards ways to imagine a truly democratic society.

The inherent ambivalence of children's literature, which stems from the paradoxical construction of the child as needing both protection and experience as

well as from the tension between conservatism and subversion in the texts, remains at the core of contemporary scholarship on the genre. In this project, I propose to conceive of children's books, and the ways in which they contain the child, on a spectrum that moves from the didactic to the dialogic, with the former emphasizing the adult's power over the child and the latter demanding an engagement with the child's voice and subject position. Didactic texts for children, then, highlight the indoctrination of both the child character and reader into a national hegemony, teaching children their place in society and maintaining a vertical teaching model, which defines the adult as the ideal the child needs to become. Texts on the other end of the spectrum provide ample space to the voice of the child, demand a serious engagement with the figure of the child and its ideological world, and advocate for a dialogue between the child and the adult. *Didactic* here refers to a one-directional, monologic teaching model that grants the adult power over the child and that is steeped in the dominant economic and social ideologies as it intends to mold the child into an ideal adult citizen. *Dialogic*, on the other hand, presupposes that the child's marginalized voice is given a space, taken seriously, and engaged with in ways that are not tokenistic but rather recognize this voice's worth, for it relativizes the adult voice and exposes its complicity in hegemony. Due to the genre's inherent ambivalence, no children's book will be entirely didactic or entirely dialogic, but I believe this spectrum offers a fresh model and language for discussing and analyzing the politics of texts for children.

In proposing the didactic—dialogic spectrum as a model of analysis for children's books, I draw on M. M. Bakhtin's discussion of social heteroglossia and on his identification of the dialogization of languages as a defining feature of the novel. For Bakhtin, "[t]he fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel, that which is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the *speaking person and his discourse*," and that speaking character is always "an *ideologue*, and his words are always *ideologemes*" (332, 333; emphasis in original). This ideologically demarcated discourse, representing a particular way of viewing the world and striving for social recognition, extends beyond the character's speech as such: "The area occupied by an important character's voice must . . . be broader than his direct and 'actual' words" (320). Hence my discussion of the child's voice in texts for children, though foregrounding the "actual words" a child character speaks, will also incorporate a

broader analysis of that character's actions and the representation of her ideological world. In other words, I will use the term "voice" here to refer not only to a character's spoken words but also more generally to the representation of her agency and subject position within the text.

Since they represent specific world views, Bakhtin asserts, all languages of heteroglossia may, moreover, "be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically" (292) as, I argue, is the case for the languages of the child and the adult in children's literature. This dialogical interrelation between the child's and the adult's languages manifests itself in the interplay between the child character and the adult author as well as between the child character and the adult character. Bakhtin points out that heteroglossia in the novel "is *another's speech in another's language*," constituting "a special type of *double-voiced discourse*" that "serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author" (324; emphasis in original). In the double-voiced discourse that results when an adult writer writes a child character's speech, then, "there are two voices, two meanings, and two expressions [and] these two voices are dialogically interrelated . . . A potential dialogue is imbedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages" (324-325). Children's literature scholar Perry Nodelman points to this relationship between the adult writer and the child character, too, when he speaks of "the hidden adult" (a phrase serving as the title and focal point of his recent book on the genre) that pervades text for children. Significantly, however, while Bakhtin writes of the potential dialogue that results from this double-voiced discourse, Nodelman's analysis reasserts the adult's power over the child both within and outside the text, going so far even as to conclude that the hidden adult participates in what he calls the "colonizing" of children through children's literature. It is this emphasis on the adult's power and simultaneous disregard of the child's agency that I intend to critique, calling instead for a perspectival shift that recognizes and validates the child's voice, and allowing for a "potential dialogue" to become manifest.

While there is a potential dialogue between author and character embedded in the novel, then, heteroglossia is typically also "personified, incarnated in individual

human figures, with disagreements and oppositions individualized,” even as these disagreements are submerged in and reconceptualized through social heteroglossia and thus showcase the clashes of two distinct world views (Bakhtin 326). For these disagreements and oppositions between child and adult characters to take place, the characters need not only a voice but also a space from which their ideological positions can be heard: “The words of the author . . . create the situation and conditions necessary for [another’s speech] to sound” since “it is impossible to represent an alien ideological world adequately without first permitting it to sound, without having first revealed the special discourse peculiar to it” (Bakhtin 358, 335). Hence I conceive of children’s literature as texts that allot a space for the voice of the child to sound, thus allowing for an engagement with the child’s “alien ideological world.” The representation of this world and the inclusion of the child’s voice is inherent to all children’s books that employ a child or child-like character (and the inclusion of such a character constitutes a defining feature of the genre), yet the space allotted to the child’s voice varies, with texts tending towards the didactic end of the spectrum offering less, and texts towards the dialogic end offering more space for the child’s voice to sound.

The child’s voice in children’s literature is, of course, always a representation and an artistic creation, and as such it is distinct from the voice of the real child. As Bakhtin observes, “the languages introduced into the novel are shaped into artistic images of language (they are not raw linguistic data), and this shaping may be more or less artistic and successful, may more or less respond to the spirit and power of the languages that are being represented” (417). In my discussion of the child’s voice in children’s books, then, I use the term “voice” not in its naïve, humanist sense as the expression of an essential personhood but rather to point towards the representation of a child character’s relative agency and ideological worldview. This marginalized and ideologically demarcated voice of the child enters into discourse with adult voices in the text as it struggles for recognition and enfranchisement. Despite the fact that it is written by the adult, this voice of the child, and thus the representation of the child’s ideological world, challenges the notion of the adult’s one-directional dominance over the child. The child’s voice in children’s literature is, of course, created based on specific assumptions about the nature and characteristic traits of the child, a figure which has been relegated in contemporary Western society to a

marginalized space. Since the child is typically defined in opposition to the adult and characterized as deficient vis-à-vis the adult, the child's voice that grows out of this construction of childhood always speaks from a space that lies outside the adult's world and, as a voice from the margins, resists easy absorption into the hegemonic structure. It is hardly surprising, then, that those texts for children that allocate the largest space for the child's voice are also typically the texts that pose the greatest challenge to hegemony and that have the most explicit political dimension.

The counterhegemonic potential of children's literature is, I believe, closely linked to the texts' inclusion of the child's voice, even as adult writers, publishers, librarians, educators, and parents determine the extent to which the genre can provide a space for this voice. Positing the child's voice as an inherent and defining feature of children's literature while acknowledging the adult's role as gatekeeper, I argue that no text for children can be truly conservative or truly subversive, nor do I subscribe to Nodelman's assertion that all texts within the genre are simultaneously both conservative and subversive. Rather, I suggest that children's books that allow the child's voice to sound, demanding for it to be heard and emphasizing a dialogical relationship between the voice of the child and the voices of both the adult character and the adult writer and gatekeeper, demonstrate subversive tendencies, and they do so by virtue of providing a space for a marginalized and disenfranchised voice. Yet I refrain from calling even those texts tending towards the dialogic end of the didactic—dialogic spectrum *truly* subversive: because adults still preside over these texts, the figure of the child cannot in the end have the last word. Children's books that significantly curtail the space for the child's voice, on the other hand, tend towards the didactic end of the spectrum and show conservative tendencies; in not allowing the child's marginalized voice to sound loud and clear, these texts ultimately reinforce a status quo that relegates the figure of the child to a place of silence and conformity. However, I hesitate to call such texts *truly* conservative because in children's literature the child's voice can never, I believe, be fully silenced. Because the inclusion of a child or childlike character is a defining feature of the genre, these books necessarily represent a disenfranchised character whose voice is present in her actions and the representation of her ideological world even if she is not given (much) room to speak actual words of "her own."

While the didactic—dialogic spectrum I propose thus provides a way to identify whether any given text for children tends towards the subversive or the conservative, it also offers a new language through which to analyze children's literature that can, I believe, be more productive and nuanced than the mere identification of texts as either conservative or subversive or both. Focusing on the ways in which the figure of the child is *contained* in children's literature, the presence of the child, rather than the adult, is emphasized when mapping texts onto the spectrum: books that tend towards the didactic aim at the containment of the child and thus at keeping her and her voice subdued and in the custody of adults, whereas books that tend towards the dialogic employ the child's marginalized voice as large part of their content and allow it to enter into a dialogue with the dominant adult forces.

The analysis of the voice of the child, a disruptive force from the margins that is, as I argue, inherent to the genre of children's literature, thus represents the focal point of this project, alongside my proposal of the didactic—dialogic spectrum. Based on how much space is allotted to the child's voice, each text for children can be mapped onto this spectrum, which also serves as an indication of the text's politics. My project is limited in scope to books for children written predominantly in the 1970s, the years that saw a resurgence of scholarly interest in childhood, children's rights, and children's literature, though it also traces how some ideas put forth in children's books in the '70s grew out of texts that preceded them, and how those ideas were further developed and amended in the following decades. My research is, moreover, limited to the discussion of texts from the US and Western Europe (in particular, texts produced in Germany, Italy, Sweden, and England) due in part to my own linguistic restrictions but also to allow me to analyze the relationship between developments in children's literature and the construction of the modern nation-state in the West. Constructions of childhood, and consequently also definitions of children's literature, vary significantly based on time and place, and this project therefore aims to compare only a relatively small number of texts in order to illustrate the containment of the child's voice in the US and Western Europe in the '70s and beyond. While my project thus takes a comparativist approach in discussing the children's books at hand and reflects on the national and historical contexts out of which these books have grown, it also moves beyond a close reading

of the texts in order to comment more generally on the politics of childhood and the rights of the child.

My interdisciplinary dissertation furthermore intends to intervene in current debates in children's literature scholarship on the child/adult binary, the construction of childhood, and the tension between conservatism and subversion by incorporating political theory and by comparing texts for children from a critical Cultural Studies perspective. Drawing on the theory on human rights and citizenship put forth by political philosopher Giorgio Agamben allows for a more nuanced exploration of the legal status of the figure of the child, for instance, while the analyses of the workings of ideology and hegemony by scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, and Raymond Williams help to further my exploration of children's literature as a genre that participates in the child's indoctrination into the nation-state. The work done by legal scholar Clark Butler, who advocates a child's education in dialogical skills in order for her to be able to use her participation rights as granted in the United Nations' CRC, presents an additional influence in my thinking about children's literature as a genre that contains the child's voice and that can facilitate dialogue between adults and children.

My first chapter, "Can the Child Speak? Childhood in the Age of Nation-States, Children's Rights, and the Role of Children's Literature," traces the historical development of the construction of childhood in the West, beginning with an exploration of the adult's ambivalent relationship to the figure of the child and culminating in a discussion of the struggles for children's rights as evidenced in the children's liberation movement and the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. I analyze the institutions, including the institution of "children's literature," that promote a national hegemony and mold the child into a future citizen by drawing on political theory such as Étienne Balibar's analysis of the creation of a fictive ethnicity, Bourdieu's study of the French education system, and Agamben's discussion of the biopolitical fracture. Even as I note the complicity of children's literature in the project of nation-building, I posit that the institutions of childhood, and children's books in particular, contain the child not only as a controlled subject, but also as a disruptive presence. While some scholars of children's literature, most notably Nodelman, have emphasized the ways in which the genre contributes to the "colonization" and imprisonment of children, I challenge their view of the adult's

one-sided dominance over the child and argue instead that the child's voice, in all its disruptive qualities, plays a role in texts for children, though to differing degrees.

Chapter 2, "The Vicissitudes of Adulthood: Rereading the Child/Adult Binary," problematizes the idea of a one-directional child/adult power structure further, as I suggest that texts for children can play with and transform this structure. I begin with an analysis of what Nodelman calls the "shadow text" in children's literature as a manifestation of the adult voice, and I illustrate my points with examples from Astrid Lindgren's children's books *Pippi Longstocking* (1945) and *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973). I then discuss three children's books from the 1970s, all of which play with and complicate common constructions of childhood and adulthood: Gianni Rodari's 1978 *C'era Due Volte il Barone Lamberto* ("*Baron Lamberto, Once Upon Two Times*") is an Italian children's book whose title character ages backwards and, I argue, inhabits the roles of child and adult simultaneously; Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974) interrogates the adult's domination over the child and suggests that childhood and adulthood represent different points on a continuum rather than a binary structure; and Michael Ende's *Momo* (1973) introduces an additional element to the child/adult binary in its depiction of non-human capitalist time-thieves, the gray gentlemen, who despise children especially. The final section of this chapter moves beyond the '70s to consider the challenges Roald Dahl's famous children's book *The Witches* (1983) and Lois Lowry's Newbery medal winning *The Giver* (1993) pose to the child/adult binary. Dahl's novel introduces the witches as a new element to the dichotomy, and I discuss how the adult female is here presented not as the nurturing and protective mother figure, but rather as a potential threat whose goal is the destruction of all children. Lowry's book, on the other hand, emphasizes the dangers of an infantilized society, and it interrogates the contemporary construction of childhood as the phase in life characterized predominantly by protection rather than agency. All the novels I discuss in this chapter allot a significant space to the child's voice, and the challenges they present to the child/adult binary largely rest on this incorporation of the child's world view that enters into a dialogue with the adult forces in the texts.

Chapter 3, "The Child as Political Agent: The Cold War, Hegemony, and Resistance in Children's Literature," examines the political potentialities of the genre while furthering my analysis of the discursive dialogue between child and adult

characters. This part of my project focuses on works with more obvious political dimensions: the first section of the chapter compares and contrasts Lindgren's *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973) and Madeleine L'Engle's *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (1978), both of which show the child protagonists engaged in ideological struggles, and the second section explores representations of hegemony and forms of resistance in Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974) and Lowry's *The Giver* (1993). All of these texts underscore the figure of the child as a political agent in a realm typically reserved for adults, and they emphasize the validity of the child's political voice. Furthermore, by employing child protagonists who act responsibly and maturely within a politically charged environment, they highlight children's lack of political rights as problematic. With the exception of *The Giver*, these novels were all written in the 1970s, a decade in which, as I have noted, the rights and legal status of children were debated as part of a larger movement towards equal rights. As the children's liberation movement struggled, for example, for the child's right to vote and the right to choose her education, these ideas of the child's participation in society are clearly reflected in the political texts for children written in that decade.

The "hidden politics" in children's literature are particularly apparent in texts that employ the common Home/Away/Home Again structure, which has been analyzed by Zipes and Nodelman and which I discuss in Chapter 4, "Homing the Child in the Nation-State: The Home/Away/Home Again Plot in Children's Literature." The chapter investigates how this common plot structure can be employed to further the child's indoctrination into a national hegemony, as it posits the final home in the texts as a microcosm for the nation-state; at the same time, however, the "home again" ending can potentially challenge nationalist tendencies even as it appears to reaffirm them. I explore the ways in which authors of children's literature have, since the 1970s especially, challenged common notions of home and the nation-state through a close reading of Richard Adams' *Watership Down* (1972), Lindgren's *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* (1981), and Lowry's *Messenger* (2004), and by contrasting the explicit political agendas in L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) and Michael Ende's *Momo* (1973). By reading these texts through a lens focused on the space allotted to the child's voice, I explore how each participates or attempts to resist participation in the nationalist homing of the child. I conclude my analysis by examining how the child character's temporary homelessness in

children's books figuratively mirrors the condition and legal status of the real child, insofar as both real and fictional children move from a position that holds numerous future possibilities towards a fixed identity in their community.

The nationalist homing of the child in and through children's literature is, of course, complicated by the process of translation that transposes the texts from one national context into another, as I explore in Chapter 5, "'No One Must Know That We Exist': Containing the Child in English Translations of Michael Ende's *Momo*." The two English-language translations of Ende's *Momo*, which I discuss here, illustrate the different poles of the didactic—dialogic spectrum as well as the different ideological approaches to the genre of children's literature: while Frances Lobb's 1974 translation draws attention to the child protagonist's voice and further underscores the novel's counterhegemonic elements, J. Maxwell Brownjohn's 1985 translation detracts from the child character's voice and defuses many of the text's political challenges. Starting with an overview of the ethics involved in translation, especially the translation of children's literature, I compare how the child speaks differently in the two English renditions and discuss how the radical politics of Ende's novel are linked to the clear presence of the child's voice. While Lobb has, through her emphasis of this voice, created a text that can be mapped much further towards the dialogic end of the didactic—dialogic spectrum than Brownjohn's can, the voice of the child cannot, ultimately, be muted in either translation since it is woven into the plot itself. While writers of children's books can, I argue, employ the voice of the child in their texts as a form of resistance to nationalist "homing" and to hegemony more generally, so translators, too, can underscore – or hush – the child's voice in their works, a disruptive and marginalized voice that can challenge forms of domination and demand dialogical engagement in both the source and target cultures.

In my conclusion, "Advancing the Child's Dialogical Participation Rights," I return to my discussion of the CRC to reflect on the legal status of children today, a quarter of a century after the convention was adopted. Children's rights education remains a central concern for scholars in the 21st century, and I propose that texts for children that engage the child's voice in productive ways can form an important component of such an education. Even as opportunities for children to participate in society in meaningful ways remain sparse, texts for children that represent a dialogical discourse between child and adult characters can promote dialogical skills

in their readers. By foregrounding the child character's subject position and representing her discursive struggles for enfranchisement as she engages the adult voices in the text, children's books can, I believe, foster a sense of agency in their child readers while encouraging them to partake in dialogue with adults.

Although I focus on examples of children's literature, my project has several larger ramifications for literary criticism and Cultural Studies. As the incorporation of a Cultural Studies perspective enriches my exploration of children's literature in the US and Europe since the 1970s, a critical analysis of the voice of the child can in turn help to enhance current debates on rights, citizenship, and the nation-state. My project offers an addendum to Agamben's analysis of the biopolitical fracture, for instance, as I propose that the figure of the child can serve to further illuminate and challenge common notions of citizenship and the distribution of rights. Similarly, an analysis of the voice of the child, and in particular of those texts that allocate a large space to that voice and that can be found towards the dialogic end of the didactic—dialogic spectrum, can help to enrich Butler's discussion of an education in dialogical skills while also pointing towards children's books that can facilitate such an education. In moving towards a more comprehensive model of children's rights and the issues that lie at the core of the politics of childhood, my project thus attempts to bridge the perceived gulf between politics and children's literature and to foster a dialogue and exchange between political theory and children's literature scholarship.

CHAPTER 1. CAN THE CHILD SPEAK? CHILDHOOD IN THE AGE OF
NATION-STATES, CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, AND THE ROLE OF CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE

The modern, Western construction of childhood is a relatively recent historical phenomenon whose conception went hand-in-hand with the rise of capitalism, industrialization, and the nation-state. Since the mid- to late nineteenth century, the institutions of childhood in the West – in particular, the family and the school – have been socializing children into a national citizenship that foregrounds uniformity and a sense of national belonging while instilling in children an understanding and acceptance of their place in the hegemonic system. The genre of children's literature has traditionally been conceived of as a body of didactic texts that teach children their place in a national community, and according to this common definition, texts for children thus participate in the child's socialization process. Through the segregation of children from the world of adults, which arose as a logical consequence from the modern construction of childhood as a life-stage characterized by inferiority and incompetence, children have also effectively been removed from positions in which they can productively enact their agency as participants in the public sphere; instead, children are now – and have been for the last 150 years or so – relegated to a space in which they are expected to receive, to learn, and to grow, but from which they cannot speak politically nor actively participate in the life of the nation as full citizens.

This disenfranchised and marginalized position that children occupy today has led some scholars to talk of children as “colonized” or imprisoned: Perry Nodelman, for instance, discusses how the genre contributes to keeping children in a space in which they lack power and are prevented from playing an active role in their society. Others, such as the child liberationists Richard Farson and John Holt in the 1970s (who use the child's figurative imprisonment as the premise of their arguments) as well as the proponents of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), have been advocating for participation rights for children, rights that would allow children to have their voices heard in a public forum. As I critique Nodelman's assertion that children are “colonized” or imprisoned, I intend in this chapter to demonstrate that a definition of children's literature as a body of didactic texts is limited, arguing instead that the genre is home also to texts that

demand a dialogical, serious engagement with the child's voice. Such texts, I believe, can further the agenda put forth by the children's liberation movement and the United Nations' CRC, particularly as it pertains to participation rights.

This chapter begins by tracing the historical development of the current construction of childhood, analyzing the institutions (and especially compulsory education) that promote hegemony and mold the child into a future citizen. I then move into a discussion of children's rights to provide an overview of the liberation movement in the 1970s and the values as well as limits of the CRC. I argue that the restrictions on a child's rights are founded on her status as "not-yet" a citizen, as *becoming* rather than *being* an enfranchised subject within a nation-state, and I draw on political philosopher Giorgio Agamben's theory of human rights to explore how this temporary status of the child challenges and complicates the model of conferring rights based on national citizenship. Following Neil Postman's lead, I then analyze how the development of literacy has helped to shape the modern nation-state model and contributed to the clear distinction of childhood from adulthood, and I discuss more broadly the ways in which literature for children can participate in the project of nation-building. In this final section, I will moreover address the claims by Nodelman that children's literature fulfills a "colonizing" function, and I argue that defining childhood as a colonized or imprisoned space creates false parallels that neither accurately reflect the status of children nor allow for any real agency on the part of children. I recommend instead an exploration of how the institutions of childhood, and especially children's literature, *contain* the child, both as a controlled subject and as a subversive presence. In other words, while Nodelman focuses on how texts for children participate in the *containment* of the figure of the child and thus in limiting and controlling it, I intend to amend this view by proposing to also study the ways in which children's books employ the child's voice as their dynamic and even volatile *content*. By incorporating the child's voice, which then enters into a dialogue with the adult's voice in the texts, these books draw attention to children's ideological positioning in the world and interrogate their disenfranchisement.

Childhood in the Age of Nation-States

In "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," Étienne Balibar draws on and revises Louis Althusser's model of the Ideological State Apparatuses to formulate his

critique of the nation-state. Balibar argues that, in bourgeois social formations, the school and family together constitute the dominant Ideological State Apparatus, and that its function is not merely the reproduction of labor relations but, more importantly, the reproduction of a fictive ethnicity. It is the existence of this apparatus, according to Balibar, that lies “at the root of the hegemony of nationalism” (“Nation” 103). The fictive ethnicity that the Ideological State Apparatuses of the school and the family recreate is the imagined community of the nation-state, as Balibar explains:

No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the populations included within them, divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized – that is, represented in the past or in the future *as if* they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture and interests which transcends individual and social conditions. (“Nation” 96; emphasis in original)

Through the creation of this fictive ethnicity of the people of the nation-state, differences between individual citizens are then subordinated to the supposed difference between those within the nation-state and those outside it (“Nation” 94). The reproduction of this national community is fundamental to the continued existence of the nation-state because, as Balibar points out, “a social formation only reproduces itself as a nation to the extent that, through a network of apparatuses and daily practices, the individual is instituted as *homo nationalis* from cradle to grave” (“Nation” 93). Such a community is, of course, imaginary, as “it is based on the projection of individual existence into the weft of a collective narrative,” the narrative of a people who share a fictive ethnicity, and it is, therefore, a primary task of the nation to create this people (“Nation” 93). For the nation-state to continue to exist as a political community, then, it has to utilize the Ideological State Apparatuses of the school and family to produce in and through ideology the “people” and thus a shared feeling of belonging and history.

Balibar’s analysis implies the importance of the figure of the child for the creation of a sense of national belonging since, as David Archard points out, “the citizens of the ideal State are made and not simply born” (161). Children undergo an intense process of socialization through the family and the school, a process in which

children's literature, a relatively young genre that developed alongside contemporary conceptions of childhood and the creation of the modern nation-state, participates. Historically linked to the formation of nation-states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, childhood as the West understands it today emerged together with "national imaginaries" and "spoke the new language of power when reasoning about the child," leading to a consistently increasing separation between the child and the adult (Hultqvist and Dahlberg 4). Postman notes that

if we take the word *children* to mean a special class of people somewhere between the ages of seven and, say, seventeen, requiring special forms of nurturing and protection, and believed to be qualitatively different from adults, then there is ample evidence that children have existed for less than four hundred years. Indeed, if we use the word *children* in the fullest sense in which the average American understands it, childhood is not much more than one hundred and fifty years old. (xi)

Prior to the rise of the nation-state and the contemporaneous industrialization and creation of capitalist economies, the people we now call "children" existed alongside "adults" and actively participated in everyday adult activities. Since the eighteenth century, however, they have been more and more excluded from the workforce and contained in a space of their own, as Philippe Ariès has famously observed in *Centuries of Childhood*, and this process culminated in the establishment of compulsory primary education in the early nineteenth century.

Our contemporary conception of childhood is thus a relatively recent phenomenon, and "what is both new and bad about modern childhood is that children are so cut off from the adult world" (Holt 39). No longer considered "little adults," containing within themselves all the qualities of adulthood, children have become a separate class of people, imagined as inherently different from and inferior to adults, and childhood is now considered a developmental life-stage preparing for adulthood. Childhood is consequently always defined in relation to adulthood, as "the 'not-yet-ness' of adulthood" (Archard 36). This concept of childhood has, moreover, been constructed not as the cultural but the natural, with assumptions regarding children's immaturity – and their associated asocial, asexual, and apolitical characteristics – presented as biological fact rather than as culturally constructed (Martineau 226). Yet

as “both focus and creation of civilization,” childhood as we understand it today is a recent historical phenomenon founded on the need to instill a sense of national belonging and to create a homogenous citizenry, and it became “a life stage dedicated to the inculcation of a sociospecific citizenship” by the end of the nineteenth century (McGillivray “Therapies” 145). Despite their apparent concern with children’s welfare, the reforms of the nineteenth century, and especially the Factory Laws and new educational policies, thus ultimately led to the disenfranchisement of children as citizens by excluding them from the public world (James and James 36).

The separation of children from adults is closely linked to their identification as “not-yet” citizens or as potential adults, and the need for appropriate training of children as future citizens became particularly pressing in the atmosphere of enhanced competition between nations that began towards the end of the eighteenth century and heightened in the decades leading up to World War I (Heywood 29). Following industrialization especially, fears of a “bastardization of the race” were spreading because the pale children working in factories were thought to be incapable of serving their countries in their later lives: “investment in human capital to produce the next generation of workers and soldiers” thus became imperative (Heywood 134; 145). Margaret Alden, a British doctor in favor of compulsory education, noted in 1908 that “the nation that first recognizes the importance of scientifically rearing and training . . . children . . . will be the nation that will survive” (qtd. in Heywood 134), and President Theodore Roosevelt’s argument against child labor was similarly based on the idea that children must be preserved and protected as a natural resource (Farson 160). New education policies making the attendance of primary school mandatory for all children therefore were instated because childhood, as Nikolas Rose has observed, was “linked in thought and practice to the destiny of the nation and the responsibilities of the state,” and it consequently became “the most intensely governed sector of human existence” (qtd. in McGillivray “Therapies” 145). Henceforth, children were to be excluded from the workforce in order to be trained and prepared in a national school system for their roles as adult citizens.

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, in their analysis of the education system in France, note that the school reproduces the status quo and maintains

hegemony because it successfully disguises this central function it performs: it gives “credibility to the ideology of social mobility whose most accomplished expression is the school ideology of . . . the school as a liberating force” (167). T. H Marshall and Tom Bottomore argue in a similar vein that “citizenship operates as an instrument of social stratification” through education, as “the status acquired by education is carried out into the world bearing the stamp of legitimacy, because it has been conferred by an institution designed to give the citizen his just rights” (39). This function of the school as an Ideological State Apparatus that maintains hegemony and teaches students their assigned roles both as children and as adults has led child rights scholar Anne McGillivray to claim that “childhood was, in effect, colonized by the state. The governance of childhood was aimed at the induction of docile citizenship, the creation of a disciplined soul” (“Therapies” 146). Yet what the overly structural analyses by Bourdieu and Passeron as well as Marshall and Bottomore exclude, and what is absent from McGillivray’s identification of childhood as a “colonized” space, is any engagement with the agency of children, who participate in the education system and who, despite their lower status vis-à-vis adults, can potentially enact forms of resistance. While “childhood ‘is’ nationhood,” as McGillivray puts it so succinctly (“Introduction” 13), it is a mistake, I believe, to conceive of the relationship between the nation and the child as purely one-directional. Rather, children are not only acted upon but can also act in ways that provoke change or that question existing structures, and child rights activists have since the 1970s pursued the creation of a more public forum for this political voice of the child.

Children’s Rights

The child rights movement, which can be traced historically to Rousseau’s model of child-centered pedagogy and the neo-humanist advocates of children’s rights, most prominently William von Humboldt and G. W. F. Hegel, saw a radical turn in the early 1970s with the rise of the children’s liberation movement (Butler “Introduction” 3). The two main theorists of children’s liberation, Farson and Holt, drew on the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and the workers’ movement to identify children as another important oppressed group in Western society, joining the ranks of African-Americans, women, and the proletariat in the

fight for equal rights (Archard 45). As Farson maintains, “Our society is now segregated not only by race, class, and sex, but by age. Consequently ideas about childhood are being developed and reinforced not through contact between adults and children, but through the lack of it” (22). The perception of children as incompetent and deficient vis-à-vis the adult, Farson and Holt argue, stems from this segregation of children and represents an ideological position that is not rooted in any real knowledge of children; in other words, “‘childishness’, connoting vulnerability, frailty and helplessness, is not a natural quality of children but rather an ideological construct which helps to support the denial of their proper rights” (Archard 49). Farson and Holt ultimately maintain, therefore, that children should be granted the same rights as adults and for the same ideological reasons, not based on assumptions about whether or not rights are beneficial to children or adults and not because children or adults will necessarily become better people as a result, but because freedom and self-government lie at the heart of the democratic system and are worthy ends in and of themselves (Farson 31).

The child liberationists therefore proposed a shift in perspective from focusing on the protection of children to focusing on the protection of their rights instead, arguing that the relationship between the adult and the child is often portrayed “as *we* (the people at the top) doing something for *them* (the people at the bottom),” a statement emphasizing the adult’s role as oppressor and the child’s as a “prisoner of childhood” (Farson 181; 214). Holt explains that what he calls “the institution of childhood” includes the norms, laws, and attitudes separating children from adults and denying them any participation in the larger world around them, thus imprisoning them in a marginalized space characterized by “subserviency and dependency, and [making] of them . . . a mixture of expensive nuisance, fragile treasure, slave, and super-pet” (26). Identifying the child as a prisoner or slave, rooted in a long history of constructing the child as analogous to the “noble savage,” the “barbarian,” and the “primitive” (McGillivray “Therapies” 144; Postman 50; Archard 33), is meant to be provocative and serves the child liberationists’ argument that children need to be freed and granted equal rights; at the same time, however, these analogies participate in that same discourse of defining the child as deficient and inferior that Farson and Holt are trying to escape. The ways in which children may actively participate in their environment, even if largely limited to the family

and school, as well as the challenges the figure of the child poses to hegemony, are not substantially addressed in these scholars' arguments, and the child's agency is thus posited as a future possibility, granted to the child by the adult, rather than as already existent, though mostly ignored or discredited by the adult.

In the wake of the children's liberation movement and the struggle for equal rights more generally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was conceived in 1979, the International Year of the Child. The CRC, expanding on the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, was drafted and revised over the following decade, unanimously adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in 1989, and has since then been ratified by 192 countries, all except for the US and Somalia – though the US signed it in 1995, it has not ratified the Convention due to concerns over American sovereignty as well as fears that parental rights would be superseded by children's rights (Covell "Case" 38). The child rights put forth in the CRC can be organized into the three Ps: rights of provision, rights of protection, and rights of participation. The former two posit the child as a passive receiver of benefits deriving from these rights, and only the latter place the child into a position of agency (Howe 142). These rights of participation represent an extension of the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which emphasized only rights of provision and protection, and they also remain the most strongly contested rights in the Convention as well as the ones facing most resistance to implementation.

Articles 12 through 15 of the Convention spell out the child's participation rights, and though these rights represent a significant step forward for the child rights movement, they in effect remain rather limited. Article 13, for example, grants the child the right to freedom of expression yet also makes it clear that this right can be restricted "for the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals." Similarly, Article 15 asserts the child's right to "freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly," but again restrictions can be placed on this right "in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), [and] the protection of public health or morals," and the child's granted agency is thus immediately curtailed to protect the larger, hegemonic nation-state system. One overarching criticism of the CRC, moreover, has focused on its normalizing of a construction of childhood based on a contemporary Western understanding of the child, and Article 12 raises significant questions regarding the

childhood conception it puts forth: “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.” Article 12 is arguably the most radical element of the Convention, as it grants the child a limited political voice – limited to “matters affecting the child,” a definition of which the CRC does not provide – but it also expresses an idea of the child as deficient, immature, and inferior vis-à-vis the adult, and the exercise of this participation right is limited to children who have proven to be “capable of forming . . . views,” views which will then be evaluated based on “age and maturity.” The adult thus remains in a position of power over the child as the person who decides whether or not a child is capable, how mature she is, and hence how much weight to attribute to her views. Ultimately, then, the adult will occupy the decision-making role when it comes to attributing a voice to the child since the adult, by virtue of the definition of adulthood, is always more capable, older, and more mature than the child.

Nonetheless, Article 12 and the CRC’s participation rights more generally present an important departure from the previous discourse on children’s rights that put forth a welfare or needs-based approach towards children rather than acknowledging their agency. As Griffiths and Kandel note, Article 12 has provided for “an international ‘sound space’ for the child’s voice” and is thus an important step towards giving children the opportunity to participate in politics and policy-making in a meaningful way (qtd. in James and James 83). Significantly, granting children participation rights is, moreover, a move towards acknowledging the child as a citizen with agency in the present and not just a future adult-in-the-making, “promot[ing] the recognition of children as contemporaneous rather than merely future citizens, as citizens who must be given a voice” (Covell “Case” 39). The CRC thus reflects a changing perspective on the child that is shifting from one of parental property, or what Holt calls the “slave” and “super-pet,” to a view of the child as an independent agent and bearer of rights (Covell “Case” 37).

Giorgio Agamben has shown that rights are granted based on nativity and citizenship rather than by virtue of being human, and his analysis can help to shed further light on the ambiguous political status of the child. Agamben explains that rights “are attributed to the human being only to the degree to which he or she is the

immediately vanishing presupposition. . . . of the citizen,” and consequently, “in the system of the nation-state, so-called sacred and inalienable human rights are revealed to be without any protection precisely when it is no longer possible to conceive of them as rights of the citizen of the state” (21; 19-20). Human rights, and rights in general, are thus directly linked to the modern nation-state, which, however, grants rights not to the human being per se but to its citizens, and Agamben draws on the figure of the refugee to expose the downfalls and contradictions inherent to this system of rights. The figure of the refugee Agamben employs needs to be distinguished from that of the migrant more generally; the refugee occupies a position different from that of the asylum seeker, for example, because the refugee, who has lost all rights, is nonetheless, due to the specific legal definition of his status, granted particular rights within the nation-state where he seeks *refugium*. He thus exists in a temporary condition of “quasi-citizenship,” typically associated with rights such as residency and the possibility of employment, while awaiting naturalization or repatriation.

The figure of the refugee, and particularly that of the stateless refugee, ultimately points toward the inherent biopolitical fracture in the nation-state between the *People* and the *people*. The fact that the refugee is granted specific rights that are usually bound up with citizenship, in a nation-state in which he does not, however, belong to the *People*, further highlights and exposes this fracture and thus brings the nation-state into crisis. Drawing on Aristotle’s distinction between the private and the public, or natural life and political life, which Agamben views as the foundation of Western politics, Agamben posits that the concept of *people* sheds further light on this inherent ambiguity. He points out that we speak, on the one hand, of “the *People* as a whole and as an integral body politic and, on the other hand, [of] the *people* as a subset and as fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies” (31). He goes on to explain that this division pervades Western politics as “naked life (*people*) and political existence (*People*), exclusion and inclusion, *zoê* and *bios*. *The concept of people always already contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture*” (32; emphasis in original). The nation-state, founded on the biopolitical fracture between the *people* and *People*, is thus based on internal exclusion, and the figure of the refugee highlights and problematizes that exclusion.

Although citizenship and thus rights are granted based on nativity, as Agamben emphasizes, I argue that the figure of the child, born into a nation-state and given citizenship, also highlights the biopolitical fracture and presents a further challenge to the nation-state's internal exclusion. Though the child's status differs, of course, from that of the refugee, the child, too, occupies a temporary space of quasi-citizenship as she does not enjoy the same rights granted to the adult citizen. Claire Cassidy has pointed out that the legal status of the child reflects the "negative notion of the child as *becoming*" because children are "powerless individuals who have to wait their turn before they are allowed to *be* in society" (167; emphasis in original). She further explains this idea of children as only potential citizens when she notes that "children are not currently considered by society to be persons. Recalling the Kantian claim that we should treat a person as an end in himself or herself and never simply as a means, children very often continue to be treated as a mere means to an end, that end being adulthood with full powers of participation" (166-167). Paradoxically, then, the figure of the child is the quintessential bearer of rights in a nation-state system that grants citizenship based on nativity, and yet children lack most of the rights associated with the citizen: they do not have the right to work, the right to vote, the right to free movement, the right to own property or to enter into contracts, or the right to self-determination. Rather, the (social) rights the child does enjoy are founded on notions of protectionism and on a needs-based approach that treats the child not as being but as *becoming*, to use Cassidy's term, and not as an end but a means.

The prevalent needs-based approach that posits adults as the protectors and teachers of children is grounded in the notion that children rely on the assistance of benevolent adults as they grow into full citizens themselves (Covell "Case" 39). This "paternalistic or welfare approach . . . does not recognize its target group as bearers of rights," as Katherine Covell emphasizes, but rather focuses on the duty-bound teacher or parent while denying children the right to exercise their human rights and the agency and voice that are inherent to them (39; 41). As "future citizens in need of preparation," children are moreover subjugated to an education that, while preparing them for the exercise of their future rights as adults, neither recognizes nor teaches children about the rights they currently hold (Covell and Howe 39). Even the child's right to education has been framed according to this perspective that identifies

children as *becoming* rather than *being*; it is “a *past-tense adult human right* to have received an education . . . as a child,” Clark Butler points out, and as a result, “[p]arents and schools need to act on behalf of the adults whom children will become” (“Children’s Rights” 18; emphasis in original). Marshall and Bottomore echo this sentiment when they argue that “[t]he right to education is a genuine social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult. Fundamentally it should be regarded, not as the right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated” (16).

Conceiving of the rights children have as “past-tense adult human rights” rather than as present-tense child human rights once again highlights the status of the child as a means rather than an end, and it furthermore points to a hierarchy of rights in which adult rights, even in the past tense, take precedence over child rights. The past-tense adult right to education, for example, interferes with the present-tense child right to enjoy a temporary freedom from institutional oversight and control, a freedom that is commonly associated with childhood. In addition, schooling based on the past-tense adult right to education is focused primarily on accommodating the needs of the future adult that the child represents, and it thus aims to socialize children into adult citizens and to instruct them in the roles and responsibilities they will hold in the future. A focus on the present-tense child’s right to education would instead treat children as ends in themselves, actualizing those rights they currently hold as children rather than laying the groundwork for rights children will hold only in the future. Such an education, then, would foreground the child’s participation rights while also providing children with a space to practice and exercise their voice.

Inherent in a discussion focused on past-tense adult rights rather than present-tense rights of the child is a hierarchy of rights that further underscores the notion of children “as *current* human beings and as *future* citizens,” as citizens-in-training who enjoy social but not civil or political citizenship (Archard 112). This hierarchy presents a significant obstacle to the exercise of children’s participation rights, as the child’s voice remains second to the adult’s. Cassidy points out that, “[w]ithout status, children and young people have no voice, there is no one to hear them, indeed, no one need hear them, and their participation is not encouraged or even promoted” (170), and the status of children therefore needs to change if the participation rights put forth in the CRC are to be taken seriously. The dominant contemporary

construction of childhood defines children as inferior to adults, as lacking qualities the adult has, and as needing to become adults rather than being children; in fact, Balthazar Gratien's provocative statement that "only time can cure a person of childhood and youth, which are truly ages of imperfection in every respect," published in his treatise on education in 1646, still rings true today (qtd. in Ariès 132). Children are considered to "be the future" or "adults-in-training," to use Farson's phrase, and they are consequently denied rights in the present, but for the CRC's participation rights to become more than merely tokenistic, it is crucial that children be recognized not just as future adults. For their voices to be heard, children need to be given a status as current citizens, not as temporary members of the *people* who have not yet earned their rights and are only in the process of being socialized into proper *People*.

Containing the Child in Children's Literature

Both the rise of the nation-state and the modern construction of childhood, which defines children as different from and deficient vis-à-vis adults, can be linked to the spread of literacy in Europe, as Postman has shown in *The Disappearance of Childhood*. Drawing on Rousseau, who has called reading "the scourge of childhood, for books teach us to talk about things we know nothing about," Postman argues that "reading is the scourge of childhood because, in a sense, it creates adulthood" (13). He maintains that the concept of childhood was absent from the medieval imaginations due to the lack of literacy and education, but that the onset of printing gave rise to a new sense of what it meant to be an adult, and hence what it meant to be a child: "The printing press created a new definition of adulthood *based on reading competence*, and, correspondingly, a new conception of childhood *based on reading incompetence* That is why there was no such thing as children's literature [before]" (17-18; emphasis in original). Indeed, the folk and fairy tales which today are sharply divided into those suitable for children and those deemed appropriate only for an adult audience – the former lacking explicit references to sex, violence, and other taboos – used to be shared by children and adults alike; literature and stories geared specifically towards children started to appear only in the mid-eighteenth century. According to Postman, it is due to printing that children had to start earning adulthood by learning how to read and write, and education became

compulsory precisely for the purpose of teaching children these skills that were now required for achieving full adult citizenship.

Due to the importance placed on literacy, children could no longer simply *be* children but entered a process, starting at birth, of *becoming* adults, with adulthood now not merely a biological life-stage but rather a symbolic accomplishment: “*childhood became a description of a level of symbolic achievement*. Infancy ended at the point at which command of speech was achieved. Childhood began with the task of learning how to read. Indeed, the word *child* was frequently used to describe adults who could not read, adults who were regarded as intellectually childish” (Postman 42; emphasis in original). While print ultimately resulted in written knowledge becoming more accessible to adults, at the same time it created a different kind of knowledge monopoly as children became increasingly separated and closed off from the everyday adult life they had been involved in previously (Postman 49; 76). With the increasing importance placed on literacy, children were subjected more and more to the supervision of teachers and parents and to what these authorities deemed suitable reading material for them. Suitable texts were chosen in terms of both the child’s reading level and their perceived ability to foster a sense of nationalism in the child. A main function of the new school system was to socialize students into a specific national culture and hegemony, and print, which had turned the vernacular into a “fixed and visualizable language” that “played an enormous role in the development of nationalism” was an appropriate medium to achieve this goal (Postman 33). As a consequence, the texts made available to children, now regarded as deficient and needing to learn specific skills that would eventually allow them to become adults, were carefully scrutinized and evaluated based on their potential for turning children into literate adult citizens of a particular nation-state. Jack Zipes echoes this sentiment when he argues that “to become literate did not mean simply to develop the ability to read; literacy entailed (and still does) a learning process that produced responsible citizens who functioned in a hierarchical society according to its rules” (“Foreword” vii). It is hardly surprising, then, that adults have been selecting and censoring children’s reading material since the sixteenth century, and that a new, didactic genre of literature tailored specifically towards children emerged in the eighteenth century as the segregation of children from adults intensified. An inherent element of children’s literature, then, is the representation of

childhood as a sphere distinct from adulthood, designed to teach child readers about their current ideological position in the nation-state.

In “Can the Subaltern Speak?” postcolonial scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak discusses Marx’s clear differentiation between *vertreten* (represent) and *darstellen* (re-present) as he analyzes the formation of class. Small peasant proprietors, Marx famously argues in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, “cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above” (qtd. in Spivak “Subaltern” 276-277). In her analysis of the passage, Spivak asserts that where the English translation uses “represent,” Marx uses “*vertreten*,” a verb related to yet distinct from *darstellen* (“Subaltern” 276). While the former term connotes substitution and what Spivak calls “rhetoric as persuasion,” the latter refers to “rhetoric as tropology”; in other words, the difference between *vertreten* and *darstellen* is much like “the contrast . . . between a proxy and a portrait” (“Subaltern” 276). Marx’s passage, moreover, helps to illustrate the ideological position of children in contemporary society: much like the small peasant proprietors he discusses, children “cannot represent themselves; they must be represented,” as adult guardians serve as their masters as well as their protectors. Since children do not have a political voice in modern nation-states until they reach the age of majority, adults function as their proxies or representatives and make decisions for them. As such, adults represent (*vertreten*) children in the public and political realm. Children’s literature offers an additional dimension to this representation, as it re-presents (*darstellen*) childhood to children, portraying the child’s role in relation to the adult. In this case, adults serve as the re-representatives of childhood as well, since they produce the texts for children, so that the re-representation (*Darstellung*) of childhood in the books is an adult construction and portrayal. The term “children’s literature” is, in fact, misleading since it refers not to a body of work written *by* children, as the possessive seems to suggest, but rather *for* them. Once again, children cannot represent themselves; rather, they depend on the adult for both their *Vertretung* and *Darstellung*.

A fundamental didacticism lies at the root of the genre of children’s literature, a body of texts historically intended to teach children about childhood, to instill in

them a sense of patriotism, and to socialize them into their role in a national hegemony. Furthermore, the impulse to censor texts for children both to protect them and to encourage their adequate socialization remains very much alive today. Article 17 of the CRC in fact states that while “State Parties shall . . . encourage the production and dissemination of children’s books,” this must be done while at the same time ensuring “the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being.” Following the articles outlining the child’s participation rights, Article 17 points to the importance of children’s books in encouraging a child’s self-expression and fostering a child’s “social, spiritual, and moral well-being.” At the same time, however, the article also highlights the necessity of censorship as well as the construction of the child as needing protection in its emphasis on keeping reading material that could prove “injurious” out of the child’s reach. Yet to think of children merely as empty vessels that become filled with moral and ideological teachings through schooling and the “appropriate” literature denies children the agency to actively engage and participate in the meaning-making process.

José Esteban Muñoz identifies a resistant strategy of reading even hegemonic texts, which include, of course, texts for children intended to socialize them into the a national hegemony, through the practice of what he calls “disidentification.” These disidentifications, which allow “identities-in-difference [to] emerge from a failed interpellation within the dominant public sphere,” work on ideology in order to transform its logic and to point towards the possibility of identities that oppose dominant subjectivities (7). He draws on both Althusser’s analysis of ideology and Stuart Hall’s identification of the encoding/decoding process to argue that disidentification reworks the meaning encoded in texts, exposing “the encoded message’s universalizing and exclusionary machinations” while at the same time empowering identifications not foreseen by the ideology inherent to the text (31). In other words, “disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by dominant culture” (31). Disidentification thus provides a strategy of resistance as this practice recycles and restructures the dominant ideology that is at work in cultural texts in order to represent an identity-in-difference. This counterhegemonic strategy,

moreover, underscores that because hegemony is founded on consent, resistance is possible and even inherent to the very idea of hegemony itself. As the Marxist political theorist Antonio Gramsci has famously argued, hegemony is achieved through consent and coercion; it requires, he maintains, both “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” as well as “the apparatus of state coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” (12). Inherent to Gramsci’s definition of hegemony as requiring consent, the process of which is located and shaped in civil society, is the possibility of withholding the consent the hegemonic system relies on, and thus the possibility of resistance. Acknowledging the child reader’s agency and participation in the meaning-making process, then, also means to allow for the possibility that the child reader may employ a strategy of disidentification and construct subversive meaning even out of texts intended to strengthen and perpetuate the hegemonic system.

Raymond Williams, who draws heavily on Gramsci in his discussion of hegemony, posits in *Marxism and Literature* that hegemony is not a structure but rather a process, “a lived system of meaning and values – constitutive and constituting” (110). This hegemonic system, experienced by most people as reality, is, for Williams, “in the strongest sense a ‘culture’,” although it needs to be understood as a culture founded on the hierarchical power structure of particular classes in society (110). Williams thus defines hegemony as containing both the notions of culture and of ideology:

‘hegemony’ is a concept which at once includes and goes beyond two powerful earlier concepts: that of ‘culture’ as a ‘whole social process’, in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of ‘ideology’, in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest. (108)

He moreover adds to Gramsci’s conception of hegemony the categories of “counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony,” which, though implicit in Gramsci’s analysis, are never by him termed as such (113). According to Williams, then, hegemony poses neither a totalitarian nor an exclusive reality; though it is necessarily dominant

and bound up with the ruling class, resistant and subversive politics exist alongside it in society, and it is the function of the dominant hegemony to contain, alter, even integrate them (113). While Williams acknowledges that the argument that the dominant hegemony both produces and regulates counterhegemonic ideas and practices is persuasive, he concludes that this view of hegemony is reductive and does not recognize the complexities of culture: “cultural processes,” he argues, “must not be assumed to be merely adaptive, extensive, and incorporative” (114). Such complexities of culture of course pervade the production and readings of children’s books as well, and a conception of children’s literature as necessarily hegemonic denies the presence of subversive elements that are inherent to a genre that has a marginalized and disenfranchised group as both its intended audience and main characters.

Texts for children are saturated with a persistent tension between the counterhegemonic and the hegemonic, or, as Nodelman puts it, a central ambivalence that stems from the child/adult power structure inherent to the construction of childhood and, consequently, to the production and reception of texts for children. While childhood, Nodelman argues, is not a stable concept and includes varying ideas about children, leading also to differing definitions of children’s literature, the genre “centrally represents adult views of childhood, not those of children themselves” (151; 149). This adult construction of childhood voiced in children’s literature serves, then, both to define adults – as the opposite of children – and, at the same time, to teach children how to be childlike or, in other words, to instruct children what their role in society is: “childhood as characteristically presented in texts of children’s literature is a fictional construct for *both* children and adults. It is an invention of adults, the main quality of which is exactly the way in which it is conceived to be opposite of adulthood” (197; emphasis in original). Consequently, “[c]hildhood exists . . . to allow adults to be adults – so children’s literature exists in order to impose childhood on children” (169). Nodelman concludes that children’s literature is necessarily didactic as it teaches children how they are different from adults and which qualities constitute childhood.

The stability of the child/adult power relationship in texts for children constitutes the subject of an ongoing debate in contemporary children’s literature criticism. Maria Lassén-Seger agrees with Nodelman that the child/adult hierarchy is

inherent to the genre as well as the discourse about children's literature, but she believes that the application of Michel Foucault's theory of power and of postcolonial theory to the criticism of children's books has demonstrated that a "one-sided domination of adults over children" cannot be taken for granted. She concludes that "narratives for children and teenagers may actually question child/adult power relationships" and thus affirms that texts in the genre can be potentially subversive of systems of domination (20). Furthermore, Nodelman bases his assertion that children's books fulfill a primarily didactic function, precluding the possibility of true subversion, on the construction of children as "empty vessels." Yet this construction of children as an "empty," open-minded, and untainted audience seems to also provide children's literature with a particular counterhegemonic potentiality, especially if children are recognized as active readers with an agency that allows them to question and think about the texts to which they are exposed.

Based on his understanding of children's literature as didactic by definition, Nodelman moreover observes that the genre serves to "colonize" children. Positing adult control as a main factor in texts for children, he argues that, "children's literature might be best characterized as a literature that works to colonize children by persuading them that they are as innocent and in need of adult control as adults would like them to believe" (163). Employing Edward Said's theory in *Orientalism* as a starting point, Nodelman identifies the child/adult relationship as analogous to that of the colonized and the colonizer: as the colonized is defined by the colonizer as the Other, so the figure of the child, too, is primarily conceived of as Other by the adult and thus, paradoxically, needs to be both kept in its place and, at the same time, taught how to move out of its state as Other and become more adult (166-167). While children's literature is thus expected to, on the one hand, offer "protection, both from knowledge and from experience" (158), it needs to, on the other hand, serve as a teaching tool that instills knowledge and values in children that aid them in growing out of childhood. Karín Lesnik-Oberstein agrees with Nodelman when she suggests that the idea of the child presented in children's literature serves as the adult's Other: "The concepts of 'adult' and 'child' interact in an immensely complicated process of adult self-definition," and adults thus employ the construction of childhood to define themselves against it (27).

Yet Nodelman's argument, drawing on this Self/Other binary in children's literature and concluding that childhood is a colonized space, creates a false parallel, as the status of children differs from that of actual colonized peoples. Lassén-Seger directly challenges Nodelman's analogy of the child/adult hierarchy to colonialism, referring to the work of Victor R. Ramraj who has argued that "the actual colony, unlike the *colony* of childhood, has literal oppressive military forces, literal political prisoners; and the actual colony does not literally grow out of its colonial state as does the child who, on reaching the age of majority, is no longer a colonized figure but now takes his or her turn at being an adult-imperialist" (qtd. in Lassén-Seger 12; emphasis in original). Archard similarly notes that the state of children "is not permanent in that . . . children will grow out of their diminished condition. In the normal course of events children will *become* rational, autonomous adults" (53; emphasis in original). While the child/adult binary remains a relatively stable fixture in contemporary society, then, individual children will of course outgrow their disenfranchised status, become full-fledged citizens, and in turn enter into a position of power over the next generation of children. The limits to Nodelman's discussion of childhood as a colonized space thus lie, as Lassén-Seger, Ramraj, and Archard have suggested, in the creation of false parallels that fail to accurately account for the real status of the child in contemporary society, and the same also holds true for Farson's identification of the child as a "prisoner of childhood" (214). While circumventing the question of whether all texts for children necessarily reinforce the child/adult hierarchy and indoctrinate children into hegemony, Nodelman's identification of children as "colonized" moreover negates children's participation in reading and the meaning-making process. Analogies that characterize the child as colonized or imprisoned thus perpetuate the conception of the child as powerless and victimized, portraying the child/adult binary as one-directional rather than dialogical.

In order to acknowledge and give a space to the voice and agency of the child, I propose that exploring how the institutions of childhood – and especially children's literature – *contain* the child is more productive than discussing how they imprison and colonize her. The meaning of the verb *contain* here is two-fold: the child is contained, defined, limited, and restricted by the institutions of childhood, and it is this containment of the child that scholars such as Nodelman focus on in their analyses. But these institutions also contain – that is, include, have as part of

their content – the figure of the child and the child’s voice, and all its disruptive and counterhegemonic potential. In the case of the family and the school, they contain this potential in the form of real children; in the case of children’s literature, this potential rests in fictional characters embodying different constructions of childhood. An analysis that foregrounds the ways in which the child is contained in as well as by the institutions of childhood thus emphasizes not only the existing power structures that benefit the adult and marginalize the child, but it also highlights how the figure of the child can challenge these power structures and use its voice as a means of resistance and enfranchisement. Children’s literature scholarship has typically emphasized the study of the child’s *containment*, focusing on the adult’s position of power within the texts as well as in the production of children’s books, and this emphasis has led to important insights into the child/adult binary and the child’s marginalized status. Studying the inclusion of the child’s voice as part of the texts’ *content*, as I propose, can amend and extend these insights by underlining the child’s responses and challenges to the adult ideological world.

Texts for children can question and revise the child/adult power structure, I argue, by incorporating the child’s voice (and thus the discursive representation of the child’s agency and ideological world) as a large part of their content. Rather than containing and controlling both the child character, by quieting her voice, and the child reader, by teaching her the limits of her role in society, such texts emphasize not the didactic function of the genre but instead call for a dialogical engagement with the child’s voice. This voice represents a defining feature of the genre, since all children’s books employ a child or childlike character and, by extension, a representation of that character’s ideological world, though some texts allocate a larger space for that voice to sound and thus more adamantly demand that it be heard and taken seriously. Tracing the incorporation of the child’s voice into the texts, moreover, highlights the ways in which the voice of the child enters into a dialogue with both the adult author and the adult character. As I discuss in my next chapter, the child/adult binary and the power structure on which it rests are thus uncovered and scrutinized: through the discursive struggle between the child’s voice and the adult’s, and thus between their respective ideological worlds, children’s books can expose the adult’s complicity in hegemony and challenge the adult’s one-sided domination over the child.

CHAPTER 2. THE VICISSITUDES OF ADULTHOOD: REREADING THE
CHILD/ADULT BINARY

German author Erich Kästner, who wrote both children's literature and fiction for adults, famously coined the phrase, "*Nur wer erwachsen wird und ein Kind bleibt, ist ein Mensch*" (Only those who grow into adults and remain children are truly human). His oft-quoted statement, which has graced the back covers of many editions of his widely published children's books, challenges the construction of childhood and adulthood as opposites and instead proposes that the figure of the child and the adult need to converge to form a human being. More specifically, Kästner uses the word *Mensch* to suggest specific qualities that make a person *menshlich* (an adjective meaning "human" as well as "humane"), and a *Mensch* in that sense is someone who possesses *Menschlichkeit* (humanity). Kästner's words, drawing on a romanticized ideal of the child, not only suggest that an adult who has abandoned that which characterizes childhood cannot be a *Mensch*, but they also, and maybe inadvertently, imply that a child too, not yet having grown into an adult, lacks *Menschlichkeit*. The child's humanity manifests itself only in potential form, one that is to be realized or abandoned over time in the process of becoming an adult. Kästner thus echoes a common notion of the child as deficient, as *becoming* rather than *being*, and as a means to an end rather than an end in herself, even as his statement apparently subverts the binary structure on which this notion rests. But what does it mean for a human being to occupy the spheres of both childhood and adulthood? And how does the child's potentiality affect our views on childhood and the genre of children's literature?

Central to definitions of children's literature, the child/adult binary is often evoked to underscore the socializing and didactic functions of the genre, as well as its prevalent binary structures and inherent ambivalence. Perry Nodelman has dedicated an impressive 390-page analysis, aptly titled *The Hidden Adult*, to the roles adults play in the genre of children's literature – both within and outside the books themselves. According to Nodelman, the genre "centrally represents adult views of childhood, not those of children themselves," and these adult understandings of childhood represent adult attitudes rather than characterize real children (149). He concludes, therefore, that the adult need to control and impose childhood onto children is a defining element of children's literature. This adult construction of

childhood inherent to children's literature serves both to define adults – as the opposite of children – and, at the same time, to teach children how to be childlike or, in other words, to instruct children what their role in society is: “[c]hildhood exists . . . to allow adults to be adults – so children's literature exists in order to impose childhood on children” (Nodelman 169). The values that need to be taught as well as those adult secrets that need to remain hidden vary, of course, depending on the ideological structure under which childhood is defined and where the production of children's books takes place.

Texts for children thus not only reflect adult views and desires about childhood and the figure of the child, but they also, to use Louis Althusser's term, “interpellate” their young readers, so that they may subscribe and adhere to these adult views as well. Joseph L. Zornado articulates this idea of children's literature even more strongly when he writes that,

The vast majority of children's stories invite the child to identify with the adult's idea of what the child should be, leaving unquestioned the authority structure of adult and child always implied in the text . . . Children's stories, in other words, are more often than not adult propaganda that serves to confirm for the child the hierarchical relationship between the adult and the child. (xv)

Children's books teach children, then, to model their behavior and their relationship to adults on the hierarchy these texts propagate. Zornado relates another prevalent opinion among critics when claiming that, in children's literature, “adult culture confirms itself, and the status quo is reproduced, for the obedient child proves the benefits of adult hegemony even as the violent, disobedient child proves the need for adult hegemony all the more clearly” (219). Scholarship on the genre has, in fact, suggested that children's literature is inherently didactic and expected to teach children enough about adult society so that they understand their own role in that society and their place in hegemony, while often keeping from them those aspects of adult knowledge and experience deemed unsuitable.

While Zornado's claim operates from the assumption that texts for children focus on the (obedient or disobedient) child and on constructions of childhood, some texts in recent decades have scrutinized adulthood as well, closely examining adult characters and the ideological world they inhabit from the child's perspective and

thus implicitly or explicitly challenging adult hegemony. Anne Scott MacLeod, for example, believes that, “The social revolutions of the 1970s transformed children’s literature Death, divorce, alcohol and drugs, racism and sexism as identified social evils, and, eventually, sexuality became commonplace in literature for the young” (210). Although MacLeod’s claim that these once unacceptable subject matters for children’s literature have since the 1970s become “commonplace” is likely an overstatement, as is her assertion that the “settled hierarchy of adult-child relationships is destroyed” (207), the social changes that were brought about in that decade seem to have, in fact, transformed the genre. Eva-Maria Metcalf agrees that, “since the 1970s high-quality children’s literature . . . often explicitly propagates more democratic child-adult interactions that mirror developments in the social and legal status of children in the Western world,” such as the extension of child rights the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child advocates (80).

Following the “liberation” of the genre in the 1970s, critics have underscored that the category of children’s literature is home to both hegemonic and counterhegemonic texts, though scholars such as Zornado and MacLeod often choose to emphasize either the didactic or the disruptive function of children’s literature. The genre is, of course, produced by the adults who write the books and who constitute one of its primary audiences, particularly as librarians, parents, and teachers. Since adults serve as the texts’ “gatekeepers” for children, it seems inevitable that the texts reflect these adults’ ideas about children and childhood. As I note in Chapter 1, Maria Lassén-Seger agrees that child/adult power relationships are inherent to children’s literature but believes that the application of Foucault’s theory of power and of postcolonial theory to the criticism of children’s books has demonstrated that a “one-sided domination of adults over children” cannot be taken for granted. She concludes that, “narratives for children and teenagers may actually question child/adult power relationships” (20) and thus affirms that texts in the genre can be subversive of systems of domination.

The change in the relationship between child and adult that is reflected in children’s literature since the 1970s and that allows for the incorporation of at least some adult secrets into texts for children constitutes a significant ideological shift. To quote MacLeod again,

Authors of the 1970s have opened the secrets of the adult world to children as juvenile literature has never before done. They have demolished protective walls built more than 200 years ago to separate the child's world from that of the adult, and in doing so, have not only exposed children to aspects of adult life long considered unsuitable for children, but also and by the same stroke have exposed adults to the scrutiny of children, who now see them portrayed in every shade and degree of failure, inadequacy, and confusion. (205)

While MacLeod suggests that the inclusion of adult secrets in texts for children severely damages, even destroys, the power relationship between adult and child, incorporating "adult" themes such as the once taboo sexuality and death into children's literature does not, I believe, automatically lead to the crumbling of this hierarchy. As Alison Lurie maintains, it is not the mere inclusion of adult secrets that defines a text's subversive potential; instead, she argues that "we should . . . take children's literature seriously because it is sometimes subversive: because its values are not always those of the conventional adult world" (131). According to Lurie, opening up children's literature to adult reality thus does not per se present a challenge to hegemony; it is, rather, the positing of values different from those of the adult status quo – what Jungian psychoanalyst M. Esther Harding calls the "parent world" – that constitutes a text's subversive potential. This potential can be realized, then, in texts that represent a discursive struggle between the child's and the adult's ideological worlds that can point towards new and unconventional values. Such texts refrain from positing conventional adulthood as the goal of the developmental stage of childhood, as they instead focus on the ways in which the child's worldview can challenge and interrogate the adult's complicity in hegemony.

This chapter will problematize the idea that the "hidden adult," to use Nodelman's term, fulfills only a homogenizing role in texts for children and suggests that some works incorporate the figure of the adult in order to challenge the power structure on which the child/adult binary rests. Texts for children do not, I argue, necessarily reinforce the child/adult hierarchy and "interpellate" children so that they may become unquestioning participants in this power structure. The genre is also home to texts that challenge the status quo and demand a dialogic engagement with the child's ideological world. What form does their resistance to this hierarchy take,

and how do their portrayals of child and adult characters question or complicate common assumptions about childhood and adulthood?

Examples of texts for children from the 1970s that incorporate often disturbing aspects of adult reality and that play with traditional constructions of childhood and adulthood include Astrid Lindgren's *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973), Michael Ende's *Momo* (1973), Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974), and Gianni Rodari's *C'era Due Volte il Barone Lamberto*¹ (1978), all of which I will discuss in more detail in this chapter. Death is a prevalent theme in *The Brothers Lionheart*, which is set predominantly in the afterworld and presumably ends with a double suicide, and *Momo* focuses on the inhumane repercussions of a capitalist system that sucks the life out of its subjects. *The Chocolate War* presents a pessimistic view of resistance to hegemony and ends with the protagonist's severe beating and possible death, and *C'era Due Volte* depicts both the kidnapping and murder of its title character Lamberto. Since these novels incorporate supposedly adult topics, they also remain among the most challenged and banned books of children's literature, with *The Chocolate War*, for instance, occupying third place of the American Library Association's "Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books" list more than thirty years after the novel's original publication date. My analysis of the aforementioned four books from the 1970s is supplemented by a discussion of three other texts, Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* (1945), Roald Dahl's *The Witches* (1983), and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), to offer additional illustrations of my arguments on constructions of childhood and adulthood as well as the child/adult binary.

The challenges these texts present to the child/adult power structure do not stem exclusively or even predominantly from their incorporation of adult secrets, however. Discussing topics such as death in texts for children, though it allows child readers an additional glimpse of the workings of the adult world, does not, I believe, suffice to critique the child/adult hierarchy. To effectively challenge this hierarchy, additional elements, most notably a large space for the child's voice, must be present in the texts, as it is this voice that, by entering into a dialogue with the adult's voice,

¹ The title translates to "Baron Lamberto, Once Upon Two Times," though in 2011 it was translated into English by Antony Shugaar as *Lamberto, Lamberto, Lamberto*. In this chapter, I will refer to the text simply as *C'era Due Volte* ("Once Upon Two Times").

exposes the adult's complicity in hegemony and demands for the child's ideological world to be engaged. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, M. M. Bakhtin points to the importance of allowing a character's voice to sound when he points out that, "The activity of a character in a novel is always ideologically demarcated: he lives and acts in an ideological world of his own . . . [but] it is impossible to represent an alien ideological world adequately without first permitting it to sound" (335). The child character's voice is thus present in both her words and her actions, since both are representations of her ideological world, as is the case also, of course, for the adult character's voice. As such, then, the "specific points of view on the world" that these characters' voices delineate "may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically" (Bakhtin 292). This chapter, then, also intends to trace the child's voice as it underscores, exposes, and challenges the child/adult binary and can offer further insight into the constructions of childhood and adulthood outlined in the texts. Starting with a discussion of what Nodelman calls the "shadow text" as a manifestation of the adult's voice in children's literature, I grant particular attention to the ways in which these books represent the child's ideological world and its dialogical relationship to the world of the adult. In my analysis, I moreover foreground how texts for children question and transform the child/adult binary through close scrutiny of the figure of the adult, through the introduction of additional elements to the binary, and through the inclusion of characters that inhabit childhood and adulthood simultaneously.

The Adult Shadow: Reading Layers of Meaning in Children's Literature

The child/adult binary is inherent to the production of children's literature as each text is filtered through various adults, who impose their ideas of childhood onto the text, write, evaluate and change it accordingly – change it during the production phase but also, quite often, in the act of reading the text to a child – and eventually decide whether or not to pass a book on to child readers. As Jack Zipes has observed,

the implied audiences of a children's book are constituted first and foremost by an editor/agent/publisher, then by a teacher/librarian/parent, and finally by children of a particular age group. Only rarely does an author write expressly for a child or for children, and even then, the writing is likely done on behalf of

children, that is, for their welfare, or what the author conceives of as a children's audience or childhood. (*Sticks and Stones* 44)

Nodelman builds on this idea of a double audience to point out that the narrative structure of children's literature is also inherently double and consequently ambivalent, juxtaposing two different perspectives. While children's literature features childlike protagonists – children, but also animals and childlike adults – and is focalized through these childlike characters, it offers a second point of view through the inclusion of the narrator. Nodelman describes that narrator as more knowledgeable and experienced than the focalized central character and as presenting an adult perspective (20), so that “the texts tend to offer two different points of view, one childlike and one adult . . . In being different and often opposite, the two points of view imply a conflict between childlike and adult perceptions and values” (77). Nodelman's identification of these different points of views call to mind Bakhtin's idea of the internal dialogization and social heteroglossia that characterize the novel. As Bakhtin asserts, the different voices in the novel represent different worldviews, so that “the dialogue of different voices arises directly out of a social dialogue of ‘languages,’ where an alien utterance begins to sound like a socially alien language . . . within the boundaries of one and the same national language” (285). The child's and the adult's different ideological worlds and worldviews, then, become manifest as “socially alien languages” even as they coexist in the same text for children.

For Nodelman, the second, adult point of view contributes to the manifestation of a second, hidden text implicit in the often simple literature for children; the hidden text, which Nodelman terms “shadow text,” represents the “unspoken and much more complex repertoire” of adult knowledge embedded in children's literature (8). Nodelman argues that simple texts imply a reader who knows more and understands that the texts communicate more than they say, and they thus include a more sophisticated perspective than the childlike focalization suggests (9; 196). Although he acknowledges that adult literature, too, often includes a shadow text, Nodelman points out that this hidden text is particularly pronounced in children's literature because there is a much more noticeable chasm between the simple text and the more complex hidden text, and the shadow text therefore represents a defining trait of the genre (14). This shadow text, I argue, thus

constitutes a manifestation of the adult voice in children's literature that the child character can enter into a dialogue with and that the child reader, too, can potentially engage.

The assumption is, of course, that the shadow text will remain outside of the child's reading experience and accessible only to the adult engaging with the text, and that the book thus offers distinct layers of meaning for its different audiences. However, Nodelman is careful to point out that the shadow text is always present and, therefore, can be read and potentially understood by all its readers, including the child:

Children's literature offers what must seem like a utopian fantasy or idyll for adults, one that operates with the assumption that children will take that fantasy for truth. Or . . . pretend to take it for truth. . . [T]he child readers implied by children's literature might well be in the process of being invited to indulge in the masquerade of pretending to be less sophisticated than they actually are. (222)

In other words, the child reader may access the hidden adult text but nevertheless subscribe to (or, pretend to subscribe to) the ideas of childhood presented in the book, ideas that relegate the child to a space of simplicity and of powerlessness in relation to the adult.

While the shadow text is a manifestation of the adult's intrusion and would thus appear to underscore the child/adult power dynamic in children's literature, books can potentially employ the hidden text to further their subversive agenda as well. Swedish author Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* (1945) is such a book, as it derives its humor, employed in the service of subversion, from the child character's engagement with the shadow text. In the chapter "Pippi Goes to School," for example, adult assumptions about education constitute the shadow text, and these assumptions are then exposed and questioned by the child character. In this episode, protagonist Pippi Longstocking, an orphaned girl with superhuman strength and inexhaustible riches, delineated from the beginning as an outsider and disruptive force, decides to join her friends in school. She is perplexed, however, when the math teacher asks, "If Lisa has seven apples and Axel has nine apples, how many apples do they have together?" Pippi interrupts, "and tell me too, if Lisa gets a stomach-ache, whose fault is it and where did they get hold of the apples in the first

place?” (Lindgren 53-54). Resisting the idea of Lisa, Axel, and the apples as mere components of an arithmetic example and taking the school teacher’s words literally instead, Pippi strips the teacher’s language of the “metalanguage” myth, to use Roland Barthes’ term (115-116): by refusing to accept the mythical concept (“I am an arithmetic example”), Pippi separates the linguistic sign from the metalanguage system, obliterating the myth inherent to the teacher’s words. Through this disruption of myths in the educational setting, Pippi highlights the inherent absurdities of language, this arbitrary signification system, while at the same time criticizing the school system that corresponds to adult ideas of learning rather than to the child reality.

As is the case for many of Pippi’s adventures, the child character’s challenge of the shadow text in this episode, and thus of adult assumptions about language and education, is also distinctly funny. Pippi’s subversive potential is, in fact, closely linked to the humor of her boundary crossings, such as her literal interpretation of the teacher’s words. Umberto Eco has argued that in humor, “the description of the rule should appear as an intrusion . . . of the author, who reflects on the social scenarios in which the enunciated character should believe,” and goes on to point out that humor “falls not victim of the rule it presupposes but [represents] the criticism of it, conscious and explicit” (277). Pippi’s adventures, then, are funny only to the reader who has previous knowledge of the rules that Pippi breaks and has come to accept these rules as the norm. These internalized rules serve as the shadow text to all of Pippi’s humorous episodes, and it is through the readers’ recognition of the shadow text, and thus of the rules they have internalized, that the tales become subversive. The shadow text of “Pippi Goes To School” is, of course, recognizable to adults and children alike as school children are asked to accept that arithmetic examples are removed from their own reality, and as they learn to not always take language literally early in their education. Subversion in *Pippi Longstocking*, then, is achieved precisely because the tale’s humor exposes these internalized rules (rules to which Pippi herself does not subscribe), which can be scrutinized and reevaluated once they have thus been brought to light. In fact, once the rules have become visible and exposed through humor, they can potentially be broken. This explosive humor, stemming from the discursive struggle between the child character’s voice and the

shadow text, constitutes the subversive potential of the tales as it exposes and even undermines conventional adult values.

Both the episode's humor and its subversion of adult ideas of education are thus rooted in the text's emphasis of Pippi's questions and worldview. As she refuses to subscribe to the adult model of arithmetic, she voices her dissent instead and forces the adult teacher to engage her disruptive voice. *Pippi Longstocking* originated from bedtime stories Lindgren told her daughter during the second World War, as Sweden was reeling under the influence of Hitler's Germany (Gottschalk 80), and the text's emphasis on the importance of questioning and challenging authority thus comes as no surprise. In interrogating adult authority, the book relies heavily on the child's marginalized voice and, moreover, aims at presenting a female protagonist different from the submissive and nice-girl characters that were the norm in children's literature at the time, as the author herself has pointed out (Gottschalk 80). Pippi responds to the adult world around her with probing questions that dispel and challenge adult myths as illustrated in the episode above, and the incorporation of the child's disruptive voice that demands to be engaged and taken seriously by the adult characters, such as the teacher, thus represents a central feature of the novel's subversive tendencies.

Pippi Longstocking is one of the rare texts for children that interrogate the child/adult binary prior to the 1970s. Lindgren's fairy-tale novel *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973) also offers a large space to the voice of the child. However, depending on the meaning-making strategy the reader brings to the text, the child's voice carries significantly more or less importance in this text. *The Brothers Lionheart* thus illustrates how two different strategies of meaning-making, one typically attributed to the child and the other to the adult reader, can lead to distinct interpretations of a text that hold very different ideological implications. The novel tells the story of two brothers, Karl and Jonathan Lion, who after their deaths live on in Nangiyala, an otherworld threatened by the cruel tyrant Tengil. Brave Jonathan and even fearful little Karl join the resistance fighters and become known as the Brothers Lionheart. It isn't until the end of the book, however, when Tengil's regime has been overcome and utopia realized in Nangiyala, that Karl faces his most difficult choice: Jonathan, who has been paralyzed by the fire of Tengil's dragon Katla, asks his brother to take him on his back and jump off a cliff into the darkness,

so that they can both die. In death, the brothers would move on to Nangilima, a different otherworld where, Jonathan promises, none of Nangiyala's dangers exist. Karl is understandably terrified of the task ahead of him, particularly as he recognizes that "*we would not jump, I would do it*" (231; emphasis in original). This scene furthermore mirrors a central event at the novel's beginning when Jonathan rescues Karl from their burning apartment back in Sweden by taking him on his back and jumping out of the window, saving Karl's life and dying himself. The brothers' roles have been reversed, and Karl's jump off the cliff constitutes, as Eva-Maria Metcalf puts it, his "ultimate redemption" (113). Karl's fear persists as he prepares to jump but is ultimately overcome by the act itself; when Jonathan, at the last moment, asks, "Are you scared?" Karl in reply utters his last words in the novel: "No... yes, I am scared! But I'll still do it, Jonathan, I'll do it now... now... and then I'll never be scared any more. Never be sca..." (232).

This apparent double suicide that ends Lindgren's book has outraged many critics and parents, who question the text's appropriateness for children due to its comforting portrayal of death, with some even arguing that the tale glorifies the taking of one's own life. However, the book offers its readers two hermeneutic choices as the tale can be read either, from the child's perspective, as a "fantastic adventure story," or, from the adult's point of view, as "a psychological portrait of a dying boy's efforts to work through his fears and pain" (Metcalf 109). At the beginning of the tale and before joining his dead brother Jonathan in Nangiyala, Karl is terminally ill, feverish, and lies in his mother's apartment thinking of the brother he misses so much. The adult, then, can read the adventures in Nangiyala as the mental fabrications of the dying Karl, and according to that reading, the child protagonist dies only at the novel's end and not from suicide. A close analysis of the text shows, in fact, that neither reading allows for the brothers' jump at the end to be interpreted as a double suicide, as Metcalf has convincingly demonstrated:

The reader's perspective may not always be clear cut; and because of it adult readers can take the view of the inner child and the critical adult simultaneously According to the adult's perspective, [Karl] dies a natural death at home in his kitchen and, according to the child's perspective, he jumps off the cliff with his brother from the other world of Nangiyala to the paradise of Nangilima The child

reader knows that Jonathan and [Karl] have already died before they come to Nangiyala, and they perceive [Karl's] jump from Nangiyala to Nangilima as a jump into another – and better – paradise. (112-113)

The brothers' struggles in Nangiyala, moreover, characterize Karl and Jonathan as life-affirming activists who, by fighting Tengil, fight against the personification of cruelty and death. Karl's jump, therefore, by no means constitutes a manifestation of the brothers' "death wish" but rather represents Karl's ultimate act of bravery that ends his brother's suffering.

While many scholars, including Metcalf, read *The Brothers Lionheart* as the tale of the dying Karl's mental fabrications in his mother's kitchen, such an interpretation relegates both the novel's political content and the child characters' voices to the margins by diminishing the importance of the 200 pages between Karl's arrival in Nangiyala and his final jump off the cliff. Lindgren herself has acknowledged the possibility of interpreting the text as Metcalf et al. have done, but she ultimately rejects such a reading:

Children read the book as a suspenseful adventure story and thank me for the happy ending [As an adult, I may think:] Maybe [Karl] had to escape into the realm of the fantastic after Jonathan's death and make up all of the adventures to console himself? Maybe he only dies on the very last page of the book and not at all in Nangiyala, but at home in his paltry kitchen? But when I read a children's book, I'd rather be a child, and I prefer, therefore, to mistrust my adult interpretation. (qtd. in Schönefeldt 549; my translation)

A reading of the text from the child's perspective, moreover, emphasizes not the brothers' eventual jump into Nangilima but rather their participation in the resistance movement in Nangiyala, whereas the novel's explicit political message and the child characters' advocacy of nonviolent resistance get sidelined in the adult reading of the tale. The strategy employed in reading *The Brothers Lionheart* thus carries significant consequences for its interpretation, and it is the level of trust placed in the voice of the child protagonist Karl, who narrates the story and firmly believes in Nangiyala's existence, that determines that reading strategy. As the different readings of Lindgren's novel illustrate, it is not just the text but the reader, too, who needs to allow for the child's voice to sound; it is only then that an engagement with

the child's ideological world can take place and that the political and ideological challenges posed by the child's voice – challenges that I will discuss more explicitly in my next chapter – are taken seriously.

Because it contains an overt political message and engages death, one of the adult “secrets,” Lindgren's 1973 novel furthermore exemplifies some of the defining characteristics of the genre in the 1970s, a time when themes that used to be deemed taboo for children became more prevalent in children's literature. Politics and death are frequent themes in children's books published in that decade, as is a more explicit examination of the child/adult binary. As I explore in the next section, some texts, in fact, play with and interrogate the child/adult binary not only through the disclosure of adult secrets but also through a close scrutiny of the adult ideological world – a world, these books suggest, that is in desperate need of change.

The Adult Ideological World Exposed:

C'era Due Volte (1978), *The Chocolate War* (1974), and *Momo* (1973)

Lurie has argued that the main adult secrets that generally remain excluded from children's literature – or that lead to the ban or censorship of children's books – are sex, money, and death: “Of the three principal preoccupations of adult fiction – sex, money, and death – the first is absent from classic children's literature and the other two either absent or much muted” (132). While sex and money have only recently become engaged in some texts for children, the reception of the portrayal of death in children's literature has undergone significant changes during the relatively short history of the genre, as Lurie goes on to explain: “Death, which was a common theme in 19th-century fiction for children, was almost banished during the first half of this century. Since then it has begun to reappear; the breakthrough book was E. B. White's ‘Charlotte's Web’” (132). Other well-known texts for children and young adults that explicitly discuss and forefront death include Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, and Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*, yet all these books have typically been challenged in the United States not because of their inclusion of death but rather because of the perceived challenge they pose to organized religion, and especially to the Christian church. For example, *His Dark Materials* has been equipped, in some libraries, with a disclaimer warning

of the tale's atheism, *Harry Potter* has been accused of glorifying witchcraft, and *Bridge to Terabithia* has been attacked for negating the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.²

While attacks on religion in children's literature still evoke strong responses from adults, death seems to have become a more acceptable topic, and many texts published in the 1970s engage death either implicitly or explicitly. His impending death is a central concern for the protagonist of Rodari's *C'era Due Volte* (1978), the 93-year-old baron Lamberto. Returning from a trip to Egypt with the belief that as long as one's name is pronounced, one does not die, Lamberto hires six people to repeat, in shifts, his name – all day and all night long. And in fact, Lamberto soon begins to age backwards, becoming younger and younger every day. But death remains a threat as Lamberto, a very wealthy man who owns twenty-four banks all over the world, is held hostage by criminals trying to extort money from his twenty-four bank directors. To expedite the negotiations, the criminals cut off one of the baron's ears to send it to the directors and, when the ear does not elicit the desired response, do the same with a finger – yet both the ear and the finger have grown back by the next morning.

While the bandits impatiently await their payday, Lamberto's nephew Ottavio, who is staying with his uncle and desperately hoping for his death so that he may inherit his riches, plots the demise of the baron. Ottavio even carefully slits his uncle's throat one night, only to see Lamberto even more vibrant and energetic when he awakes; shooting him seven times at close range in a second night has the same effect. In all instances, it seems, Lamberto is saved by his employees who never fail to say their "Lamberto, Lamberto, Lambertos." That is, until Ottavio discovers his uncle's secret and dissolves sleeping pills into the soup the employees eat for dinner, causing them to fall into a deep sleep for several days and leaving the baron, whose name is no longer repeated, to die an old man the following night. But the story doesn't end there. During his own funeral, when hundreds of attendees discuss the baron's life and, of course, utter his name over and over again, Lamberto is revived and rejoins the living as a young man. By the end of the tale, Lamberto has become a thirteen-year-old boy who relieves the six employees of their duties and begins to age forward again.

² In the book, his friend Leslie tells the protagonist Jess, "That whole Jesus thing is really interesting, isn't it?" Faced with Jess' shocked reaction, she explains that, "It's really kind of a beautiful story – like Abraham Lincoln or Socrates – or Aslan" (108).

Rodari's novel explicitly plays with the idea of death, going so far as to let the protagonist of the story die, even if only temporarily. Perhaps more shockingly, though, the story is also quite violent and does not shy away from describing the severing of the baron's ear and finger as well as Ottavio's three attempted murders. Death and, even more so, violence are topics that typically remain outside the scope of children's literature, yet Rodari takes on both and does so in a tale that is often comical, absurd, and never takes itself too seriously. Rodari, who was closely following the protests in a 1970s Italy characterized by great political instability, incorporated into his text for children the violence inherent to the clashes between the workers' movement and the ruling forces in his country. At first glance, *C'era Due Volte* seems to make light of, for instance, the violence with which the kidnapers, who call to mind the Red Brigades, treat Lamberto, since the severing of neither his ear nor his finger presents an actual threat to this protagonist. However, as Zipes has observed, Rodari's tales often take a real event as their starting point to then quickly move into the realm of the absurd and nonsensical, and "it is through the most imaginative turn of events possible, Rodari suggests, that children can learn the truth about reality" ("The War of Bells" 93). Furthermore, Zipes asserts, the marketing of the text's English translation in the US as a tale "[b]ased on the Red Brigades' kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro" is demeaning to Rodari's work as the novel does not merely present a political allegory but rather points towards the inherent "absurdity of life" ("Incomprehensible"). The distinguishing feature of Rodari's story and that which defines its absurdity is, of course, the baron's ability to age backwards; this feature, I argue, allows the book to incorporate further commentary on Italy's political landscape at the time, while also highlighting constructions and expected behaviors of both the child and the adult.

In fact, Rodari begins the epilogue to his story with an observation about its structure and a tongue-in-cheek question: "Fairy tales usually begin with a boy, a young man, or a girl who, after many adventures, become a prince or a princess, get married, and throw a great feast. This fairy tale, however, begins with an old man of ninety-three years who in the end, after many adventures, becomes a young boy of thirteen years. Isn't this rude to the reader?" (131; my translation). The tale, of course, turns the reader's expectations upside-down as it represents not the process of maturing and growing up as the basis for its happy ending, but rather focuses on

the joy the baron feels at being a boy again – and this joy largely grows out of the infinite possibilities ahead of Lamberto, who can begin his life anew. While the story addresses the reality that at thirteen, Lamberto no longer enjoys the same citizen rights he did when he was older – “You need a guardian because you’re underage,” one of his bank directors observes – the baron focuses on, and is enthused by, his potential futures: “I want to become an artist in the circus. That has always been my dream, and now I have a whole lifetime to realize it” (129; my translation). Lamberto is excited and happy about his new young age, and the story thus ends with a celebration of the potentiality inherent to the figure of the child.

This depiction of Lamberto as a joyous, optimistic child at the end of the tale stands in opposition to his portrayal as an adult, and this juxtaposition of the child and the adult in the tale’s protagonist also offers a commentary on Italian politics in the ‘70s. At the same time, Rodari urges children to think not within predefined constructs but rather “for themselves and out of the box” (Zipes “Incomprehensible”), suggesting the importance of the child’s ideological worldview for potential social change. Though Lamberto is, throughout the process of aging backwards, depicted as a more and more active, energetic, and life-affirming man, the reader learns from the descriptions of his bank directors that the baron used to be a rather dull and money-hungry adult. As one director points out, the baron has never liked anything but “financial statements, allowances, check books, and gold bullion” (69; my translation). Moreover, when Lamberto writes to his directors to invite them on a little trip to the Prater in Vienna during the coming Christmas season, they are stunned and begin to suspect that somebody may be impersonating the baron as the letter seems to contradict his personality, “which was always free from frivolousness and diminutives” (67; my translation). And when he writes again to command that all employees in all his banks who do not know how to dance the tango should be fired, the directors conclude that the letter’s style indicates a personality completely different from the one they know; after all, the baron does not even like the tango (68-69).

As an adult, then, the baron is characterized as a successful capitalist, but this life focused on the accumulation of riches leaves him void of joy, a joy Lamberto rediscovers only as he becomes childlike again. The text thus offers a reflection, I believe, on an Italian nation that found itself in crisis as class conflict manifested

itself in violent clashes between communist groups and capitalist ruling forces, and the baron's desire to return to a carefree childhood emphasizes the undesirability of life as a vain and money-hungry adult. "Class conflict," Zipes observes, "is central to most of Rodari's writings, and he always reveals a tender spot for oppressed people"; in *C'era Due Volte*, then, he depicts Lamberto's servants favorably, "whereas the bankers and mayor are greedy and stupid bureaucrats" ("Incomprehensible"). Lamberto himself is initially portrayed as a vain and self-absorbed character, interested predominantly in his own power and in the pursuit of riches, but this depiction changes as he grows younger: the more Lamberto moves towards childhood, the less he cares about money, and the reader follows his story with the knowledge that he used to be a disciplined, hard-working, boring adult, who has since been transformed by aging backwards. Such a portrayal of the adult plays into common ideas about adulthood as defined in opposition to childhood; in this binary, the child is typically thought of as playful, wild, ignorant, imaginative, and innocent, while the adult is constructed as everything the child is not: serious, disciplined, knowledgeable, dull, and experienced. Yet although Rodari uses the child/adult dichotomy as the backbone to his story, he then complicates the binary by creating in Lamberto a character who remains an adult but at the same time becomes a child, long before he turns into a thirteen-year-old boy even. In fact, when he writes the letters to his bank directors, who see him as an adult authority figure, Lamberto is a grown man in his forties, but he also possesses a childlike spirit that causes him to write about the Prater and the tango, and that allows him to approach even the criminals in his own house with a playful spirit. Moreover, while he grows younger and younger, the baron does not lose all of the adult qualities he has gained over his lifetime; rather, he remains a knowledgeable and experienced man even when he has become a young boy.

Baron Lamberto, therefore, is a character who subverts the child/adult binary because he is a mosaic of aspects from both sides of the dichotomy. In aging backwards, moreover, Lamberto abandons the capitalist ideology he previously personified, as is apparent particularly at the tale's end. Faced with the need to appoint a guardian for himself since he is now a teenager and has consequently lost the adult right to self-determination, he rejects his bank directors' proposal that one of them might serve in that role: "Absolutely not! My guardian will be [my butler]

Anselmo, who is used to obeying me, not one of you fuddy-duddy old bankers!” (129; my translation). Lamberto also rejects the bank directors’ idea that he, given his now youthful and fresh-faced appearance, might serve as the face of the bank’s next publicity campaign. No longer interested in the workings of capitalism, Lamberto instead wants to study and realize his childhood dream of becoming a performer in a travelling circus (129). Having learned from his past mistakes and understood that working the capitalist system did not afford him happiness, Lamberto thus maps out a new life that stands in stark contrast to his former ideals and aspirations. As Zipes has pointed out, the endings of Rodari’s tales were always “intended to provoke young readers to think how the future might be changed” (“The War of Bells” 94), and the last few sentences of the epilogue in *C’era Due Volte* explicitly ask the readers to do just that: “Every reader who remains unsatisfied with the ending can change it as he sees fit, adding another chapter or two to the book. Or even thirteen chapters” (133; my translation). Given that the baron’s joylessness as an adult stems from an ideology that values power and money above all else, the reader is thus invited to envision a potentially utopian future steeped in different values. As Zipes points out, Rodari, “a ‘non-conformist’ communist, sought to develop a new language for children that would incorporate utopian ideas that he had absorbed through reading Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Calvino’s Italian folktales, and works by other progressive writers who wanted to speak to the common people” (“Incomprehensible”). Rodari here suggests that it might be possible for the reader to conceive of a future in which the spheres of childhood and adulthood are not distinctly separate but interrelated and fused, much like they are in the character of Lamberto. As an author of children’s books who, Zipes observes, wrote on “[children’s] behalf and constantly undermined the position and perspective of adults through silly nonsense and fervent political beliefs” (“Incomprehensible”), Rodari thus points to the importance of the child’s voice and ideological position in presenting a potential catalyst for progressive social change.

Cormier’s young-adult novel *The Chocolate War* (1974) shares many of the themes Rodari’s *C’era Due Volte* explores: death and violence are foregrounded in Cormier’s work as well, and *The Chocolate War*, too, challenges a traditional understanding of adulthood. However, the tone of the two books varies greatly; while Rodari’s remains lighthearted, humorous, and playful, Cormier’s novel, which

begins with the foreshadowing sentence “They murdered him” (3), is dark, serious, and pessimistic. In fact, no irreversible death or act of violence occurs in *C’era Due Volte*, but in Cormier’s book the consequences of both death and psychological as well as physical violence are severe and long-lasting. *The Chocolate War* tells the story of Jerry Renault, a teenaged boy who suffers from depression due to his mother’s recent death and who is alienated from his father. The all-boy Christian high school Jerry attends as a freshman is ruled by a secret student organization, the Vigils, and by the acting headmaster Brother Leon, a cruel, manipulative, and menacing man who thrives on the fear he inspires in his students. Jerry becomes both the Vigils’ and Brother Leon’s adversary through a seemingly insignificant act of rebellion: he refuses to participate in the school’s annual chocolate sale. As a consequence of this refusal, Jerry is the victim of intimidation, threats, and eventually severe physical violence.

Cormier’s novel has been harshly criticized and remains among the most frequently challenged books in the US for its disturbing portrayal of cruelty and its despairing, unhappy ending, both of which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3. *The Chocolate War* includes several aspects and themes traditionally reserved for adult literature and thus illustrates the new approach to the genre of children’s literature that first manifested itself in the 1970s. As MacLeod has argued, that decade saw “the demise of virtually all taboos,” and consequently, children’s “literature is open to many more aspects of human experience than it once was. As the most daring authors test the definitions of what is marketed as children’s literature, the boundaries between children’s and adult literature, always movable, blur, shift, and sometimes seem to disappear altogether” (215). Cormier’s novel significantly departs from the expectations of the genre not only in its serious, dark tone and inclusion of adult secrets such as death, violence, and sexuality, but also in its depiction of adult characters. None of the adults in the novel serve as role models or inspirations; rather, the two main adult figures in the text are Brother Leon, a vile character who abuses the power he has over students, and Jerry’s father, a disillusioned, defeated man who leads a monotone and, in his son’s eyes, pointless existence. Jerry’s father, moreover, fails to protect his child from the cruelty he faces at school, and adulthood as Cormier portrays it is thus a far cry from its typical

depiction in children's literature: the adult here serves neither as an ideal for the child to strive for nor as a figure that provides shelter and protection.

The powerlessness of his father leads the child protagonist Jerry to interrogate the assumed superiority of adults over children. When Jerry realizes that his father's days all essentially follow the same predictable schedule and can all be described as "fine," he begins to question the meaning of adulthood:

Was this all there was to life, after all? You finished school, found an occupation, got married, became a father, watched your wife die, and then lived through days and nights that seemed to have no sunrises, no dawns and no dusks, nothing but a gray drabness. Or was he being fair to his father? To himself? Wasn't each man different? Didn't a man have a choice? . . . He didn't want to be a mirror of his father. The thought made him cringe. I want to do something, be somebody. But what? But what? (Cormier 61; 63)

While texts for children traditionally tend to portray constructions of childhood and to transmit rules of appropriate childlike behavior to their readers, Cormier here shifts the attention onto the adult instead, allowing for the scrutiny of adulthood through the child character. In addition, by depicting one of the central adult figures, Jerry's father, as a failure both as a parent and at life, the text questions notions of adults as superior to children based solely on their age and supposed experience.

By focusing on aspects of childhood, texts for children typically serve to define the adult as everything that the child is not, thus reinforcing the binary structure. *The Chocolate War*, in contrast, paints a different picture of adulthood; rather than being defined in opposition to childhood, the text suggests, adulthood is merely what the child grows into on a continuum of time. As the above passage illustrates, there is no sudden moment of change on this continuum; contrary to what the construction of the child/adult binary indicates, the text proposes that the child does not become radically different from what he used to be when growing into an adult. Rather, life continues as the child grows older and matures, gaining in knowledge and experience, but no revelatory events occur that justify the adult's power and superiority over the child.

Ende's fairy-tale novel *Momo* (1973), too, critiques the lack of power the child has in relation to the adult and challenges traditional definitions of adulthood,

and it does so partly through the incorporation of an additional element to the child/adult binary: the gray gentlemen. The gentlemen, whom Ende depicts as capitalist ideology personified, in fact appear only in adult form, though they are hardly human but exist only as long as they continue smoking their fat cigars that consist of people's stolen time. In order to amass more time, then, these time-thieves strive to convince the citizens of the town that serves as the tale's setting to work faster and deposit their accumulated time in the gray gentlemen's time-saving bank. Children, however, represent a threat to these plans: "nothing and nobody is such a danger to our work as children are," one of the gray gentlemen points out; "Children," he continues, "are our natural enemies" (104).³ These gentlemen despise children and, therefore, present a significant menace to them throughout the novel, robbing them of their parents' time, of games, and of freedom. Yet the text is careful to point out that the grey gentlemen have come into existence only because adults let them, thus positing adults as complicit in the time-thieves' endeavors. Master Hora, the keeper of time, explains that, "They come into being only because people give them the opportunity of coming into being – that suffices to bring it about. And now that people are giving them the opportunity of ruling over them, that will suffice to bring that about too" (136). By subscribing to the gray gentlemen's ideology that time is money, adults have thus not only created these time-thieves but also placed them into a position of power, and the adults therefore condone, even if indirectly, the gentlemen's persecution of children.

Ende's critique of the adult here is, of course, closely linked to his critique of capitalism as personified by the time-thieves, and the novel highlights the problems that can arise from indoctrinating young children into a capitalist ideology propagated by adult society. Significantly, it is not the time-thieves but the adult parental figures in the text who force the child characters away from their playgrounds and games into child depots, arguing that play is a waste of time, that the children are in danger of becoming delinquents, and that they need to learn how to become productive members of society. These child depots to which the children are relegated provide them with a clear structure, useful games that serve as learning tools, and training in time-saving so that, "[l]ittle by little the children began to look

³ For this chapter, quotations from *Momo* are taken from Frances Lobb's 1974 translation of the German text.

like miniature Time-Savers. Sulky, bored and hostile[,] they did as they were told, and even when they were left to themselves they no longer had any idea what to do” (164). The child characters are thus turned into small adults, and just as the adult characters in the text are caught in the time-thieves’ ideological net, the children have now been indoctrinated into the capitalist structure as well.

The adult’s complicity in hegemony in Ende’s text, moreover, is underscored by the child protagonist and title character Momo, who eventually succeeds in defeating the gray gentlemen through her persistent refusal to partake in the time-saving endeavors. As the novel is focalized through Momo, her perspective exposes the problems with adulthood as portrayed in the text, and her voice consistently challenges the idea that true adulthood should presuppose participation in the capitalist system. As Momo serves as the tale’s moral compass, the text does not posit the adult as the ideal that the child needs to grow into but rather underlines the failures of contemporary constructions of adulthood in the West. By focalizing the tale through a counterhegemonic child character and by highlighting the complicity of the adult characters with the grey gentlemen’s capitalist ideology, Ende’s novel thus exposes the potential downfalls of a child/adult power hierarchy that allows the dominant adult to force her beliefs and values onto the subordinate child. At the same time, the text also challenges common constructions of the adult as the child’s protector since the adult characters’ collaboration with the grey gentlemen delineates them as a threat to the child characters instead. Similar to Cormier’s *The Chocolate War*, *Momo*, too, interrogates assumptions about adulthood through the perspective of the child protagonist, exposes the adult as complicit in hegemony, and challenges the adult’s one-directional domination over the child.

These challenges of the child/adult binary that writers for children began to pose in their texts in the 1970s reflected the pulse of the time and also had far-reaching consequences for the genre of children’s literature. As my next section will explore, children’s books written after the ‘70s have continued to interrogate the relationship between the child and the adult, and they often do so by employing similar strategies. Dahl’s *The Witches* (1983), for example, calls to mind Ende’s *Momo* as Dahl’s novel also introduces a new element to the child/adult binary in order to critique adulthood, whereas Lowry’s *The Giver* (1993) complicates the

binary by positing that true adulthood is achieved not by passing an age threshold but by escaping the ignorance that the institutions of childhood impose on children.

Beyond the '70s: Interrogating Adulthood in *The Witches* (1983) and *The Giver* (1993)

In the decades following the 1970s, authors of children's literature have continued to write challenging and often controversial texts that complicate the child/adult binary and that interrogate not only childhood, but adulthood as well. In his children's novel *The Witches*, Dahl introduces an additional element to the child/adult binary in order to comment on constructions of adulthood: the witches. Characterized as non-human but disguised as ordinary women, these witches mask themselves as "the most rrrre-spectable ladies of the Rrroyal Society for the Prrree-vention of Crrruelty to Children," yet their ultimate and only goal is the complete destruction of children everywhere (90). The chant of their leader, the Grand High Witch, vividly describes what they wish to accomplish: "Down vith children!" she shouts, "Do them in! Boil their bones and fry their skin! Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them! Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!" (Dahl 85). Reminiscent of Ende's gray gentlemen, who are otherworldly creatures that pose a threat to humankind as well, the witches differ from the all-male time-thieves in that they are exclusively female. The witches' gender in fact contributes to their menace: since women have traditionally been the primary caretakers and thus protectors of children, the fact that the witches can pass as adult women facilitates their ensnarement of children. Furthermore, while the gray gentlemen are driven by a capitalist ideology and intent on stealing time from children and adults alike, the witches' explicit goal is the complete annihilation of children: while they can tolerate adults, children omit such an offensive stench to their noses that the witches wish to kill every child in every country.

Like the gray gentlemen, the witches represent an additional element to the child/adult binary, and Dahl's narrator is careful to point out that the witches are not "real" women: they are bald, have no toes, and grow claws instead of fingernails. However, witches are also masters of disguise and become almost indistinguishable from women when they wear wigs, shoes, and gloves, so that children may come

across them regularly, even as the witches remain unrecognized and secretly plot the children's demise:

For all you know, a witch might be living next door to you right now. Or she might be the woman with the bright eyes who sat opposite you on the bus this morning. She might be the lady with the dazzling smile who offered you a sweet from a white paper bag in the street before lunch. She might even – and this will make you jump – she might even be your lovely school-teacher who is reading these words to you at this very moment. (10)

Not only are the witches under most circumstances indistinguishable from women, they are also always trying to find new ways to have adults do the dirty work – the murder of children – for them. Instead of killing a child herself, then, a witch will use magic to transform the child into a creature hated by adults everywhere: a slug, for example, that the adult will then step on and squash; or a flea, so that the child will find his end, through flea powder, at the hands of his own mother; or, right before pheasant-hunting season, a pheasant that will then be shot, cooked, and eaten by adults (37). Indeed, “it gives the . . . witches great pleasure to stand back and watch the grown-ups doing away with their own children” (37), and children, therefore, need to fear not only women, the potential witches, but all adults – even their own parents.

Dahl's novel thus plays on an elementary fear of the child: that adults, and even parental figures, do not actually like and secretly harbor plans to get rid of her. This fear comes true for one central child character in the novel who, having been turned into a mouse, is greeted with disgust and disbelief by his parents. Though his later fate remains obscure, the text states that his father probably had him drowned (194). Far from depicting adults as caring and protective, *The Witches* thus paints a dark and dangerous portrait of child/adult relations since adults, potentially menacing and murderous creatures that cannot be trusted, pose a threat to children. While the child/adult power structure rests at least in part on the idea that the adult provides shelter for the inexperienced child until she, too, can join the ranks of the grown-ups, this protection might only be an illusion and mask the adult's true intention in *The Witches*. Consequently, the novel's introduction of the witches as an additional

element significantly upsets the child/adult binary and plays on children's fears about the figure of the adult.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the protagonist of the book, an unnamed boy whom the witches have transformed into a mouse, is content to remain in his animal shape at the tale's end rather than return to being a child that is destined to grow into an adult. This ending has, however, been interpreted as regressive and unhappy, and Nicolas Roeg accordingly changed the denouement in his film adaptation, in which the boy is transformed back into his human shape by a good witch (though no such creature exists in Dahl's novel). Roeg believes that young viewers would find an ending that leaves the protagonist's original metamorphosis intact "to be distressing their imagination," and that Dahl's ending was irresponsible considering the age of his readers (qtd. in Lassén-Seger 223). Such an analysis, however, disregards the fact that for the protagonist through whom the tale is focalized – and, by extension, for the child reader as well – the ending is indeed a happy one: having been acquainted with the hidden evils of adulthood, the boy no longer wishes to grow up and is glad to remain a childlike mouse until the end of his days. Though the ending can be interpreted as regressive, since living as a child without the threat of having to grow up signifies regression, it can also be read as a resistant and liberating ending: by staying in his animal shape, the boy, after all, refuses to participate in the child/adult binary and, moreover, rebels against the inevitability of growing up and joining adulthood. As adulthood is not, unlike in most books for children, depicted as a desirable and happy stage of human life in *The Witches*, the boy's liberation from growing up actually contributes to, rather than negates, the happiness of the tale's ending.

While the central character of Dahl's *The Witches* is thus content never to have to grow up, the protagonist of Lowry's Newbery Medal winning children's book *The Giver* (1993) wants nothing more than to become an adult – or, more precisely, to become a human being equipped with emotions, sexuality, responsibility, and history. The dystopian community in which the protagonist Jonas lives, however, is stuck in an eternal childhood that is characterized by ignorance: his society does not know money, sexuality, death, race, violence, war, or pain, and the aspects of life that create conflicts and suffering are thus largely avoided. The forced exclusion of these aspects of life is striking since it is these same themes – money,

sexuality, death, race, violence, war, and pain – that have traditionally been absent from children’s literature and, more generally, that have been deemed unsuitable topics to be discussed with children. In order to shelter and protect children from “adult” reality, the argument goes, they should not be confronted with such themes. Still today, texts for children – and *The Giver* often among them – are frequently banned and challenged because they engage one or more of these topics.

Lowry’s novel depicts potential problems that stem from such censorship; specifically, it addresses how the absence of conflicts and suffering also means the absence of passion and love, how the elimination of differences creates forced conformity and eliminates individuality, and how the abolition of knowledge leads to the abolition of choice. The latter problem is particularly pronounced in the book and significant for its challenges to the child/adult binary. Every aspect of life in Jonas’ society is minutely structured so that the citizens never face the necessity, or even the opportunity, of making a choice, as their daily schedules, professions, life partners, children, and lifespan are all chosen for them. The community of Elders, elected leaders whose job it is to closely observe the citizens, makes all decisions, and it often does so after asking advice from the Giver, the holder of memories. This precise structure of life is especially apparent in the citizens’ early years, termed “the period of preparation,” when all children undergo the same training and education until, at the age of twelve, they become adults and are assigned a profession (51). Jonas’ assignment, however, differs significantly from those of his age-mates: he is chosen as the Receiver and, as such, will be transmitted all memories by the adult Giver in order to one day take his place.

The novel’s first explicit challenge to adulthood occurs when Jonas returns home after having been given his assignment and reads through the instructions he has received. The last of his instructions asserts that, “You may lie,” leaving Jonas surprised and confused because his parents and teachers have taught him that lying is among the worst offenses a citizen can commit (68). Jonas’ thoughts are racing, and he is horrified by the implications of these instructions:

What if *others* – *adults* – had, upon becoming Twelves, received in *their* instructions the same terrifying sentence? What if they had all been instructed: *You may lie*? His mind reeled . . . he *could*, conceivably (though it was almost unimaginable), ask someone, some

adult, his father perhaps: “Do you lie?” But he would have no way of knowing if the answer he received was true. (71; emphasis in original)

Teachers, parents, and adults generally are expected to serve as resources of knowledge for children so that children can learn about the world from the adults around them, and this student/teacher, or receiver-of-knowledge/giver-of-knowledge, relationship is a central component of the child/adult binary. Honesty, of course, is fundamental for this relationship to be functional, and the possibility of the adult lying to the child severely damages the foundations upon which this rapport rests. Just as Jonas’ world begins to crumble when he realizes adults may have been lying to him all along, so any child’s worldview would be threatened by the adult’s dishonesty. Yet although adults are often thought of as submitting knowledge to children, they lie frequently, trapped by the paradox notion that although children need knowledge to grow up and achieve adulthood themselves, they also need to be protected from truths deemed unsuitable – such as, typically, knowledge related to money, sexuality, death, race, violence, war, or pain. Much of what children need to know about these topics, they learn from experience and sources other than the adult (who will often either deny their existence or lie about them), and the process of growing up is thus bound up with the realization of the adult’s dishonesty.

In Jonas’ world, however, the adults, too, only have access to very select bits of knowledge, limited to information needed to work in their respective professions, and none but the Giver understands history or how the society functions. He transmits this knowledge to Jonas, the new Receiver, through memories, and at first the child is thrilled and amazed when he experiences snow, family, colors, and love, but the excitement dulls and turns into suffering as Jonas is given memories of war, pain, and death. He quickly understands that knowledge comes with a heavy price and wishes to return to his former life of ignorant bliss:

He didn’t want the memories, didn’t want the honor, didn’t want the wisdom, didn’t want the pain. He wanted his childhood again, his scraped knees and ball games. He sat in his dwelling alone, watching through the window, seeing children at play, citizens bicycling home from uneventful days at work, ordinary lives free of anguish because he had been selected, as others before him had, to bear their burden.

(121)

In this society, only the Giver (and, later, Jonas the Receiver) carries responsibility and has the ability to make choices because he has knowledge and, as such, only he fulfills the role of an adult. The other adults in the text live in a bubble of naivety and ignorance that is commonly associated with childhood, not adulthood. The dangerous consequences of such an infantilized society are highlighted in the text: each citizen has to take a pill in the morning to prevent sexual stirrings, the elderly are confined to a separate home so that the reality of death can remain invisible, babies (born to professional birthmothers and subsequently assigned to citizens) are killed if they are ill or do not develop as quickly as expected, and so forth. As a result, the novel criticizes the trend to render invisible particular areas of life, such as sexuality, death, disease, and suffering.

Moreover, as the text highlights the ignorant state the child is expected to inhabit, Lowry's book can be read as a commentary on the construction of childhood and, by extension, on the child/adult binary. The novel draws attention to the potential problems that can result from keeping children ignorant and sheltered from experience, and it underscores the paradox that the child should be both protected from certain knowledge and taught how to become a responsible and mature adult. Furthermore, the book suggests that reaching a specific age threshold is not sufficient for someone to reach this adulthood characterized by responsibility, knowledge, and maturity, as all characters in *The Giver*, apart from the title character himself, remain trapped in a state of childhood even after they have turned twelve and supposedly become "adults." Lowry thus complicates her reader's understanding of the child/adult binary as a dichotomy in which the "/" serves to divide humans by age, suggesting instead that adulthood is reached not by aging but by overcoming the ignorance imposed on the child in childhood.

* * *

Nodelman has argued that children's literature reflects the adult's imagination of children "as double and divided – as what they should be according to adults and as what adults assume they already are and want them not to be" (63-64), and MacLeod echoes this idea when she writes that, "contemporary American culture is profoundly ambivalent about children, unsure whether they are dependents, companions, or adversaries. Children's literature reveals that ambivalence" (209). In the 1970s and the decades that followed, however, some texts for children have complicated not

only the construction of childhood but have focused on and scrutinized adulthood as well, asking uncomfortable questions about what it means to be an adult and why adults hold such power over children. Incorporating adult secrets into texts for children has represented the first step towards a more complex understanding of the relationship between the child and the adult in children's literature, so that the binary construction of childhood and adulthood can be interrogated.

Explicitly examining the figure of the adult from the perspective of the child character, moreover, significantly shifts the focus of these texts away from constructions of childhood to adulthood. Such a shift challenges the definition of the adult as the ideal the child needs to become, and it disrupts the notion that childhood is merely a developmental life-stage in preparation for adulthood. Karín Lesnik-Oberstein has observed that, "By defining and discussing the nature of children adults are expressing, formulating, and projecting ideals and ideas about themselves and the not-themselves" (25-26). Some texts for children, however, focus not on childhood against which adulthood is then constructed, but rather examine the figure of the adult from the perspective of the focalized child character. Such texts, then, also create the possibility for both the child and the adult to be defined outside the confines of the binary.

To return to Kästner's assertion that "*Nur wer erwachsen wird und ein Kind bleibt, ist ein Mensch*" (Only those who grow into adults and remain children are human beings), this statement, too, indicates that the child and the adult do not necessarily have to be read as a binary. Kästner suggests instead that the spheres of childhood and adulthood are interrelated, and that one can inhabit both identities simultaneously, as Lamberto does at the end of Rodari's text. Books for children that interrogate the child/adult binary and that refrain from positing adulthood as the goal of childhood, moreover, revise the traditional understanding of the potentiality that lies within the figure of the child. The child, then, is not merely a potential adult, nor is she depicted as *becoming* and as means to an end. Instead, these texts demand that the child's ideological world be taken seriously, as they emphasize the disruptive potential of the figure of the child and its voice. This voice can illuminate the adult's complicity in a hegemonic system that keeps the spheres of childhood and adulthood separate and that perpetuates the adult's one-sided domination over the child.

CHAPTER 3. THE CHILD AS POLITICAL AGENT: THE COLD WAR,
HEGEMONY, AND RESISTANCE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Can children's literature be subversive and pose a challenge to hegemony? Claiming that children's literature has subversive potential runs counter to the traditional understanding of the genre, and much of what is published as children's literature aims to teach children the values of adult society and thus to indoctrinate them into the hegemonic order. If texts for children are conceived of as a socializing tool, then it is not surprising that children's books exploring controversial topics and questioning commonly held values and beliefs have been frequently banned and censored and continue to be among the most challenged books in the US. Contemporary scholars of children's literature often question the genre's role in perpetuating hegemony, with some, such as Gail Schmunk Murray and Joseph L. Zornado, emphasizing that all texts for children ultimately fulfill a socializing function even when they appear to challenge the status quo. Others, including Julia L. Mickenberg and Jack Zipes, have suggested that a one-sided domination of adults over children cannot be taken for granted and that children's literature can actually question power hierarchies and possess subversive potential, a potential Zipes sees especially in those texts that point towards the realization of truly democratic communities. Murray maintains that children's literature is inherently conservative and didactic, reinforcing existing social structures and indoctrinating children into accepted forms of behavior. Zornado goes even further when he writes that tales for children typically function as "adult propaganda that serves to confirm for the child the hierarchical relationship between the adult and the child" (xv). Children's literature, according to Zornado, tends to suggest to its young readers that success and happiness can be attained only through the acceptance of adult culture and ideology, an ideology that reproduces itself because the obedient and the disobedient child, respectively, prove the benefit of and need for adult hegemony (214, 219). Although Mickenberg agrees that children's books often reaffirm the bourgeois status quo, she points to the potential challenges they can pose because these texts reach "the nation's most open-minded citizens" (7), and her study goes on to analyze how the radical left in the United States employed children's literature during the Cold War to further its political agenda.

Even though this idea of children as the “most open-minded citizens” and thus as potentially subversive can be seen as just another construction of childhood by adults, the argument that children have not yet been completely indoctrinated into their culture and national hegemony and, therefore, do in fact represent a more receptive audience for radical ideas than adults, cannot be disregarded. In fact, it seems to be this same basic argument that also fuels the idea that children’s literature needs to teach or, to use Perry Nodelman’s term, even “colonize” children, so that they can eventually become members of the adult society. As Nodelman points out, “The fact is that many texts produced for children in the past and in the present are primarily didactic” (154), and children’s book author Katherine Paterson argues that it remains “the view of many intelligent, well-educated, well-meaning people that . . . the object of children’s literature is to whip the little rascals into shape” (*Gates* 124). Texts produced for children are, it seems, often expected to (and often do) fulfill an educational function precisely because the child is understood as needing to be taught the essential values of society.

In the modern nation-state, children’s existence is relegated to private rather than public life and structured so as to provide them with sufficient exposure to the dominant ideology. Although the child crosses the public-private divide by attending educational institutions and taking part in social organizations, the child’s role in the public realm is largely that of passive receiver, not active participant. Children do not, for example, participate in decisions on school curricula and thus have no say in what they will be taught; the child’s legal status as underage and “minor” silences her voice in the public sphere and prohibits the child from access to rights we consider basic and commonplace for (adult) citizens, such as the right to self-determination or the right to vote. Only after children have been indoctrinated into society over a specific number of years are they allowed a political voice, and it is at that moment of their first participation in public life that children become adults. The nation’s youngest citizens, then, before entering the political life, cannot represent or speak for themselves and thus do not partake in one of the central rights of the citizen. The figure of the child thus occupies a temporal in-between space, in which it holds the place of the citizen but without the political rights associated with that status. T. H. Marshall has argued that children are “citizens *in potentia* only,” because they lack political rights and have only limited access to civil and social

rights (James and James 35). Allison and Adrian L. James suggest, in a similar vein, that “children remain marginalized and treated as non-citizens by the systems of surveillance and control through which ‘childhood’ is protected as a social space in the life course” (37). The child’s marginalization and treatment as only a nascent citizen is, however, always temporary as he or she is expected to learn and grow into an adult citizen.

The access to rights, then, is here based on the internalization of the dominant ideology that is accomplished via the family and the education system. As Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron have highlighted in their study of the French education system, for example, the school functions not only to instill knowledge in children but also to correct and curtail their behavior, while at the same time teaching pupils their place in the class structure. This process of indoctrination rests, of course, in the control of adults, who as parents, teachers, writers, publishers, and librarians also serve as the gatekeepers of children’s books, and the intense surveillance that follows children as they are socialized is perhaps most apparent in the censorship of children’s literature. Books for children pass through various adult checkpoints before finding their way into a child’s hands as they are written, edited, illustrated, produced, reviewed, taught, and bought by adults, who typically judge these texts based on their didactic purpose and often challenge books that do not teach the dominant ideology to children. In fact, the American Library Association’s list of the Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books from the past decade consists overwhelmingly of titles written for children, with J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, Phyllis Reynold Naylor’s *Alice* series, and Robert Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* (a novel written more than three decades ago) occupying the top three spots. Even Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* (#8 on the list) and Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* (#23) rank higher than, for instance, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, which ranks 26th. The fact that texts for children continue to remain among the most censored and most frequently banned works of literature, and the fact that adult society needs to relegate children to a temporary space from which they cannot speak politically, suggest that the figure of the child and the books children read can pose significant challenges to the adult world and the nation-state.

Yet children’s literature is generally thought of as an apolitical genre, just as children are “commonly considered to be apolitical – in that they have no political

rights of citizenship” (James and James 30), and the books’ counterhegemonic potential is, therefore, often underestimated. This potential, I argue, rests precisely in the incorporation of the voice of the child and thus of a voice that is marginalized and generally excluded from political discourse. The child’s voice in children’s literature is not, of course, the unadulterated voice of the real child; instead, it is written into the text by the adult author and consequently reflects adult constructions of childhood. As Bakhtin has pointed out, “the languages introduced into the novel are shaped into artistic images of languages (they are not raw linguistic data), and this shaping may be more or less artistic and successful, may more or less respond to the spirit and power of the languages that are being represented” (417). Because childhood has been a sphere separate from adulthood in the West since the inception of the genre in the 18th century, the child’s ideological world differs significantly and is typically even defined as opposite from the adult’s, and it is this disenfranchised worldview, rather than the language of the real child, that the child’s voice in children’s literature reflects. The child’s voice in texts for children thus carries significant ideological implications, and the extent to which the child’s voice is given a space in a text for children can serve as an indicator of a text’s politics.

While all children’s literature includes the child’s voice, negotiates the status of the figure of the child, and engages the child/adult binary, as I discuss elsewhere in this dissertation project, some texts for children incorporate explicitly political themes and emphasize the child’s voice as a political force. Critiques of hegemonic systems and representations of forms of resistance are in the public imagination typically reserved for adult literature, yet they make frequent appearances in the genre of children’s literature, too. The first part of this chapter examines two novels for children from the 1970s, Astrid Lindgren’s *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973) and Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (1978), both of which engage Cold War politics, yet while the former highlights communal forms of resistance and advocates nonviolence, the latter emphasizes US American individualism and reinforces the legitimacy of US ambitions for world dominance. My discussion then moves to the representation of hegemony and resistance in the second half of this chapter, in which I will compare Robert Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* (1974) – as well as its 1988 film adaptation – and Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* (1993) to illustrate my arguments about how some texts for children showcase child protagonists who are

actively involved in ideological struggles. Explicitly political texts for children furthermore challenge traditional definitions of the genre as apolitical and point to the figure of the child as a political agent who can engage and act in a realm typically reserved for adults. These texts thus contest the notion that children do not (and ought not to) have a political voice by employing child protagonists who face a politically charged environment and respond to it responsibly and maturely – and thus in ways associated with the ideal, empowered, autonomous adult citizen rather than with what is often considered to be the immature and unformed child.

Non-Violent Child Soldiers in a Cold-War Setting: *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973) and *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (1978)

One of the most beloved children's book authors of all time, Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren was a passionate activist who fought against social injustices and for the rights of the underprivileged, and she was also the first writer of children's books to win the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade (*Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels*) in 1978. The call for social change and rebellion against the status quo runs as an undercurrent through all her texts for children, but it is voiced perhaps most overtly in her 1973 fairy-tale novel *The Brothers Lionheart*. As I described in Chapter 2, the book tells the story of 10-year-old Karl Lion and his brother, 13-year-old Jonathan, who after their untimely deaths reunite in Nangiyala, a fictional otherworld set in “the time of campfires and sagas” (9). The brothers Lionheart, as they become known, live on Knights Farm in the utopian Cherry Valley, but the “young and healthy and good time, that is easy and simple to live in” that reigns in Cherry Valley is contrasted starkly with the horrible living conditions in Wild Rose Valley, the other settlement in Nangiyala (37). In Wild Rose Valley, the tyrant Tengil of the neighboring land Karmanyaka has established his reign of terror with the aid of his deathly dragon Katla, and the brothers set out to help the Wild Rose Valley inhabitants in their fight for freedom from this cruel regime.

The Brothers Lionheart foregrounds a struggle against suppressive forces and advocates concrete strategies, namely the methods of non-violent resistance, for the realization of fundamental social change. Published at the height of the Cold War in 1973, the novel appears to be a black-and-white commentary on the East-West conflict, complete with the personification of the atomic bomb through tyrant

Tengil's terror-inspiring dragon Katla. In such a reading, Cherry Valley and Wild Rose Valley, separated by a heavily guarded wall that surrounds the latter, represent the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), respectively; however, a closer reading reveals, as I intend to demonstrate, that the ideologies under which the two valleys operate do not directly correspond to those of the FRG and the GDR. The brothers Lionheart and their fellow freedom fighters in fact envision not a pro-American, capitalist society as the alternative to Tengil's regime but instead fight for a utopian way of life based on mutual respect and real equality.

The two valleys in the novel, though depicted largely as polar opposites, are also described as inherently connected: as Jonathan tells Karl, "when it becomes tough and difficult over in the other valley, then life becomes difficult in Cherry Valley, too" (52), and he insists that it is his duty to support the Wild Rose Valley inhabitants in their struggle against oppression if he wants to be a human being and not "just a piece of dirt" (60). This solidarity that not only the brothers but other citizens of Cherry Valley, too, show their neighboring villagers calls into question the notion that separate states exist independently from one another and instead emphasizes that human beings from different states are nonetheless connected, even if imaginary lines called borders are drawn on maps between them. Although the valleys are divided by a natural border, "towering mountains which were hard to cross if you didn't know the winding, dangerous little paths," this border was crossed frequently and did not represent an insurmountable obstacle prior to Tengil's reign: "the people in the valleys knew the paths and could travel freely to see each other" (52-53). Indeed, the border crossing becomes almost impossible and even punishable by death only after Tengil and his men have established their stronghold over Wild Rose Valley and try to cut off any communication and exchange with the villagers from across the mountains.

The concept of borders is introduced early in the novel, when Karl first comes to Knight's Farm, his new home, which is surrounded by "a stone wall, a short little gray wall with pink flowers on it" (29). Lindgren's portrayal of this wall is positive, and it summarizes typical sentiments about the borders of nations: "You could have jumped over it, as easily as anything, but once inside the gate, you felt that the wall protected you from everything outside" (29). While this wall is easily

crossed, then, at least by the ones entitled to the space around which it is built, its function is protection; however, it remains unclear what the brothers need protection from in the peaceful Cherry Valley community, and, as the reader learns only a few pages later, the wall fails to fulfill its promise when an intruder nonetheless succeeds in entering the brothers' house at night. This familiar idea that borders serve as protection "from everything outside" is turned upside-down entirely when Lindgren reveals that "there was a wall around all of Wild Rose Valley, a big wall that Tengil had forced the people there to build, since he wanted them imprisoned as slaves forever Now there was just one gate which was kept closed, and you had to be one of Tengil's men to go through" (97). Unlike the wall around Knight's Farm that provides a feeling of protection (and ultimately fails to deliver on that promise), the wall around Wild Rose Valley actually imprisons the villagers and appears impenetrable. Borders, the tale seems to suggest, only appear to create security; they do not actually shelter those they enclose from what is outside and, furthermore, can even function as prison walls.

While borders can, on the one hand, be thought of as contact zones between nations, they are always also lines of division and often make contact impossible. As Étienne Balibar points out, "since earliest Antiquity, since the 'origins' of the state, of city-states and empires, there have been 'borders' and 'marches' – that is to say, lines or zones, strips of land, which are places of separation and contact or confrontation, areas of blockage and passage" ("Border" 77). For the citizens of Wild Rose Valley, the border manifested by the wall is a place of division and impediment; it separates them from the rest of the land and effectively blocks their freedom of movement. For Tengil, "the worst of all tyrants" (125), the border serves to imprison and enslave the villagers, thus significantly strengthening his power while facilitating his men's task to keep the villagers subdued and controlled. Gérard Noiriel has referred to the concept of borders as the "tyranny of the national" (qtd. in Balibar "Border" 77); such tyranny is clearly evident in the borders around Wild Rose Valley.

The parallels between Wild Rose Valley and the GDR, a nation-state that still existed and was at the center of the Cold War when *The Brothers Lionheart* was published in 1973, are obvious, and it seems apparent that Lindgren was inspired by the divided Germany in her depiction of Nangiyala. The border that enclosed the

GDR territory manifested itself visibly in what East German officials euphemistically referred to as the “Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart” (*Antifaschistischer Schutzwall*), the wall that separated the East from the West German part of Berlin, as well as in a towering barbed wired fence surrounding the nation. The border was patrolled and its imprisoning function enforced consistently by armed guards who were ordered to kill anyone attempting to cross, much like “Tengil’s men up on the wall with their swords and spears” (109). While the vast majority of GDR citizens were thus effectively prohibited from leaving their nation, it was almost equally as difficult to enter the republic from outside, and the border, therefore, isolated those it enclosed from the rest of the world. Willy Brandt even compared the Wall to the barriers of a “concentration camp,” and it was standard in the West German media to refer to East Berlin as the “biggest concentration camp of all time” (Ahonen 42). When Lindgren writes in her novel that, “No one can escape from Wild Rose Valley now and no one can go in either Wild Rose Valley is no longer a free land Because the valley is in enemy hands” (53), she clearly takes up this idea of the wall as signifying imprisonment and isolation.

However, Tengil’s reign in Wild Rose Valley is not, in the end, a one-to-one representation of the Soviet stronghold over the GDR. His regime is not communist in nature but instead motivated solely by materialistic greed, and Tengil readily executes villagers who refuse to work for him. The power structure he establishes in the valley is even partly reminiscent of the feudal system: as Jonathan reminds Matthias, a citizen of Wild Rose Valley, “out of ten beans from your field, Tengil takes nine” (119). Although further parallels between Nangiyala and the divided Germany exist, such as the mountains separating the valleys which call to mind the Brocken, a tall mountain in the middle of Germany through which the border ran, neither political system in the tale’s valleys can be traced back or linked directly to either the GDR’s or the FRG’s socio-economic structure. Moreover, in attempting to free Wild Rose Valley, the resistance to Tengil’s regime is fighting for the values of the Cherry Valley community, which are not to be confused with the pro-American values the FRG largely perpetuated.

Indeed, although Lindgren seems to have been inspired by the situation of the two Germanys when writing her novel, the politics of the tale go beyond the specific to comment more generally on socio-economic injustices. As Klaus Doderer puts it,

the situation in Nangiyala is created in “the image of the conditions amongst us human beings today, under which the poor and the underdogs come into existence” (qtd. in Wolff 14; my translation). The most striking difference between the two valleys in *The Brothers Lionheart* is, in fact, that while complete equality reigns in Cherry Valley, where each of the citizens contributes to the well-being of the others and no one suffers from hunger or lack of shelter, the Wild Rose Valley inhabitants lead a bare existence, stripped of everything but their working bodies because of Tengil’s insatiable greed. Karl finds it “horrible to see how things were for the people of Wild Rose Valley, how pale and hungry and unhappy they all were . . . so different from the folks in Cherry Valley” because Tengil has taken from them all that they lived on (99). In order to satisfy their constant want for more, as well as to cement their superior status in the power structure, Tengil and his men latch onto the villagers like parasites and establish themselves as the ruling class while condemning their victims to a life void of political power and self-determination.

In *Means without End*, Giorgio Agamben illuminates this relationship between the ruling classes and the underprivileged when he identifies the central contradiction in linguistic usage in modern European languages of the term “people.” As I noted in Chapter 1, he demonstrates that this word is used to refer to both “the whole of the citizenry as a unitary body politic . . . as well as those who belong to inferior classes” (29-30). Drawing on these linguistic findings, Agamben goes on to discuss the implications of this opposition between *people* and *People*:

[The concept of *people* serves] as the defining category of the original political structure: naked life (*people*) and political existence (*People*), exclusion and inclusion, *zoê* and *bios*. *The concept of people always already contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture. It is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a part as well as what cannot belong to the whole in which it is always already included.* (31-32; emphasis in original)

It is this fracture, Agamben maintains, that Marx has identified as class struggle; “what Marx calls class struggle . . . is nothing other than this internecine war that divides every people and that shall come to an end only when *People* and *people* coincide . . . only when there shall no longer be, properly speaking, any people” (32-33). He cites the Nazi-German prosecution of the Jews as an example of the attempt

of the *Volk/People* to eradicate the *people* in order “to produce one single and undivided people . . . a people without fracture,” and points out that our contemporary time, complete with the construction of camps to hold migrants, “terrorists,” etc., “is nothing other than the methodical and implacable attempt to fill the split that divides the people by radically eliminating the people of the excluded” (33-34). Both Jews and migrants exemplify the *people* par excellence as those who, due to their status as stateless or as non-citizens, refuse “integration in the national body politic” (34) and, at the same time, threaten the constructed identity of the nation-state.

The inhabitants of Wild Rose Valley have effectively, by Tengil’s men, been relegated to the status of what Agamben calls “naked life” as they have been stripped of all political rights and serve only as working bodies that Tengil needs to satisfy his greed. This pitiless tyrant’s perception of the villagers as nothing more than slaves becomes explicit when he visits the walled-in town and assembles his subjects on the village square. Surrounded by his men and sitting on horseback, he “stared straight ahead, he didn’t look at the people. It was as if there was nothing else to him, nothing other than Tengil of Karmanyaka, yes, he was horrible! . . . [He] stared out over the square and the people, but he didn’t see any of them” (127). Not only does Tengil refuse to look at the villagers, but he also “didn’t actually speak for himself. He would not talk to slaves” (130). The tyrant’s characteristics stand in for those of his minions, a uniform mass of violent men covered in black helmets and cloaks, who show the same contempt for the villagers and speak to them only if conversation is unavoidable. Tengil’s greed for materialistic possessions, displayed in the adornment of his black stallion with a golden bridle and saddle and the diamond on his forefinger that “flashed every time he ordered someone to death” (132), is mirrored in his men as well, who receive valuable white horses for special services.

The purpose of Tengil’s visit further demonstrates his complete disregard for his subjects apart from their capabilities as physical workers: he has come to Wild Rose Valley in order to choose slaves to be taken with him to Karmanyaka, where they will help to build his fortress until their eventual deaths from exhaustion (131-132). Much like the Jews in Nazi Germany, whom Agamben cites as an example of a people relegated to naked life, the villagers, too, have been reduced to bare existence, and while millions of Jews were worked to death in the concentration camps, the

villagers, if chosen by Tengil's cruel forefinger, awaits a similar fate in the mountains of Karmanyaka. The scene on Wild Rose Valley's square, where Tengil has his subjects lined up in order to arbitrarily pick those he will take with him to certain death, in fact calls to mind the *Selektion* in concentration camps, where Nazi officials became the masters over life and death by merely ordering an inmate to step either to the right or left. Protest is futile: when one of the villagers, chosen to work in the Karmanyaka mountains, confronts and insults Tengil, he is swiftly hewn to death by a soldier. In many respects, then, the walled-in valley resembles a concentration camp, a place where human beings have been stripped even of their most basic rights: escape seems impossible, and even bare existence has become uncertain as the guards can take the inmates' lives at any moment.

While the people of Wild Rose Valley have thus been condemned to live a life ruled by uncertainty and terror, the neighboring Cherry Valley is a utopian community without a ruler or government and with equal rights for men, women, and children. For the brothers Lionheart, life in Cherry Valley is beyond their wildest dreams, especially since they were living the typical existence of the underprivileged lower class with their mother, a seamstress, during their time on earth before their deaths. Their economic status appears to remain largely unchanged when they arrive in Nangiyla; their farm much resembles their former apartment in layout and size, and they do not own many material possessions beyond their basic needs. However, money does not pose a problem anymore: in Cherry Valley, Jonathan tells Karl, "everything is free . . . We give to each other and help each other when it's needed" (40). The class struggle is thus nonexistent in the valley, and, to use Agamben's words, the *People* and *people* coincide here, where the fundamental biopolitical fracture is mended. In their struggle, then, to restore Wild Rose Valley to a community resembling Cherry Valley, the brothers are fighting for a utopian society without classes, where true equality and real community exist. Their struggle, moreover, encourages the reader to think beyond the *People/people* binary and to envision a society without classes as a real possibility.

Even in their fight against Tengil's regime, the brothers choose nonviolent resistance. Jonathan simply refuses to kill anyone, even when the villagers and Tengil's men come head-to-head in the eventual battle, and his attitude is met with scorn by the leader of Wild Rose Valley's freedom fighters, Orvar: "If everyone

were like you,” Orvar tells him, “then evil would rule for all eternity!” But Karl quickly jumps to his older brother’s defense, pointing out that, “if everyone were like Jonathan, then there would be no evil” (209). Jonathan not only refuses to kill Tengil’s men but refrains entirely from regarding their lives as less valuable than those of his comrades, even saving one of the enemy soldiers, Park, from certain drowning. Karl echoes his brother’s sentiments after Jossi of Cherry Valley, whom Karl has exposed as a traitor secretly serving Tengil, attempts to escape by boat and is swept away to his death in Karma Falls; instead of rejoicing at the traitor’s demise and his own new status as “the hero of Wild Rose Valley,” Karl only feels sad (206). While Tengil’s rule is founded on the use of cruelty and violence, personified par excellence by his monster, the terrifying dragon Katla who murders on Tengil’s command and inspires terror in anyone crossing her path, the brothers Lionheart reject the idea of beating him with his own means and instead advocate a nonviolent approach that proves victorious in the end.

Lindgren’s novel thus places two children into surroundings that test their courage and convictions, and it ultimately shows the brothers to be as capable, if not more so, of acting responsibly and compassionately when faced with this violent, distressing situation as their adult counterparts. It is, moreover, first and foremost Jonathan and Karl who serve as the advocates for the utopian values of Cherry Valley, and it is Jonathan’s expression – “sometimes you have to do things that are dangerous, otherwise you [aren’t] a human being but just a piece of dirt” – that serves as the tale’s leitmotif (66). The text invests its young protagonists with significant political agency, highlighting both the challenging choices and the rewards such agency entails, and it shows the characters taking on the resulting responsibilities in stride. Free from adult supervision and living as full members of the Cherry Valley society, Jonathan and Karl are not relegated to the margins of their community due to their status as children; they have a clear and loud voice in their community. The novel, positing the Cherry Valley community as a utopian ideal for which to fight and struggle, thus also highlights that a society based on true equality incorporates children and their voices as equal as well, and does not keep from them either the rights or the challenges that come with the status of full citizen.

At first glance, Lindgren’s novel and L’Engle’s 1978 *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* have much in common. L’Engle’s book, too, engages the conflict between two

societies that are fundamentally connected, the United States and the fictional South-American country Vespugia, and the protagonists, fifteen-year-old Charles Wallace and adult Meg, succeed in eliminating a cruel dictator who poses a threat to both places. Upon closer examination, however, the ideological implications of L'Engle's text and its commentary on the Cold War differ significantly from those at the core of *The Brothers Lionheart*.

L'Engle established herself as a writer of children's literature with the publication of her Newbery Medal winning novel *A Wrinkle in Time* in 1962, the first in a series of books featuring as protagonists the Murry children, Meg and Charles Wallace. Like *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, too, comments on the Cold War as the children travel to the distant planet Camazotz, which is controlled by an ideology of sameness the protagonists eventually manage to overcome by reciting parts of the Declaration of Independence and by holding on to their individualistic American ideology that equality does not mean sameness but is rather characterized by each citizen's potential for individual achievement. Their efforts to resist the dominating forces in Camazotz are inherently individualistic rather than communal; while the protagonists succeed in rescuing the members of their own family from Camazotz, leading to a happy ending back home in the United States, their interactions with the inhabitants of the foreign planet remain minimal, and no effort is made to free these citizens from their harsh regime.

In *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, a novel which in many ways follows in the footsteps of L'Engle's earlier work, the threat of communism is closer to home and more explicitly a threat to the entire nation rather than to members of the Murry family only: Mad Dog Branzillo, president of the small South-American nation Vespugia, has threatened nuclear war against the United States. This president is characterized as "a man who overthrew the democratic government with a wild and bloody coup d'état. He is mad . . . and there is no reason in him" (11). This notion of Branzillo as a madman without reason is briefly challenged by Mr. Murry's observation that "[t]he Western world has used up more than our share of the world's energy, the world's resources, and [Branzillo believes] we must be punished . . . We are responsible for the acutely serious oil and coal shortage, the defoliation of trees, the grave damage to the atmosphere, and he is going to make us pay" (12). Mr. Murry's attempt to explain Branzillo's actions is, however, quickly dismissed as

irrational because a nuclear war would hurt Vesputia as much as the United States, and the text does not again engage the Vesputian president's motives after that – or, for that matter, the West's exploitation of resources. Instead of highlighting US foreign politics and diplomacy with South-American nations, the novel henceforth focuses on Charles Wallace and Meg's efforts to rectify the situation by eliminating Branzillo. Much like in *A Wrinkle in Time*, which uses US-Russian relations as an implied backdrop for the protagonists' heroism, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* also emphasizes individual action in the defeat of evil, this time personified by the Vesputian president. Russia and Vesputia are essentially interchangeable; as Mrs. Murry points out, "one spring, many years ago now . . . relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were so tense that all the experts predicted nuclear war before the summer was over," and now, the situation is much the same except that Vesputia has replaced the former red threat (15). These foreign nations serve as interchangeable evils because both pose the same danger to the United States as they stand in opposition to American ideology as well as the US political and economic systems.

In L'Engle's novel, Charles Wallace travels through time to discover that the first European settlers in America consisted of a pair of brothers, one good and one evil, and whereas the good, peace-loving brother remained in North America, his evil, power-hungry brother eventually settled in South America. While the descendants of the former are upstanding citizens, dedicated to the struggle for justice and equality and exemplifying the good colonists, Charles Wallace finds out that the latter brother's line consists of conniving men yearning to dominate, with Branzillo as the current incarnation of these bad colonists. By changing past events so that they lead to the death of one of Branzillo's forefathers, the child protagonist succeeds in changing the present, too, as the Vesputian president now will never have been born and is instead replaced by a descendant of the good, North-American brother's line who "is setting up a Congress for the working out of peace plans and the equitable distribution and preservation of the earth's resources" (276). The book thus achieves its happy ending by eliminating the descendants of the evil brother in South America and extending US American power and ideology to Vesputia.

In some ways, the plot of L'Engle's novel seems to parallel Lindgren's, as *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, like *The Brothers Lionheart*, emphasizes how different

societies are inherently linked and interconnected, even through familial relations. Both books, moreover, condemn the politics of the tyrant Tengil and the dictator Branzillo, respectively, and both antagonists are defeated, either through death or, in the case of the latter, through never being born in the first place. And importantly, the child protagonists are, in both texts, at the forefront of the political struggle and ultimately succeed in their endeavors, highlighting their agency and the idea that child characters can, when given the chance, act as responsibly and maturely as their adult counterparts. However, there are striking differences between the two texts as well that, I argue, highlight the politics of communal, non-violent resistance in *The Brothers Lionheart*, on the one hand, and an individualistic American ideology that dominates *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, on the other. One important difference is the form resistance takes in the texts: in Lindgren's novel, resistance is a communal effort that involves the inhabitants of both valleys and that gives a voice to those who directly suffer under Tengil's regime. There is a compassionate dimension to the resistance effort as well: the Cherry Valley inhabitants are not subject to a direct threat from Tengil, yet many of them join the resistance regardless in order to free their brothers and sisters in the valley across the mountain. This feeling of close kinship is, moreover, based not on actual blood relations as in the case of the Murry family; rather, the citizens of the two valleys, separated through death from their birth families, have been naturalized into their societies and share a strong communal bond. In L'Engle's text, resistance rests with the individual rather than the community and, as Charles Wallace points out, "It may not be me . . . But it has to be somebody" (36), emphasizing the American ideal of individual heroism as well as the "lone cowboy" mentality based on the idea that the individual can overcome all odds even without joining forces with others. Furthermore, the protagonist only begins his lone journey of trying to save America when Branzillo's madness poses an imminent danger to his own self and his nation; prior to the Vespugian president's threat of nuclear war, some members of the Murry family were not even aware of the small South-American nation's existence.

Another important difference between the texts is their setting, as well as their incorporation of real-life political conflict. *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* is set in the nation that most of its young readers call their home, the United States of America. It is the ideologies of this nation that the protagonists fight for and defend against an

outside enemy, the president of a South-American country. (Though Vesputia is fictional, the continent on which L'Engle situates it certainly is not.) The text, then, propagates US American values and contrasts those beliefs – personified by the good settler and his descendants – with the mad, irrational politics of the South American dictator, concluding that it is in the American citizen's best interest for those political foes to disappear. L'Engle's novel can thus even be read as supportive commentary on the efforts of the Nixon administration and the CIA to eliminate subversive and typically Marxist forces in Latin America in the '70s in order to further an ultraliberal economic agenda and impose it on the continent. The book in fact calls to mind the 1973 coup d'état in Chile that saw the overthrow of elected socialist President Salvador Allende in which the United States, through its financial support of the conservative opposition as well as through the CIA's involvement in anti-Allende propaganda, played an important part. As such, then, L'Engle's novel is inherently conservative and does not present a challenge to the dominant cultural and political forces in the US at its time of publication in 1978. The adventures of the brothers Lionheart, on the other hand, take place in a clearly fictional land in the afterlife, and while many of the two valleys' characteristics parallel the divided Germany during the Cold War, others do not, as I have shown, and therefore the politics of the Cold War cannot be cleanly mapped onto the text. While the novel does, of course, suggest that life in Cherry Valley is devoid of poverty and systems of domination and, consequently, worth fighting for, the conditions in Cherry Valley do not parallel the conditions in West Germany but are posited as utopian ideals.

The brothers Lionheart themselves are an integral part of and active participants in that process of struggle for utopia, and although Charles Wallace in L'Engle's text goes through a similar struggle, the politics of his struggle are different and aimed at maintaining the status quo, not at creating a true utopian democracy. Ultimately, *The Brothers Lionheart* “projects on a conscious, literary, and philosophical level the objectification of home as real democracy under nonalienating conditions,” representing “*a process of struggle*” against oppressive forces and domination as well as pointing to the possibility of realizing utopia, and the novel thus fulfills the criteria Zipes has established for the identification of a text with subversive potential (*Fairy Tales* 177; emphasis in original). The child protagonists' methods of participation also differ: while Charles Wallace travels

through history and, in the end, prevents Vespugia's dictator from ever being born, the brothers' involvement in the struggle is more explicitly political as they are members of a resistance movement and choose a specific, non-violent method of resistance. Nonetheless and despite the conservative politics in *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, the child protagonist Charles Wallace does have political agency, and it is his actions that prevent a global catastrophe. L'Engle's novel, too, thus places a child character at the forefront of the political struggle, which highlights the fact that real children in contemporary society are effectively prevented from acting like Charles Wallace, not only because they cannot travel through time, but more importantly because they do not have access to the political voice and agency this child character is granted in the text.

The different characterizations of the child protagonists and their worldviews in the texts further highlight the ideological distance between Lindgren's and L'Engle's novels. Karl Lionheart's defining characteristic is his fear, a fear that is validated by the violence and terror that surrounds this child character, and much of Karl's inner monologue highlights his struggle to overcome this constant anxiety, so that he might participate more effectively in the resistance movement. Significantly, however, Karl is not taking on the tyrant and his henchmen by himself but rather works together with the other resistance fighters, including his brother Jonathan, whose strength and determination inspire him to become a little braver even as he wishes to return to simpler times: "I couldn't help thinking how nice it would be if we didn't always need to be strong and brave" (192). Karl is depicted not as an otherworldly hero but as a relatable child whose participation in the resistance is made possible only by the resistance's communal nature. Fifteen-year-old Charles Wallace, by contrast, is an extraordinary individual who fights against Branzillo largely on his own and with only little support from his adult sister Meg. Charles Wallace, though physically small, is depicted as exceptionally intelligent and courageous, and he is therefore able to perform the remarkable task of defeating Branzillo precisely because he is not a typical child. L'Engle's text thus foregrounds an individualist exceptionalism and emphasizes that, due to his unique and non-childlike characteristics, Charles Wallace is a hero *despite* the fact that he is, by age, also a child; Lindgren's novel, on the other hand, underscores that the child, with all

his childlike attributes, can actively participate and play an important role in his community.

Hegemony and Voices of Dissent in *The Chocolate War* (1974) and *The Giver* (1993)

In “The Construction of Peoplehood,” Immanuel Wallerstein explores inequalities in the nation-state through his analysis of pastness and ethnicization, illustrating the uneven distribution of rights even amongst citizens. Wallerstein maintains that races, nations, and ethnic groups “are all peoplehood constructs, all inventions of pastness” (78). He identifies pastness as a mode that provides a common past to particular social formations, and that is central to the socialization of individuals as well as to the process of persuading people to act in a particular way in the present. As he points out, “The past is normally considered to be inscribed in stone and irreversible. . . . The social past, how we understand this real past, . . . is inscribed at best in soft clay” (78). Pastness thus serves as a tool to create peoplehood, which Wallerstein describes as central to the establishment of the nation-state; positing statehood as preceding nationhood, he argues that any given sovereign state needs to construct a “nation” and, therefore, a “people,” because states “have problems of cohesion. Once recognized as sovereign, the states frequently find themselves subsequently threatened by both internal disintegration and external aggression” (81). Yet people within a nation-state are further fractured and divided: according to Wallerstein, different modes of pastness are employed to create different peoplehood constructs, and “ethnicization” in particular serves to maintain the hierarchy of labor within the capitalist system. Cormier’s novel *The Chocolate War* (1974) focuses on what Wallerstein calls the construction of peoplehood and explores how the hegemonic system imprisons its citizens with no possibility of resistance, whereas Lowry’s children’s book *The Giver* (1993) is set in a future dystopian and infantilized society and centers more specifically around the consequences of taking the construction of different peoplehoods to its extreme.

Wallerstein argues that, although labor in capitalism is always exploited, some laborers receive a larger share of the surplus-value they create than others, and along with that “occupational hierarchy comes the ‘ethnicization’ of the work force within a given state’s boundaries” (83). He explains that, in order for capitalism to

reproduce its laborers, specific segments of the working population need to be socialized to inhabit particular mind-sets, and “the ‘culture’ of an ethnic group is precisely the set of rules into which parents belonging to that ethnic group are pressured to socialize their children” (83). This socialization that capitalism requires is thus carried out “voluntarily” by the specific ethnic groups that make up the capitalist work force, and it helps to recreate and solidify the hierarchical structures of capitalism within a given nation-state. Wallerstein explains that this socialization “provides a legitimation to the hierarchical reality of capitalism that does not offend the formal equality before the law which is one of its avowed premises,” and he goes on to point out that, as a result, “ethnicization, or peoplehood, resolves one of the basic contradictions of historical capitalism – its simultaneous thrust for theoretical equality and practical inequality” (84). In Wallerstein’s analysis, then, the differential construction of peoplehood within the nation-state goes hand in hand with the reproduction of capitalism.

Education, whether through children’s books, the family, or the school system, is, of course, one of the founding pillars of hegemony and, to use Althusser’s term, represents an Ideological State Apparatus that perpetuates dominant ideological structures. The function of education thus includes the construction of “peoplehood,” as Althusser has also suggested: “children at school . . . learn the ‘rules’ of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is ‘destined’ for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination” (132). The oppressive system that operates through educational institutions serves as the central theme in Cormier’s *The Chocolate War*. Categorized as children’s literature, both Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* and *I Am the Cheese* have “come under pressure from those who feel that they undermine parental, institutional, and governmental authority” (West 859). Because of Cormier’s novels’ critique of hegemony and their questioning of (adult) authority, some advocate their censorship, presumably based on the notion that children’s literature should reinforce children’s consent to hegemony, not encourage them to question it. This idea of indoctrination is brought to attention and criticized in the novel’s depiction of Brother Leon’s classroom. In a particularly disturbing scene, the teacher Leon calls

one student, Bailey, to the front of the class where he then accuses him of cheating, an obviously false and baseless charge. Leon voices his accusation repeatedly and with increasing viciousness, at one point even striking the student across the cheek with his pointer. The other students watch his cruelty with fascinated terror until, to their great relief, the bell brings the lesson to an end. But Leon is not yet finished and “regarded them pityingly, shaking his head, a sad and dismal smile on his lips. ‘You poor fools,’ he said. ‘You idiots . . . you sat there and enjoyed yourselves. And those of you who didn’t enjoy yourselves allowed it to happen, allowed me to proceed. You turned this classroom into Nazi Germany for a few moments’” (44-45). This lesson, not apparent until Leon spells it out for the students, comes as a surprise after a performance in which the teacher clearly enjoyed terrifying and prosecuting the innocent Bailey. Characterized by fear and confusion, Leon’s classroom highlights that the adult’s power can easily be abused. Furthermore, this episode can serve as an analogy to the socialization of the child into the adult system of beliefs and values; much like Leon’s students, the child too lacks power during the socializing process and is at the mercy of the adult.

“Do you dare disturb the universe?” the poster in the child protagonist Jerry’s locker asks, and this question constitutes the novel’s central theme. In this text the universe appears to be comprised of the institutions that uphold the hegemonic structure, that reproduce the status quo, and that socialize children and teenagers so that they become a part of the collective. Jerry’s Catholic all-boys high school, Trinity, forms an important component of this system in the novel, and the protagonist’s refusal to participate in the school’s annual chocolate sale becomes the focal point for the power struggles between characters. The idea for the story came to Cormier because his own son decided not to sell boxes of chocolates to raise money for his school, and although his decision was not met with any serious repercussions, Cormier imagined a series of events that could have occurred in response to his son’s choice (DeLuca and Natov 110). Jerry’s rebellion appears to be only an insignificant act of dissent, yet the dire consequences of his decision illustrate that no action that “disturbs the universe,” however small it may be, will be tolerated. As Cormier has pointed out, “I was conscious, of course, of using Eliot’s line from ‘Prufrock’: ‘Do I dare disturb the universe?’ Which is essentially a middle-aged man’s question, because that’s what Prufrock was. And yet, you can disturb the universe on all levels”

(qtd. in DeLuca and Natov 115). In other words, and as *The Chocolate War* illustrates, not just the adult but the child, too, can “disturb the universe,” and even seemingly insignificant acts of rebellion can have far-reaching consequences.

At the end of the book, however, Jerry, who has been violently beaten and is severely injured, says to his friend Goober, “They tell you to do your thing but they don’t mean it. They don’t want you to do your thing, not unless it happens to be their thing, too. It’s a laugh, Goober, a fake. Don’t disturb the universe” (187). Antonio Gramsci has argued that hegemony is achieved through consent and coercion; it requires, he maintains, both “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” as well as “the apparatus of state coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” (12). Jerry’s disillusioning conclusion depicts these workings of hegemony: although participation in the system, as in the chocolate sale which, in the novel, serves as a microcosm of the capitalist market economy, appears to be based on consent and thus on choice, coercion, sometimes by violent means, awaits those who dissent. As Anne Scott MacLeod puts it, “Cormier has abandoned an enduring American myth to confront his teenaged readers with life as it more often is – with the dangers of dissent, the ferocity of systems as they protect themselves, the power of the pressure to conform” (192). Unsurprisingly, almost four decades after its publication, *The Chocolate War* continues to be one of the most frequently censored books in the United States and holds third place on the American Library Association’s “Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books” list from 2000-2009. At the same time, the novel also remains a fixture in high schools’ curricula, and as Cormier himself puts it, “If *The Chocolate War* has been taught in schools for a quarter of a century despite all the challenges, surely there must be virtues present” (qtd. in Myers 449).

The novel’s ending, which has protagonist Jerry carried off in an ambulance to an unknown fate and possibly death, while the hegemonic system remains intact and its main propagators, Brother Leon and Archie, unpunished, is hard to swallow, particularly given that a “happy ending” is often cited as a defining characteristic of the genre of children’s literature. Not surprisingly, then, *The Chocolate War*’s 1988 film adaptation of the same name considerably changes the ending, though it

otherwise stays largely faithful to the novel. In the film, Jerry wins the final fistfight against Archie, is cheered on by his schoolmates, and punishes his adversary. While the novel's ending highlights the inhumane nature of the system, the movie thus significantly mutes this systemic critique and instead focuses on the individuals who need to be defeated in order for a happy ending to occur. As such, the film caters to a US American audience that wants to see the hero overcome adversity and be successful in the end, much like Charles Wallace does in *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*; in this case, the system works because it allows the individual to live up to his potential, and the problem rests with individual characters standing in the protagonist's way rather than with systemic apparatuses. Jerry's poster, moreover, does not make an appearance in the film, and the movie thus turns the novel's main question – Do you dare disturb the universe (and will the universe allow you to do so)? – into a question of individual persistence and heroics. As such, then, the film serves as an example of how counterhegemonic critique can be assimilated and adapted to ultimately reinforce hegemonic structures.

Lowry's 1993 *The Giver*, much like Cormier's novel, also highlights the potential downfalls of the education system as it socializes children into different modes of "peoplehood" by fitting them into prescribed societal and economic roles. Lowry's text underscores the importance of storytelling and reading as transmitters of cultural knowledge, and it condemns censorship as a marker of an infantilized society, as I discuss in Chapter 2. The only character with access to books in Lowry's story is the Giver, who serves the seemingly ideal society he lives in as the keeper of memories and cultural knowledge. However, his purpose is not a moral or educational one; rather, the Giver carries the burden of memories for his fellow citizens, who without memories can live a safe life void of strong emotions such as hatred and love, and ignorant of music, colors, and the realities of war. The child protagonist Jonas has been chosen as the Receiver, the person who will one day take the Giver's place, and he, too, therefore becomes exposed to "the memories of experiences and emotions that the people have chosen to banish from their minds so that they might sustain the illusion of social order and success" (Campbell 720). Although at first Jonas's world appears to be perfect, as violence, pain, jealousy, and war have been entirely eliminated, the reader feels more and more unsettled as the story progresses and understands that a seemingly ideal world must be an illusion in

which the society's most cruel aspects are hidden. In fact, the inhabitants of Jonas's world are constantly manipulated, so that the societal structure and order can be maintained: sexual urges are suppressed with hormonal pills, and the euphemism "release" has replaced the concept of death; the "release" procedure is, moreover, practiced not only on the elderly but also on newborn children deemed "unsuitable," as well as on members of the society who do not completely conform.

All people in Jonas's world undergo conditioning, a process that teaches them their place in the hegemonic structure while keeping them "protected" from all other knowledge; in other words, they undergo what Wallerstein calls the creation of different peoplehood constructs. Their mentality, consequently, remains that of children who never grow up and forever live in ignorance because every child is only taught the knowledge relevant for her to fulfill the role in society she has been assigned, and the dystopian community Lowry depicts is thus highly infantilized. In fact, all those aspects often thought of as unsuitable for children are banned in this society: there is no violence, war, pain, sexuality, death, or religion. Hence, choice and the possibility of change have also been eliminated in Jonas's world, where sameness and conformity are valued above everything else, with those who attempt resistance being promptly "released." While in Jonas's society it has consequently become almost impossible to suffer from physical or emotional pain, to be discriminated against, or to experience any severe conflicts, the members of this community lose the ability to make choices and to function beyond their prescribed roles. Jonas, who due to his knowledge functions as the only truly "adult" character in the text besides the Giver, eventually reaches a point where he wants to give up and wishes to be able to return to a state of oblivion: "he didn't want the memories, didn't want the honor, didn't want the wisdom, didn't want the pain. He wanted his childhood again" (121). Though he can never return to the blissful ignorance associated with childhood, Jonas later devises a plan that involves his leaving the village so that "the community has to bear the burden themselves [sic], of the memories [Jonas] had been holding for them" (155). Unsure of the exact outcome his leaving will create for the community, Jonas escapes to build a life for himself elsewhere, but the ending of Lowry's novel, much like Cormier's, is ambiguous and does not provide an obvious happy ending for its hero.

Lowry's text can be read as a critique of contemporary constructions of childhood and, moreover, of the abundant censorship books for children face. In the novel, parents and schools work together to socialize children into their prescribed roles without allowing them to make choices of their own, while any hint of resistance is silenced immediately and mercilessly. Such systemic oppression, Lowry seems to suggest, leads to the creation of an infantilized society, not to the creation of responsible, educated, and knowledgeable citizens. It is certainly no accident that those aspects of life forbidden in this dystopian society – sex, religion, and violence, amongst others – are also the same themes that are considered forbidden in the genre of children's literature. *The Giver* thus comments on a central idea surrounding the genre, that children need protection in the books they read, "both from knowledge and from experience," and that "children's literature exists in order to offer children this protection, to exclude things they ought not to know about" (Nodelman 158). Critiquing this approach to the genre, the novel suggests instead that texts for children need to incorporate "forbidden" themes, share knowledge, and open doors that often remain closed to children. In her Newbery Award Acceptance Speech in 1994, Lowry stresses the importance of texts for children that push the genre's boundaries:

The man that I named the Giver passed along to the boy knowledge, history, memories, color, pain, laughter, love, and truth. Every time you place a book in the hands of a child, you do the same thing. It is very risky. But each time a child opens a book, he pushes open the gate that separates him from Elsewhere. It gives him choices. It gives him freedom. (qtd. in Horn Book 216)

In *The Giver*, in fact, it is only Jonas who, because he has been exposed to knowledge and experience, has the ability to make choices and he, the child protagonist, is thus the only character in the text with any real freedom and agency.

Both Lowry's novel and Cormier's *The Chocolate War* highlight the violence and oppression that lie at the core of a hegemony functioning as a system of coercion and control, and both do so from the perspective of a child character. While Jerry's resistance to this system ultimately proves to be futile, it remains uncertain whether Jonas' choice to leave his society has the desired effect of releasing his memories and thus liberating the citizens of his village. As is the case in *The Brothers*

Lionheart and *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, however, it is once again the child characters who go through a political struggle and who serve as political agents in the texts, and each of these books, though in different ways, makes an argument for the inclusion of everyone, not only of adults, in the political realm. Cormier's text does so by underscoring the horrors that stem from denying anyone the right to make real choices, and while the novel suggests that adults can often lack the ability to choose as well, this lack is particularly evident in the case of children subjected to an education system in which they have no voice. Lowry's novel also centers around a society in which choices have become a thing of the past (a past that, of course, nobody remembers), and it draws clear parallels between such a society and the institution of childhood, thus critiquing the fact that children are kept in a realm outside of the adult world where they have no voice and are denied access to knowledge and experience. L'Engle's and Lindgren's books, though they differ remarkably in their politics, both employ child characters as the central agents of political struggle, and Lindgren's text explicitly highlights the child protagonists' voices and ideological worlds.

* * *

With the exception of *The Giver*, these novels were all written in the 1970s, a decade in which the rights and legal status of children were debated as part of a larger movement towards equal rights. Writers, teachers, and activists such as Richard Farson and John Holt, both prominent members of the children's liberation movement, went so far as to argue that children of all ages should be granted the same rights as adults, including the right to vote, the right to self-determination, and the right to choose their own education, among others. Some of these ideas are clearly reflected in the political texts for children written in that decade, and among those presented here *The Brothers Lionheart* makes, I believe, the strongest case for an expansion of political rights to children: not only does Lindgren's novel focus on two child characters actively engaged in a communal political struggle, but the utopian society they are fighting for is, moreover, a place where children are no longer excluded or marginalized but included, as participants with real agency, in the public and political realm. In Lindgren's Cherry Valley utopia, a real democracy where the class struggle has ended, the *People/people* fracture is indeed mended, and the discrepancy of rights between adults and children has been overcome. As

Lindgren's text demonstrates, books for children that invest the child character with a distinct and disruptive voice can thus challenge systems of domination and demand a more serious engagement with the figure of the child.

CHAPTER 4. HOMING THE CHILD IN THE NATION-STATE:

THE HOME/AWAY/HOME AGAIN PLOT IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In her study on "Homing and Unhoming: The Ideological Work of Canadian Children's Literature," Mavis Reimer observes that "the trajectory of most . . . children's texts . . . is to home the child subject, both the subject inside the book and the subject outside the book" (2). This homing of the child takes place in children's literature most typically through the removal of the child protagonist from her initial, conservative home setting under parental supervision to a state of homelessness and, eventually, the establishment of a new home whose organizing principles (those principles governing who is included in the home and who remains on the outside) reflect the individual text's politics and ideological position. In this move into the new home, the adult's authority over the child character, who has escaped from the adult's grasp during her temporary homelessness, is reintroduced, and the adult's presence and hold over the child reader tends to be particularly marked in this final homing process. Unlike the inhabitants of the home the protagonist leaves in the text's beginning, the members of her eventual home do not, however, necessarily share blood ties but rather come to be closely affiliated with one another, despite their sometimes diverse outward appearances, through a common ideology. The home that signals the protagonist's arrival at her destination in texts featuring the Home/Away/Home Again plot is thus often marked not by familial affiliations but rather by ideological ties that link this community that is now considered home. As such, the final home in these texts tends to serve as a microcosm for the nation-state, another community based not on blood relationships but rather on a dominant ideological structure that binds its citizens together.

Prominent children's literature scholars Perry Nodelman and Jack Zipes have both written on the Home/Away/Home Again plot that permeates texts for children. Though their analyses differ remarkably in the conclusions they reach about children's literature's subversive potential, both focus almost exclusively on the ending of texts to discuss the plot pattern and its implications for the genre: the protagonist's return home into the protection of the adult signals conservative tendencies and is reactionary, argues Nodelman, whereas Zipes maintains that the "home again" conclusion of a tale can be transformative and represent a counterhegemonic function. The conclusion of a tale certainly offers significant

insight into a text's politics, yet a reading that emphasizes only the text's ending neglects its other elements, elements that can potentially disrupt or challenge those final pages: although a conservative ending would subdue a tale's potentially subversive elements that have come before, it cannot silence them entirely. While Nodelman and Zipes' arguments will serve as a starting point for my exploration of the final home in books for children as a microcosm of the nation-state, in this chapter I intend ultimately to move beyond their findings to also discuss the texts' depictions of home prior to the "home again" ending.

My analysis will, moreover, foreground a discussion of the child's voice in texts employing the Home/Away/Home Again plot, as this voice represents an ideological world different from the adult's and can, therefore, challenge adult conceptions of both home and the nation-state. Since this plot structure affords the child protagonist a time and space "away" and thus outside the adult's supervision, her voice, too, is allotted a space in which to sound that is less circumscribed by the adult's voice than it often is during both the initial and final homing. At the end of the tale, then, the child's voice can potentially enter into a dialogue with the adult's voice, and out of this dialogue can arise new definitions of home that no longer take the adult's one-directional power over the child for granted. The languages of heteroglossia in the novel are, Bakhtin asserts, "specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values" (292), and the depiction of the child's voice and her world view can, therefore, point toward new definitions of home. As "[t]he novel begins by presuming a verbal and semantic decentering of the ideological world, a certain linguistic homelessness of literary consciousness, which no longer possesses a sacrosanct and unitary linguistic medium for containing ideological thought" (Bakhtin 367), it allows for the representation of ideological thought that lies outside the realm of adult hegemony. By allotting a space to the child's voice, particularly during her time "away," and by presenting a discursive struggle between the child's and the adult's ideological worlds in the "home again" ending, texts for children following the Home/Away/Home Again plot structure can, I argue, challenge nationalist tendencies even as they appear to reaffirm them.

Home has been a frequent and often ideologically charged theme in children's literature since the birth of the genre – one only needs to think of classics

such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), and J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911), to name but a few. Yet it appears that since the 1970s especially, writers of texts for children have begun to employ the Home/Away/Home Again pattern in order to expressly challenge common notions of the home and thus, sometimes explicitly, of the nation-state. Astrid Lindgren's 1981 fairy-tale novel *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, for example, takes up questions of what home and belonging mean, rejecting the necessity of borders and emphasizing title character Ronia's voice in the creation of a new community. Similarly, the 2004 children's book *Messenger* by Lois Lowry criticizes the strict immigration policies of the small, well-to-do nation that serves as its setting, and its child protagonist's voice especially calls for the opening of borders and a different conception of community that includes foreigners. Explicit political agendas also color the depiction of home, community, and the nation-state in the children's texts *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962), by Madeleine L'Engle, and *Momo* (1973), by Michael Ende, though the ideological work these two texts do differs significantly. L'Engle's text, written before the 1970s, the decade during which the genre of children's literature underwent notable changes, in fact serves as a contrast to Ende's: while the former reaffirms the status quo and the existing state of the nation in its conservative ending, the latter presents a utopian depiction of community that, due to the child protagonist's voice of dissent, in the end refuses to participate in a nation-state ruled by the principles of capitalism.

In this chapter, I will begin my exploration of ideological homes in children's literature through a reading of Richard Adams' 1972 novel about migrating rabbit refugees, *Watership Down*, a text for children that will allow me to illustrate and complicate Nodelman's and Zipes' readings of the Home/Away/Home Again plot. The subsequent sections will discuss the abovementioned books by Lindgren, Lowry, L'Engle, and Ende, focusing in particular on how these texts participate in or attempt to offer alternatives to the nationalist homing of the child, as most of them challenge existing definitions of the home and the nation-state and call instead for new forms of community that incorporate the ideological world of the figure of the child. I will conclude by reflecting on the status of the child as a migrating figure in need of shelter, and examine how the child's (temporary) homelessness in texts for children figuratively mirrors the condition and legal status of real children.

Creating a Rabbit Nation in *Watership Down* (1972)

Both Nodelman and Zipes foreground the final homing in their discussions of the Home/Away/Home Again plot, and both draw on Sigmund Freud's analysis of the 'uncanny' to make their arguments, yet they reach remarkably different conclusions: while Nodelman asserts that the homing of the child at the end of the plot serves as an illustration of children's literature's inherent conservatism, Zipes finds that it is in this final homing especially that the genre's subversive potential lies. Freud's study of the apparent opposition between the German adjectives *heimlich* and *unheimlich* in his essay on "The Uncanny" serves as the foundation for both Nodelman's and Zipes' arguments about the Home/Away/Home Again plot. Both adjectives take *Heim*, the German word for home, as their stem; according to Daniel Sanders's *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, which Freud uses as his source, *heimlich* means "intimate" and "familiar" (qtd. in Freud 126), whereas *unheimlich* refers to the uncanny. *Heimlich*, however, can also signify that which needs to remain "concealed, kept hidden, so that others do not get to know of it or about it and it is hidden from them" (129), and as such, its meaning is highly ambivalent and can even coincide with its seeming opposite, *unheimlich* (132). Drawing on these linguistic findings, Freud develops his theory of the uncanny as that which was once *heimlich*, or familiar, as part of our Selves but has since been repressed; its reappearance outside of the Self therefore creates a feeling of fright and discomfort. In Freud's words, "the uncanny [the 'unhomely'] is what was once familiar ['homely', 'homey']. The negative prefix *un-* is the indicator of repression" (151).

Nodelman's analysis draws on Freud's concept of the 'uncanny' when he argues that, "the law of home implies what it leaves outside merely by insisting it be left outside. The outside is already inside. It is there as the *unheimlich*" (224). He claims that the uncanny, or *unheimlich*, is an element of home at the beginning of texts for children featuring the Home/Away/Home Again plot, and that the home the hero returns to at the end of such tales no longer bears this uncanny trace that the protagonist, through her adventures outside the home, has overcome: "At the end of children's stories home finally becomes the safe place it was always supposed to be, a place for innocent childhood, with whatever was *unheimlich* . . . about it at the start expelled at least temporarily by the journey away, the unhoming the unfortunate presence of the *unheimlich* led to" (225). This return home, then, is essentially

conservative, reinforcing the power of the adult over the child as the child reenters the protective space provided by adults in form of the home, and as the uncanny element has been eradicated. Nodelman's analysis of the Home/Away/Home Again plot thus remains closed to the possibility of writing for children that subverts the child/adult hierarchy and, moreover, that questions the notion of home as homogeneous. Although children's literature tends to be a conservative genre that reinforces the power structure by transmitting its values to children, I find that some texts for children do allow for subversive readings and can potentially foster resistance in their readers, as Jack Zipes has consistently affirmed.

In *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, Zipes explores this same Home/Away/Home Again pattern and he, too, uses Freud's exploration of the uncanny as a starting point. However, Zipes's conclusions differ markedly from Nodelman's. According to Zipes, the "real" return home is intimately bound up with the uncanny and can be subversive because it points to the possibility of utopia. He explains that, "*the real return home or recurrence of the uncanny is a move forward to what has been repressed and never fulfilled*. The pattern in most . . . tales involves the reconstitution of home on a new plane" (*Fairy Tales* 175; emphasis in original). In order for this return home to be liberating, the tale that employs it must "[project] on a conscious, literary, and philosophical level the objectification of home as real democracy under nonalienating conditions" and "reflect *a process of struggle* against all types of suppression and authoritarianism and posit various possibilities for the concrete realization of utopia" (*Fairy Tales* 177; emphasis in original). While the Home/Away/Home Again plot is thus not in and of itself subversive, Zipes argues that the 'real' return home possesses significant liberating potential, a claim that Nodelman's analysis of the pattern rejects. Zipes here views the uncanny as a necessary component of the final home in tales that have subversive potential, whereas Nodelman concludes that the uncanny, and hence any subversive potential, is absent in the homing of the child at the end of the text.

Richard Adams' children's book *Watership Down* (1972) complicates both Nodelman's and Zipes' analyses and, moreover, serves to illustrate that home in texts for children often signifies a community bearing resemblances to the nation-state. The novel tells the story of a group of rabbits who, under the leadership of Hazel, leave their old warren Sandleford to build a new home elsewhere. Hazel's brother

Fiver urges the departure from Sandleford as he senses imminent danger – and in fact, as the rabbits later learn, the warren is viciously and systematically destroyed by construction workers within days of their departure. Humans are one of the many elil⁴ rabbits face, and they represent a constant and, due to what the rabbits perceive as human beings' unnatural and non-instinctive behavior, uncanny threat throughout the text, which illustrates how different warrens cope with this danger.

On their search for a new home, Hazel and the others come across a warren in which all rabbits are large, healthy, and strong, yet consumed by a vague and inexplicable pessimism. Hazel and his group of rabbits are invited to stay and join the warren, but the feeling of gloom that emanates from this place keeps them, and Fiver especially, careful and wary. The rabbits in the warren lead an easy and lazy life; the nearby farmer leaves carrots and salad for them to eat and, with the help of his shotgun, keeps elil at a safe distance. As a consequence, the rabbits have lost much of their natural instinct and have developed different patterns of behavior that leave the newcomers bewildered, though they are, for the most part, grateful to have found such a peaceful home. But Hazel and the others soon realize the cause for the rabbits' gloom: the farmer who protects them also regularly sets rabbit traps – a fact the rabbits have come to accept as the price for their comfortable lives.

Upon this discovery, the Sandleford rabbits escape along with Strawberry, who wishes to leave his unnatural and gloomy warren behind, and Hazel and the others soon build their home on Watership Down, only to be faced with a new problem: the group consists of only bucks, and the rabbits desperately need does if they wish to keep their newly constructed warren, Honeycomb, alive and populated. So they leave on another journey, this time to Efrafa, a warren not too far from Watership Down, in the hopes of convincing Efrafa's leadership to allow some of the does to join them. However, General Woundwort, chief of Efrafa, runs a tyrannical and cruel regime and refuses to let any of his rabbits leave, mutilating or killing those who attempt to escape. He is supported by the strongest rabbits in his warren who serve as guards and police, keeping Efrafa's citizens on a tightly organized schedule and constantly afraid. Yet much like the rabbits in Strawberry's former warren, the Efrafa rabbits largely accept their fate because General

⁴ The term "elil" in Adams' text refers to all those creatures that endanger the lives of rabbits, such as dogs, cats, certain birds, and human beings.

Woundwort's rule keeps them as safe from elil – humans and animals – as possible. In fact, while a typical warren like Sandleford will always be haunted by the uncanny danger the elil represent, in Efrafa that uncanny element has been replaced by Woundwort, who inspires a similar fear and misery in the rabbits. This uncanny feeling he elicits is further amplified by Woundwort's unnatural behavior – he fights and does not flee like other rabbits – and the fact that he is said to be the first cousin of the Black Rabbit of death.

After a long struggle, Hazel, Strawberry, and the Sandleford rabbits are eventually joined by many does and several bucks from Efrafa in their new home on Watership Down, and they are neither under the secret rule of a farmer nor the open rule of a power-hungry rabbit General. Instead, the book ends happily as the rabbits under Hazel seem to have found a satisfactory balance between safety and freedom. The plot of Adams' children's book, following the Home/Away/Home Again pattern and ending happily, thus clearly highlights the process of nation-building and posits the warren at Watership Down as a successful community model. As such, it can be read as a conservative text illustrating Nodelman's findings: the rabbits leave the uncanny threats posed by their initial home (as well as the two other potential homes they encounter on their journeys) behind and succeed in constructing an idyllic home in the end that, in its protection and safety, appears to be void of the *unheimlich*. However, Hazel's warren is actually a heterogeneous home that accepts the uncanny elements that remain with the rabbits. The descendants of Fiver, some of whom have inherited his strange sixth sense and visions that have proven to be an advantage to the warren, present such a residual uncanny element, as do the nearby farmers, who once shot and severely wounded Hazel. Moreover, the blood of the uncanny General Woundwort, the Black Rabbit's cousin, courses through the veins of many young rabbits in the heterogeneous Watership Down community.

The novel further complicates Nodelman's arguments because the protagonists of Adams' book are not children, as one would normally expect in children's literature, but rabbits, and adult rabbits at that. Nodelman maintains that through the final homing in texts for children, the child reenters the adult's protective space and thus returns into her power, leaving the world of adventures behind. While it is possible to read the ending of *Watership Down* as the adult author asserting his authority over the child reader, guiding that reader to accept the text's conclusions

about what constitutes (at least in the rabbit world) a successful and happy home, warren, and nation, there is no child character to be homed and reintroduced into the adult's protection in the text itself. Even in a reading that posits, as Gillian Adams' does, the rabbits as "a composite hero with whom [the child] can identify" (106), that composite hero is not at the end of the tale reintroduced into an adult's supervision. As Gillian Adams suggests, "Hazel's story can be read as an allegory in miniature of the life any child might expect: Hazel's first journey . . . is from an established and somewhat authoritarian structure like the parental home, to his own home established on his own terms" (107-108). Such a reading of the tale, then, that interprets the rabbits, and especially Hazel, as childlike protagonists, indicates that the homing at the end of the tale is not regressive or reactionary but rather occurs outside the adult's authority; it also posits, however, that the adult's supervision is no longer required precisely because the rabbits have, through the knowledge and experience gained on their journey, grown into responsible and mature adults themselves, who are therefore capable of inhabiting a home of their own.

Adams' choice of (almost exclusively) male adult rabbit protagonists furthermore excludes the novel from texts that, according to Zipes' argument, serve a counterhegemonic function. It appears, at first, that Adams' tale of warren-building rabbits possesses liberating potential: the text, quite literally, depicts what Zipes calls "the reconstitution of home on a new plane," and it seems to construct "home as real democracy under nonalienating conditions." However, the warren at Watership Down can be called democratic and nonalienating only insofar as these terms apply to a rabbit community, but not if we read the rabbits as representative of human beings, a reading that Zipes' argument necessitates. Throughout the novel, Adams goes to great lengths to show how the life of rabbits, including values and relationships, differs significantly from the way our human lives are organized. The text thus suggests that its rabbit characters should not be read as stand-ins for people, and consequently, it resists a reading couched in terms applicable only to human societies, such as "democracy." If we do, however, read the tale as an allegory for human behavior, then the adventures of the rabbits only seem to "reflect *a process of struggle* against all types of suppression and authoritarianism and posit various possibilities for the concrete realization of utopia" (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 177; emphasis in original); the society they create at Watership Down is not, in fact, utopian but

based on the continued authority of bucks/men over does/women and on the leadership of one sole rabbit/potential dictator.

The plot structure of *Watership Down*, moreover, takes the rabbits on a journey that is more complex than the Home/Away/Home Again pattern indicates. In fact, Hazel and his group encounter several different versions of home during their time “away,” most significantly Strawberry’s warren and Efrafa, and the former even serves as a potential new home for the migrating rabbits before they discover the farmer’s traps. These different homes figure prominently in the rabbits’ process of nation-building as they illustrate, to the protagonists as well as the child reader, which elements do or do not constitute desirable characteristics of the ideal home; the warren at Watership Down emerges as a community model that has grown out of the rabbits’ experiences with other warrens. Consequently, and in order to critically examine the homing process that occurs at the tale’s end, it is imperative to also consider the depiction of these other homes in the text. Such an analysis, then, moves beyond the modes of reading of the Home/Away/Home Again plot suggested by Zipes and Nodelman, modes that focus on a story’s conclusion with only little attention paid to the “Away” segment of the text. Yet it is this time “away” in children’s literature, I argue, that is particularly significant for assessing a text’s counterhegemonic potential, because it is in that section of a text that the child’s voice and thus her ideological world tend to be given the largest space, encouraging both the characters and readers to reflect on adult notions of home, community, and nation. These reflections, of course, impact the outcome of the tale in its “Home Again” part, as *Watership Down* illustrates.

Due to its Home/Away/Home Again plot structure and emphasis on nation-building, *Watership Down* has commonly been interpreted as a tale of epic proportions that bears a close resemblance to Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The similarities between the texts are indeed striking and range from the depiction of Fiver’s sixth sense, analogous to doomed Cassandra’s foresight, to, as Celia Anderson has highlighted, “the fact that, like the remnant of the Trojans, the few surviving rabbits must travel a weary way before they establish a new civilization” (12). According to this reading, then, Hazel stands in for Aeneas since “[t]hey both lead a band that escapes from a doomed civilization [and] they both have a mission to found a new people” (Anderson 12). This interpretation is, of course, further supported by the fact

that the rabbit warrens closely resemble nations, with Efrafra's totalitarian regime bearing a striking resemblance to Hitler's Germany (Gillian Adams 109). Published in England in 1972, *Watership Down* may, moreover, incorporate these elements that call to mind the epic of nation-building in response to a crisis of history education in the 1960s and 1970s across Europe, when, as Arie H. J. Wilschut has pointed out, "politics and society scorned the 'useless' school subject of history" (717). In England, the traditional aims of an education in history, focused on "the special role of Britain as a mighty empire" and working to instill in students a sense of patriotism and national belonging, remained largely unchanged until the 1960s, when it became increasingly difficult, due to society's increased diversification, "to create national citizenship, loyalty, and coherence" (Wilschut 698, 712). Though a more traditional curriculum was later reintroduced in order to serve as a "binding agent" for a diverse people and to further a project of nation-building reminiscent of the 19th century, the 1960s and '70s in England represented an "intermezzo" to this approach to the study and teaching of history (Wilschut 712, 717).

The striking resemblances between *Watership Down* and the *Aeneid*, an epic that served as a founding myth for the Roman Empire, may thus indicate a sense of nostalgia for Britain's past as a "mighty empire" as well as a desire to continue to teach children about the greatness of the British nation. The struggle with and eventual defeat of Efrafra can then be read as a reflection on Britain's more recent past as an ally in the war against Nazi-Germany, a war in which Richard Adams served as a soldier (Gillian Adams 109). At the same time, however, the text seems to resist such a reading as an epic of nation- or even empire-building because it employs rabbits as its protagonists, and these rabbits are consistently depicted as non-human-like. Furthermore, the rabbits' adventures take place on a strikingly small scale, and the book in fact "contains a map of a real geographical place, the approximately five-by-ten miles in Hampshire that contain the action" (Anderson 12). As it may be driven by a nostalgia for the British empire on the one hand, then, Adams' text seems to also suggest that the time for the large-scale human epic of nation-building has come to an end.

Beyond Borders: *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* (1981) and *Messenger* (2004)

The recipient of numerous literary awards, such as the Hans Christian Andersen Award (1958) and the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Book Trade (1978), Swedish children's book author Astrid Lindgren was in 1994 presented with the Right Livelihood Award "for her unique authorship dedicated to the rights of children and respect for their individuality" ("Astrid"). As the Right Livelihood Award Foundation asserts, Lindgren's books depict "a world of loving relationships and soaring spirits of empowerment and freedom" ("Astrid"), and this sense of empowerment that pervades her texts is, I believe, largely due to the space her books provide for the child's voice to sound and to demand serious engagement. As Lindgren has pointed out, "The only thing I would dare to hope for is that my books might make some small contribution towards a more caring, humane, and democratic attitude in the children who read them" (qtd. in Metcalf 125), and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* (1981), the last of Lindgren's full-length novels, may well be her most expressive work in its advocacy of a more caring and humane society. The potential for change is placed in her child characters, and title character Ronia especially, as she rebels against her parents' worldview and advocates a different model of community. Lindgren's fairy-tale novel places particular emphasis on the child protagonist's voice and thus on her ideological world, and this voice enters into a dialogue with the adult's voice in the text, challenging adult conceptions of borders and home.

Lindgren's book tells the tale of Ronia, daughter of robber chieftain Matt who lives with his wife and robber band in Matt's Fort, a large fortress surrounded by a vast and mystical forest that is home to many magical creatures. Ronia grows up a wild and happy child, but her life drastically changes after she meets Birk, the son of Matt's archenemy Borka, at Hell's Gap. On the night both Ronia and Birk were born, a raging thunderstorm split Matt's fortress "into two halves, with a chasm between them" (7), and it is this chasm known as Hell's Gap which later allows the Borka robbers to move into the North Fort that was split off, renaming their half of the fortress Borka's Keep. Henceforth, the two robber bands, both consisting of twelve robbers and a chieftain with his wife and child, live as mirror images of one another, separated only by that fateful chasm. Despite their similarities and physical closeness, however, Matt's and Borka's bands live in a state of war and rivalry; for

Matt, “Borka was the archenemy. Just as Borka’s father and grandfather had been the archenemies of Matt’s father and grandfather – yes, since time immemorial the Borkas and Matts had been at loggerheads” (9). Though “not particularly wide” (22), Hell’s Gap represents an insurmountable division between the two robber bands and, at first, between Ronia and Birk.

Ronia, however, has always enthusiastically welcomed new elements into her world, such as the water lilies and the mountains she sees when first exploring the forest, and her initial reaction to encountering Birk Borkason mirrors her delight at nature: just as she had “laughed silently because rivers and forests were there,” she watches the boy sitting on the other side of Hell’s Gap “and laughed to herself because he was there” (13; 20). Yet as Ronia has been taught by her family and the robber band to believe that every Borka is an enemy, it is only after Birk has saved her life that she admits to herself that she likes this boy, whom she then begins referring to as her “brother.” Eventually, Ronia begins to understand the absurdity of the robber bands’ rivalry by trying to see herself from Birk’s perspective: “After all, she was one of Matt’s robbers and an enemy of Borka She could well understand that Borka must loathe Matt’s robbers as much as Matt loathed the Borka robbers” (71). Her father Matt, on the other hand, far from being able to put himself into his enemy’s shoes, refers to the Borka robbers not only as “dirty devils,” but also by names such as “snake spawn,” “heathen dogs,” and “robber scum” (29). This dehumanization of the other robber band reaches its climax when Ronia angrily accuses Matt of robbing people after he has kidnapped Birk: “Who’s talking about people?” he indignantly replies, “I’ve caught a snake fry, a louse, a little thieving hound” (90). It is her father’s refusal to recognize as human those living on the other side of Hell’s Gap, or on the other side of the border, that leads to Ronia’s decision to leave Matt’s Fort, her childhood home, and create a new home with Birk in the woods.

Ronia’s departure from Matt’s Fort does not, however, represent a complete break with her parents’ teachings and traditions, some of which prove useful and even crucial to survival in the forest: Ronia has learned from her mother Lovis, for example, that moss serves to stop wounds from bleeding, and it is this knowledge that enables her to save the dying wild horse Lia, who in turn lets herself be milked by the children. Certain modes of behavior Ronia has observed in her parents also

resurface in her relationship with Birk; for instance, she tells her brother at one point, “Now you certainly are as crazy as they come,” copying a phrase she has heard Lovis say to Matt (122). Ronia’s rebellion against the robbers in Matt’s Fort is consequently not all-encompassing but rather aimed specifically at those adult values, embodied especially by her father Matt, that create borders between one’s own community and another and that value some human lives above others: as long as Matt refuses to accept someone from the Borka clan, such as Birk, as a person deserving humane treatment and respect, Ronia refuses to share a home with him.

During her life in this home away from home, Ronia moreover learns how to share her space with all others, no matter how different. Indeed, the forest, as Birk heatedly explains to Ronia after she claims the woods are hers, is home to everyone and belongs to all its inhabitants:

Your fox cubs! Your woods! Fox cubs belong to themselves – don’t you know that? And they live in the foxes’ wood, which is the wolves’ and bears’ and elks’ and wild horses’ wood too. And the owls’ and the buzzards’ and the wood pigeons’ and the hawks’ and the cuckoos’ wood. And the snails’ and the spiders’ and the ants’ wood [It’s] also the wild harpies’ and the gray dwarfs’ and the rumphobs’ and the murktrolls’ wood! In any case, it’s my wood! And your wood, robber’s daughter – yes, your wood too! But if you want it for yourself alone, then you’re sillier than I thought when I first saw you. (39)

As Birk’s passionate speech illustrates, the forest is the home for beasts, birds, insects, shadow folk, and humans alike, and as such it allows Ronia to live outside the concept of borders she has grown accustomed to in Matt’s divided fort. It is also in the woods that Ronia and Birk learn how to live “in peace with all the life about them” (148), such as with the wild horses who – despite the children’s best efforts – will never be domesticated animals, and even with the harpies, the most dangerous and cunning creatures in the forest.

Instead of perpetuating the robber band’s traditions and its demonization of those outside the group, Ronia thus makes her home in a world free of borders, and she decides to return to Matt’s Fort only once her father is willing to set aside his differences with Borka in order to unite the two robber bands. Yet Ronia’s return to

the fort does not signal her return into her parents' supervision and authority but instead represents a compromise between this child protagonist and her adult counterparts: she agrees, if Matt and Borka stop their fighting, to live with her parents during the cold winter months but goes back to the forest with Birk during the first days of spring, to live in "their cave, their home in the wilderness," where "everything is as before, safe and familiar," until the next winter arrives (176). The book ends with Ronia and Birk's return to their cave in the woods, and Lindgren's tale thus expands upon the Home/Away/Home Again pattern as the child protagonist returns home twice: to Matt's Fort, and to the forest. In fact, not only does Ronia's time "away" lead to Matt's change of heart and his eventual union with Borka and his robbers, enabling Ronia to come back to the fortress as a place that now represents a compromise between the child's and the adult's ideas of home, but it is also during this time away that the child protagonist creates a home of her own – a home she does not forever abandon when she temporarily goes back to living with her parents.

The novel thus does not, in the end, home the child protagonist in her parents' protection, which would signal a regression and return to "innocent childhood," according to Nodelman; instead, Lindgren's tale employs and expands upon the Home/Away/Home Again pattern to show the child character's growth and her starting independence from the adult figures in the book. Even Matt realizes that he has lost his hold and power over Ronia and voices this sentiment in a conversation with Borka, just after both robber chieftains have learned that their children refuse to follow in their footsteps and become robbers themselves one day: "You can't do anything with children these days," he says, "They do as they like – you just have to get used to it. But it's not easy" (167). However, as Lindgren has herself asserted, "If the young were to listen to everything older people say, every progress would come to an end and the world would stand still" (qtd. in Hohmeister 35; my translation), and the representation of the child's disruptive voice is thus an essential component of her texts for children. By challenging adult constructions of home and community, Ronia's voice here enters into a dialogic relationship with the adult's, and out of this discursive struggle between their separate ideological worlds grows a new conception of home at the tale's end, a home that presents a compromise for both the child and adult characters: while Ronia agrees to live with her parents in Matt's Fort

during the winter months, she does so only on the condition that the Matt and Borka robbers end their feud; and while Matt agrees to let Ronia live in the woods during the summer months, he reserves the right to visit her in her forest home from time to time. Rather than homing Ronia at the end of the text by having her return to a home characterized by the adult's authority over the child, the novel ends with Ronia's return to her home in the woods in the springtime, and the last lines of the tale once again highlight her indomitable voice: "Don't be scared," Ronia tells Birk, "'My spring yell is just coming.' And she yells, shrill as a bird, a shout of joy that can be heard far away in the forest" (176).

Lindgren's novel, moreover, challenges the idea of borders through its juxtaposition between the adult robbers' rivalry and divisiveness to the child characters' borderless home in the woods. The division between the two robber communities seems arbitrary from the beginning as they appear to be very much alike – apart from the superficial fact that the hair of all Matt robbers is black while Borka and his robbers are redheads – and the border the two groups build is constructed solely based on (false, as they later learn) stereotypes about the other that have been passed down for generations. The eventual union of the two robber bands and the dissolution of the borders that have kept them separate, then, seems a natural development; but the novel goes further even in its criticism of borders between communities. The most natural way of life, the tale suggests, is the children's in the forest where they live next to and in harmony with all other creatures, and Ronia takes this knowledge to its next logical step when she decides that she will not be a robber chieftain when she grows up; instead, she wants to establish ties and friendships with the villagers that live nearby so that they, too, will be able to fearlessly pass through and enjoy the forest.

The woods play an important role in Lois Lowry's novel *Messenger* (2004), the third installment of a quartet following *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* and preceding *Son*, as well, though they are not, as in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, a border-free zone in which all creatures can peacefully coexist. The forest in Lowry's text instead personifies the border and borderland surrounding Village, the community that child protagonist Matty calls his home. Village serves as a place of refuge for migrants who have escaped from their destitute or oppressive communities, and nearly all the inhabitants of Village were therefore born someplace

else. A welcoming and friendly people who live off the natural resources their land has to offer, the citizens of Village undergo drastic changes in their approach to foreigners after the practice of “trading” is introduced. Through trading, many fall prey to the seductive powers of capitalism, wanting more and more things for themselves and refusing to continue sharing their riches with others. Soon, a petition is introduced that calls for the closing of Village’s borders, and the ensuing town meeting illustrates the stronghold trading and its consequences have on the citizens:

Some of those who had been among the most industrious, the kindest, and the most stalwart citizens of Village now went to the platform and shouted out their wish that the border be closed so that “we” (Matty shuddered at the use of *we*) would not have to share the resources anymore. *We need all the fish for ourselves. Our school is not big enough to teach their children, too; only our own. They can’t even speak right. We can’t understand them. They have too many needs. We don’t want to take care of them.* And finally: *We’ve done it long enough.* (85; emphasis in original)

Following their meeting, the villagers begin to construct a wall around their community to keep out further immigrants, and it is Matty’s task to journey through the forest one final time to get Kira, who is to be the last refugee to enter Village, and return before the wall is finished.

Matty’s travels through Forest, his time away from home, prove much more difficult than anticipated, however, as Forest personifies the citizens’ hostility and begins to viciously attack both Matty and Kira as they attempt to reach Village. “Forest represents the tangled forces of human greed and misery,” Lowry has pointed out in an interview, “the things that keep us separated as humans in a complex world” (Lowry “*Messenger: A Reader’s Guide*” 9). Forest, the physical borderland between Village and other communities, thus also serves as a manifestation of the borders humans as well as entire nations create between each other for reasons such as the ones given by the citizens in the town meeting. Ultimately, Matty is unable to protect both himself and the physically disabled Kira from Forest and, once he has brought Kira close enough to Village so that she can reach it on her own, he sacrifices himself to this borderland’s violence so that he may save the other citizens: Matty possesses a supernatural ability to heal and, in

surrendering himself to Forest, he succeeds in curing the disease that trading introduced into his community. Matty dies, the citizens abandon their trading obsessions as if awoken from a bad dream, and the borderland becomes once again easily penetrable, serving as a welcoming gateway to newcomers looking for a new home.

In *Messenger*, it is only the child reader, then, who follows the Home/Away/Home Again ending to its very end, whereas the child protagonist dies before he can return home. Though Matty succeeds in eradicating the greed and selfishness that have poisoned the citizens and Forest alike, he himself is unable to see Village returned to its old splendor, and the fact that he never completes his journey differentiates Lowry's novel from other texts employing the Home/Away/Home Again pattern. Not only does this child character never return into the adult's protection at the end of the tale, he also makes the conscious and difficult decision to sacrifice himself on his own, eschewing any possible advice from the adult figures in the text. As readers, we may moreover recognize that the plot follows the Home/Away/Home Again pattern so common to texts for children, and Matty's death then comes as an even greater surprise and shock. This ultimate sacrifice on the part of the child protagonist puts the evil that has been created through capitalist desires and closed borders into sharper relief and thus significantly adds to the novel's criticism of both capitalism and practices of immigration control.

Lowry's text presents an outspoken condemnation of capitalism and, moreover, connects the practices of capitalism with the increased need for borders. Published in 2004 and thus at a time that saw a growing fear of foreigners in the West, a fear that went hand-in-hand with the fortification of borders in both the US and the European Union, *Messenger* highlights the selfishness that accompanies the construction of borders which ensure that "we" can continue to live better than "they." In the novel, it is the child character's willingness to sacrifice himself in order to help others and thus his utter selflessness that presents the counterpoint to the adult practice of selfish "trading" and the building of walls. Lowry herself has argued that reading of Matty's selfless act might help "young people to think in terms of 'What would I be willing to give up?'" since everyone, she believes, "could conceivably have the opportunity for that... perhaps not to give our lives, as he did, for the good of others, but to make genuine painful sacrifices in order to heal, or

help, our world” (“*Messenger: A Reader’s Guide*” 6). It is the child character in Lowry’s text, then, that serves as the tale’s moral compass as he counteracts the adult practice of trading, bound up in selfishness, with his healing sacrifice, an act of selflessness. It is the child character, too, who makes the return home at the end of the tale possible: though he himself is not homed but dies in the borderland, it is Matty’s vision of what constitutes “home” that is brought to life in the novel’s ending, as both the border and trading have been eradicated, so that Village is once again a community welcoming of immigrants and willing to share its resources.

Utopian Homes in *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) and *Momo* (1973)

Published in the US during the height of the Cold War in 1962, L’Engle’s Newbery Medal winning children’s book *A Wrinkle in Time* celebrates the ideas of American individualism while condemning communism, and it does so through a plot that follows the Home/Away/Home Again structure. From the beginning of the tale, the child characters’ exceptionalism is highlighted: Meg Murry and her brother Charles Wallace as well as their new friend Calvin all possess unique qualities that, occasionally, make them appear strange to others but that characterize their individuality and mark them as special. In the Murry family, these special attributes are cherished and nurtured rather than shunned, and Calvin quickly recognizes that it is with these people that he will feel at home: “I’ve never even seen your house, and I have the funniest feeling that for the first time in my life I’m going home!” he exclaims excitedly before meeting Meg’s mother and other brothers (37). While the United States is constructed as the child characters’ home nation in L’Engle’s novel, it is specifically the Murry family that personifies American values of individualism and achievement and that, therefore, serves as the community in which the children feel the most at home.

The protagonists learn how special their home really is when they leave to rescue their father, a scientist held captive on the distant planet of Camazotz. At first the foreign planet seems familiar and in fact much like America, but Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin quickly realize that there is one crucial difference: on Camazotz, all the houses, paths, and yards look alike, and even people bear an uncanny resemblance to one another; “though their features were as different one from the other as the features of men on earth, there was also a sameness to them” (116). That

sameness came to rule Camazotz when IT, a disembodied, living brain, began thinking for all citizens, so that everyone's decisions became IT's and so that any trace of individuality disappeared from the population. In order to free their father and return home, the children have to face IT without falling prey to its seductive powers, and it is during Meg's struggle against the brain, which she attempts to keep at bay by reciting the Declaration of Independence, that the book's politics are the most pronounced:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident!” she shouted, “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” “But that's exactly what we have on Camazotz. Complete equality. Everybody exactly alike.” “No!” she cried triumphantly. “*Like and equal* are not the same thing at all!” [S]he held on to her moment of revelation. *Like and equal are two entirely different things*. For the moment she had escaped from the power of IT. (160; emphasis in original)

As Meg's struggle with IT illustrates, the novel propagates pro-American values and an American exceptionalism, referencing the US as the nation where everybody, including those with strange and different abilities like the child characters, is equal, and the resulting life of US citizens stands in contrast to life on Camazotz, where everyone is alike due to an utter loss of individuality.

During their time away from home, the protagonists thus come to truly appreciate their own nation and are anxious to return to it after realizing how much worse their lives would be as citizens of Camazotz, a planet painted as communist not only through its depiction of IT's beliefs but also through a consistent highlighting of the dominance of the color red: Meg, for example, finds herself in “a sea of red,” “red fog,” and “red darkness” while on Camazotz (157; 161; 162). After having saved her father, however, Meg needs to return to the planet once more in order to rescue Charles Wallace, who has fallen under IT's influence. It is only after she has saved her brother as well that this one half of the Murry family (and Calvin, who has by now become a kind of honorary family member) can return home to their country on planet Earth to reunite with the other half. The book's ending is thus a happy one as the Murry family is finally whole again and as the child protagonists

return home with a newfound love and respect for their private home as well as their nation as a whole.

Problematically, however, this happy ending makes no mention of the fate of the citizens of Camazotz, a planet described as having been very similar to Earth before IT's arrival. In fact, the children's mission is never to save Camazotz or even those citizens who attempt rebellion, but rather only to rescue their father, and then Charles Wallace. The novel thus places heavy emphasis on familial ties in establishing community; the citizens of Camazotz, though blameless victims of IT, are not constructed as members of the child characters' community and, therefore, do not need to be rescued in order for the text to present the protagonists' return home as a happy ending. Since the Murry family, moreover, serves as a microcosm for the US as a whole within the text, the child characters are at the end of L'Engle's tale effectively homed both in their family, and thus in the adult's supervision, and in their nation. Their time "away" has served not to present the child characters with alternative models of "home" that could potentially challenge the status quo, but it instead reinforces their sense of national belonging by highlighting the downfalls of life on Camazotz. As it perpetuates a national hegemony and works towards the incorporation of the child's voice into this hegemonic structure, L'Engle's text tends towards the didactic end of the didactic—dialogic spectrum. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the child's voice does not represent a counterpoint and challenge to hegemony but rather echoes adult definitions of both home and the US nation.

Published before the transformation of the genre of children's literature in the 1970s, L'Engle's book, with its emphasis on American exceptionalism and its homing of the child characters at the tale's end, stands in stark contrast to Ende's *Momo* (1973), a fairy-tale novel for children that highlights the child protagonist's voice in its critique of capitalism. *Momo* in fact shares with *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* an emphasis on the child's disruptive voice that challenges and interrogates the adult's ideological world, whereas the novel's negative depiction of capitalism as a system that sucks the life out of its subjects goes beyond even the criticism of harmful and selfish "trading" practices in *Messenger*. Winfred Kaminski, whose analysis focuses on children's literature in West Germany, asserts that "young people's literature has changed since the end of the 1960s," and he goes on to emphasize the ideological implications inherent in the genre's transformation:

Clearly, the change has been directed toward dissolving the idyll of the child's world, demonstrating how deeply children and childhood are affected by political and social events, as well as emphasizing that children must be prepared for this. In West German young people's literature this change is reflected, not in realistic texts, but primarily in fantastic tales in the broadest sense of the term – e.g., in anti-authoritarian young people's literature. (192)

Ende's *Momo*, a book Kaminski discusses to illustrate his argument, is just such a fantastic tale that emphasizes how the child is affected by adult society and politics, and it moreover provides a large space to the child protagonist Momo's voice and ideological worldview in order to challenge and interrogate the adult-propagated system of capitalism.

Wild-haired Momo is an escapee from a dreadful orphanage, who has made her home in an old amphitheater outside an unnamed but clearly Italian city and wears mismatched shoes and an oversized men's jacket; and from the outset of the story Momo is thus characterized as an outsider, someone who defies the norms of society and exists on the margins. The text moreover asserts the child protagonist's agency from the beginning, as it is Momo herself who has created her home, in which she lives free from adult supervision. When asked by an adult character, in fact, if she shouldn't go back home, Momo promptly assures him that "[t]his is my home" (12)⁵, and the novel's depiction of what constitutes home at the tale's outset thus significantly differs from the conservative home, a place in which the child lives under parental authority, that serves as the initial setting for most texts for children. Although only Momo physically lives in the old amphitheater on the outskirts of the city, that amphitheater, a symbol for the ancient public life and community that now, however, lies in ruins, quickly becomes the home for the other characters as well: children and adults alike return the amphitheater to its old function as it once again becomes a gathering place for people to meet, share stories, have the occasional petty argument, play games, and so forth. The home Momo constructs thus not only provides provision and protection, as the conservative homes at the beginning of texts for children typically do, but it also affords her and the other child characters active participation.

⁵ I will quote from Frances Lobb's English translation of Ende's text in this chapter.

It is the gray gentlemen's invasion, the onset of capitalism, that brings this communal life to an abrupt halt and that leaves the old amphitheater abandoned once more. Having convinced the inhabitants of the city that houses Momo's home to work more and more as well as faster and faster in order to save their time, the gray gentlemen have effectively turned the citizens' idyllic and relaxing lives on their heads. A typical day in Momo's city now mirrors everyday life under capitalism today:

Crowds of people were scurrying hither and thither, thrusting each other impatiently aside, jostling one another, or pressing on in endless queues. The roadway was packed solid with cars, while double-decker buses, crammed to overflowing, groaned and jerked their way along. Advertisements in neon lighting flashed from every wall, casting a brilliant glare over the throng, only to dim again equally suddenly.
(109-110)

Momo, however, remains immune to the time-thieves' methods of persuasion and so, at first, do the other children in the text. It is only once their parents force the other child characters into so-called child depots, daycare centers that teach children how they, too, can effectively save their time and become productive members of the capitalist system, that Momo finds herself truly alone in her efforts of resistance.

When Momo first visits Master Hora, the keeper of time, she moreover learns that the gray gentlemen can exist only because people have permitted them to, highlighting the people's complicity in their own oppression. Master Hora explains that, "[The time-thieves] come into being because people give them the opportunity of coming into being – that suffices to bring it about. And now that people are giving them the opportunity of ruling over them, that will suffice to bring that about, too" (136). The capitalist ideology the gray gentlemen propagate is consequently resonant of the citizens' own ambitions and desires, born from the belief that "[t]he one thing that matters in life . . . is to be a success, to become a Somebody and to have possessions. If you are a success, if you are a Somebody, if you possess more than other people, everything else follows automatically – friendship, love, honours and so on" (84). As the gray gentlemen are born from the characters' own desires, Ende's novel emphasizes that the characters do, in fact, have the power to resist and change the existing conditions under the time-thieves' power, and this agency is further

emphasized by the fact that the child protagonist does eventually succeed in defeating the gray gentlemen's regime.

When the children and adults of the big city can return to the amphitheater at the end of the tale because capitalism has effectively been overthrown, the text points towards the necessity in our society to foster utopian ideas that can help us shape a better and more just future, and to resist the appeals of individualistic capitalism. In his analysis of the liberating potential that the return home can unlock, Zipes briefly discusses this ending of Ende's fairy-tale novel for children. Despite the novel's anti-capitalist stance, however, he concludes that the defeat of capitalist forces here represents not a communal struggle against oppression but that Ende "employs the fantastic to celebrate individualistic action or the privatization of the imagination" (*Fairy Tales* 184). The novel, which closes with child protagonist Momo's return home to the amphitheater after the last of the gray gentlemen, representatives of capitalism, has evaporated, has a seemingly happy ending that is, for Zipes, problematic and "deceptively emancipatory" (*Fairy Tales* 184). According to Zipes, then, *Momo* is not an effectively subversive text.

However, while Zipes posits that a communal effort and struggle for utopian ideals is a condition for a text to be truly liberating, I argue instead that a text's subversive tendencies lie with its depiction of the child's voice and the space allotted to the portrayal of the child's ideological world. *Momo* not only bestows its child character with significant agency and a clear voice, but it also points to the importance of a serious, dialogical engagement with the child's ideological world. As the gray gentlemen first enter the city and make their capitalist ideology known, it is the child characters, in fact, who organize a protest and invite the adults to the amphitheater in order to educate them about the time-thieves' sinister plans: "there were hundreds [of children] if not thousands of them. Everywhere in the big city children were now streaming through the streets in long processions, inviting the grown-ups to the important meeting that was to change the world" (98). Alas, that important meeting never takes place because the adult characters fail to take the children seriously and, instead of entering into a dialogue with the child voices, begin their time-saving ventures. The ending of the text once again highlights the importance of listening to the child's voice, as the community is gathered in the amphitheater when "[s]ilence fell. Then Momo went and stood in the middle of the

great arena. She thought about the music of the spheres and about the hour-blossoms [that represent everyone's time]. And in a clear voice she began to sing" (235). It is because the adults are now taking the child's voice seriously and are listening to Momo's song about time, the tale's ending suggests, that the time-thieves and their capitalist ideology will not be allowed to infiltrate this community again.

In his critique of capitalism and in his vision of a different, utopian community, Ende thus relies heavily on the child's voice, a voice that due to the child's disenfranchised status comes from the margins and has the potential to disrupt the status quo. This community is truly utopian in that Ende did not envision for communism to replace capitalism but was critical of both systems, as the incorporation in *Momo* of the story about cruel tyrant Marxintius Communis, told by Momo's friend Guido, implies, and as the author himself has articulated: "The two major opposing economic powers [in the 20th century] . . . were in fact twins: private capitalism and state capitalism. But we have never actually experienced a non-capitalist system as such" (qtd. in Hirota). The potential for change, Ende believes, rests with people's imagination and the belief that utopia can, in fact, be realized: "People always think, 'that is the way with money. It cannot be changed.' That is not true. We can change it. We have created it and therefore we can undo it" (qtd. in Hirota). The child's ideological world, then, characterized by its opposition to adult hegemony, can serve as a starting point in envisioning new and even utopian forms of community, and it is the serious engagement with the child's voice and worldview that Ende's *Momo* advocates.

Much like Ende's portrayal of community at the end of *Momo*, L'Engle's depiction of the Murry family and the US nation in *A Wrinkle in Time* is also, I believe, not a realistic but a utopian portrayal. Unlike the utopian community Ende describes, however, L'Engle's US is presented not as a utopia but a reality: whereas home in the beginning and end of *Momo* is set at an unidentified time in a nameless big city, home in *A Wrinkle in Time* is the United States, a realistic setting that figures prominently not only as the protagonists' home but whose history and principles are moreover employed in the children's fight against the evil represented by IT. American values are never questioned in the text but rather need to be defended from other, dangerous ideologies, and the application of these values in the US is taken for granted – in other words, whether all men in the United States are

actually equal is not a question the text raises. In *Momo*, on the other hand, it is the big city under the gray gentlemen's influence that most closely resembles contemporary life under capitalism, and the text thus advocates action and change by pointing towards the possibility of utopia in which the gray gentlemen and their ideology have been overturned. *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Momo*, then, can be read as employing the Home/Away/Home Again pattern for contrasting purposes and effects: while the former unquestioningly glorifies the US American nation-state as a home that needs to remain unchanged and protected, the latter, through the child protagonist's voice, asks questions about the current state of society and encourages resistance to dominant economic ideologies to achieve a more just and even utopian home for all.

The Figure of the Migrating Child

The common Home/Away/Home Again pattern in texts for children places the central child character or characters in a position of temporary homelessness that is reflective of the status of real children in the nation-state before they reach the age of maturity. Prior to reaching adulthood, children are certainly not homeless as they have been given citizenship in a nation-state upon birth and live in the protection of adults, but they lack the right to participate as active members in that nation or home. The child's marginalization and treatment as only a nascent citizen is always temporary, as she is expected to learn and grow into an adult citizen, and the access to full participation rights is based on the internalization of the dominant ideology that is accomplished via the family and the education system – and, of course, via children's literature. Child characters in texts featuring the Home/Away/Home Again plot find themselves in a similar situation: their time away, in fact, serves for these characters as an opportunity to learn what home means and which values are of central importance for the home they will eventually create, find, or return to. As such, the "Away" segment of the text represents a time in which the characters acquire knowledge about home so that, at the end of the tale, they can actively choose and participate in the home that fits their experience – much like real children who are granted permission to participate in the nation-state once they reach the age of maturity and have been inculcated to a sufficient extent into its dominant ideologies.

Several aspects of the journey of the child character thus mirror the journey the child reader herself must undertake. While “away,” the child character, much like figures of migrants, exiles, and nomads in literature, finds herself in a position that is not yet fixed and determined and that carries the potential for different endings, whereas the actual child is often perceived of as a wild creature that needs to be contained so that this development can be controlled – in other words, the actual child, too, is in a position that holds numerous future possibilities. The outcome for the character in a Home/Away/Home Again plot and the real child is the same: they journey towards a fixed identity, a stable place in a community, and active membership in a nation-state. In other words, once the protagonist and the real child have gained appropriate knowledge about their home, their temporary status as a migrant (in the case of the former) and treatment as only a potential citizen (in the case of the latter) comes to an end and they are, at the end of the story or the end of childhood, effectively “homed.”

Some texts for children, however, such as Lindgren’s *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter* and Ende’s *Momo*, highlight the child’s voice and advocate a dialogical engagement with the child’s ideological world. In doing so, these books emphasize how the figure of the child can actively participate in the creation of home and of community, even as the child’s vision of what constitutes a home differs from the adult’s, and they underline the importance of the child’s voice not only during the final homing but also during the time “away.” Hence these texts suggest that the real child, too, possesses a voice that deserves to be taken seriously and that can participate in public discourse even prior to the child’s attainment of adulthood. As the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child underscores, children have not only the right to protection and provision, but also to participation, and the Convention thus stresses the importance of giving a space to and engaging children’s voices. While the voices of real children are bound to differ from the constructed voice of the figure of the child in children’s literature, real children, too, have the right to enter into a dialogue with the adults around them. In that dialogue, we should engage the child’s voice, a potential catalyst of progressive social change, in a manner that is not tokenistic but that takes its perspective seriously even and especially when the child’s viewpoint differs from our own.

CHAPTER 5. “NO ONE MUST KNOW THAT WE EXIST”: CONTAINING THE
CHILD’S VOICE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF MICHAEL ENDE’S
MOMO

As I have been arguing throughout this dissertation, texts for children *contain* the child in both senses of the term: children are contained by children’s literature in the sense that they are categorized and defined in and through the genre, and at the same time these texts contain, or include, the figure of the child in all its disruptive capacities. A main function of the genre is to construct the child in opposition to the adult and thus positioned outside of the adult framework, yet it is precisely in this space that the child’s counterhegemonic potential lies. Because children are perceived as needing education and are relegated to a space outside of adult life until they become members of the adult world at the age of maturity, childhood is the time of life in which the nation’s youngest members learn what the qualities of the adult citizen are and how to conform to them. Children’s literature, then, is typically expected to teach children enough about society so that they understand their own role in it and their place in hegemony, while keeping from them those aspects of adult knowledge and experience deemed unsuitable. However, because children are constructed as different, or other, from adults, they pose an inherent challenge to the adult world, and this difference is central to texts for children as well. Since they include representations of the child and her ideological world, texts for children can highlight the potential of the child’s perspective to disrupt and interrogate the adult worldview.

Children’s literature, then, often functions to indoctrinate children into dominant ideologies while also containing those aspects of childhood, through the child’s voice and representations of the child’s ideological world especially, that could potentially upset hegemonic structures. On the one hand, texts for children thus serve a didactic function, but on the other, they can advocate a serious engagement with the child’s voice – in Bakhtin’s sense of “voice” as a dynamic aspect of fictional discourse – as that voice enters into a dialogue with the adult voices and forces in the text. Texts for children can, therefore, be mapped onto a spectrum that moves from the didactic to the dialogic; books tending towards the didactic end of the spectrum work towards the containment of the child’s voice and perpetuate the adult’s position of power over the child, whereas books tending towards the dialogic

end of the spectrum foreground the child's voice in their content, showcasing a discursive struggle between the child's and the adult's ideological worlds in which the child's worldview is taken seriously.

Translations of texts for children further complicate these politics of children's literature and the didactic—dialogic spectrum. If childhood is the phase in life characterized by the indoctrination into hegemony, and if children's literature is expected to teach children about their own place in society, then a translation of a text for children – a text that has grown out of a national and historical context different from the target culture's – has the potential to disturb the didactic functions of the genre. Yet because children's literature is an inherently ambivalent genre, different practices of translation can serve to highlight either the didactic or dialogical elements of a text for children; in other words, translations can emphasize the child's containment – the ways in which the figure of the child is controlled and kept in its place in the text – or the inclusion of the child's voice, a potentially disruptive element that erupts from a space outside the adult framework. Moreover, the child's voice is always no more than a representation in texts for children, which are produced by adults and represent specific ideas about childhood and what “real” children are or should be like. In other words, the child's voice in children's literature is not the unadulterated voice of a real child but rather an adult construction. In the process of translating a text from one natural language to another, the child's voice, too, is then transformed and represented differently, and the translator's as well as the target audience's perceptions of childhood influence again the ways in which the child will be contained in the translated work.

In this chapter, I will examine the two English-language translations of Michael Ende's *Momo* (1973), a fairy-tale novel for children that explicitly invites a counterhegemonic reading insofar as it stresses the child protagonist's agency and disruptive voice that the hegemonic forces in the text cannot erase or silence. These translations illustrate the different approaches to the genre and gravitate toward opposite poles of the didactic—dialogic spectrum. While Frances Lobb's 1974 translation for a UK publisher generally attempts a close literal rendering of the text that foreignizes the English language, draws attention to the child's voice, and further underscores the novel's subversive elements, J. Maxwell Brownjohn's 1985 translation for the US market provides an easy-to-read fluency in English, detracts

from the protagonist Momo's agency, and defuses many of the text's political challenges. I will start this chapter with an exploration of the different practices and ethics involved in translation, and in translating texts for children in particular. I will then compare the two translations of *Momo* while focusing especially on their different rendering of the child's voice. While this voice cannot ultimately be silenced in the text because it is woven into the plot itself, this chapter discusses how the child nevertheless speaks differently in translation and how that difference affects the text's politics.

Citizens, Strangers, and Translation Nationalism

In *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle argues for a poetic style that “make[s] the language unfamiliar” instead of relying on established conventions: “To deviate [from prevailing usage],” he writes, “makes language seem more elevated; for people feel the same in regard to *lexis* as they do in regard to strangers compared with citizens” (221). Aristotle's image of language, as taking on the role of either a stranger or a citizen, lends itself to the discussion of foreignizing and domesticating translation practices. Although the foreign text is necessarily a “stranger,” it is the task of the translator to make it accessible to the target audience, and in that process the text can retain some of its strange features or assimilate to the extent that it appears to be a citizen; in other words, the language the translator employs can be “othered,” or it can be naturalized. The translator, bound by her double responsibility to both the source text and the domestic culture, is faced with various ethical choices in determining the degree to which she will rely on foreignizing or domesticating practices of translation; she can either domesticate the foreign text through translation so that it wears the mask of the citizen, or she can keep it recognizable as a stranger who speaks with an accent. This fidelity – freedom continuum, with translations resembling naturalized citizens on the freedom end of the spectrum and those which keep a foreign accent on the fidelity side, has been a central concern for translation studies since the very start: should a translator attempt to render the source text as literally as possible, or is a free translation more effective? How do genre and the intended target audience influence the translator's choices or, in other words, do specific genres and readers call for a more faithful rendering of the text

while a free translation is preferable for others? Which ethical questions does a translator face when deciding on a particular practice of translation?

John Dryden, writing in 1680, distinguishes between three methods, or strategies, available to a translator. Metaphrase is the literal, line-by-line rendering of the original that aims for absolute correspondence or transliteration; paraphrase, or “translation with latitude,” aims at keeping the original’s sense and spirit alive by focusing on context and meaning and making them available to the target audience; and imitation is a strategy of adaptation or mimesis that attempts to represent the original without, however, duplicating it (38). Dryden’s triad can, of course, be mapped onto the fidelity – freedom continuum, with metaphrase being the most “faithful” and imitation the most “free” of these strategies. Friedrich Schleiermacher, in 1813, conceives of translation practices along this continuum as well, arguing that the translator either “leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him” (49). Six years later, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe maps a triad of translation similar to Dryden’s, yet he conceives of the three types of translation as indicative of particular epochs and as progressing towards a “highest” form. The first epoch is characterized by plain-prose, or domesticating, translation, the second one by parodistic translation, such as adaptation or substitution, and in the final and highest epoch, Goethe argues, translation attempts to achieve “perfect identity with the original” (65). This ultimate translation, according to Goethe, “greatly facilitates our understanding of the original,” and he thus advocates a literal and foreignizing rendering of the text (66).

In the 20th century, Eugene Nida and Vladimir Nabokov are among the most extreme in their advocacy for translation practices on opposite ends of the fidelity – freedom spectrum. Nida argues for a translation of dynamic equivalence that attempts to evoke in the target audience a response to the text similar to the source reader’s. “An easy and natural style in translating,” he writes, “is . . . essential to producing in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors” (160). Based on the principle of similar response, a translation of dynamic equivalence attempts to communicate the meaning that a text has for its source audience to the target audience and, as such, it will substitute cultural referents and domesticate the text. This domesticating translation practice strives to bring the text

to the reader and aims for an easy readability to create the illusion that the text could have been written in the target language and grown out of the target culture, so that the translator remains largely invisible. Nabokov, on the other hand, believes that translation is not limited to the transfer of content or meaning but that its main purpose is rather to communicate aesthetics, which he posits as a universal. A firm advocate of verbatim translation, Nabokov argues that if this “absolute accuracy” leads to the suggestion that “the letter has killed the spirit,” then the only possible reason can be that “there must have been something wrong either with the original letter or with the original spirit, and this is not really a translator’s concern” (125). Nabokov consequently prefers a foreignizing translation practice that strives to bring the reader to the text; it largely keeps references to the source culture intact and stretches the target language to accommodate linguistic otherness, reminding its readers that they are indeed reading a translation.

In his essay “Local Contingencies: Translation and National Identities,” Lawrence Venuti complicates the dichotomy of domesticating and foreignizing practices through his analysis of “nationalist translation agendas” (178). Although translation, which contains but can never entirely conceal the otherness of the foreign text, seems to posit an inherent threat to the concept of the nation as a homogeneous unity, it can nonetheless stand in the service of such agendas and foster a manifest desire for increased national unity, reinforce national myths, or enrich the national language through contact with a foreign tongue. While domesticating strategies of translation appear to be particularly suited to the furthering of the nationalist agenda, foreignizing practices, too, can be employed in order to “profit” the nation, as they can evoke in readers a desire for increased national unity and a fear of the foreign.

Venuti maintains, however, that although translations can be employed for the advancement of the nationalist agenda, they can subvert or challenge nationalism as well: “If . . . a foreignizing translation practice can be useful in building a national culture. . . . it can also undermine any concept of nation by challenging cultural canons, disciplinary boundaries, and national values in the translating language” (*Invisibility* 84). Translation negotiates between the foreign and the domestic, and although it is, according to Venuti, necessarily asymmetrical and privileges the latter, this slant towards the domestic can have significant political repercussions in the target culture that can be either conservative, reinforcing hegemonic structures, or

pose a challenge to the status quo. Although a translation has to utilize domestic terms and values in order to make the foreign text accessible to its target audience, a translator can employ an “ethics of difference” and destabilize these terms and values in order to effect change in the target culture (*Scandals* 83).

While Venuti posits that “ethnocentric violence” cannot be avoided in translation because it necessarily privileges the domestic over the foreign, he finds this violence particularly pronounced in domesticating translations (*Invisibility* 17). A foreignizing translation that employs an ethics of difference, on the other hand, matches this unavoidable ethnocentric violence “by a violent disruption of receiving cultural values that challenges forms of domination, whether nationalist or elitist” (*Invisibility* 121). The ethical translator who works with foreignizing practices can thus create a new readability that has the potential to effect change in the target culture. As a translation is produced for a target culture on its own domestic terms (even if those are not dominant but marginal), it cannot actually represent the foreignness of the original as such; rather, “foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the translating language” (*Invisibility* 15). According to Venuti’s definition, then, a foreignizing translation can challenge existing values in the domestic culture. Such a practice of translation, therefore, advances the creation of imagined communities that are heterogeneous and that include accents and marginalized forms of speech, rather than the homogeneous, unified nation that translation nationalism attempts to foster (“Translation” 491).

Venuti’s emphasis on an ethics of difference is complicated when it comes to the translation of children’s literature, a genre in which even the source texts already contain the voice of the child and thus a “foreign” element. By virtue of the construction of childhood in opposition to adulthood, the child’s voice represents, to use Bakhtin’s terms, a “socially alien language” and, by extension, an “alien ideological world” (284; 335). As Bakhtin points out, through the dialogization of socially alien languages that nonetheless are part of the same national language, “[t]here takes place within the novel an ideological translation of another’s language, and an overcoming of its otherness” (365), and this “ideological translation” is particularly pronounced, I believe, in children’s literature. Texts for children contain the child’s voice, which, by entering into a dialogue with the adult’s voice, is

engaged in a discursive struggle for recognition, and the translator of children's literature is thus tasked with rendering this disenfranchised voice, the ideological world it represents, and its disruptive dialogue with the voice of adult domination.

Translating the Child

Children's literature as a genre contains speech from the margins as it includes the voice of the child, and yet a translation of a text for children that speaks with an accent seems problematic: after all, it is one of the characteristic features of children's literature that it employs a rather simple and easy-to-read style that is understandable to a readership lacking the adults' vocabulary. Prolific translator Anthea Bell, who specializes in children's literature and has worked on texts such as Cornelia Funke's *Inkworld* trilogy, maintains that "if you have done your job properly as a translator then readers will not notice that the words on the page are actually your words" (25), and she consequently believes that a translator of children's books should remain invisible. Nida echoes this idea when he points out that a "translation designed for children cannot be the same as one prepared for specialists, nor can a translation for children be the same as one for a newly literate adult," implying that a translator of children's literature should aim for dynamic equivalence, or employ a domesticating practice, while a translator of, say, a Shakespearean play that is primarily studied in academic circles, should opt for formal equivalence, or employ a foreignizing practice (155). The latter part of Nida's statement also highlights the notion that translations for children should differ from those for adults, and that their difference is not tied exclusively, or even predominantly, to the intended reader's new literacy. What is it, then, about children's literature that calls for alternative translation practices, and how do the strategies employed by translators of children's books reflect contemporary constructions of childhood as well as ideas about the functions and purpose of the genre?

As a genre that helps to civilize its young readers, children's literature is often designed to explain and to indoctrinate children into a society's cultural norms. To a certain extent, children's literature therefore translates cultural practices into a language understandable to children, those members of society who have not yet been entirely acculturated. Children's literature thus in and of itself typically

constitutes a form of translation and explication of culture, and particularly of the adult world. In other words, children's books are necessarily foreignizing to their target audience, as they explicate cultural norms and ideologies into which the child has not yet been entirely indoctrinated and consequently perceives as, at least partly, foreign. Paradoxically, therefore, a foreignizing translation of children's literature can fulfill the function that Nida attributes to practices of dynamic equivalence and keep the relationship between the text and its reader intact.

Regardless of whether the cultural referents in a text come from the national context in which the child actually lives or from a foreign context, then, these cultural referents will necessarily appear as foreign to the child reader, and books for children thus fulfill a translating function for their intended audience. This translation work the genre takes on is particularly apparent in those many texts for children that are set in a fantasy world. Both J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*, for example, explore a magical world from the perspective of a young boy who is foreign to this world; consequently, all referents in the fantasy realm, unfamiliar to both the protagonist and the reader, are sufficiently explained within the text itself. Yet the same can be said for children's books that do not employ the magical realm as their setting, because the texts necessarily translate adult-world referents to the child readers, who thus learn about this world that they are not yet part of but are expected to grow into. Texts for children, then, contain in their very structure the translation nationalism Venuti identifies as a component of literary translations from one language into another. In and through the texts, children are defined and contained, and their place in the nation, and especially in relation to adults, is highlighted. Children's literature, moreover, asserts cultural and political homogeneity as it indoctrinates the child into hegemony; at the same time, however, texts for children – like foreignizing translations – can also undermine and challenge existing structures.

As I have suggested above, this inherent translating function in children's literature complicates the translation of these texts from one natural language into another as the translator is faced with specific ethical and political choices. How can the translator achieve the easy readability and fluency that is a hallmark of the genre without creating the illusion of invisibility? What effects are produced when the translation nationalism (which is, as I argue, inherent to texts for children) is

translated into a different national context? How can the translator maintain an ethics of difference when translating for a minoritized audience that is constructed, defined, and contained by the text at hand? These and other questions that arise in the context of the translation of all children's literature are amplified even further in the translation of books for children that have an explicit political message and in which the child's voice can be heard loud and clear.

One primary challenge to hegemony that texts for children can pose lies within the voice of the child. Yet this voice is, of course, not the unadulterated voice of the "real" child but rather an adult writer's representation, and the translator therefore faces a task that is distinct from the work of a translator of adult fiction: because the child is constructed in children's literature as different from the adult, the translation of this other voice and agency represents a particular ethical challenge. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, writing about translation in the postcolonial context, has argued that because alterity cannot be imagined maximally, "we have to turn the Other into something like the Self"; the task is to know the Other in a way that respects the constraint of Otherness, as neither an object nor a mirror of the Self ("Politics" 372). For the ethical translator, then, "translation is the most intimate act of reading" and requires an act of surrender as well as a careful listening to the text ("Politics" 372). Spivak's formulation of the ethics of translation seems applicable to the specific challenges a translator is confronted with when she reads the child's voice; for this voice not to be suppressed in translation, an intimate act of listening is imperative. In other words, when the adult translator encounters the voice of the child, a voice that comes from a space outside of the adult world to which the child is relegated, she needs to resist the impulse to fit it into the adult framework. Instead, the voice's otherness asks the translator to listen so that it can be heard in a different tongue as well.

Venuti emphasizes that the act of translation is complicated because "language is a continuum of dialects, registers, styles, and discourses positioned in a hierarchical arrangement" ("Local" 29-30). This hierarchy of languages is underscored in a global context in which English has become the lingua franca to which all other languages are regarded as subordinate. Translations of literary texts from English into another language, moreover, far outweigh those from other languages into English, and translations of children's literature are no exception. As

Bell puts it, “There is no shortage . . . of good translations of children’s books *from* English. There is definitely a shortage of good translations *into* English” (27; emphasis in original). Compared with translators for children from English, translators of children’s literature into English therefore face additional challenges, and they battle with both the low status of the genre and that of translation: “Literary ghettos do exist: in the English-speaking world children’s books are in one and translation in general is in another, so it is hardly surprising that translations of children’s literature are consigned to the ghetto twice over” (Bell 24). The children’s literature market is dominated by texts originally written in English, as the worldwide success of British books such as J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series (translated into 67 languages), C. S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia* (translated into 41 languages), and Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* (translated into 37 languages) clearly demonstrates. Similar success stories of texts written in a language other than English, such as Swedish author Astrid Lindgren’s *Pippi Longstocking* (translated into over 70 languages), are few and far between.

Even Michael Ende, an internationally renowned author who enjoyed acclaim and popularity especially after the 1979 publication of *The Neverending Story*, which has been translated into 27 languages and adapted into a film, failed to conquer the US market with *Momo*. Translated into more than 30 languages worldwide, the novel has been a critical and commercial success especially in Europe and Japan, yet it constitutes a “lost” book in America: neither Lobb’s nor Brownjohn’s translation is currently available in bookstores in the US, where the book was first published in 1985 but has been out of print since the late ‘80s, and the text remains notoriously difficult to obtain, since both Canadian and UK publishers are legally prohibited from selling Ende’s book to US readers (“Book: Momo”).

Unlike its US counterparts, German children’s books began in the 1970s to employ the fantastic in order to critique the status quo, and the fact that Ende’s fairy-tale novel partook in this development may, at least in part, explain its commercial failure in America. In his study on the evolution of West German texts for children in the late 1960s and ‘70s, Winfried Kaminski highlights “the break with tradition through which a nonconformist young people’s literature developed in the wake of the student protest of 1968” and began to ask “questions without claiming to possess the answers” (172). He emphasizes that these new questions that texts for children

ask are particularly pronounced in books utilizing the realm of the fairy tale or the fantastic: “Because of the alienation that fantastic narration makes possible, it is considered a suitable medium for politicizing young people’s literature and for criticizing recent, capitalist Federal German society” (192). Ende’s *Momo*, according to Kaminski, represents one such fairy-tale novel that “has the concrete intention of criticizing civilization”; by exposing how a consumer society compensates for emptiness and withheld love with the fetishization of inanimate objects, the text effectively “illustrates the alienation of parents and children, and stuns the reader with these object-oriented communication structures” (189). This new trend of employing the fantastic realm in politicized West German children’s literature had as its forerunners the translations of Scandinavian literature such as Astrid Lindgren’s 1954 fairy-tale novel *Mio, My Son* (Kaminski 193). The wide critical acclaim and commercial success that Lindgren’s fairy-tale novels, including also the later *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973), enjoyed in West Germany thus seems to have been a significant contributing factor in shaping the direction German texts for children took in the 1970s.

In the US, on the other hand, explicitly political children’s books were not typically set in the fantastic realm but rather tended towards realism, with Robert Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* (1974) and *I Am the Cheese* (1977) being two prominent examples. Furthermore, such political texts were in the US usually marketed towards an older reader and identified not as children’s but young-adult literature; both of Cormier’s novels are for American teenagers between the ages of twelve and seventeen, whereas *Mio, My Son* and *The Brothers Lionheart* as well as *Momo* are targeted towards eight- to twelve-year-olds in Sweden and Germany. Though reviews of *Momo* were mostly favorable when it initially hit the US market, they also indicated that the novel was different from the reading material American children were accustomed to: “a fantasy unlike anything I can remember reading,” Naomi Lewis wrote, while acclaimed children’s book author and illustrator Natalie Babbit concluded, “Is it a children’s book? Not here in America” (qtd. in “Books: *Momo*”). Since commercially viable translations of children’s literature are, as Riitta Oittinen points out, typically those that will “travel,” meaning translations that appear similar to texts the child reader in the target culture is already familiar with (150), *Momo* might indeed have been too different for its American audience.

Intimate Listening in Translations of *Momo*

Ende's *Momo*, published in Germany in 1973, is among the first texts for children to reflect a changing attitude towards history that has, since the 1970s, been prevalent in German children's literature. While history had previously been regarded as a gold mine of material to be adapted for children in order to convey to them a sense of national belonging as well as an appreciation for the greatness of the German people, in that decade history became understood "as the site of battles in which societal interest groups, rather than nations, are pitted against each other" (Kaminski 184). In his analysis of the study of history in Germany, Arie H. J. Wilschut argues that in the '70s, "historical thinking opens up options for critical thinking about present conditions and thinking about alternatives," based on an "understanding of the changeability and variability of human societies (including contemporary society)" (704). While topics in German history teaching would henceforth demonstrate both "changeability and the power of the status quo" (Wilschut 705), writers of children's literature began at the same time to incorporate this new view of history into their texts. Ende's tale of Momo and the gray gentlemen, for example, is set in "old, old times," but the narrator discloses in the postscript that the story was told to him by a fellow passenger on a train; this passenger, having come to the end of the tale, reveals that, "I have told you everything . . . as if it had already happened. I could also have told you the story as if it were to take place in the future. For me, that doesn't make a big difference" (5; 301; my translation). Rather than imply that Momo's fight against capitalist forces lies in the past, then, Ende's text suggests that this struggle between dominant forces and disenfranchised subjects is an ongoing battle that is not dependent on a particular time and place.

As German texts for children begin to approach history differently, they also tend to reflect more explicitly on political themes and to incorporate models of alternative societies. As Kaminski points out, "a great number of authors since the 1970s have acknowledged the political purposes of their writing [for children]" (174), and for Michael Ende, envisioning utopia and a different kind of society is of particular importance. Though Ende acknowledges the limitations an author faces in bringing about actual change, he has consistently highlighted the important role literature can play in pointing towards utopia: "I can develop ideas and thoughts which might possibly help mankind not to make the same mistakes again and also

help them to create a society of a completely different kind” (qtd. in Hirota). The central concern for Ende is the critique of the capitalist system, which is particularly explicit in *Momo*, and this critique in fact includes communism, or what Ende calls “state capitalism.” In order for a truly democratic society to be realized, he maintains, capitalism in all its forms needs to be overcome; “The main problem [with communism],” Ende asserts, “was that Marx did not actually want to change capitalism but only wanted to hand it over to the state . . . [W]e have never actually experienced a non-capitalist system as such” (qtd. in Hirota). *Momo*, a text which highlights the child’s agency and ideological world, presents Ende’s most outspoken attack on capitalism and, moreover, emphasizes the potential of the child’s voice to interrogate and challenge existing structures.

In the book, sinister gray gentlemen endeavor to steal time from the inhabitants of an unnamed large city somewhere in Italy. Dressed in gray suits with round, stiff gray hats, carrying gray briefcases, driving elegant gray cars, smoking gray cigars and speaking in ash-gray voices, these gentlemen visit each citizen in turn and succeed in convincing their human prey to become more efficient and deposit saved time into their Time-Savings bank. Calling to mind the figure of the wolf in classic tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, the gray gentlemen, whose hunting grounds are not the woods but the big city, often seem to appear as if out of nowhere, stalking the citizens as a pack of indistinguishable gray bodies. Like wolves, the gray gentlemen too threaten to devour their victims because by stealing time, the gray gentlemen ultimately rob people of life itself. As the story unfolds, and as the big city’s adult inhabitants all fall prey to these modern wolves’ convincing methods, believing more and more in capitalist and consumerist values, Momo, the heroine of Ende’s tale, remains immune to the gray gentlemen’s demand of her time. A young orphan, Momo has made her home in an old amphitheater outside the city and has formed close relationships with both the children and adults who live in the vicinity. These neighbors often visit and spend time with Momo, who has an uncanny ability to resolve conflicts merely by listening to both sides, but they disappear one by one as they become absorbed in their time-saving endeavors. Because Momo knows that time needs to be shared rather than saved, she sets out on a quest to free the human time the gray gentlemen are hoarding. With the aid of the turtle Cassiopeia and Master Hora, the keeper of time, she eventually succeeds in her

task and is able to return to her home in the amphitheater, where she is at the tale's end joined by her friends. They are now able to tell stories again, play games, and share time with Momo.

The capitalist ideology the gray gentlemen propagate and that Momo fights is a reflection of the citizens' own ambitions and desires, born from the belief that success and productivity will lead to happiness. It is this dogma of capitalism that Ende ultimately writes against, showing its downfalls and inherent problems while revealing that capitalist ideology stems from our own wish to be more and have more than those around us. The seemingly happy ending of the novel is actually bittersweet and leaves its readers, who do not have Momo, Cassiopeia, and Master Hora to save them, with an aftertaste that ultimately calls for an examination of their own ambitions as well as for resistance against capitalism and consumerism. Ende's novel is explicitly political and, by emphasizing Momo's dissenting voice, it attempts to defy the child's inscription into a society that values the saving over the sharing of time. As such, the text resists the common definition of children's literature as a didactic genre that serves to socialize children into the hegemonic structure, calling instead for a dialogical engagement with the child's voice and ideological world. The translator of Ende's novel thus not only has to work through the linguistic and cultural challenges any act of translation poses, but she has to also engage with the explicit politics of *Momo*. While Lobb's translation emphasizes political nuances in the text, Brownjohn's version erases many of the more directly counterhegemonic tendencies of the novel. The child protagonist's agency and voice, which are central to the disruptive potential of the novel because the representatives of hegemony, the gray gentlemen, fail to contain them, are inscribed in the plot itself and are not entirely muted in either translation, but Brownjohn's rendering significantly muffles Momo.

Momo's first encounter with a gray gentleman represents a turning point in the tale. As the time-thief's guarded façade crumbles in the presence of the little girl, the reader not only recognizes the extent of Momo's potential power to fight against the gray men, but also learns, in no uncertain terms, of the gentlemen's secret plan to turn all humans into fast, efficient, time-producing machines. Spellbound by Momo, the time-thief reveals their agenda to her:

“Wir müssen unerkannt bleiben”, vernahm sie wie von weitem, “niemand darf wissen, dass es uns gibt und was wir tun ... Wir sorgen dafür, dass kein Mensch uns im Gedächtnis behalten kann ... Nur solange wir unerkannt sind, können wir unserem Geschäft nachgehen ... ein mühseliges Geschäft, den Menschen ihre Lebenszeit stunden-, minuten- und sekundenweise abzuzapfen ... denn alle Zeit, die sie einsparen, ist für sie verloren ... Wir reißen sie an uns ... wir speichern sie auf ... wir brauchen sie ... uns hungert danach ... Ah, ihr wisst es nicht, was das ist, eure Zeit! ... Aber wir, wir wissen es und saugen euch aus bis auf die Knochen ... Und wir brauchen mehr ... immer mehr ... denn auch wir werden immer mehr ... immer mehr ... immer mehr ...” (Ende 106)

Lobb translates the passage as follows:

“We must remain unrecognized,” she heard, as if the words came from far away. “No one must know that we exist, no one must discover what we are doing. We take good care to see that no one ever remembers us... for it’s only as long as we go unrecognized that we can carry on our business... It’s a dreary business, stealing people’s time in hours or minutes or seconds... because all the time they save is lost as far as they are concerned... We seize it... we hoard it... we need it... we long for it. Oh, you humans don’t know what time is worth! But *we* know, and we are sucking you dry... and we need more... and more... because there are more of us all the time... more and more...” (86; emphasis in original)

In stark contrast to Lobb’s version, Brownjohn’s translation reads:

“We have to remain unrecognized,” he blurted out. “No one must know of our existence or activities. We make sure no one ever remembers us, because we can only carry on our business if we pass unnoticed. It’s a wearisome business, too, bleeding people of their time by the hour, minute, and second. All the time they save, they lose to us. We drain it off, we hoard it, we thirst for it. Human beings have no conception of the value of their time, but *we* do. We suck them dry, and we need more and more time every day, because there are

more and more of us. More and more and more ...” (80-81; emphasis in original)

The differences between the two translations are striking. Lobb attempts to recreate Ende’s sentences closely in terms of length and punctuation; Ende’s passage and Lobb’s translation are both 133 words long, sentence breaks are similar, and both include a deliberately large number of ellipses: sixteen in Ende, and twelve in Lobb. Brownjohn’s version is shorter (114 words), several sentences that are split up in the source text are joined, and all ellipses except the one ending the paragraph have been replaced by other punctuation marks. While Lobb thus retains the gray gentlemen’s eerie and fragmented way of speaking in this scene, Brownjohn’s time-thief lacks the uncanny lunacy that Ende embeds in the ellipses. In Ende (and Lobb), the style in this brief monologue contrasts with the gentleman’s typically guarded and even robotic statements on the previous pages; in Brownjohn, the style itself does nothing to indicate that he is acting out of character, and his rendition thus lessens the effect that Momo’s careful listening has on the time-thief.

Another crucial difference between Lobb’s and Brownjohn’s renderings of the passage is the translation of the time-thief’s exclamation, “Ah, ihr wisst es nicht, was das ist, eure Zeit!” Lobb’s version reads, “Oh, you humans don’t know what time is worth!” whereas Brownjohn translates, “Human beings have no conception of the value of their time.” In Ende and Lobb, the sentence is a passionate cry, as indicated by both the exclamation (“Ah”; “Oh”) and the exclamation mark; in Brownjohn, the phrase does not stand out from the rest of the monologue as it does in the source text and, moreover, does not even stand alone as a complete sentence but has been joined with the next phrase, “but *we* do.” The source text further highlights this sentence because of the gray gentleman’s shift here from the third person (“sie”) to the second person plural pronoun (“ihr”), a shift that presents a challenge to Lobb and Brownjohn as the English equivalent for this pronoun, “you,” can indicate either the singular or the plural. The time-thief is now speaking to Momo (and, by extension, her fellow townspeople) directly, but the readers, too, might feel themselves included in that shouted “ihr,” which aligns the readers with Momo. Attempting to create a similar effect, Lobb resorts to the address, “you humans”; as the reader could not here infer from the context alone if the gray man were using “you” in its singular or plural form, the added “humans” serves to

indicate that he is speaking not only to Momo but to a multiple “you,” including the novel’s audience. Brownjohn’s sentence – and entire passage – however, remains in the third person and thus does not allow for the possible interpretation that the time-thief’s exclamation is directed also at the reader.

Before the gray gentleman breaks down, he presents Momo with a doll: Bibigirl. Bibigirl, who speaks with a mechanical voice, repeating the same phrases over and over again, looks not like a child or infant but a young, sexily clad woman. She demands that Momo buy her more and more things. As the time-thief explains, that “perfect” doll can be accessorized with an infinite range of products, from clothing to jewelry to make-up – and then there is Bubiboy, of course, Bibigirl’s boyfriend, for whom accessories can be bought as well, and who has another friend, and so forth: “es ist ganz einfach,” the gray gentleman concludes, “man muss nur immer mehr und mehr haben, dann langweilt man sich niemals” (Ende 100).⁶ Bibigirl is, quite obviously, reminiscent of Barbie, the Mattel doll that was launched in 1959 and derived from a 1955 German doll, Bild Lilli. Ende’s naming of the mechanical, sexy toy as “Bibi” echoes, in fact, both names and seems to be a combination of Barbie and Lilli, while the addition of the English-language “girl” in the German text underlines that the Mattel doll represents US American ideals, exported via the toy into all corners of the globe.

Lobb’s translation of the doll’s name is closely modeled on Ende’s: she drops the final “girl” and refers to the toy as “Bibi,” whereas “Bubiboy” turns into “Bubi.” Her rendering thus keeps the echoing of Barbie/Lilli, and her decision to eliminate the added “girl” and “boy” seems appropriate, because these terms would, of course, not sound as foreign and distinctly American in the English text as they do in the German and, therefore, would fail to fulfill their function. Brownjohn, however, calls Bibigirl “Lola” and Bubiboy “Butch,” deviating significantly from Ende’s naming and erasing the clear reference to Barbie. His translation thus eliminates the explicit criticism Ende voices of his surrogate of the Mattel doll, which Momo finds boring and unlovable and which is clearly associated with the time-thieves’ ideology. The underlying resistance to the dissemination of US American values is no longer hinted

⁶ This declaration is rendered similarly in both English-language versions. Brownjohn translates, “it’s quite simple. As long as you go on getting more and more things, you’ll never grow bored” (76-77), and Lobb’s translation reads, “it’s quite simple. All you have to do is to keep getting more and more things, and then you’ll never get bored” (82).

at with the doll's name: in contrast to Bibigirl, Lola could just as easily be a German as an American name. In fact, the English-speaking reader may recognize Lola as the name of Marlene Dietrich's character in the 1930 film *The Blue Angel* and consequently assume that the doll bears a German name, which would further defuse Ende's critique of Barbie as an American doll that represents the export of US consumer capitalism.

As a repercussion of his talk with Momo, the gray gentleman faces judgment in a court presided over by other time-thieves. The judge explains that children are the gray gentlemen's natural enemies and should not be approached directly, and he goes on to point out that, "Kinder lassen sich sehr viel schwerer zum Zeit-Sparen bringen als alle anderen Menschen" (Ende 128). Lobb translates, "It is much harder to persuade children to save time than it is adults" (104), whereas Brownjohn's translation reads, "Adults are far easier to turn into timesavers" (99). The rendering of the child/adult binary that Ende's sentence implies differs in its implications in both translations. Ende does not explicitly construct a binary between children and adults here, or at least his passage does not mention the word adult ("Erwachsener") but rather "all other people" ("alle anderen Menschen"). Children ("Kinder"), moreover, is the subject of this sentence, granting them stylistically the agency that they are given through the content as well: the ability to resist the gray gentlemen. The subject of Lobb's sentence is the impersonal "it," and she highlights the child/adult binary more directly than Ende by contrasting the children's ability to resist with the adults' predisposition of serving as easily persuaded victims. Brownjohn, on the other hand, erases children from the sentence entirely, employing "adults" as the subject instead; although the sentence's meaning thus changes only slightly, the focus shifts away from the children and onto the adults – the adults Ende's sentence only implies. Though this sentence, in all three versions, points to an opposition between children and adults, Ende's text focuses on the child as the subject and agent, Lobb's impersonal construction creates an apparent balance between the two, and Brownjohn's obliterates the child to shift the focus to the role of the adult.

In general, Brownjohn's translation of the novel tends to shorten and combine sentences, producing a fluency that avoids the long constructions found in the source text. This tendency toward simplicity is glaringly apparent in the chapter titles he

chooses, which often do not invoke Ende's titles at all. Many of Ende's twenty-one chapter titles are quite long and often constitute a full sentence: chapter six is entitled, "Die Rechnung ist falsch und geht doch auf"; chapter nine, "Eine gute Versammlung, die nicht stattfindet, und eine schlimme Versammlung, die stattfindet"; and chapter eleven, "Wenn Böse aus dem Schlechten das Beste machen..." Lobb translates these titles closely as, "The Sum Adds up Right but is Wrong," "A Good Conference which Does Not Take Place and an Evil One which Does," and "The Worst Make the Best of a Bad Job." Brownjohn's titles for these chapters, however, read, "The Timesaving Bank," "The Trial," and "The Conference." The titles he chooses for the three chapters are indicative of his translations of the other chapter titles as well as of his translation as a whole, which aims at an easy readability that is characteristic of the genre of children's literature but, in the case of this translation, often keeps Ende's style and even some of the content from shining through. Lobb's foreignizing translation, on the other hand, reproduces the source text much more closely in terms of both style and content, as it plays with and stretches the English language to accommodate the source text.

Occasionally, Lobb's version goes beyond even a close literal rendition of Ende's novel to further foreignize the text, and these departures further heighten its counterhegemonic potential. For example, Master Hora lives in the "Nirgend-Haus" in the "Niemals-Gasse" (147; 145), and while Brownjohn translates these place names verbatim as "Nowhere House" and "Never Lane" (112; 113), Lobb chooses to replace the German terms for "nowhere" and "never" with their Latin rather than English equivalents; in her translation, Master Hora's residence is the "Nusquam House" in "Nunquam Alley" (117; 118). While Lobb moreover opts for an amplification of the girl's disruptive potential, Brownjohn's translation tends to downplay the disarming effect Momo has on the gray gentleman. During Momo's first encounter with a time-thief, the gray man actually has a physical reaction to the child's question, "Hat dich denn niemand lieb?" ("Does nobody love you?"): "Der graue Herr krümmte sich und sank plötzlich ein wenig in sich zusammen," Ende writes (105). "The grey gentleman writhed in pain and seemed suddenly to shrink into himself," Lobb translates, adding "in pain," which is not present in the original, to the description of the gray gentleman's response and thus heightening the effect of Momo's probing question (85). Brownjohn, on the other hand, chooses to minimize

the time-thief's reaction and, therefore, the powerful hold that the child is establishing on him: "The man in gray squirmed a little" is the extent of his rendition (80).

Indeed, Brownjohn's translation consistently defuses Momo's agency, downplays the powerful unsettling effect she has on the gray gentlemen, and often suppresses her voice, even explicitly so as his version renders several of Momo's direct utterances – including the very first time she speaks in the text – as indirect speech or descriptions of gestures, so that her actual words remain unheard. One sentence that illustrates how uncomfortable the time-thieves become in her presence is actually missing completely from Brownjohn's rendition. In the scene, Momo is interrogated about Master Hora's whereabouts, but she remains watchful and responds to the gray gentlemen's requests with questions or not at all, waiting and listening instead. "Momo blieb stumm und wartete ab," the source text reads. "Unter den grauen Herren entstand eine Bewegung, sie schienen unruhig zu werden" (251). Lobb translates the sentences closely as, "Momo remained silent and watchful. There was a movement among the grey gentlemen, who seemed to be growing restive" (199), but Brownjohn's version lacks a translation of the second sentence that points to the growing agitation and impatience of the time-thieves as they are faced with the girl: "Momo said nothing, just waited" (192). As Momo's distinguishing characteristic is her ability to listen, really listen, and thereby to disarm her interlocutors, allowing her to see their true selves, Brownjohn's omission of the sentence is particularly striking.

Momo's remarkable talent for listening is also of particular importance when she returns to the amphitheater after her stay with Master Hora and hears the song of time inside herself. She pays such careful attention to the rather difficult words of the song that she is able not only to repeat them but to grasp their meaning as well: "Momo brauchte nur aufmerksam in sich hineinzulauschen, um diese nachsprechen, ja sogar mitsingen zu können. Von geheimnisvollen und wunderbaren Dingen war da die Rede, aber indem Momo die Worte nachsprach, konnte sie deren Bedeutung verstehen" (188). Lobb's faithful rendition reads, "Momo had only to listen attentively to her heart to be able to repeat them or even to join in the singing. Mysterious and wonderful were the things of which the voices sang; yet when Momo repeated the words she found she could understand their true meaning" (150).

Brownjohn, however, mistranslates the passage and conveys the opposite meaning when he writes that, “Momo had only to listen closely and she could repeat the words – even sing them. They told of strange and wonderful things, but their meaning eluded her as soon as she uttered them” (144). This scene in which Momo listens to the music of time is central to the tale; due to her deep understanding of time, she is now firmly outside the reach of the gray gentlemen, and she consequently also devises a plan to tell everybody the words she has heard so that they would henceforth no longer fall prey to the time-thieves, having recognized what time truly is. Momo’s story in fact ends with her standing in the middle of the amphitheater after having defeated the gray gentlemen, surrounded by her friends and singing the song of time to ensure that the thieves will never be able to steal time again from those who are listening. Brownjohn’s mistranslation, though probably an inadvertent mistake, radically downplays Momo’s development as a character as well as her agency – an agency that largely rests on her ability to listen intimately and attentively.

Brownjohn’s rendition also significantly defuses Momo’s agency at the beginning of the story, when she makes her home in the old amphitheater. She has moved into one of the chambers below the stage, Ende writes, and “[h]ier hatte sie sich häuslich⁷ eingerichtet” (8). Lobb translates the sentence as “it was here that Momo had made herself a home” (11), but Brownjohn’s rendering reads, “this was where Momo had installed herself,” erasing the source text’s reference to the idea of home and, due to the overtones of the word “install,” making Momo’s decidedly non-bureaucratic process of creating her amphitheater home sound like a bureaucratic endeavor. In other words, while Ende’s text, as well as Lobb’s translation, suggests that Momo has on her own fashioned a home for herself, Brownjohn’s version instead indicates that Momo now lives underneath the amphitheater’s stage but that her living situation does not necessarily qualify as a real home. This notion is further highlighted by Brownjohn’s rendition of Ende’s description of Momo’s residence. Ende calls it a “Kammer” and a “Loch” (11; 12), both of which Lobb translates as “vaults” (14); Brownjohn, however, uses the terms

⁷ The German word *Haus* can refer to both “house” and “home,” so *häuslich* here indicates that Momo has turned the chamber into her home, or that it feels homey to her. Similarly, when the people from the surrounding neighborhood inquire where her home is, she repeatedly asserts, “Ich bin hier zu Hause” – I am at home here, or here is my home (9-10).

“dungeon” and “cell” (8). While the source text highlights the poor condition and limited space of the place when referring to it as a hole (“Loch”), Brownjohn adds a different connotation with his choice of words: Momo’s residence becomes here the opposite of a home and is instead turned into a place of imprisonment. In his rendition, in fact, it is only after the friendly adults have refurbished and redecorated Momo’s place that it is worthy of a “housewarming party” (9), suggesting that it now qualifies as a sort of home because the adult characters have begun to help and take care of Momo by turning her prison-like dwellings into a room that a child can live in. Brownjohn’s translation thus contributes to a hegemonic reading of the child’s dependency on adults and defuses Ende’s counterhegemonic impulse of highlighting the child’s agency.

The translators’ treatment of this passage is especially important since home is a central issue in children’s literature as well as scholarship on the genre, as works such as Nodelman’s and Zipes’ analyses of the common Home/Away/Home Again plot pattern demonstrate. Typically, the protagonist’s home at the beginning of a tale for children is characterized by the presence of parental figures who structure and organize the child’s life, containing the child in her place within society. Home is thus the place of family, in which the parents fulfill an educating function, simultaneously nurturing the child, by transmitting cultural values and norms in the socialization process, and containing the child by relegating her to a place outside adulthood where the child’s wildness and disruptive potential is under control. It is, therefore, noteworthy that Momo has created a home on her own, which indicates that she is taking care of herself and that here, the definition of home does not include parental figures. The fact that she has made a home for herself also suggests that even as a child, she possesses significant agency and that she is taking responsibility for herself, rather than being under the wing of parents or authority figures in an orphanage. Her creation of a home that is purely her own thus also blurs the child/adult binary as Momo, who demonstrates remarkable maturity, takes on both roles in caring for herself, by herself. In Brownjohn’s rendition, however, Momo does not possess the same agency or disruptive potential because the place she has chosen to live in becomes a home only after it has been overhauled by the adults who live in the neighborhood, which suggests that parental figures, or adults more generally, are a necessity for the home of a child – and thus Brownjohn’s

translation significantly deviates from the source text not only on the level of word choice and syntax but, in this instance, on the level of plot details as well.

While neither Lobb's nor Brownjohn's translation is, of course, entirely faithful or entirely free, Brownjohn does take more liberties with the text and makes significant changes that impact the work's overall message regarding politics and the figure (and voice) of the child. Lobb's rendition largely keeps the original's challenges to capitalism, foreignizes and bends the English language, and highlights the protagonist's agency. Even as Brownjohn's domesticating rendition defuses some of the novel's political critiques and muffles Momo's voice, however, the child's voice cannot in the end be completely contained.

Containing the Child's Voice

The discrepancies between Lobb's and Brownjohn's renditions of *Momo* illustrate the different approaches translators can take generally, and when working on texts for children specifically. The English-language versions of the novel differ considerably in their emphasis or de-emphasis of Ende's counterhegemonic critique as well as of the child protagonist's agency and voice. Ende represents the figure of the child in the heroine Momo, who is the embodiment of a specific set of characteristics associated with children: she is wild, free, independent, and cannot be contained by the adult framework and hegemony. Both Lobb and Brownjohn then carry Momo across languages, nation-states, and systems of cultural referents to represent the figure of the child in a new context. Lobb's translation largely allows Momo's voice to shine through clearly in this new context, whereas Brownjohn's rendering suppresses Momo's voice by detracting from her ability to listen, her effect on the time-thieves, and her creation of her own home. However, as *Momo* displays a critique of capitalism in fairy-tale form and relies heavily on the child's voice, the content of the text itself, even when made accessible through Brownjohn's domesticating translation, may have proven a stranger too strange for American parents, librarians, and educators, the gatekeepers of children's literature. In the US, Momo's voice, a child's voice that successfully resists indoctrination into hegemony and cannot be contained by it, has largely fallen on deaf ears.

As the child's voice resists incorporation into hegemonic structures in *Momo*, Ende's text moreover illustrates the dialogical rather than didactic tendencies of the

genre. Children's literature is traditionally considered to be a didactic genre that helps to socialize the child reader, but some texts for children have, especially since the 1970s, highlighted instead a dialogical engagement with the child's voice and ideological world. Those texts that aim at the containment of the child's voice, emphasizing the adult's voice and position of power over the child, tend towards the didactic, whereas those texts that contain the child's disenfranchised voice as their content, showing it engaged in a dialogue with adult voices, highlight the dialogic elements of the genre. This dialogue between adult forces and the child's voice is particularly apparent in Lobb's rendering of Ende's *Momo*, as her translation places particular emphasis on the discursive struggle between Momo's ideological world and that of the gray gentlemen. Even Brownjohn's rendering, however, includes the child's disruptive voice as a large part of its content since Momo's voice is woven into the plot itself and thus carried over into the context of the target culture. Her voice is affirmed with particular emphasis when she defeats the gray gentlemen and when she sings the song of time to her friends at the novel's end, and although Brownjohn's version suppresses this voice, it cannot silence it. Though to different degrees, both translations thus contain the disruptive, unsettling potential of the child as their content, and both advocate for a serious, dialogical engagement with the child's voice.

The counterhegemonic potential inherent to the voice of the child manifests itself in children's literature not only as a thematic component, through the texts' mimetic representation of this voice, but also as a rhetorical and stylistic dynamic, as the child's voice engages the adult forces in the texts on the level of discourse. Bakhtin observes that in the novel, which is "a dialogized representation of an ideologically freighted discourse," a specific language "is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance" (333). In children's books, the child's marginalized voice enters into a discursive struggle with the adult's voice as it strives for enfranchisement, and translation engages this discursive operation within the text, as I have noted in this chapter. The dialogism in children's literature, moreover, manifests itself on the rhetorical terrain as the process of "coming to know another's word" (Bakhtin 353), and the counterhegemonic resistance contained in the voice of the child is thus particularly pronounced within this discourse.

CONCLUSION: ADVANCING THE CHILD'S DIALOGICAL
PARTICIPATION RIGHTS

On October 9, 2012, fifteen-year-old Pakistani student and education activist Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head by a masked Taliban gunman as she was riding home on a school bus. The assassination attempt, which sparked international attention and condemnation, was prompted by Yousafzai's vocal opposition to the Taliban's practice of banning girls from attending school. Though the shooting left her severely wounded, Yousafzai has since recovered and returned to school in England on March 19, 2013, reiterating that she "want[s] all girls in the world to have this basic opportunity" (qtd. in Holden). Following her ordeal, Yousafzai has become a symbol of resistance to the Taliban and an internationally renowned figure in the women's as well as child's rights movements, and she has been nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her efforts to promote equal rights.

In her childhood home in the Swat district in Pakistan, Yousafzai was actively engaged in the struggle for child rights, and for girls' education in particular, and she served as the chairperson for the local UNICEF-supported Child Assembly. This Child Assembly, the founder of the Khpal Kor Foundation Muhammad Ali explains, allows children to present "their concerns and [provide] solutions in front of their adult counterparts and other stakeholders" (qtd. in Durrani), and it is thus designed to promote the inclusion of children's viewpoints and opinions on issues that pertain to them. As such, Yousafzai has pointed out, the assembly encourages its participants to "voice their concerns about child-rights issues and present practical solutions to address these concerns" (qtd. in Durrani). The Child Assembly thus implements the child's participation rights put forth in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially her right to freedom of expression, while fostering a productive and meaningful dialogue between children and adults, in which Yousafzai served as a vocal contributor.

Articles 12 to 17 of the CRC declare the child's participation rights and foreground the rights to freedom of expression and thought, the right to communication, and the right to access to information on all matters affecting the child. Though the child's rights to protection and provision form important components of the CRC as well, Clark Butler argues that these serve as the foundation for the basic right to participation, because the child can exercise "the

dialogical right to participation only by way of exercising rights to freedom from fear and freedom from want” (“Children’s Rights” 16). Departing from its predecessor, the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the CRC thus underlines children’s capacity to think and act independently from adults by establishing “the status of children as persons in their own right and . . . children’s right to speak. In so doing, the signatories of the CRC recognize that children think, that they think in a critical manner, and that they have information to convey, experiences to share, and ideas to communicate” (Daniel 84). Yet even though the CRC acknowledges the agency of children and grants children the right to a voice in decisions affecting them, the opportunities for children to participate in public discourse and to make their viewpoints heard outside of the realm of the school and the family remain few and far between, even a quarter of a century after the convention was adopted.

When children are given a voice in public discourse, moreover, a serious engagement with their subject positions is often lacking, so that their participation remains tokenistic rather than productive. Claire Cassidy observes that “[if] children, with their different voices, are consulted and included in debate and dialogue with no further purpose, the exercise has limited value. Indeed, this lack of meaningful opportunities for participation points to the key problem of the role and status of children in society (166). As I have noted in Chapter 1, the figure of the child both illuminates and complicates Giorgio Agamben’s discussion of the biopolitical fracture between the *People* and the *people* due to the child’s temporary status as only a potential citizen without access to the full political rights of the adult. This status of the child accounts for the mostly limited implementation of the child’s participatory rights and for the scarce opportunities children are offered to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and communication. R. Brian Howe, who discusses the CRC’s implementation in Canada, points out that “government action is highly influenced by political pressure. However, in the area of children’s rights, little pressure comes from the chief stakeholders – Canada’s children. They do not vote, they have little money and resources, and they seldom are involved in organizational and lobbying activity” (144-145). Consequently, the child’s exercise of her participation rights in dialogue with adults remains largely limited to the spheres of the school and family, at least until the rights put forth in the CRC have been implemented more thoroughly. The CRC has, however, important implications

for the child's education in the school and the family, as Butler notes, since it suggests a "universal right of all children to education in dialogical skills" ("Children's Rights" 18), thus moving away from a model of education that treats the child as deficient vis-à-vis the adult and that perpetuates the adult's one-sided domination over the child. Rather, an education in dialogical skills foregrounds the child's agency, as it incorporates and engages the child's subject position. Children's literature, I believe, can play a vital role in fostering these dialogical skills.

The CRC, which grew out of a shifting attitude towards children in the 1970s that reflected an augmented recognition of the child's agency, has sparked debate about child's rights education in schools that teaches children about the rights they presently hold while also promoting participatory skills. Marie-France Daniel, who proposes the use of philosophical novels in preschools in order to engage the students' subject positions and encourage dialogue, finds that children's literature "can be interesting, at times" but too often serves a distinctly didactic purpose that can prove counterproductive (76). In order for a children's book to inspire dialogue and allow the child to think independently, she posits that it "must not contain an explicit or even implicit moral toward which the youngsters are directed. Indeed, children's literature too often contains messages relating to 'proper' behaviors. Pupils rapidly detect these messages and adjust their thinking accordingly . . . [T]hinking within an author's perspective is not thinking, since thinking is thinking by oneself" (76). While most works for children are indeed steeped in the values of the status quo, aim at socializing the child into hegemony, and fulfill a didactic function, other children's books represent the child's ideological world and show a dialogue between child and adult voices in the text. These latter books, which tend towards the dialogic end of the didactic—dialogic spectrum, can serve as a valuable addition to a curriculum designed to promote children's participation rights.

As I have discussed throughout this dissertation, novels for children "contain" the counterhegemonic potential of the child: on the one hand, these texts perform the *containment* of the child, as they define and restrict the child as a controlled subject, and, on the other hand, they include the child's subversive presence in the *content* of the text, as they depict the child's ideological world. The space allotted to the child's voice in these novels consequently varies, with texts aiming at the containment of the child providing less, and books engaging the child's worldview offering more space

to the representation of this voice. The former books for children tend towards the didactic end of the didactic—dialogic spectrum, as they work towards the socialization of the child into adult hegemony and posit the child as deficient vis-à-vis the adult, whereas the latter books tend towards the dialogic end of the spectrum, as they represent a dynamic interplay between the child and adult subject positions in the text in which the child assumes a degree of agency. Bakhtin points out that “the novelistic plot serves to represent speaking persons and their ideological worlds. What is realized in the novel is the coming to know one’s own language as it is perceived in someone else’s language, coming to know one’s own belief system in someone else’s system” (365). This social heteroglossia and dialogization of the novel is particularly pronounced in those books for children that employ the child’s voice as a large part of their content and allow it to enter into a meaningful dialogue and discursive engagement with the adult forces in the text.

Texts that represent this discursive struggle of the child’s voice for enfranchisement, I believe, can also serve as dynamic reading and discussion material for children’s education in dialogical skills. Astrid Lindgren’s novels *Pippi Longstocking* (1945) and *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter* (1981), for example, both depict strong female heroines who confront and challenge the adult values they encounter; as I point out in Chapter 2, Pippi interrogates the conventional school system and exposes its absurdities, whereas Ronia, as I discuss in Chapter 4, rebels against her parents’ definition of community and creates a new home on her own terms. Both texts provide a large space for the child protagonists’ voices and ideological worlds, and they can present points of departure for a dialogue with the child reader about the themes these books examine. Moreover, by depicting child characters who defy adult norms and whose worldviews are presented as worthy counterparts to the adult’s, Lindgren’s novels can encourage the child reader’s expression of her own points of view, even if these differ from the opinions of the adults around her.

While books for children, and especially those close to the dialogic pole of the didactic—dialogic spectrum, can thus inform and contribute to children’s education in dialogical skills, this education takes place, of course, in the institutional and ideological realms of the family and the school. Child participants continue to remain largely absent from public and political discourse, due to their

disenfranchised status as “not-yet” adults and hence as “not-yet” full-fledged citizens. Even as the CRC, by emphasizing children’s participation rights, works toward an increased inclusion of children in such discourse, the implementation of the rights put forth by the convention is progressing only slowly. Furthermore, the US remains one of only two countries that have not ratified the CRC, and the opposition to its ratification is strong due to fears that it would curtail parental rights and undermine US sovereignty. The 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney pledged not to sign the convention, asserting his beliefs that “the best safeguard for the well-being and protection of children is the family, and that the primary safeguards for the legal rights of children in America is [sic] the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the states” (qtd. in Hart). President Barack Obama, on the other hand, has expressed his support for the CRC as well as his intention to work towards its ratification, proclaiming in 2008 that he would “review this and other treaties and ensure that the United States resumes its global leadership in Human Rights” (qtd. in Geary), but his administration has yet to initiate the ratification process.

When he nominated Malala Yousafzai for the 2011 International Children’s Peace Prize, Desmond Tutu emphasized that the importance of the prize rests in its facilitation of “a platform for children, who make a valuable contribution to a peaceful world” (qtd. in “Desmond”). The nominated children, he continued, “are very brave since they are fighting for children’s rights . . . Children are the future, but often they are not heard: the Children’s Peace Prize gives a voice to the voiceless” (qtd. in “Desmond”). As proponents of the CRC strive for its US ratification and global implementation, they also strive for the increased acknowledgment and engagement of children’s agency and subject positions. Dialogized novels for children participate in this process, I suggest, not only as they can potentially foster dialogical skills in their child readers, but also as they represent the child’s voice as a discursive dynamic within the text – and in the world – that is struggling for social recognition and enfranchisement.

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