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Is Children's Literature Really Meant for Children? Global Political Commentary in Children's Literature

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By

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Abstract

This thesis explores the way children's literature is a productive form for political commentary. I analyze how the genre of children's literature allows authors the unexpected freedom to express the moral complexity of contemporary political problems. This form provides authors a space to comment upon complicated and sometimes controversial political discourse in a way they might not have the freedom to do otherwise writing explicitly for an adult audience. Amidst the argument that children's literature as a form allows for authors to include political discourse, I also incorporate an examination of the audience of children's literature to demonstrate the complexity of the form and who it is meant for. People often assume that children's literature takes up simple topics and simple approaches to more complex topics, but I demonstrate how three classic works approach global political crises with unexpected complexity and nuance. To accomplish these objectives, I discuss these three primary texts among a collection of secondary scholarship to both add to and generate new conversation surrounding the form of children's literature and its potential purposes. The primary texts I analyze are *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling, published in 1894 and 1895, *The Lion the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, published in 1950, and *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, published in 1962.

Introduction

There is no set-in-stone definition of what children's literature is, but there is a broad assumption that this form of literature is a genre of works produced primarily for the entertainment or instruction of children and young people. But what if children's literature served a purpose entirely different from just being for children? In my thesis I examine the way children's literature is a productive form for political commentary. I argue that the genre of children's literature allows authors the unexpected freedom to express the moral complexity of contemporary political problems. This form provides authors a space to comment upon complicated and sometimes controversial political discourse in a way they might not have the freedom to do otherwise writing explicitly for an adult audience. Amidst my argument that children's literature as a form allows for authors to include political discourse, I also incorporate an examination of the audience of children's literature to demonstrate the complexity of the form and who it is meant for. People often assume that children's literature takes up simple topics and simple approaches to more complex topics, but I demonstrate how three classic works approach global political crises with unexpected complexity and nuance. To accomplish these objectives, I discuss these three primary texts among a collection of secondary scholarship to both add to and generate new conversation surrounding the form of children's literature and its potential purposes. The primary texts I analyze are *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling, published in 1894 and 1895, *The Lion the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, published in 1950, and *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, published in 1962.

When it comes to the audience of children's literature, most people might automatically assume that texts falling under that genre are for the child reader. However, throughout this

thesis I discuss the ways in which children's literature is meant for both the child and adult audiences simultaneously. Children's literature contains different elements that might pertain to a child more, or an adult more, or both the child and the adult together, and I illustrate this idea with specific examples from each primary text. I argue that children's literature is a medium that can be read and enjoyed by both children and adults because it is a form that deals with universal themes, values, and issues that are relevant to readers of all ages such as growing up, adventure, love, and conflict. Such themes can be explored by and are accessible to children and adults in meaningful ways. There is a great deal of critical work concerning the audience of children's literature. Such literature is important to look at in regards to this project because it not only reveals the way children's literature can reach a wider audience than just children, but it also goes hand in hand with the idea that authors use the form of children's literature to discuss complex global political issues.

Ruth B. Bottigheimer seeks to define children's literature in, "An Important System of Its Own: Defining Children's Literature." That children's literature contains both "childist" and"adultist" perspectives is an important element of the genre (Bottigheimer 191). Within *The Jungle Books,* for instance, Kipling uses language such as, "But that is a story meant for adults," pointing to the idea that his work elicits both a child and adult perspective that are dependent on the particular story. Within the discussion of the audience comes another discussion on the types of subjects and disciplines found within any story. This is where political commentary fits into the conversation. While Bottigheimer attempts to define children's literature, Marah Gubar pursues the idea that children's literature is not something that needs a concrete definition. In her work, "On Not Defining Children's Literature," it is argued that the genre of children's literature has so many different elements that go into making it the form that it is, there cannot be just one

definition to explain so many complicated ideas and disciplines (Gubar 209). Gubar is an important critic to look at because she addresses the idea that children's literature contains many different elements to it that make it hard to define. Considering the idea of having such a variety of elements within the genre connects to the question of audience that I examine in each chapter. Such aspects of this form might cater differently to a child versus an adult reader, demonstrating the versatility of the genre in the way that it can simultaneously be meant for each of them at once. For instance, within *A Wrinkle in Time* I argue that the elements of quick lessons and definitions of words or concepts throughout the novel are directed more towards the child reader in an attempt to teach them something. On the other hand, there are also elements of very complicated scientific, mathematical, and philosophical concepts that are more catered to the adult audience who might better understand and comprehend such topics. This is just one example of what makes children's literature difficult to define as Gubar notes, because there are so many different aspects to a story that muddy the idea of who exactly a story is meant for.

Just as Gubar does not define children's literature, in the book, *The Case of Peter Pan, Or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction,* Jacqueline Rose posits that children's fiction is an impossible genre to define because, "it hangs on an impossibility, one which it rarely ventures to speak. This is the impossible relation between adult and child" (Rose 1). Rose challenges the conception that children's literature can be written by an adult because adults cannot truly understand the experience or embodiment of being a child or how to elicit childlike emotion and thoughts throughout a text. As long as the adult is in control of the text supposedly meant for the child reader, there becomes a power gap between the adult and the child, and the writing is automatically geared towards an adult audience because that is who wrote it. She argues that children's literature, such as *Peter Pan,* gives the reader the child, but it does not actually speak

to the child (Rose 1). She looks at children's literature as a repository for child experiences that might otherwise be crushed in the outside world by "cultural decay" (Rose 43). Yet, this skews the way people view childhood and child experiences as they are formed from an adult writer and not the child themself. Thinking of *The Jungle Books* in this regard, Rose would likely argue that because Kipling is writing as an adult, his work automatically cannot apply to the child audience because it was not written by a child. As an adult, Kipling cannot truly understand what it is to be a child, and therefore his child characters such as Mowgli or Kotick do not accurately represent or embody the child reader. So what do Kipling's stories and stories in the genre of children's literature actually represent? An adult's fantasies of childhood? Nostalgia? Children's literature might not have a concrete definition or audience as Gubar and Rose both posit, rather it is more than just being about the child; it depicts the world the child lives in, and that world can include the global conflict occurring at a given time.

With the understanding that children's literature is actually quite a complex form in itself, the article, "Why Study Children's Literature?" by Barbara F. Harrison is useful in looking into why it is important to study the form of children's literature, and the complexity that this form has to offer. Simplicity of language, which might push a text more towards young readers, does not take away from the complexity or any hidden meanings an author has to offer within a story (Harrison 244). For instance, in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* Lewis's language is quite simple and easy to understand. The recommended grade level for this book is grade 4, suggesting that the language would be more straightforward and comprehensible to a younger audience. However, despite the simplicity of the language, Lewis's concepts actually turn out to be quite complex with several different meanings. As I discuss more in detail later in the introduction and in chapter 2, the White Witch is a representation of Satan in a religious sense,

but also a representation of tyrannical dictators during WWII. Though Lewis's language is simple, he still manages to include complicated and mature material. Children's literature is such an important form to study because of authors like Lewis, Kipling, and L'Engle, who foster a development of critical thinking among all readers and offer a cultural understanding of the world around them through depictions of global conflict, for example. A common misconception when it comes to the category of children's literature is that because the word "children's" is present in the title of this genre, texts are therefore catered to a young audience. Many texts categorized as children's literature actually cater to the human experience as a whole, which means something different for every reader, and they are worth investigating for what they teach us about what is happening in the world outside of fiction. (Harrison 243).

I research scholarly work discussing children's literature as a genre to both explain what makes a text "children's literature" as well as why children's literature as a form is so useful for incorporating global human experiences and politics. I enter into conversation with the secondary literature mentioned in this section as well as included in the bibliography, but I mostly build on those foundations to advance an original argument about the way children's literature as a form provides a space for authors to comment freely upon complicated and sophisticated topics such as imperialism, the world wars, and the Cold War specifically. Scholarly research on the way politics are included within children's literature is important to include, and I dive into this idea throughout each of my chapters analyzing the primary texts. Jerry Y. Diakiw's article, "Children's Literature and Global Education: Understanding the Developing World" argues that topics such as politics, religion, and the developing world can be integrated into the genre of children's literature because children as young as elementary school are, "developmentally ready for a global perspective" (Diakiw 296). Diakiw does not go into

great depth on who children's literature is specifically meant for, but rather addresses that, "children's literature can be a powerful medium for understanding the world" (Diakiw 297). No matter who the audience is, authors have the opportunity to provide insight into what is occurring in the world outside of their story. Kipling, Lewis, and L'Engle bring global politics such as imperialism, the World Wars, and the Cold War into conversation with their fictional worlds. I found the article, "Children and War in the Fairy Tale" by Jacques Barchilon to provide helpful insight into the idea of child protagonists and the conflict or battles they face within their fictional words. This text examines the way children's literature can be a, "historical cultural document that has much to tell us about the past and the present" (Barchilon 317). Barchilon's idea can be seen within *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.* For instance, the conflict that the Pevensie children encounter as child protagonists gives subtle details about the world wars. The overarching conflict of the novel resembles that of WWII and the major allies and enemies involved, where the individual combat that Peter engages in resembles the violent, hands on combat style of WWI. In this way, Lewis's fantastical story is telling a historical story itself about the world wars. The ideas put forth from the secondary literature mentioned in this section are important throughout my project as I enter into conversation with these sources as a foundation for my original argument about the way authors might use children's literature as an outlet for past or current historical and political discussion. In each chapter, I build on the literature mentioned in this introduction, as well as included in the bibliography, to advance my claims about political commentary about the era of imperialism, the world wars, and the Cold War, within children's literature, as well as calling into question who the audience of children's literature truly is.

Each of the primary texts I analyze was written and published during times of major global political conflict, and I introduce such political context to demonstrate how these conflicts connect to and correspond to each primary text. While other scholars have considered these texts in their socio-political contexts, my project makes a new contribution as I analyze how this form of writing allows authors to challenge as well as combine ways of seeing the world about complicated issues such as imperialism, the world wars, and the Cold War. For instance, Lewis does this with his allegory that is both religious and political at the same time.

The Primary Texts

The Jungle Books by Rudyard Kipling is a collection of stories revolving mostly around animal characters on some kind of adventure or journey. The first story of *The Jungle Books* I analyze in chapter one is, "Her Majesty's Servant," a story about the working animals of the British and Afghan army. The working animals discuss what they do in battle for their respective armies and how they obey their leaders. I also analyze the stories, "Mowgli's Brothers," "Kaa's Hunting," and "Tiger! Tiger!" which all follow the life of Mowgli, the man cub living among the animals in the Jungle after being taken in by the Wolf Pack. These particular stories within *The Jungle Books* are about Mowgli's experience as a child learning the Law of the Jungle, and facing enemies such as Shere Khan the tiger as well as the Bandar-log, a lawless group of monkeys creating havoc among the Jungle community. I also analyze the story, "The White Seal," which follows the young white seal, Kotick, as he searches for a safe home for his fellow seals who are being killed and skinned by killer islanders. Overall, *The Jungle Books* are a collection of adventure stories where child and animal protagonists face challenges and successes as they navigate their roles among their individual environments.

At the time of publication of Kipling's *The Jungle Book,* British imperialism, or the Age of New imperialism, was underway. Major global powers such as Great Britain were carrying out aggressive expansion policies motivated by economic and political needs created by the Industrial Revolution as well as the desire for national greatness and superiority over "backward societies." Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," might provide the very obvious and expected stance on imperialism coming from the author; however, within *The Jungle Books,* Kipling, who is known as the voice of British imperialism, offers much more complicated depictions of imperialism through characters with hybrid or shifting identities. Mowgli might be read as an imperialist in stories such as "Kaa's Hunting," but also as a representation of Indian people in stories such as "Mowgli's Brothers." Kipling's attitudes towards the different groups represented within *The Jungle Books* demonstrate a level of complexity and confusion because of the way his sentiment is so unclear and constantly changing throughout each different story.

For *The Jungle Books,* drawing on scholarship from authors such as Patrick Brantlinger and John McBratney, I build on the idea that Kipling's shifting character representations throughout each story create unclear sentiment about the era of imperialism. I compare and contrast each of the stories mentioned above and illustrate how some stories seem to offer the expected attitude towards imperialism that Kipling demonstrates in work like, "The White Man's Burden," where others do not at all. By the end of this chapter, the audience will have an understanding of the era of imperialism, and the way Kipling used the child protagonists and his surroundings to portray British Imperialism in unexpected ways. Scholarship from authors such as Brantlinger and H.L. Varley points to the idea that Kipling is a pro-imperialist writer and people might expect him to portray pro-imperialist sentiment in all of his works, but a story like, "The White Seal," in particular, illustrates the complexity of his commentary. Are the killer

islanders a representation of Great Britain and the innocent seals a representation of the people of India and other East Asian territories under the rule of British imperialism? These questions themselves are quite complex and further complicate the idea of audience. They elicit even more intricacy to the topic of the audience because we must ask if these kinds of questions are meant for the child or the adult reader, or who would be able to understand them. With this idea in mind, Lewis and L'Engle follow a similar pattern of complexity within their works.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis revolves around the Pevensie children, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. The Pevensie children were forced to move to the countryside of London during WWII because of the air raids that made living in the city too dangerous. Lucy, the youngest sibling, is the first child to find the Wardrobe that leads her into the world of Narnia where she meets a Faun named Mr. Tumnus who warns Lucy of the danger of the White Witch in the kingdom of Narnia. Edmund finds himself in Narnia next, encountering the White Witch, who feeds him delicious Turkish Delight, and directs him to bring the rest of his siblings back with him next time. Once all the children are in Narnia together, the story follows the Pevensie children on a journey to save Mr. Tumnus from the White Witch, encountering Mr. and Mrs. Beaver on their journey. They learn of Aslan the lion and his ability to turn the White Witch's forever winter into spring. The children learn that they must battle the White Witch and her army alongside Aslan and his army, as well as save Edmund from her clutches. Overall, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is the adventure of the Pevensie children on a quest to save Narnia from the White Witch.

As Kipling comments on imperialism, C.S. Lewis uses the form of children's literature to comment on the World Wars that had just recently occurred in Europe. I examine the way Narnia is not just a fantastical world in this text, but also a representation of Europe going through a

global conflict, specifically WWII. Even though Great Britain emerged victorious in both world wars and Nazi Germany was no longer a global superpower, a new threat to global peace was on the rise during this time. The Soviet Union and the Cold War were emerging following the end of WWII. I argue that Lewis uses both the context of the world wars as well as the emergence of the Cold War in the world of Narnia, specifically through the battles the children and animals partake in against the White Witch and her army, as well as the idea of the "forever winter." I argue that Lewis goes beyond a simple depiction of the world wars through the use of multifaceted characters in the story who often represent more than one political aspect or figure. For instance, the White Witch can be seen as multiple different dictators who stood in power during the World Wars, and Aslan the Lion is representative of Jesus but also the various allied countries that came to aid during the world wars.

Critics such as James Russel and Sylvia Hunt have commented on how Lewis writes about war, but they have not really considered some of the complexity of the imagery. For instance, the White Witch might be thought of as the devil, or an evil in Christian terms, but I discuss how she can also be read as both Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin based on her authoritarian rule and use of violence as a method of control. Such a reading offers a new level of complexity because Hitler and Stalin were on opposite sides during the war, but I argue that the White Witch can still represent both of them simultaneously. Lily Glasner posits that Aslan is widely recognized as an allegorical figure for Jesus, but I build on this idea and argue that he is more than a religious allegory and also a representation of the allied forces that intervened during the World Wars to stop enemy figures such as Hitler and Nazi Germany. Though Stalin and Russia were allies during the world wars, the status of Russia went from ally to enemy during the transition of WWII to the Cold War. The Pevensie children can also be read as a representation

of imperialism because of the way they come from the outside world to save Narnia and all of the people and creatures there.

The last work I analyze is *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, a story about three children, Meg Murry, Calvin O'Keefe, and Charles Wallace, and their journey to save Mr. Murry from the planet of Camazotz and The Dark Thing. The children meet Mrs Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which, who guide them through space travel, or the act of "tessering," as they prepare to go to the planet Camazotz and battle the evil that lies there. Once on Camazotz, the children encounter the brain IT, the evil mastermind behind the planet and The Dark Thing that is slowly spreading across planets in the galaxy. Charles Wallace becomes possessed by IT, and it is up to Meg and Calvin to save Meg's younger brother even after she finds and frees her father from captivity. After several failed attempts at saving Charles Wallace, Meg realizes she is the only one who can save him from IT, and must use her courage to venture back to Camazotz alone to free her brother. Ultimately, Meg saves Charles Wallace through the power of love and all the children make it back to earth with Mr. Murry, reuniting the Murry family once again.

At the time of publication in 1962, the Cold War was continuing to develop, and the threat of communism and the Soviet Union was creating global tension and unease. L'Engle addresses the threat of communism with the incorporation of "The Dark Thing " and the idea of sameness in the world of Camazotz. Yet, while Camazotz might seem like a straightforward representation of the Soviet Union, it also reads as American suburbia, and calls into question what "The Dark Thing" actually represents. The third chapter revolves around the era of the Cold War and the threat of the Soviet Union. Critics such as Marek Oziewicz discuss the way L'Engle's personal Christian values as well as concerns over the misuse of science and technology are present throughout the novel. I build on this idea and argue that through

L'Engle's personal values and concerns she provides a warning against the possibility of nuclear warfare and the way the United States and the Soviet Union have the dangerous capabilities to negatively impact Earth and humankind. Richard Gooding and Anna Quindlen provide insightful commentary about the way Camazotz serves as a representation of communist Soviet Russia but also 1950s American suburbia. I further contribute to this idea by arguing how during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union both encouraged the idea of conformity among their people in different ways, making these two superpowers more similar to each other than different as most people would perceive. I also elaborate more on how similar to the way Camazotz has multiple different readings, The Dark Thing can be read as a representation of the spread of communism as well as the future of American suburbia if conformity persists. *A Wrinkle in Time* takes on a more complex stance than one would expect of a children's novel, which is why the question of audience is such an important element to consider when discussing this novel and this form.

Throughout these chapters, I address how all three primary texts address global political issues and the power dynamics that were occurring amidst such politics, and how each author uses the form of children's literature to take ambiguous and complicated stances on imperialism, the world wars, and the Cold War. For instance, critics such as Gooding and Oziewicz are important to acknowledge when it comes to *A Wrinkle in Time* because they highlight L'Engle's personal religious and political beliefs that influence her ambiguity over what elements such as The Dark Thing and Camazotz represent. The way that authors such as L'Engle, Kipling, and Lewis take complicated and ambiguous stances throughout their work is so important because such stances encourage readers to think critically about the world around them. By presenting complex and ambiguous issues, authors encourage children to engage in deep thinking and

reflection as well as help them navigate the complexities of the world and direct them to form their own opinions, and beliefs, and values. This complexity also speaks to an adult audience as well by the way it can challenge or deepen their preexisting beliefs.

Conclusion

Following the analysis of each work and the consideration of the audience in each chapter, I discuss in a brief conclusion some of the broader implications this project produces. For instance, I consider the way primary texts like the ones I am examining for this project live beyond their moment of publication and take on a modern context. I discuss how during the time of their publication, Kipling, Lewis, and L'Engle were able to express complicated observation and criticism on global politics, and how their contributions produce conversation even in the contemporary world. For instance, L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* produced commentary on the Cold War during its time of publication, with "the Dark Thing" being representative of communism and the Soviet Union. In a more modern context, the "Dark Thing" can be seen as a representation of depression or mental illness. This idea demonstrates the way that the time and context when a text is read can elicit very different meanings from the audience. It is my hope that by the end of this conclusion, my audience will better understand how on a surface level, children's literature is expected to be very straightforward, but there is actually much deeper meaning that every single character and setting within a story elicits. I discuss how such complex and changing character and conceptual representations challenge widely accepted assumptions about each text and offer ambiguous commentary about broader political discourse. I hope that my audience will recognize those deeper meanings to be affiliated with the global politics occurring at the time of publication of each primary text. At the end of the conclusion I come back to the idea of audience and reiterate the idea that children's literature is a form meant for

both the child and adult reader simultaneously. The complexity that authors have the unexpected freedom to exhibit through this form provides benefits to both the child and adult audience, as every reader is exposed to the world around them and important themes such as love, adventure, and conflict.

Chapter One

At the time of publication of Kipling's *The Jungle Books,* British imperialism, or the Age of New imperialism, was underway. Major global powers such as Great Britain were carrying out aggressive expansion policies motivated by economic and political needs created by the Industrial Revolution, as well as the desire for national greatness and superiority over so called "backward societies." Within *The Jungle Books,* Kipling comments on British imperialism as it pertained specifically to the colonization of India. The child protagonist as well as talking animals might provide the idea that *The Jungle Books* is merely a collection of simple stories for the child reader. However, Kipling's stories encompass various allusions to imperialism, blurring the lines on who the audience is and should be, perhaps even suggesting that children may be an appropriate audience for stories that are not simple at all. In the article, "Imperialism and Rudyard Kipling" H.L. Varley argues that Kipling was in fact a political writer. He was more of a journalist than a literary writer because of his early life and upbringing which exposed him to current events and ideas of imperial responsibility (Varley 124). Kipling's childhood and literary past is imperative to discussing the ways in which Kipling commented on politics, as well as who his writing was particularly meant for.

Before diving into the ambiguity and intricacy of such stories, it is necessary to acknowledge Kipling's reputation for imperialist rhetoric. Kipling was one of the most well known advocates of imperialism during his time because of his outward support for the British empire through select literary work. One of his most famous poems, "The White Man's Burden," published in 1899, is a prime example of Kipling's pro-imperialist attitudes.

Despite the complexity of *The Jungle Books,* many people believe that Kipling's stance on imperialism is very clear cut because of "The Wite Man's Burden." For instance, Kipling writes,

> "Take up the White Man's burden –
> Send forth the best ye breed –
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' need;
> To wait in heavy harness
> On fluttered folk and wild –
> Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
> Half devil and half child" (Kipling 1-8).

In the poem's first line, Kipling demonstrates an element of pro-imperialist sentiment when he capitalizes "White Man." Capitalizing the words white and man illustrates that the White Man in this poem is supposed to be superior and powerful over all other men. The word "burden," also holds a lot of weight, meaning that Kipling views imperialism as a responsibility or a job that must be carried out. Within the second line of the poem when Kipling writes, "Send forth the best ye breed," he is implying that the "best" is the white man because that is who will be carrying out this burden he speaks of. Not only does this produce the idea that white men are the better "breed," but also depicts the idea that such a better "breed" has an obligation to devote their breed's education and skills to imperial initiatives. Within the first two lines of the poem, there is a clear idea of racial excellence, and this carries throughout the poem with the repetition of the line, "Take up the White Man's burden." Kipling's pro-imperialist attitudes are quite clear when he characterizes native people as, "...fluttered folk and wild / Your new caught sullen peoples, / Half devil and half child" (Kipling 6-8). Within these lines, Kipling describes the native people as "wild" and "caught," as well as calling them "half devil." Such descriptions of the native peoples explicitly display the fact that they need saving by the white man because they

are so “wild” and uncivilized like a devil or a child. He uses words such as “wild” and “half devil and half child” to describe native peoples in attempts to illustrate that they are in need of the superior white race to come and colonize them, and provide them with the education and skills from this better “breed.” In regard to the idea of superior white beings “saving” their inferior native counterparts, there is an element of justification introduced in, “The White Man’s Burden” and arguably *The Jungle Books* that makes imperialism seem like it is for the benefit of the native people. Unmistakably, “The White Man’s Burden,” is a testament to British imperialism and the idea that white people are so superior to their native counterparts that it is their duty and responsibility to “save” them from their own barbarism.

Within the book, *Taming Cannibals, Race and the Victorians* by Patrick Brantlinger, the chapter, “Kipling’s ‘The White Man’s Burden,’ and its Afterlives,” dives into the way Rudyard Kipling was known as a “great patriot” and “supporter of the British empire” (Brantlinger 202). Brantlinger argues that Kipling believed in “divine mission” for the white race to conquer the world and civilize inferior people and places, which is why he wrote, “The White Man’s Burden” (Brantlinger 203-204). This poem served almost as a letter of advice to the Americans, urging them to follow in the imperialist footsteps of the British and colonize the Philippines (Brantlinger 204). Kipling illustrates the way that the white man, whether he be from Britain or America, has an obligation or a responsibility to save the “inferior” beings of foreign lands. Kipling’s pro stance on imperialism is clear from the, “The White Man’s Burden,” where he endorses the idea of white superiority over native peoples and the role that Britain, and other nations dominated by whiteness, should play in colonizing them. This idea of racial excellence is also prevalent throughout *The Jungle Books,* but it is not the only attitude depicted as it is in, “The White Man’s Burden.” Though his stance on imperialism is undeniable in the poem,

Kipling's other works such as *The Jungle Books* and his 1901 children's novel *Kim* expose conflicting viewpoints on imperialism, making Kipling's true position on this matter unexpectedly ambiguous and up for varied interpretation from the audience.

In discussing Kipling's imperialist commentary within his work, it is important to bring the text *Kim* into conversation. Kim, the protagonist of the story, is an orphaned Irish white child living in India whose darkened skin and immersion in the Indian culture made his white race heritage almost unrecognizable. Having lost his parents, Kim is taken in by a lama who is searching for Enlightenment. Once his true racial identity is exposed, the British seek him out to be a secret agent. This story follows the adventures that Kim encounters and the misrecognition of his racial identity. Tim Christensen argues in, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Misrecognition, Pleasure, and White Identity in Kipling's *Kim,*" that instead of Kim's racial misrecognition being a source of anxiety, he finds it pleasurable and exciting (Christensen 9). In *Kim,* Kipling articulates a performative ideal of identity where Kim is able to perform and experience a duality of racial identities, and yet still enjoy the benefits of whiteness. Racism within this story is embedded in the idea that only a white person could possibly engage in such a process of passing as two different races, while all other ethnic groups in the book are confined to their Indian being (Christensen 10). *Kim* elicits a level of complexity though because of the way that throughout the story, Kipling includes negative and stereotypical portrayals of whiteness. Such negative stereotypes of whiteness evoke a more complicated reading of race in the novel; however, at the end of the day, Kipling still portrays Kim, a white character, as an ideal leader of Indian society. Though Kim has experienced Indian passing and the culture growing up, he is still white, and this fact points to the idea that whiteness is the best option for leadership over India (Christensen 15). Just as Kim enjoys the freedom of a dual identity

throughout *Kim,* Mowgli also takes on multiple different identities that allow him different privileges and pitfalls in his different environments. Though both *Kim* and *The Jungle Books* offer significant complex examinations of imperialism and the relationship between Great Britain and India, throughout this chapter I focus on the imperialist commentary Kipling offers within *The Jungle Books.*

Kipling exhibits very clearly the British sentiment of superiority through the story, "Her Majesty's Servants." In this story, the working animals of the British army and the Afghan army discuss what they do in battle and how they feel about their work, as well as the way they obey orders from the Queen. Don Randall offers insight to Kipling's imperialist sentiment in, "Post-Mutiny Allegories of Empire in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books*." He argues that within this story, Kipling subtly addresses the mutiny of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, which was an Indian insurrection against the British East India Company (Randall 98). Though the insurrection occurred decades before *The Jungle Books* were written, Kipling, born in India in 1865, would have grown up during the time Britain was recovering from the Indian Rebellion of 1857, likely influencing the way he viewed his childhood homeland as well as the country his white race provided him allegiance to. Such childhood experiences reasonably influenced Kipling's writing, as he would have been taught growing up that Britain was the all powerful nation that combated and suppressed the Indian Rebellion for the betterment of society. The British superiority complex comes out in "Her Majesty's Servants" when Kipling writes, "He was receiving a visit from the Amir of Afghanistan — a wild king of a very wild country. The Amir had brought with him for a bodyguard eight hundred men and horses who had never seen a camp or a locomotive before in their lives — savage men and savage horses from somewhere at the back of Central Asia" (Kipling 98). In this passage Kipling uses repetition with words such as "wild," and

"savage," to insinuate that the people from, "somewhere at the back of Central Asia" are barbaric and uncivilized. The use of em dashes in this passage also illustrates the intentionality of Kipling including a sentence to describe how wild and savage the Amir's people are. In this instance, Kipling wants the reader to know that the people and even the animals that come from, "the back of Central Asia," are less than human in comparison to the British. The way Kipling describes the native animals and people in this story serves as a way to restage and reaffirm the idea of British empire and dominance that was weakened following the insurrection (Randall 98).

Such prestige is also prevalent in the very last few lines of this story, which also happen to conclude *The Jungle Books* as a whole. In a conversation between a, "Central Asian chief" and the native officer of the British, Kipling writes,

> 'They obey, as the men do. Mule, horse, elephant, or bullock, he obeys his driver, and the driver his sergeant, and the sergeant his lieutenant, and the lieutenant his captain, and the captain his major, and the major his colonel, and the colonel his brigadier commanding three regiments, and the brigadier the general, who obeys the Viceroy, who is the servant of the Empress. Thus it is done.'
>
> 'Would it were so in Afghanistan!' said the chief, 'for there we obey only our own wills.'
>
> 'And for that reason,' said the native officer, twirling his mustache, 'your Amir whom you do not obey must come here and take orders from our Viceroy' (Kipling 109).

Kipling uses polysyndeton throughout this passage to demonstrate the order and organization of the British army that leads them to success. The constant use of "and" to list each link in the chain of command conveys a message of British perfection and excellence. The inclusion of the officer, "twirling his mustache" is another way Kipling exhibits the British prestige over their

inferior counterparts. The final sentence of this passage, also wrapping up the book, "your Amir whom you do not obey must come here and take orders from our Viceroy," alludes to the idea that Great Britain is superior, and should expand to be in control of "backwards" people and societies with no order to them.

This story captures the idea of superior creatures coming to the rescue of inferior creatures. The people in the story are painted in such a light that portrays them as less capable and accomplished compared to the British, and that they would benefit from the white savior. There is an element of justification within this story, just as there is in, "The White Man's Burden," where Kipling insinuates that Indian people *need* British leadership in order to be civilized rather than backwards and barbaric. Though Kipling does not address Mutiny and the Indian Rebellion of 1857 in direct language, the way he asserts Britain's power and supremacy might point to the idea that he was playing a part in upholding the British narrative of excellence following a temporary state of weakness after the insurrection whose effects persisted throughout Kipling's childhood years in India (Randall 100). Kipling hammers down the idea that because Britain is so powerful and superior to the Indian people and army, exhibited in the close reading above, the potential for another rebellion or insurrection from the Indian people is virtually impossible. Despite the indisputable pro-imperialist attitude Kipling exhibits in "The White Man's Burden," and "Her Majesty's Servants," Kipling displays a more complicated attitude towards imperialism throughout his other stories within *The Jungle Books.*

The first story of *The Jungle Books,* "Mowgli's Brothers," revolves around the introduction of Mowgli, a human, to the Wolf pack and to the Jungle. Kipling uses this story as a way to provide insight to the Law of the Jungle that Mowgli must learn as an outsider, as well as the way he is both accepted by some animals and rejected by others. For instance, Mother and

Father Wolf adopt Mowgli as their own, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther take on mentor roles for the child, and Shere Khan the tiger is portrayed as the enemy. In the first story of his book, Kipling demonstrates a realm of complexity by the way there is not a clear understanding of who or what each character in the stories represents. For instance, Kipling writes about the Law of the Jungle that forbids the animals from eating or killing man, "The real reason for this is that man-killing means, sooner or later, the arrival of white men on elephants, with guns, and hundreds of brown men with gongs and rockets and torches. Then everybody in the Jungle suffers" (Kipling 7). In this instance, Kipling portrays humans, both white men and those of East Asian or Indian descent, in a negative light. Kipling uses polysyndeton to illustrate and list the danger that humans would bring upon the Jungle by saying, "...and hundreds of brown men with gongs and rockets and torches." The use of "and" in this instance exhibits the man-made weaponry humans might bring to the Jungle if they are threatened by the animals there. On one level, it seems as though there is a clear human versus beast dynamic in this story where humans are dangerous and destructive towards animals. However, the white versus brown man dynamic illustrates how human society in itself is very complex, and there are differences between the people who the Jungle animals are cautious of.

Though Kipling's stance on imperialism is rather unclear in discussing human beings, his depictions of Mowgli, an Indian boy, subtly indicate the way many Indian people were viewed during the time of imperialism: "...and at first Mowgli would cling like the sloth, but afterward he would fling himself through the branches almost as boldly as the gray ape" (Kipling 11). The use of similes in this instance to describe Mowgli as a sloth and an ape points to the idea that Indian people were viewed as jungle animals. In the article, "Imperial Subjects, Imperial Space in Kipling's 'Jungle Book,'" John McBratney further demonstrates this complexity by discussing

the way Mowgli portrays an ambiguous identity throughout his time in the Jungle. His true identity of human or beast is unknown because of the way Kipling balances both of these characteristics throughout the story (McBratney 285). Kipling's depiction of Mowgli's ability to fit into the Jungle with such ease in this story and others further illustrates the perception of Indian people as animals or beasts.

Kipling's depiction of Mowgli and the Jungle point to the British idea that the people of India are animal or beast-like. Towards the end of the chronological order of the Mowgli stories, in particular in the story "In the Rukh," Mowgli wants to become a servant of the British Raj, but he refuses to let go of his ties to the Jungle (McBratney 288). McBratney illustrates how Mowgli, an Indian boy, is torn between his Jungle identity and his human identity conflicted by British imperialism and the expectation that he submit to the British Raj. Within the Mowgli storyline, Kipling depicts that it is possible for Mowgli to maintain and balance his jungle and human identities, raising questions around who Mowgli the human represents, and who Mowgli the Jungle boy represents. Mowgli can be read as a representation of the Indian people when Kipling compares him to beasts or animals, as well as when Kipling puts him in the position of a servant to the Raj.

Mowgli might also be read as a representation of the British when he acts superior to his animal and human counterparts, just as the British would carry themselves in comparison to the Indian people or any other foreign land. Mowgli demonstrates his superiority to the Jungle animals by using his hands to remove thorns from their paws. He is also the only creature who can interact with fire, and he takes power in this knowing that the animals in the Jungle fear fire or "Red Flower" as it is known to them. Mowgli also takes on a position of superiority by the way he stares into the eyes of the Jungle animals knowing they cannot hold his gaze. Even being

immersed in the Jungle himself, Mowgli still acts in ways that are similar to the British imperialists by the way he is aware of his dominance over the Jungle animals and portrays such superiority in different ways.

Kipling further muddies the water in regards to imperialism in the chapters, “Kaa’s Hunting” where the theme of imperialism is still very present, but the perception of Mowgli is still ambiguous. In “Kaa’s Hunting,” Mowgli is kidnapped by the Bandar-log, a group of Monkeys in the Jungle considered uncivilized and barbaric by all other creatures, much as Indian people were viewed by the British. In this case, the Bandar-log might serve as a representation of Indian people instead of the initial perception that Mowgli did. The story follows Baloo, Bagheera, and Kaa the python on their journey to rescue Mowgli. Baloo describes the Banderlog as, “...the people without a law—the eaters of everything” (Kipling 23). Baloo goes on to say,

> They have no law. They are outcasts. They have no speech of their own, but use the stolen words which they overhear when they listen, and peep, and wait up above in the branches. Their way is not our way. They are without leaders. They have no remembrance. They boast and chatter and pretend that they are a great people about to do great affairs in the jungle, but the falling of a nut turns their minds to laughter and all is forgotten (Kipling 24).

The way Baloo depicts the Banderlog replicates the way the British perceived the people of India, and his description might also serve as a justification for expansion and imperialism over East Asian territories and people. Kipling uses anaphora and the repetition of the word “they” at the beginning of each sentence to instill an “us versus them” mentality, as well as a way to separate the Bandar-log from the rest of the Jungle people. Kipling also uses short sentences such as “They have no law,” “They are outcasts,” and “They are without leaders,” to plainly list out

some of the negative attributes of the Bandar-log, which also happen to be the perceived attributes of Indian people. Much like the Bandar-log, the people of India were seen as backwards, uncivilized and in need of colonization from the British empire. But if the Bandar-log embody India in this story, who then are Mowgli and the Jungle People in regards to imperialism? Who represents the British empire? The way that the Bandar-log needed Mowgli to teach them skills such as fire making and building shelters, raises the notion that Mowgli in this instance embodies the British and their initiatives of colonizing the "backwards" Indian people, or the Bandar-log. It seems as though the roles of the Empire and the colonized change within each of Kipling's stories, creating uncertainty about what kind of political commentary Kipling is truly trying to depict.

Randall posits that Mowgli serves as an imperial proxy and a protagonist who represents the British imperial mission when there is an absence of an obvious British colonizer (Randall 101). Randall's argument can be both supported and countered by Kipling's writing, which is why his intentions are still so unclear. For instance, as discussed in the previous paragraph, Mowgli might represent the British imperial mission as Randall proposes, as he attempts to essentially colonize the Bandar-log. Jane Hotchkiss's article "The Jungle of Eden: Kipling Wolf Boys, and the Colonial Imagination," adds onto the ideas put forth by Randall. Hotchkiss considers how with many characters in Kipling's stories, particularly Mowgli, there is an idea of the self and the other. In the case of Mowgli, there is a struggle between himself as a 'wild child' and the colonial other (Hotchkiss 436). With these two competing identities, Kipling blurs the once defined border between the civilized and barbarians (Hotchkiss 437). In the article, "Kipling's Jungle Eden" James Harrison explores how within *The Jungle Books,* the Bandar-log consider themselves to be free above all because they do not have laws or rules. But this freedom

and lack of order is the very reason they are considered outcasts and excluded from Jungle Society (Harrison 157). Again, adding onto the work of Randall and Hotchkiss, Harrison examines the way that the Jungle People are seen as civilized whereas the Bandar-log are seen as barbarians. This idea contributes to the lack of clarity throughout *The Jungle Books* as a whole then who each group really represents in terms of imperialism and the relationship between Great Britain and India. The ambiguity Kipling offers within the form of children's literature demonstrates the way that Kipling as an author might not be the imperialism advocate that many believed him to be during his time due to stories such as, "Her Majesty's Servant," and other works such as, "The White Man's Burden." Kipling further perpetuates a complex reading of imperialism throughout, "Tiger! Tiger!" where Mowgli's identity is yet again torn between being a representation of the Indian people and also the British.

The story, "Tiger! Tiger!" follows Mowgli's reintegration into the human village. Mowgli is taken in as the long-lost son of Messua and is forced to carry out human tasks such as herding the village's buffalos. Yet during his time with the village, Mowgli receives visits from his brother wolf and Akela, who warn him of Shere Khan's intention to kill Mowgli. At the end of the story following the death of Shere Khan, Mowgli is outcast from the human village and returns to the Jungle to hunt with the wolves. Again within the Mowgli plotline, Kipling's imperialist sentiment is uncertain. Where Mowgli was a representation of the Indian people in the story, "Mowgli's Brothers," but then a potential representation of the British in "Kaa's Hunting," "Tiger! Tiger!" seems to again put Mowgli in the position of the British, rather than the Indian people. For instance, Kipling writes, "The priest came to the gate, and with him at least a hundred people, who stared and talked and shouted at Mowgli. / 'They have no manners, these Men Folk,' said Mowgli to himself. 'Only the gray ape would behave as they do." So he

threw back his long hair and frowned at the crowd" (Kipling 40). Kipling's use of polysyndeton in this passage when he writes, "who stared and talked and shouted," emphasizes the ways Mowgli believes the humans are being barbaric, pointing to the idea that in this instance and story as a whole, Mowgli is the civilized and well-mannered character, despite his ties to the Jungle. Kipling also provides the idea that the Indian people are "barbarous" in this story when he writes, "Only the gray ape would behave as they do." As he once compared Mowgli to the gray ape in, "Mowgli's Brothers," he now portrays the Indian people as animalistic, inferring that they are unrefined and crude. Mowgli's disapproval and slight superiority complex towards the Indian people demonstrates that Kipling, as Randall posits, was using Mowgli as a proxy for imperial representation when there is a lack of a colonial power in the story. However, this idea can be quite perplexing, as Mowgli himself is an Indian boy, just like the people in the village that he criticizes and feels superior to.

Looking at *The Jungle Books,* Kipling exhibits ambiguous sentiment towards imperialism through his constantly shifting representations of characters and concepts within each story. Where Mowgli might perform as the British empire affirming Kipling's pro-imperialist attitudes in stories like, "Kaa's Hunting" and "Tiger! Tiger!," he might also serve as a representation of the Indian people in these same stories, as well as, "Mowgli's Brothers." Not only do these shifting representations create a sense of the complexity surrounding the political commentary, but they also illustrate the way that Kipling might not hold such straightforward views about British colonization of Indian people. The idea that Kipling is a multidimensional writer and thinker when it comes to the issue of imperialism can be further seen by the way his writing elicits questions revolving around sympathy as well as violence. Throughout *The Jungle Books,* from cues provided by Kipling within the stories, the reader can admire and sympathize with

Mowgli because of the way he is such a complex character with multiple identities depending on his circumstances. It is also interesting to look at Mowgli in comparison to Kim. Kim enjoys the freedom of a shifting identity because of his whiteness, but Mowgli does not share this same racial identity. Perhaps it is those who occupy the space of a child who have the freedom of shifting identities, as they do not face the same pressures or expectations as adults do to conform to a certain role. The roles of Mowgli and Kim might actually be a lot more personal to Kipling based on his own childhood experiences. Kipling spent his early years living in India before being sent to England by his parents (McBratney 279). Kipling's experiences in India and England were extremely different, and just like Mowgli and Kim, Kipling's own identity shifted throughout his childhood, which heavily influenced his own conception about cultural identity in an imperial world (McBratney 279). Kipling illustrates the fluidity of a child that he himself experienced, through Mowgli, making his successes and challenges more admirable and relatable to the reader.

Just as the Mowgli stories blur the lines of imperialist or Indian representation, "The White Seal," another story a part of *The Jungle Books,* provokes similar confusion when it comes to deciphering who embodies what in the story. Within the story "The White Seal," Kotick, a rare white seal, who is also the protagonist, witnesses fellow seals being skinned and killed by islanders. Because of this, he finds a safe place for the seals after many years of searching and returns back home to persuade them to follow him to a place without human intervention and disturbance. The relationship between the seals and the islanders in this story resembles that of the British and Indian people during the time of imperialism. It is also important to consider the blatant violence depicted in the story, raising potential concerns about the measures taken by the British to colonize the Indian people during the time of imperialism. Kipling writes, "Ten

minutes later little Kotick did not recognize his friends anymore, for their skins were ripped off from the nose to the hind flippers, whipped off and thrown down on the ground in a pile. That was enough for Kotick. He turned and galloped (a seal can gallop very swiftly for a short time) back to the sea; his little new mustache bristling with horror" (Kipling 61). Kipling uses descriptive language and words and phrases such as "ripped off," "whipped off," and "thrown down," and "horror" to convey the violence of the Islanders. Questions arise surrounding the way the relationship between the humans and the seals mimic British imperialism. Are the killer islanders a representation of Great Britain and the innocent seals a representation of the people of India and other East Asian territories under the rule of British imperialism? Or on the other hand, do the killer islanders represent the Indian people during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, and the innocent seals represent the many British people fleeing for their lives during the insurrection? If the seals represent the Indians and the killer islanders represent the British, then a level of sympathy for the Indians would be revealed that is not always outwardly evident in Kipling's writing; however if the seals represent the British people and the islanders represent the Indians, then a level of sympathy for the British would be provoked, reaffirming the idea that Kipling is pro-Britain and pro imperialism. Is the level of sympathy for the acts of violence committed against the seals at the hands of the Islanders a subtle way that Kipling criticizes how the British forcefully and violently took over India and the people there? Or does Kipling use this story as a potential justification for imperialism by illustrating how the Indian People also committed violent and barbaric acts against the British? Imperialism was an extremely violent and deadly experience for those being colonized, and this idea is not something that is portrayed in pro imperialist literature like, "The White Man's Burden." But Kipling does include such violence

within *The Jungle Books,* which raises questions about what violence he is portraying and who the audience should feel sympathetic towards.

Again referring to Kipling's work, "The White Man's Burden," the adult audience might expect him to portray pro-imperialist sentiment in all of his works, but this particular story in *The Jungle Book* illustrates the complexity of his commentary. Reading this story with an anti-imperialist lens illustrates that much as the British were expanding for political and economic reasons, the Islanders were skinning and killing seals for economic gain, demonstrating the connection between this story, presumably for children, and the global political context at the time of Kipling's writing. Issues of representation play a role within this story as they do in, "Kaa's Hunting," "Mowgli's Brothers," and "Tiger! Tiger!" because of the way sympathy towards a single character or group may be different depending on the interpretation. In "The White Seal," it is unclear exactly who the innocent seals represent and who the killer islanders represent. Writing the seals as victims of violence demonstrates a surprising level of sympathy for the Indian people from Kipling because it strays so much from his outward pro imperialist attitudes. On the other hand, however, if the innocent seals are perceived as the British and the killer islanders are seen as the Indian people during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, sympathies might lie with the British empire. The inclusion of violence and death in *The Jungle Books* does not just raise questions about sympathy, but its inclusion also paves way to a discussion about audience. Kipling uses the form of children's literature to break down global politics into digestible concepts such as good and evil, but his incorporation of more mature topics raises questions about who his stories are really meant for. It also raises the idea that children's literature might not have just one explicit intended audience. Rather the form allows for both

children and adults to relate to, understand, and take away important lessons from the stories they are reading.

Children's literature does not have to have a definitive audience as many critics would argue. There does not have to be a position where a text is exclusively for the child or exclusively for the adult reader. Rather, children's literature as a form can be for both the child and adult audience. Some critics, who are discussed below, would argue that simple topics are meant for the child audience and complicated topics are meant for the adult audience. But the form of children's literature itself is much more complicated than this assertion, and I argue that every topic included in children's literature can apply to both a child and adult audience simultaneously. With the understanding that children's literature is actually quite a complex form in itself, the article, "Why Study Children's Literature?" by Barbara F. Harrison, is useful in looking into why there might not necessarily be a simple answer to the question of who children's literature is meant for. Simplicity of language, which might push a text more towards young readers, does not take away from the complexity or any hidden meanings an author has to offer within a story (Harrison 244). A common idea when it comes to the genre of children's literature is that a text is explicitly meant for the child reader because the word "children's" is present in the title of the form. In reality, many texts categorized as children's literature actually resonate with people of all ages and experiences (Harrison 243).

As mentioned in the introduction, Ruth B. Bottigheimer actively seeks to define children's literature in, "An Important System of Its Own: Defining Children's Literature." Within children's literature there are both "childist" or "adultist" perspectives. With the "adultist perspective" in mind, in *The Jungle Books,* Kipling uses the phrase, "But that is a story meant for grown-ups," (Kipling 52), at the end of the story, "Tiger! Tiger!" Prior to alluding to this, "story

meant for grown-ups," Kipling was discussing Mowgli growing up to become, "a man and married," pointing to the idea that adult experiences such as becoming a "man" and getting married are not meant for the child reader, rather they are topics only relevant to an adult audience or perspective. This might also imply that simply because Mowgli, and other characters such as Kotik the white seal, occupy the space of a child throughout *The Jungle Books,* such stories are meant to be read by children.

The mere premise of the child protagonist and talking animals might suggest that *The Jungle Books* are meant for children. In the article, "Children's Literature, Issues of Definition: The 'Why?' and 'Why Not?' of Criticism," Sebastian Chapleau argues that fantasy and animal stories occupy a large space in the definition of children's literature (Chapleau 11). The way that reality and fantasy become intertwined is a determining factor of children's literature because of the way these elements are supposed to represent or associate with the essence of childhood. For instance, when talking animals happily coexist or go through certain adversity together in a story meant for the child, it is believed that such innocent coexistence and relationships embrace the characteristics of childhood (Chapleau 14). Animals are looked at as being so suitable for children because of the way they are introduced into the lives of children at such an early age for the purpose of familiarizing them with nature and the world in general. Including animals in children's literature serves as an educational tool that teaches children about such animals and their roles in nature. This inclusion also creates memorable protagonists and lessons that can be applicable to humans. In terms of *The Jungle Books,* Kipling includes an existence of animals who do not in fact coexist harmoniously in the Jungle; rather the animals in *The Jungle Books* often fight and carry out acts of violence against each other in competition for resources like food, water, and power. However, the jungle animals introduced such as Baloo the bear,

Bagheera the panther, Kaa the python, as well as Kotik and the other seals, do face similar successes and challenges together in the Jungle. These successes and challenges are those that human beings might face with each other, serving as a way to teach children about how to react and behave in certain situations they might find themselves in. For instance, a child might learn how to follow directions and obey rules from authority figures, just as Mowgli does with Baloo and Bagheera, even during times when they may not want to be obedient. Such lessons do not only have to be applicable to children though, as adult readers might also take note of some of the lessons the animal characters produce. With the incorporation of animals in unity with one another, the introduction of adversity or enemy characters is also an important element of children's literature that Chapleau touches on. Figures such as Shere Khan the tiger, the Bandar-log and the killer islanders prove to be threats to the harmonious world of the other animals in *The Jungle Books,* and serve as the source of evil or adversity that Chapleau asserts is a critical element of the form.

Bottigheimer also discusses the way that factors such as plot, vocabulary and instruction or lessons have all been recognized as main elements of children's literature (Bottigheimer 201). Within the story, "The White Seal," Kipling incorporates subtle factual information about seals, as if he were teaching his audience a lesson. In the middle of a passage enclosed by parentheses, Kipling writes, "a seal can gallop very swiftly for a short time" (Kipling 61). This short sentence within parentheses serves as an interruption to the broader sentence to provide the audience with factual information about seals. This interjection comes up in the middle of a very violent scene, thus diffusing the fear the scene might cause the reader. Incorporating even just a small lesson in the story makes it more believable that children are the intended audience.

But among the "adversity" and evil that Kipling incorporates, violence becomes a prevalent feature in many of his stories, raising the question of whether or not such mature and violent topics are really meant for the child reader. In the article, "Violence and Deception in Children's Literature," Glenn McCracken portrays different relationships of violence that can be found in children's literature. For instance, there are stories where man is cruel to animal, man is cruel to man, animal is cruel to animal, and animal is cruel to man (McCracken 423). Each of these circumstances can be found within Kipling's stories in *The Jungle Books.* For instance, man is cruel to animals when the islanders kill and skin the innocent seals in, "The White Seal." Man is cruel to man when Mowgli threatens the village people with his wolf brothers in, "Tiger! Tiger!" Animals are cruel to animals in many of Kipling's stories, but specifically when the Bandar-log engage in combat with Baloo, Bagheera and Kaa. Lastly, animals are cruel to man when the Bardar-log kidnap and abuse Mowgli for their own entertainment in "Kaa's Hunting," or when Shere Khan attempts to kill Mowgli at the very beginning of the story. The violence found in *The Jungle Books* might make people argue that such stories are not meant for children, as they might negatively impact the child's innocence by portraying scenarios that might be scary or disturbing. For instance, in "The White Seal" the image of the "killer" islanders killing and skinning helpless seals invokes an upsetting reaction from the reader, something that people might argue children should not be exposed to at a young age. In terms of the broader idea surrounding the global conflict occurring during the time of imperialism, people might argue that any conversation regarding such conflict and the violence that came along with it should not be discussed or alluded to in literature meant for children.

Despite there being an abundance of examples of violence in *The Jungle Books*, children might not be impacted or upset by what they are reading because at the end of the day, they

know it is a made-up story (McCracken 423). To back this claim McCracken references evidence from a 1969 study done on elementary school children where their reactions were taken into consideration after reading different fictional stories with violence incorporated into them. The study found that children recognized the violence within the story but they were not worried or fearful knowing the nature of the story was fictional (McCracken 423-424). McCracken demonstrates the way that more developed topics such as violence and global conflict such as imperialism that might seem too mature for children might actually not matter as much as some would argue. Rather, literature with such concepts can appeal to both the child and the adult reader.

Kipling also includes broader lessons such as discipline and obedience that children might be taught during their early years that might make *The Jungle Books* seem as if they pertain more towards the child audience. He does this specifically through the relationship between Mowgli and his mentor figures, Baloo and Bagheera. For instance, in "Kaa's Hunting," Kipling provides an insightful lesson about what happens when a child causes trouble. Kipling writes, "Baloo did not wish to bring Mowgli into any more trouble, but he could not tamper with the Law, so he mumbled: 'Sorrow never stays punishment. But remember Bagheera he is very little.' / 'I will remember. But he has done mischief, and blows must be dealt now. Mowgli hast thou anything to say?'" (Kipling 38). Within this passage, Kipling portrays the adult perspective coming from Baloo and Bagheera about how to handle the mischievous child. Mowgli responds to his adult mentors by saying, "'Nothing, I did wrong. Baloo and thou are wounded. It is just'" (Kipling 38). It might seem at first glance that Kipling is incorporating a classic tale of a child paying the consequences of their actions, teaching children to recognize their wrongs and do what is necessary to correct them. However, with the idea of audience in question, it is also

important to look at this specific passage through the lens that Kipling was also writing for the adult audience. He provides a scenario where the adult or mentor figures of a child must clean up the mess of the child and determine a way to teach him not to do that again. As much as the adult might not want to punish the child, Kipling insinuates through this story that it is necessary, potentially providing the adult reader with a lesson and a particular way to deal with children. Even though there are lessons incorporated throughout the stories, these lessons might also be geared towards the adult audience, demonstrating the idea that the topics found in children's literature do not need to pertain exclusively to the child reader. Such lessons, whether factual or moral, are applicable to both the child and the adult reader.

Is it possible that there is simply no intended audience for children's literature? Can factors such as plot and topic, or the incorporation of lessons alone determine whether a text is meant for a child and encompasses the child experience? Marah Gubar claims that children's literature is not something that needs a concrete definition. In the article, "On Not Defining Children's Literature," Gubar argues that the genre of children's literature has so many different elements that go into making it the form that it is, there cannot be just one definition to explain so many complicated ideas and concepts (Gubar 209). Gubar compares children's literature to children's theater, arguing they are forms with similar characteristics and the same problem of difficulty to define. She argues that she has not discovered a single characteristic of children's plays that could decisively differentiate them from adult dramas (Gubar 214). With this idea in mind, Gubar demonstrates the way that similarly to theater and plays, literature meant for either children or adults might not have many or any characteristics at all that make them two different forms. In other words, children's literature, and even adult literature, do not necessarily need to have a definitive audience, as they both have the capability of eliciting similar themes and

lessons. Gubar posits that trying to define the elements and the audience of children's literature would produce no value as there are so many possible different complex definitions that could prevail (Gubar 214).

What a lot of people neglect to consider about children's literature and the way authors like Rudyard Kipling often include complex "adult" topics such as political commentary, violence and other mature topics, is that children might actually be ready and receptive to such topics, despite their age. Jerry Y. Diakiw's article, "Children's Literature and Global Education: Understanding the Developing World" argues that topics such as politics, religion, and the developing world can be integrated into the genre of children's literature because children as young as elementary school are, "developmentally ready for a global perspective" (Diakiw 296). Children are often underestimated in their ability to comprehend complex "adult" topics when in reality, many authors of children's literature recognize the way children are capable of understanding complexity, sometimes even more so than the adult reader. Diakiw also posits that "children's literature can be a powerful medium for understanding the world," (Diakiw 296), demonstrating the way that the inclusion of complicated topics that might initially seem like they cater to adults, actually serve as an important tool contributing to the development of the child mind. The idea that children's literature can be a medium for "understanding the world" is an important assertion pertaining to *The Jungle Books,* as it brings in the possibility that Kipling's inclusion of political commentary of imperialism throughout the stories is in fact something that can be comprehended and absorbed by not only adults, but children as well. Kipling may have actually thought more highly of his child readers versus his adult readers given the nuanced depiction of imperialism with conflicting and complicated sympathies in *The Jungle Books,*

which are so different in comparison to “The White Man’s Burden,” a very simple poem for adults.

As Diakiw posits that children are developmentally ready for reading about more mature topics, the article, “On Three Ways of Writing for Children” by C.S. Lewis, discusses the ways that children can actually benefit from encountering difficult topics in literature. Lewis disagrees with those who want to shelter children from topics such as death, violence, wounds, adventure, heroism and cowardice. Hiding these topics from children by excluding them from literature provides them with a “false impression” of the world and “feed(s) them escapism” (Lewis 216). Children are undoubtedly going to experience and face “cruel enemies” and other hardships in their life, which is a reason they should be reading about more difficult or mature topics (Lewis 216). Hiding reality from children does not help them, rather it provides them with a false sense of the world they will grow up into. Literature including “cruel enemies,” “brave knights,” and “heroic courage,” better prepares children for the real world encounters they will inevitably face at some point in their lives because they were familiarized with it at a young age.

The form of children’s literature undoubtedly presents an array of complicated topics and concepts that disrupt the simplicity that many would associate with children’s literature**.** With questions of audience and the evidence of complex discourse in mind, what kind of space does the form of children’s literature truly become? How do authors such as Rudyard Kipling, C.S. Lewis and Madeleine L’Engle use the form of children’s literature to cater to a specific audience, or no specific age at all? Another question that must be considered is whether these authors are even really thinking about the audience, or if they are strategically using the form of children’s literature to engage in complex political discourse that they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to do openly through adult literature. The inclusion of political conflict in particular,

such as the time of imperialism, brings in new layers of complexity within the form of children's literature by the way there is not always a clear stance provided by the author. Rather it is up to the reader to interpret and often come to their own conclusions about real world political issues. Thus, children's literature as a form not only encourages critical thinking from its readers, but offers many levels of complexity that both challenge and relate to every audience.

Chapter Two

C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* was published in 1950, following a period of turmoil in Europe which encompassed both World War I and World War II. Lewis was born in 1898 and actually fought in WWI, likely impacting the way he writes about the conflicts taking place in Narnia based on personal experience. In terms of the major political connections, Lewis relates conflicts in Narnia broadly to WWII, which is what this chapter will discuss the most; however, I briefly touch on how his own experience fighting in WWI comes out in his writing when he brings in examples of hand to hand combat, the type of fighting closely associated with the first world war. Major global powers such as the United States, Great Britain, and Russia emerged victorious following both world wars. Though such powers were successful over enemy countries such as Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union proved to be a rising threat to the world, and the publication of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* comes at the very beginning of the Cold War and the fight against communism and the Soviet Union. Within this chapter I first direct my focus on figures such as the White Witch and Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* and illustrate the ways these characters are representative of global political leaders and forces during WWII. I start with an analysis of the White Witch and her resemblance to figures such as Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, as well as the way she is an allegory for Satan in a more religious reading. I then discuss Aslan and the way he embodies the Allied forces as a collective during WWII as well as Jesus Christ. Following the readings of the White Witch and Aslan, I discuss the topic of audience, and the idea that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is a story pertinent to both the child and adult audience simultaneously. Writing under the form of children's literature, Lewis has the unexpected freedom to express the

complexity of the world wars and all of the figures involved without explicitly mentioning them at all throughout the book.

Similarly to the way Kipling's political ideas were prevalent in *The Jungle Books*, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* also illustrates Lewis's political and religious ideals. Specifically, in the article, "Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Classic Children's Literature, and the Imperial-Environmental Imagination in 'The Chronicles of Narnia,'" Clare Etcherling discusses how deeply rooted imperialist sentiments can be seen throughout *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* as Lewis presents a vision that encourages imperial exploration and control of distant lands. The geographical exploration and adventure found in the Chronicles of Narnia add to the idea of the imperial project (Echterling 100-103). Having the Pevensie children being the rightful rulers of Narnia poses the idea, one that can be found in Christian theology, that white, civilized and Christian peoples are those who are most capable and deserving of ruling over foreign lands (Echterling 100).

Some critics have commented on the politics of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* and the idea that Narnia represents the kind of political system Lewis approved of**.** Such a political system resembles the Greek *Polis*, in which the Pevensie children represent the four pillars. Sylvia Hunt touches on the *polis* in, "The Political Worlds of Boxen and Narnia: Small Bodies in Big Spaces," to describe each Pevensie child and their respective pillar. Lucy the Valiant portrays Courage, Susan the Gentle demonstrates Moderation, Peter the Magnificent embodies Wisdom and Edmund the Just exhibits Justice (Hunt 45). Critics also recognize that Lewis denounces totalitarianism, the misuse of science, the corruption of language and education and the erosion of individual rights, attributes countries like Germany and the Soviet Union possess during WWII and the Cold War (Hunt 43). Narnia is a landscape that includes Lewis's

personal political and Christian beliefs as well as the ancient ideas of the *polis,* or the ideal political state to thrive (Hunt 44). Throughout this chapter specifically, I develop the idea that Narnia and the characters throughout the novel are representative of global political figures and conflicts occurring during the time of WWII.

Before Lewis dives into the world of Narnia, he sets the stage of what was occurring in the world outside of Narnia which is London, England. On the very first page of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* Lewis addresses WWII and the air-raids occurring in London which cause the Pevensie siblings Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy to be sent away to the country. Lily Glasner argues that the immediate consequences of the war occuring are evident and personal to the Pevensie children, as their very own parents were a part of serving and contributing to the war effort (Glasner 55-56). What is interesting about Glasner's argument in her work, "But What Does It All Mean? Religious Reality as a Political Call in the Chronicles of Narnia," is that she pulls from the movie adaptation of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to talk about the reason for the absence of the Pevensie parents and their whereabouts during the war. The book never explicitly states that the Pevensie parents are contributing to the war effort, but Glasner's inclusion of the movie adaptation strengthens the political implications that come from Lewis's writing. This is an interesting point to consider as there are arguably no parental or adult figures within the world of Narnia, demonstrating the way Lewis is granting the Pevensie children their own political agency as they fight for their new land (Hunt 44). Lewis addresses the setting of the novel on the very first page, priming his audience for the political references and implications that will arise throughout the book regarding wartime. He writes, "This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids. They were sent to the house of an old Professor who lived in the heart of the country, ten

miles from the nearest railway station, and two miles from the nearest post office" (Lewis 1). During war time, it was common for children to be sent away to live in the country for their safety. Lewis uses simple language to describe the childrens' new setting and provide the audience with a sense of a seemingly boring residence the children would be staying in. Interestingly, Lewis himself actually took in groups of evacuee children during the Nazi air raids over London during WWII, as his home, like that of the professor in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, was in the countryside. Hosting children during the war likely inspired much of his writing throughout the Chronicles of Narnia.

Many critics argue that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is solely a religious allegory of Christianity because of the inclusion of Biblical stories as well as the significance of main characters in relation to figures such as Adam, Eve, Satan, and Jesus. Lewis's characters, however, can be read in multifaceted ways that relate to the global politics occurring during the time such as the world wars and the cold war. Just as Kipling presents characters in *The Jungle Book,* such as Mowgli, in multidimensional ways representing Great Britain and India simultaneously, Lewis also portrays his characters as multifaceted representations of religious and political figures. For instance, at first glance, many would read the White Witch as an allegory for Satan, as she is searching for the Son of Adam and the Daughter of Eve with malicious intent. But with further interpretation, the White Witch can also be read as a representation of multiple fascist leaders such as Adolf Hitler of Nazi Germany and Joseph Stalin of Soviet Russia. Because of the freedom the form of children's literature offers Lewis, he is able to combine the moral complexity of both religion and politics so that they are both represented simultaneously through certain characters and moments throughout the novel. Where a discussion of religion and politics anywhere else might be misunderstood or controversial, *The*

Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe serves as a space for Lewis to comment upon such complicated discourse in unexpected ways.

Lewis introduces the tale of the White Witch through the kind Faun, Mr. Tumnus. Mr Tumnus is also Lucy's first encounter in Narnia, and he describes his situation to her as they talk over tea: "'Like what I've done,' said the Faun. 'Taken service under the White Witch. That's what I am. I'm in the pay of the White Witch'

'The White Witch? Who is she?'

'Why, it is she that has got all Narnia under her thumb. It's she that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!'" (Lewis 20).

The authoritarian rule of the White Witch resonates with those of the enemy countries during WWII as well as the Cold War. When Lewis writes, "Taken service under the White Witch" he implies that she has power over the people of her land even if they do or do not agree with her, much as Hitler and Stalin ruled over the people of Germany and Russia. Despite the power figures such as Hitler and Stalin had over their people, not all citizens of Russia and Germany supported such totalitarian regimes similar to the way Mr. Tumnus, though indebted to the White Witch, did not support her rule.

Just as Germany and the Soviet Union had spies and loyal followers throughout the country during wartime, the White Witch had her own loyal followers to carry out spying on every creature in Narnia, another way her control was spread and maintained. The book *Symphony for the City of the Dead* by M.T. Anderson investigates Soviet Russia before, during and after WWII, demonstrating the way, like the creatures in Narnia, people were not safe from being spied on and turned in by their very own neighbors. In Soviet Russia, communal living was not unusual as many families needed more income during trying times, and people often,

"...listened through the walls to hear if neighbors they particularly hated were speaking out against the regime. This was an easy way to get rid of a neighbor. In those times, people either shouted or spoke in whispers" (Anderson 46). Mr. Tumnus experiences a similar reality where he must speak in hushed tones as he tries to do the right thing and bring Lucy back to safety. As Mr. Tumnus attempts to defy the White Witch by returning Lucy, or the Daughter of Eve, to the wardrobe, Lewis writes, "'We must go as quietly as we can,' said Mr. Tumnus. 'The whole wood is full of *her* spies. Even some of the trees are on her side'" (Lewis 22). By italicizing "her" in this passage, Lewis makes it clear that Mr. Tumnus does not even feel comfortable speaking of the White Witch outwardly because he fears the repercussions of being seen or heard by any of her spies. This can almost be seen as a parallel to the way many German people were involved in hiding and keeping Jewish citizens safe from persecution during the Holocaust. People referred to as rescuers during the Holocaust were those who functioned at the group level involved in small communities or underground organizations and worked together to help Jews escape or hide from persecution (Celinscak 61). Working with such organizations was extremely dangerous for rescuers as they were putting themselves and those in hiding at risk of being caught by such spies.

Lewis portrays the White Witch as a representation of Hitler, or the evils of Nazi Germany as a whole, by the way he demonstrates many of the creatures in Narnia fearing for their own lives and the lives of those around them. There is a realization that no one in the woods is safe, making mere existence a danger. This can be related to how life looked for Jews during WWII and the time of the Holocaust, as well as German citizens defying Hitler and the regime by providing safe havens for Jewish people in hiding. Many Jewish people were sought out by Nazi soldiers themselves as well as German citizens loyal to Hitler and his fascist plans for the

country. Celinscak refers to these individuals and groups as the perpetrators of WWII and the Nazi regime, or those who were directly involved in constructing or carrying out anti-Jewish measures (Celinscak 60). Arguably the largest group aside from persecuted Jews during the Holocaust were bystanders, or those who were aware of the atrocities being carried out by Hitler and the Nazi regime but did nothing to contribute to persecution or liberation (Celinscak 60). It is important to recognize that with bystanders being the largest group of people in Germany, being a rescuer in an organization or on the individual level was a rarity, demonstrating just how heroic the actions of such individuals were. The Beavers and Mr. Tumnus are recognized as some of the only creatures in Narnia willing to aid or guide the Pevensie children through the woods, illustrating their heroism and courage similar to those involved in rescue and hiding operations throughout WWII.

Once all of the children actually enter Narnia together, they face the same struggles of secrecy and caution that Lucy experienced while she was alone. The children meet Mr. and Mrs. Beaver who agree to help the children save Mr. Tumnus after learning of his arrest prompted by helping Lucy leave Narnia. Lucy insists to her siblings that they must do whatever they can to save Mr.Tumnus from the White Witch, as she feels responsible for his capture. But the fear of spies and traitors in the woods is even more of a threat to the children as the White Witch knows of their existence. Within the childrens' first interaction with the Beavers, Lewis writes, "'S-s-s-sh!' said the Beaver, 'not so loud please. We're not even safe here.'

'Why, who are you afraid of?' said Peter.

'There's no one here but ourselves.'

'There are the trees,' said the Beaver.

'They're always listening. Most of them are on our side, but there *are* trees that would betray us to *her;* you know who I mean,' and it nodded its head several times'" (Lewis 73). Within this dialogue, Lewis uses italics with the words "are" and "her" to put emphasis on the danger the children and the Beavers are in by just being in the woods of Narnia while the White Witch, or *"her,"* is out looking for them. Italicizing the word "are" first indicates that even though there are a lot of creatures in the forest that would not betray one another to the White Witch, there are still those who are loyal to "*her"* and would turn in anyone to keep themselves safe and in good graces with the Witch. Just like the creatures in Narnia, there were many people in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia who were either terrified into loyalty, or those who truly believed in their leaders, thus carrying out acts of betrayal on others. In Russia, "Villagers anxious to save themselves accused their personal enemies of hiding money, grain, or a bourgeois past. The accused were stamped as 'anti-people.' Some were sent off to concentration camps. Thousands of families guilty of nothing more than owning an extra cow were shipped into the wilderness in cattle cars. Some were shot" (Anderson 69).

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver represent some of the rescue efforts during the Holocaust that were more on the underground level, where a figure such as Mr. Tumnus represents efforts on the individual level where people would risk their own personal well being to hide and help save the lives of others. One of the best known individual rescuers during WWII was a man named Oskar Schindler, who sheltered more than 1000 Jewish people in his factories throughout Nazi occupied Poland (Celinscak 62-63). In terms of underground organizations, Zegota in Poland provided financial support, forged identity documents and offered hiding places for Jewish men, women and children in the midst of the Holocaust (Celinscak 62), much like the way Mr. and

Mrs. Beaver assisted the Pevensie children by providing them food, shelter and direction on their journey to find Aslan.

Similarly to the way she resembles Hitler or Nazi Germany, the White Witch can also be painted as a representation of Joseph Stalin or the Soviet Union as a whole. Even though the Soviet Union proved to be an Allied force during WWII where Germany was the enemy, Stalin was still carrying out his own mass genocide against anyone who disagreed with him or attempted to defy his rule during this time. Just as the White Witch, Stalin had his own "woods" full of spies, or those who would seek out those who defied their leader and turn them in for being traitors of the Soviet Union. Being an Allied power did not take away from the evils of Joseph Stalin and the suffering experienced by Russian citizens during WWII. The Stalin regime categorized any German person living in Russia as an enemy, and thus created efforts to have them mistreated, sent away to labor camps and killed (Pohl 284). Similarly to Hitler, Stalin was carrying out his own ethnic cleansing of many different types of people in Russia, believing they were aiding foreign powers or not worthy of contributing to and being a part of the Soviet regime. Around twenty million people died as a result of forced labor camps, famine and disease, and forced collectivization (Pohl 292). The similarities of dictatorship and maltreatment of citizens demonstrates the way the White Witch represents both Hitler and Stalin simultaneously.

Anyone who disagreed with the White Witch and her regime would be turned to stone or forced to be a part of her army and its efforts to take over Narnia. Returning to the passage included and discussed above, when Lucy asks about who the White Witch actually is, the Faun responds by saying, "'Why, it is she that has got all Narnia under her thumb. It's *she* that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!'" (Lewis 20). The way that it is "always winter and never Christmas" in Narnia resonates with the extremely cold and long

winters that Russia experiences. Winters during WWII in Russia were particularly trying, as resources were extremely scarce and rationed. The idea of it always being winter in Narnia not only resembles the cold Russian winters of WWII, but also the start of the Cold War and the way Soviet Russia turned from an Allied power to a global enemy. Lucy, the youngest sibling, is the first to venture accidentally into the world of Narnia. She encounters a Faun named Mr. Tumnus, who believes she is the Daughter of Eve. Aside from the religious commentary Lewis first offers with Lucy's first meeting in Narnia, right away the state of Narnia's season is commented upon by Mr. Tumnus who says, "it is winter in Narnia, and has been for ever so long, and we shall both catch a cold if we stand here talking in the snow… Daughter of Eve from the far land of Spare Oom where eternal summer reigns around the bright city of the War Drobe, how would it be if you came and had tea with me?" (Lewis 13). The way it has been winter, "for ever so long" points to the idea of the Cold War, which had already been going on for a few years prior to publication. The way Lewis also has Mr. Tumnus describe where Lucy is from, which the audience knows already to be London, as an "eternal summer" and "bright city" provides a much more positive connotation than the state of Narnia which is plagued by winter.

Despite being a part of the Allied powers, there was nothing to be celebrated in Russia during WWII when their own citizens were suffering from lack of food, shelter and warmth, and people were willing to do anything to stay alive, even if it meant turning in their neighbors for disobeying the many laws in place during the time of war. For instance, "The only way to save oneself and one's family was to admit guilt and give names of other 'coconspirators.' People blurted out the names of their personal enemies, past lovers, people who'd told jokes at Stalin's expense. In this way, the pool of suspects snowballed, grew. Before long, half the USSR's urban population was listed in the NKVD's records of possible anti-people saboteurs" (Anderson 118).

Stalin's harsh measures went largely unnoticed during the war because of the attention on Hitler and the atrocities being carried out in Nazi Germany. In reality, Stalin was taking totalitarianism to the same inconceivable lengths as Hitler, just in more covert ways: "To conceal the unimaginable reach of the purges, victims were driven through the streets in trucks marked MEAT and VEGETABLES. At night, they were taken to remote killing fields outside the cities. They were never seen again" (Anderson 118). Not only did Russian citizens have to worry about outside enemy forces and the war going on, but they lived in daily fear of their own leader and regime.

Where the White Witch represents Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin in unique ways, she also serves as an allegory to Satan in the Book of Genesis, which is also the most common reading of her character by many readers. Just as Satan (or the Serpent) tempts Adam and Eve with the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, the White Witch coaxes Edmund into speaking with her, feeding him delicious Turkish delights in return for his cooperation:

"'Son of Adam, I should so much like to see your brother and your two sisters. Will you bring them to see me?'

'I'll try,' said Edmund, still looking at the empty box.

'Because, if you did come again—bringing them with you of course—I'd be able to give you some more Turkish Delight'" (Lewis 39).

The White Witch takes advantage of the tempting nature of a delicious treat as well as the childlike innocence of Edmund to persuade him to come back into Narnia with his brother and sisters to carry out the Witch's malevolent initiatives. It is hard to resist the White Witch's offer once Edmund has already tasted the Turkish Delight, much like the way Adam and Eve could

not resist the nature of the Forbidden Fruit once they experienced it. The Turkish Delight appeals to both the five senses as well as the seven deadly sins, a reason Lewis chose this confection as a symbol throughout the novel. The treat is presented to Edmund in a pretty box with a green ribbon, which Edmund then has the opportunity to touch, smell and taste as the White Witch's voice speaks sweetly to him (Kehl 35). Gluttony and greed are also portrayed as Edmund tries to, "...shovel down as much Turkish Delight as he could, and the more he ate the more he wanted to eat" (Lewis 33). The way the Turkish Delight imitates the forbidden fruit further illustrates the way Lewis incorporates Christian theology and religious lessons into the book. Yet the Turkish Delight also serves as a symbol of coercion from authoritative powers. The way Edmund is coerced by the White Witch into eating her Turkish Delights, despite him initially being frightened by her, demonstrates the way it was so easy for people to be manipulated or influenced by leaders such as Hitler and Stalin during their time in power. This is another way Lewis comments on the evils of totalitarianism and the way innocent people, similar to Edmund, could so easily fall into the trap of such figures.

If the White Witch is representative of Hitler, Stalin and Satan simultaneously, the Soviet Union and Germany might be interpreted as their own versions of Satan when it comes to global politics because of the evils they both present to the world at different times. This might be a way that Lewis himself comments on the state of global politics and the evils of both WWII and also the Cold War. By representing Hitler and Stalin through the White Witch, and thus Satan at the same time, Lewis makes a statement about his personal political beliefs as well as the idea that his loyalty lies with Britain and the Allied powers. Lewis believed that dictators like Hitler and Stalin denied knowledge and thus abandoned liberty, something his religious and political ideology did not agree with (Watson 92-93). Such political commentary from Lewis also makes

sense because of his own involvement in WWI and the experience he had fighting for the British army.

Similarly to the way many critics read the White Witch as an allegory to Satan, many people also read Aslan the Lion as an allegory to Jesus Christ. Specifically, Aslan's death and resurrection mimics the story of the New Testament and Jesus Christ's death and rebirth. For instance, just as Jesus died for the sins of his people, Aslan sacrifices himself for the sake of the Pevensie children and his other followers in Narnia. Another example is when Lucy and Susan were the only ones who witnessed Aslan be killed by the White Witch, representing Jesus's mother Mary and Mary Magdalene, who were the only of his followers to witness his death. Following his brutal killing, Aslan rises from the dead more powerful than before to rule his people again just as Jesus did. During his resurrection, the Stone Table Aslan was tied down to and killed on, shatters, which is a biblical symbol in itself. The table is an allegory of the stone tablets bearing the Ten Commandments that represent an older and stricter form of religion. The shattering of the table following Aslan's resurrection signifies an end to an older and cruel era of religion, and the beginning of a new period. The religious allegory and imagery in this scene is undeniable, but the way Aslan rises again also resembles the way the Allied powers took many blows to their forces during wartime, and yet still came out victorious over evil. For instance, the Allies experienced some very dark moments throughout WWII, particularly when France fell to Germany and the Nazi advance into Russia seemed unstoppable. Despite their own major breakdowns and moments of defeat, the Allied forces still consistently held off and rebuffed attempts of Nazi officials and military personnel to invade other European countries or negotiate with the Allied forces (Weisiger 106).

Similarly to the way Lewis uses the White Witch to equate Hitler and Stalin with Satan, he uses Aslan to equate the Allied powers with Jesus Christ. As Jesus reigns over the new Heaven and Earth, the Allied powers essentially come to the rescue of the world during WWII, guiding Europe away from destruction and providing the opportunity for rebuilding and rebirth from the war. During WWII, the three great Allied powers were the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. The idea that the Allied powers provide salvation to the world during wartime parallels how Jesus freed humanity through his personal sacrifice. Similarly to Jesus's sacrifice, on a more personal level, many individuals went off to fight in WWII believing they were sacrificing themselves for the greater good of the world. That kind of mentality from a collective of individuals is one reason the Allied forces were able to come together and be successful, just like Jesus and Aslan both were. This reading of Aslan shows the way Lewis makes a clear stance that the Allied powers, like Aslan in Narnia, were the force of good during wartime. The way the Allied powers resemble Jesus and the way Hitler and Stalin resemble Satan provides a clear depiction of Lewis's perception of who is good and who is evil on the global political stage at the time of publication. Such a depiction also illustrates Lewis's own beliefs about Christianity.

The representation of Aslan as Jesus Christ is undeniable, as is the deeper political reading of Aslan within this story. Just as the White Witch might be read as Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia, Aslan is representative of the Allied forces that emerged victorious during WWII and those that remained allies throughout the Cold War. Lewis writes, "'Aslan a man!' said Mr. Beaver sternly. 'Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion —*the* Lion, the great Lion'" (Lewis 86). Aslan is referred to as "King of the wood" and "King of

Beasts” to attach great importance and influence to his being. Capitalizing the word “King" and the word “Lion” also elevates Aslan’s importance and demonstrates to the reader the way he is a highly respected figure in Narnia. The way Lewis italicizes the word “the” before Lion shows that Mr. Beaver is keen on emphasizing how no other creature or lion can do what Aslan can do in terms of saving Narnia. Lewis also uses encouraging language such as the words, “settle” and “save” while talking about Aslan to illustrate the way he encapsulates a sense of hope coming into Narnia Just the fact that Lewis chose a lion to be Aslan’s character also says a lot about how he perceives both the Allied powers and Jesus Christ. A lion is a symbol of strength, nobility and power. It is also the job of a male lion to protect and defend his cubs from any danger, much like the way Aslan comes to defend Narnia from the White Witch, the Allied powers defend Europe from Hitler, and Jesus defends his people by dying for their sins. Similarly to the way Aslan is the only creature who can defeat the White Witch, the Allied forces during WWII became the only hope of providing relief to the oppressed people of Germany. Reading Aslan as the Allied powers on top of the reading of Jesus Christ elevates the idea that the Allied powers also equal salvation and righteousness.

Just as the presence of the allied countries began to weaken the Nazi forces towards the end of WWII, Aslan’s mere presence in Narnia was detrimental to the White Witch’s eternal winter:

> Every moment the patches of green grew bigger and the patches of snow grew smaller. Every moment more and more of the trees shook off their robes of snow. Soon, wherever you looked, instead of white shapes you saw the dark green of firs or the black prickly branches of bare oaks and beeches and elms. Then the mist turned from white to gold and

presently cleared away altogether. Shafts of delicious sunlight struck down onto the forest floor and overhead you could see a blue sky between the tree tops (Lewis 131).

This is the first glimpse of spring in Narnia and Lewis includes both descriptive and figurative language to describe the way the setting is changing as a result of Aslan's occupation there. Lewis repeats the phrase "every moment" in the beginning of the passage to demonstrate how quickly changes are taking place and revealing new color in the forest. He also personifies the trees when he writes, "...more and more of the trees shook off their robes of snow" illustrating the idea that just like any other creature in Narnia, the trees are very much alive and happy to be seeing signs of spring again after so long. The snow melting off the trees and other elements of nature in Narnia is also symbolic in representing the way such creatures, like the trees, were no longer beholden to the White Witch. Snow and the everlasting winter in Narnia was an indicator of the White Witch's power, and as those things slowly dissipated, so did the Witch's grip. Lewis's descriptive language in this passage demonstrates the way the bland white and snowy sameness that plagued the land for such a long time under the rule of the White Witch was now melting away as warmer weather and the colors of nature started to unveil. For instance, Lewis writes, "Then the mist turned from white to gold," and "Shafts of delicious sunlight struck down onto the forest floor…" to portray the way spring is not only welcomed, but a refreshing glimpse of the future as well. Similarly to the way Aslan's presence in Narnia brought about physical and psychological changes to the land and creatures, the growing presence and strength of the Allied forces in Europe, specifically in Germany, began to bring hope and life back into the people and the land.

The way that Narnia quickly began changing from winter to spring is similar to the way German forces and the Axis powers began to fall to the Allied powers towards the end of WWII.

In January of 1943, the Allied powers demanded nothing less than an unconditional surrender from Germany, refusing all of Hitler's attempts at negotiation. Both Hitler and the White Witch wanted nothing more than to have control over the land, but had difficulty carrying out their initiatives of domination due to figures like Aslan or the Allied Powers who would not give up such control without a fight. Despite Germany having a series of victories in the early 1940s, bringing Western Poland, Denmark, Norway the Netherlands, Belgium and France under Nazi control, Winston Churchill refused any settlement with Germany, forcing Hitler to continue fighting a two-front war (Weisiger 122-23). At this point in the war the Allied powers knew, much like Aslan did about the Witch, that Hitler was committed to aggression and peace was only attainable by fundamental reform of German government and society. (Weisiger 122). Similarly, as Aslan's presence in the forest drove away winter, large scale aerial bombings of Germany in 1944 drove away the Axis powers, making the defeat of Nazi Germany more attainable with an end in sight.

Following Aslan's resurrection and crusade to the White Witch's castle, the Pevensie children watched as the stone creatures littered across the courtyard of the castle start to come to life again, symbolizing the near end of the war and the return of life and liberation to German citizens. Lewis writes,

> Everywhere the statues were coming to life…Instead of all that deadly white the courtyard was now a blaze of colors; glossy chestnut sides of centaurs, indigo horns of unicorns, dazzling plumage of birds, reddy-brown foxes, dogs and satyrs, yellow stockings and crimson hoods of dwarfs…And instead of the deadly silence the whole place rang with the sound of happy roarings, brayings, yelpings, barkings, squealing, cooings, neighings, stampings, shouts, hurrahs, songs and laughter (Lewis 185).

Lewis's use of descriptive and figurative language in this passage exhibits the delight and relief all of the stone creatures felt as they became lively again from the breath of Aslan. The use of asyndeton is paired with descriptive language during the scene when Lewis writes, "glossy chestnut sides of centaurs, indigo horns of unicorns, dazzling plumage of birds, reddy-brown foxes, dogs and satyrs, yellow stockings and crimson hoods of dwarfs" to list out all of the different creatures and their colors coming to life again in an almost chaotic order. Lewis goes on to use asyndeton again later on in the passage when he writes, "...the whole place rang with the sound of happy roarings, brayings, yelpings, barkings, squealing, cooings, neighings, stampings, shouts, hurrahs…" Listing out the many different colors and sounds coming from the courtyard of the castle demonstrates the way Narnia is much more than a land of whiteness and snow, but rather extremely lively and diverse. Aslan freeing the creatures of Narnia from their stone imprisonment mimics the way the Allied forces liberated the land in Europe and symbolized the return of life following wartime. The shift from the "forever winter" to spring again in Narnia is also significant to WWII, as the war showed signs of nearing an end during the transition from winter to the early months of spring, actually ending in May of 1945.

The Battle of Berlin, taking place from April to May of 1945 was one of the final battles to take place in Germany during WWII where Soviet, American and British forces launched an offensive against the German capital of Berlin, proving to be catastrophic to Nazi forces. Germany officially surrendered to the allied forces shortly thereafter (Schneyder and Lochner 422). Similarly, the final battle taking place in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in Narnia resembles the Battle of Berlin because of the way the Aslan and the Pevensie children, or the Allied forces, overcame the White Witch and her army, killing her and ending her reign and the forever winter in Narnia. Lewis writes,

> … dwarfs with their battleaxes, dogs with teeth, the Giant with his club (and his feet also crushed dozens of the foe), unicorns with their horns, centaurs with swords and hoofs. And Peter's tired army cheered, and the newcomers roared, and the enemy squealed and gibbered till the wood re echoed with the din of that onset. The battle was all over a few minutes after their arrival. Most of the enemy had been killed in the first charge of Aslan and his companions; and when those who were still living saw that the Witch was dead they either gave themselves up or took to flight" (Lewis 194-195).

Again, Lewis employs asyndeton in this passage when he writes, "…dwarfs with their battleaxes, dogs with teeth, the Giant with his club (and his feet also crushed dozens of the foe), unicorns with their horns, centaurs with swords and hoofs…" The use of asyndeton here introduces a dramatic and urgent tone in the scene where a variety of different creatures jump at the opportunity to fight against the White Witch and her army. The fast-paced tone Lewis creates in this passage continues with his use of polysyndeton when he writes, "And Peter's tired army cheered, and the newcomers roared, and the enemy squealed and gibbered till the wood re echoed with the din of that onset" (195). The repeated use of the word "and" to describe the aftermath of Aslan's forces joining the battle demonstrates the quick change of power from the White Witch's army to Aslan's as they gained strength and numbers. The lack of the word "and" and the repeated use of the word "and" in the same passage gives the reader the sense of chaos and being overwhelmed, as this last battle in Narnia was a pivotal and very fast paced moment in Narnia. Likewise, the Battle of Berlin, otherwise known as the Fall of Berlin, was an extremely important moment in the history of WWII. Not only did Allied forces take down the German capital, but Adolf Hitler killed himself and left his forces leaderless and defeated, much as the White Witch's army "gave themselves up or took flight," when they learned of her death.

Where the final battle in Narnia resembles the Battle of Berlin during WWII, such hand to hand, violent, personal combat also parallels the type of fighting Lewis himself would have experienced during WWI as a member of the British army. Similar to the way Peter and Aslan's army fights with the forces of the White Witch, the type of fighting during WWI was extremely brutal for soldiers as they engaged in physical and more personal combat with enemies during wartime. Lewis himself described his experience during WWI, saying, "...the frights, the cold, the smell of high explosive, the horribly smashed men still moving like half-crushed beetles." This quote comes from Lewis's autobiography, *Surprised by Joy,* published in 1955 and detailing his life from childhood to his conversion to Christianity, including his time serving in WWI. Undoubtedly, Lewis saw a great deal of bloodshed and death coming from the brutality of humans against each other during the war.

Though on a surface level it might seem like *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is merely a depiction of WWII, this is not just a retelling of the war. Lewis's purpose behind writing this novel and the Chronicles of Narnia extends deeper than what might be initially perceived. What Lewis is actually portraying through characters such as Mr. Tumnus, the Beavers, the White Witch, Aslan, and the Pevensie children themselves is a message of morality. Lewis presents the doctrine of good versus evil throughout *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.* Representing known totalitarian and oppressive leaders such as Hitler and Stalin, as well as Satan, through the White Witch, the understood force of 'evil' in the novel, Lewis demonstrates what kinds of global political leaders should be condemned and deemed immoral for their atrocities against humanity. Just as Lewis drives the point of evil home, he also displays what it means to be good. By representing the Allied Forces and Jesus Christ through a character

like Aslan, the understood 'good guy,' Lewis exhibits a model figure of morality and goodness, something he believes all people should strive to be like themselves.

Similarly to the way Kipling's political commentary and inclusion of violence raises questions about who *The Jungle Books* is truly meant for, Lewis's many political, religious and violent references raise a comparable concern regarding the audience for the Chronicles of Narnia. In one sense, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* seems undoubtedly meant for the child reader, as the novel revolves around four child protagonists with arguably little adult intervention or interference. But in another, Lewis's political complexity and inclusion of violence muddies the idea that this text is solely for children.

As discussed in the previous chapter, fantasy worlds and animals are a large indicator of children's literature because of the way they allow children to identify with the essence of childhood through made up creatures or talking animals (Chapleau 11). Such a fantasy world and fantastical creatures are an integral part of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* strengthening the idea that this is a novel meant for children. Jacques Barchilon argues in the article, "Children and War in the Fairy Tale," that the children in Lewis's Narnia series live dual lives, much like the way children have active and creative imaginations that carry them to their own fantasy worlds (Barchilon 326). The Pevensie children live dual lives as great warriors in Narnia reigning over their Kingdom, only to come back to reality where very little time had passed. On the first page of *Prince Caspian,* the next book to be published following *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* Lewis writes, "While they were in Narnia they seemed to reign for years and years; but when they came back through the door and found themselves in England again, it all seemed to have taken no time at all" (Lewis 1). This kind of fantastical experience is relatable to

child readers who often become lost in their own imaginations, their own childhoods seeming to fly by fairly quickly (Barchilon 326).

Not only do the fantastical world and talking creatures provide the idea that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is meant for children, but Lewis also includes little lessons throughout the book about knowing good from evil. Lewis believed in the power of the written word to instruct children on knowing good from bad and also to teach them universal moral values, particularly those values associated with Christianity (Glasner 57). For instance, Lewis demonstrates the consequences of giving into evil and temptation by having Edmund suffer at the hands of the White Witch: "...and in a few minutes Edmund found himself being forced to walk as fast as he could with his hands tied behind him. He kept on slipping in the slush and mud and wet grass, and every time he slipped the dwarf gave him a curse and sometimes a flick with the whip" (Lewis 131). Showing the way Edmund is mistreated and manipulated by the White Witch serves as a warning to the child reader to resist the evils of temptation and greed.

Despite Edmund's hardship, Lewis portrays an end to his suffering where he speaks alone with Aslan and apologizes to his siblings for his regrettable actions, proving there is a chance for redemption through remorse and finding God, or Aslan in this case. "There is no need to tell you (and no one ever heard) what Aslan was saying, but it was a conversation which Edmund never forgot. As the others drew nearer, Aslan turned to meet them, bringing Edmund with him.

'Here is your brother,' he said, 'and —there is no need to talk to him about what is past.'

Edmund shook hands with each of the others and said to each of them in turn, 'I'm sorry,' and everyone said, 'That's all right.'" (Lewis 153). Lewis shows his audiences that there are consequences to greed and acting out of self-interest. Such a lesson can be applicable to Christian morals but also just learning the difference between right and wrong and good and evil.

Through the fictional world of Narnia, Lewis addresses the child audience specifically by encouraging them to look at their own world around them and to identify and embrace what is deemed good and reject those things that are deemed bad or unworthy (Glasner 68). This can also connect to WWII by the way that Lewis portrays totalitarianism and authoritarian leadership in a very negative light, blatantly demonstrating the evils of the White Witch and rulers such as Hitler and Stalin. On the other hand, figures like Aslan, the Beavers and Mr. Tumnus are praised as 'good' or moral because of their heroism, pointing to the idea that Jesus Christ and the Allied powers should be embraced and deemed as valuable by the audience.

Not only does the inclusion of moral and religious lessons within *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* point to the idea that Lewis was writing for the child audience, but also the encouragement from the Professor, arguably one of the only adult figures present throughout the novel, to believe Lucy and the idea that there might be another world through the doors of the wardrobe:

> 'That is the very thing that makes her story so likely to be true,' said the Professor. 'If there really is a door in this house that leads to some other world (and I should warn you that this is a very strange house, and even I know very little about it) —if, I say, she had got into another world, I should not be surprised to find that the other world had a separate time of its own; so however long you stayed there it would never take up any of *our* time. On the other hand, I don't think many girls of her age would invent that idea for themselves. If she had been pretending, she would have hidden for a reasonable time before coming out and telling her story' (Lewis 54).

Having the professor, an adult figure in the reality outside of Narnia, be so open to the idea that Lucy might be telling the truth about having entered another world, gives the idea to the child

reader that the elements of this book do not have to be fantasy. The way that the Professor ponders about his strange house and the idea that Lucy would not make up such a story not only makes the possibility of Narnia being real more believable to the reader, but it also validates childhood imagination.

Along with the inclusion of fantasy and lessons throughout *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* pointing to the idea of a child audience, Lewis's intentional incorporation of WWII and also subtle Cold War references raise questions about whether this is a story meant for children, adults, or both. Though many children might have lived through a fragment of WWII, it is reasonable to say that they likely would not have the same knowledge as adults about wartime and what was happening across the world politically. More specifically, people would not expect there to be a description of Nazi Germany in the middle of a fairy tale (Barchilon 319). In fact, multiple critics argue that fairy tales are simply a product of adult imagination (Barchilon 318), which is why in a sense they are written for and read by adults (Voight 23). J.R.R Tolkien writes about this idea in his work, "On Fairy-Stories" addressing the fact that childrens' knowledge of the world is often so small that they cannot judge or distinguish between the fantastical and the 'grown up' (Tolkien 17). Though Tolkien would agree with Lewis that adults and children are both capable of enjoying fairytales, adults will ultimately 'put more into them and get more out of them than children' (Voight 23). Tolkien's argument while thinking about *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* specifically, might be demonstrated by the way Lewis includes very blatant political commentary, and occasions of violence and bloodshed throughout the novel. These are aspects that many critics would argue pertain more towards a mature audience in terms of understanding as well as keeping the child's mind innocent. For instance, people might argue that images of violence may have a negative psychological impact on a child who might find

such topics to be scary or disturbing**.** Though it might be true that such mature topics might be more relatable or comprehended by an adult audience, that is not to say that the child reader does not or will not have equal benefit.

Lewis, on the other hand**,** would actually argue in "On Three Ways of Writing for Children" that fairy tales where children have the opportunity to succeed and participate in adventures are more beneficial to them than stories of reality that might raise false expectations about the world and he believes that children have a great deal to learn from such stories (Lewis 214). Even though, as Tolkien argues, adults do benefit from such stories, children as the primary audience have just as much to take away as well. Lewis pushes his audience of this critique to look at children as equals, and that they should not be "patronized or idolized," but rather talked to as man to man (Lewis 219). Lewis's own interpretation of children's literature does a good job of demonstrating that, as discussed in the previous chapter with Kipling and *The Jungle Books, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and the genre of children's literature in general is relevant to both the child and adult audience simultaneously. Lewis demonstrates this idea in his dedication of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* when he writes, "My Dear Lucy, I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realized that girls grow quicker than books. As a result you are already too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed and bound you will be older still. But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again" (Lewis). In his dedication, Lewis outwardly says that this novel is written for a child. He proceeds to recognize that, "girls grow quicker than books," and the idea that a child might outgrow a fairy tale children's story. But the most important part of the dedication is when Lewis writes, "But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again," essentially stating that a book for children is also a book for adults.

Lewis even ties in the ending of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to his dedication by the way he writes the Pevensie children growing up in the novel. He writes, "And they themselves grew and changed as the years passed over them" (Lewis 201). Lewis then goes on to describe the adult that each Pevensie child becomes. For instance, Peter becomes a tall warrior and is called Peter the Magnificent. Susan becomes Susan the Gentle, a grown woman with long dark hair and many men from different lands wanting her hand in marriage. Edmund becomes Edmund the Just, a quiet and wise grown man. And Lucy becomes Lucy the Valiant, with her golden hair and happy demeanor. The way that Lewis has the Pevensie children grow up and live as adults themselves in Narnia points to the idea that this story is applicable to both the child and adult audience. A topic like marriage, which Lewis discusses specifically while describing Susan and Lucy as grown ups, though it might only be applicable to adults in reality, is still something Lewis thinks children can understand and look forward to for their own futures, a reason he includes it at the end of the novel.

Throughout *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* Lewis undoubtedly includes topics such as global political conflict and violence that might seem to cater to a more mature audience; but he also includes topics such as fantasy, talking animals and made up creatures that seem to cater to a younger, more innocent audience. The way that Lewis simultaneously includes child-like and adult-like affairs throughout the novel that the Pevensie children must navigate through together demonstrates the way there is not a fixed audience for this novel specifically or the genre of children's literature in general. Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter all enter Narnia as children, with arguably no adult or parental interference. Though they have guiding figures during their time, Lewis gives the children their own personal political and religious agency that they use to make difficult decisions and contribute to saving Narnia from the White Witch. The

independence that Lewis grants to the Pevensie children is something that is relatable to children and adults alike. Not only do the Pevensie children serve as the entry point into the world of Narnia, but also into the complex political readings of WWII and the Cold War.

Chapter Three

Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* was first published in 1962, during the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. During this time, communism was creating rising global tensions and the threat of nuclear war loomed over the world as these two major global powers would not concede to one another. Though Russia and the United States were Allied powers during World War II, following their victory against Nazi Germany and the Axis Powers, their alliance quickly disbanded as the Soviet Union criticized the capitalist West and carried out communist initiatives, where the United States denounced communism and advocated for democracy across the globe. During the period of the Cold War, aside from the looming threat of deploying nuclear weapons, the United States and the Soviet Union were also competing head to head in the Space Race. Not only was there an imminent threat of nuclear war, but each of these global powers was pioneering the launching of satellites into space, robotic space probes to the moon, Venus and Mars, and even human flights into space and eventually to the moon. Each country wanted to prove their status as the best on the global stage, attempting to spread their influence and ideals to other countries across the world and even into outer space.

Similar to the way Kipling and Lewis present their own political and religious ideas in *The Jungle Books* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* L'Engle includes undeniable commentary on global politics in *A Wrinkle in Time.* Throughout this chapter, I discuss the idea that the fight between good and evil L'Engle writes about resembles the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, as well as the way the setting of space travel represents the Space Race and the associated form of imperial ideology. Where Kipling

and Lewis present characters such as Mowgli, the White Witch, and Aslan in multidimensional ways, L'Engle also displays such complexity and ambiguity throughout *A Wrinkle in Time.* More specifically I develop the idea that Camazotz and The Dark Thing are a representation of Soviet Russia and communism, IT specifically represents Communist leaders such as Joseph Stalin and Nikita Krushchev, and Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin represent the United States and their efforts to combat Communism. Aside from the representations of the Soviet Union and communism, Camazotz is also a representation of 1950s American suburbia, contributing to the ambiguity of what exactly L'Engle's political position is. I also touch on L'Engle's religious imagery portrayed throughout *A Wrinkle in Time* and the way she associates Christianity with goodness.

The setting of *A Wrinkle in Time* taking place in outer space is an important aspect of the novel to consider as it puts emphasis on the Space Race, as well as the way the need for control in space resembles the period of imperialism where countries attempted to spread their influence to territories across the globe. The space travel of "tessering" in *A Wrinkle in Time* across the galaxy to different planets mimics the way that the United States and the Soviet Union were both actively making progress launching satellites, rockets and even astronauts into space, attempting to be the first countries to make a presence in completely uncharted and unclaimed territory. Space launches and missions from the United States and the Soviet Union were simultaneously kept secret until their successful completion, but never failed to make front page headlines across the world (Werth 564). Engaging in such a prestigious space activity, such as manned spaceflight, demonstrated to the rest of the world that the Soviet Union and the United States each had major technological potential, and provided proof that the conquest of space with rockets, satellites, and manned space vehicles was changing the strategic balance of power in the

world (Werth 564). People across the globe are familiar with the iconic image of U.S. astronauts planting a flag on the moon in 1969, a modern imperialist demonstration of the United States showing the rest of the world their influence and power in practice. The Cold War became known as a surrogate war of technology, and the Space Race served as a new age of imperialism in a non-traditional sense.

Throughout *The Jungle Books,* Rudyard Kipling provides commentary on British imperialism and the way Great Britain's imperialist initiatives in India were a testament to the ideas of power and empire as well as the ability to hold control over foreign people and places. Similar to the way Kipling demonstrates Great Britain's imperial domination, L'Engle alludes to the conflict for power through space technology and advancement by the way dark planets are present in the galaxy at the same time as light planets in a tug of war, both trying to spread their darkness and lightness, or influence in other words, to other planets. Space supremacy was extensively linked to world domination, just as historically, naval power served as the foundation of the imperialist success of the British Empire, and aerial superiority helped the United States during WWII (Werth 567). Where The Dark Thing is a representation of communism and the imperialist motives from the Soviet Union in space, it is also a representation of the potentially dangerous outcome if either the United States or the Soviet Union decided to respond to each other's technological threats through the use of nuclear warfare. In the article "The Time Quartet as Madeleine L'Engle's Theology," Marek Oziewicz discusses how L'Engle expresses the modern concern about how if technology and science are misused, they may jeopardize the "humanness of humanity", if not the survival of the human race (Oziewicz 211). The Dark Thing might literally represent a dark cloud of smoke rising as a result of a nuclear explosion, but it also represents the looming threat of communism over the world in a negative way. L'Engle

takes advantage of the ambiguity of this dark cloud in the galaxy and thus creates various meanings of what The Dark Thing is.

The moment L'Engle introduces The Dark Thing in *A Wrinkle in Time,* she demonstrates the way it elicits feelings of extreme negativity and unease as Meg simply looks at it from a great distance: "What could there be about a shadow that was so terrible that she knew that there had never been before or ever would be again, anything that would chill her with a fear that was beyond shuddering, beyond crying or screaming, beyond the possibility of comfort?" (L'Engle 81-82). L'Engle poses a hypothetical question in this passage to illustrate the way Meg cannot think of anything even close to the horror she experiences while looking at The Dark Thing. L'Engle also uses asyndeton and repetition of the word 'beyond' to demonstrate the dread of The Dark Thing when she writes, "...beyond shuddering, beyond crying or screaming, beyond the possibility of comfort." By repeating the word "beyond," L"Engle displays the idea that the fear Meg feels in this moment cannot even be described by typical emotions or reactions such as crying, screaming or shuddering. Rather it is a feeling so horrible and strong she cannot even put her own fear into words. The asyndeton paired with this repetition further exhibits the dreadfulness of The Dark Thing as it shows the way Meg's thoughts scramble in an attempt to define the way she is feeling as a result of seeing The Dark Thing for the first time.

Meg's reaction to The Dark Thing is an interesting inverse of the reaction the Pevensie children have when they hear Aslan's name for the first time in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.* "Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays…" (Lewis 74-75). Where the Pevensie children

experienced different feelings of delight, courage, adventure and even horror, The Dark Thing evoked only feelings of fear and dismay. L'Engle and Lewis both demonstrate the way figures of good and evil can elicit such strong emotions from their characters, similar to the way that what was happening on the global political stage during WWII and the Cold War was very impactful to ordinary citizens who found themselves in the midst of such conflicts. Following the description of Meg's feelings, L'Engle then goes on to write, "Darkness glazed her eyes and mind…" to further illustrate the impact The Dark Thing has on Meg, even as she is still very far away from it. The way Meg is so terrified and impacted by The Dark Thing mimics the way so many Americans felt about communism and its influence slowly spreading to vulnerable countries across the world.

American sentiment towards the spread of communism and the Soviet Union itself was similar to the way Meg felt looking at The Dark Thing covering other planets from a distance. Reactions to Communism during the Cold War were those of dread that Communism might spread across the globe. At the same time, the threat of a nuclear war's potential to destroy civilization also contributed to the atmosphere of fear and anxiety surrounding the Cold War period. There was alarm that because the Soviet Union managed to orbit the Earth before the Americans in 1961, they might be more advanced in both space technology as well as military and nuclear technology (Oziewicz 216). Feelings of impatience were also heightened during the Cold War as Americans became increasingly frustrated that the West seemed to be tolerating Communism without any direct actions against it (Graebner 95). President Truman believed that a policy of containment as a firm and patient process where the West should be doing everything in their power, except for direct war, to prevent further communist expansion, was the best way to combat the Soviet Union at the time. In practice, these measures of containment included

economic pressure and harassment, strengthening the military, support for Communist resistance movements, efforts to exploit any weakness in the Communist bloc, and military confrontation when and where it proved necessary (Mueller 69). In *A Wrinkle in Time,* one of Meg's faults is her impatience, which mimics the American sentiment of frustration and impatience surrounding the Cold War and the threat of Communism spreading. Meg wants to take quick and direct action to find her father because she believes that once she does, everything will be okay again: "'But I'm not patient!' Meg cried passionately. 'I've never been patient!'' (L'Engle 71). Similarly, many Americans during the Cold War were frustrated with Truman's policy of containment because they wanted swift and more direct action to be taken against the Soviet Union to end the Cold War. The way that patience was necessary while dealing with a major force such as the Soviet Union parallels the way Meg needed to refrain from rushing the process of saving her father and eventually Charles Wallace from IT. "Mrs. Who's glasses shone at her gently. 'If you want to help your father then you must learn patience. *Vitam impendere vero. To stake one's life for the truth.* That is what we must do'" (L'Engle 71). For both Meg and the United States, patience was integral in keeping the situation under control and not aggravating such evil forces.

The idea of "peaceful coexistence" was portrayed by Soviet Russia in attempts to relax tension from the Western world, making it seem as though the Soviet Union was not a military threat and thus pushed for Western democracies to disarm and back off from fighting communism. This "peaceful coexistence" that the Soviet Union advertised, however, proved only to be a very dangerous weapon as communism continued to spread over countries away from the West on their quest for world domination (Graebner 97-98). Interestingly, the "peaceful coexistence" the Soviet Union pushed for was also consistent with President Truman's policy of containment. The way the Soviet Union wanted to continue to spread communism without

interfering with the West, and the way the West wanted to curb the spread of communism without interfering with the Soviet Union, points to the idea that each country understood the nuclear capabilities of each other and the risk of nuclear war that interference might pose. This kind of "coexistence" resembles the way IT does not initially try to force Meg, Calvin or Charles Wallace to give in to IT's possessive power and conforming to Camazotz, rather IT attempts to coerce them to make the decision on their own, knowing they would put up resistance if any forced compulsion was laid upon them right away.

Similar to the way The Dark Thing cast its shadow over weaker planets, Soviet Russia targeted particularly vulnerable and third world countries while trying to spread communism as they were easier to manipulate and influence. Communism was portrayed to third world countries as a way to bring aid and relief to the suffering people were already experiencing there (Mueller 75). Not only did Americans fear the spread of Communism to third world countries, but also to Asia and the Middle East, as the communist revolution in China proved that Communism was in fact a major global problem threatening national sovereignty of countries across the globe (Graeber 97). Similar to the Soviet Union, Charles Wallace, who is possessed by IT at this moment, attempts to portray Camazotz as a peaceful planet where all of the people are happy and blissful: "'Nobody suffers here,' Charles intoned. 'Nobody is ever unhappy'" (L'Engle 157). L'Engle demonstrates how IT tries to manipulate Meg and Calvin into believing Camazotz is a good planet with good intentions, while simultaneously spreading The Dark Thing across space, consuming other planets.

The Soviet Union believed that the world domination they sought after would come from the oppressed working class violently revolting against the oppressive capitalist class, destroying them and then "eternal peace and utopian bliss would inundate the earth" (Mueller 68). L'Engle

demonstrates how in one reading of Camazotz and The Dark Thing, communism and Soviet Union thought were an imminent threat to the world, and would continue to be if something is not done to stop them. She writes, "Again Mrs. Which's voice reverberated through the cave. 'Therre willl nno llonggerr bee sso manyy pplleasanntt thinggss too llookk att iff rressponssible ppeoplle ddo nnott ddoo ssomethingg abboutt thee unnppleassanntt oneness'" (L'Engle 97). Mrs. Which's unique voice and style of speaking is portrayed in this passage along with the idea that combatting The Dark Thing is a time sensitive issue. The way L'Engle extends Mrs. Which's words serves as a way to demonstrate not only her wisdom, but her experience with The Dark Thing. Mrs. Which is the oldest of the Mrs. W's, having fought The Dark Thing in her past. Her speech is a testament to her older age, but also her judgment on the pressing matter of The Dark Thing. She recognizes that there will not be pleasant or good things to see in the Universe anymore if responsible actors do not take action to fight against Camazotz and The Dark Thing. This idea resembles the way the Soviet Union would only continue to spread communism across the world unless they could be stopped by a country like the United States and those with Western democratic policies. The idea that good things to see in the Universe are at risk of disappearing also resembles the way L'Engle warns against the dangers of conformity in American Suburbia, which I explore in more depth later in this chapter. With the idea of communism and American Suburbia both in mind, it is unclear who truly is the responsible country and who is the unpleasant one.

On the topic of goodness, L'Engle includes religious commentary on the idea of good and evil similarly to the way Lewis does in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.* L'Engle writes,

'Who have our fighters been?' Calvin asked.

'Oh, *you* must know them, dear,' Mrs. Whatsit said.

Mrs. Who's spectacles shone out at them triumphantly, '*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*'

'Jesus!' Charles Wallace said. 'Why of course, Jesus!' (L'Engle 100).

L'Engle equates Jesus Christ to goodness in this passage, providing the idea that just as Jesus is a fighter of The Dark Thing in *A Wrinkle in Time,* Jesus, or Christianity in general, is a part of the fight for good against communism and the Soviet Union. Including Jesus and a passage from the Book of John affirms L'Engle's own personal Christian worldview and the way she views the universe as an arena of an eternal battle between forces of good and evil (Oziewicz 211). Oziewicz discusses L'Engle's Christian worldview and touches on the idea that in an increasingly technological world, there are increasing threats to humanity and Christianity that she seeks to address in *A Wrinkle in Time* (Oziewicz 211). L'Engle's incorporation of Jesus and a biblical passage to represent goodness also serves as a criticism of Communist Soviet Russia, where there is no place for a system of believing in God or any kind of religion. Communism is an atheistic system, and through this passage L'Engle provides the idea that one reason the United States is representative of goodness is because of their acceptance of all religions.

Not only does L'Engle include Jesus as a fighter of goodness, she also includes a list of many great artists and thinkers such as Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare, Bach, Pasteur, Madame Curie, Einstein, Schweitzer, Gandhi, Buddha, Beethoven, Rembrandt, and St. Francis. These historical greats are those of a liberal arts education, showing the way L'Engle is making a point about the kinds of historical figures she believes share the type of goodness that Jesus Christ elicits. The wide variety of thinkers that L'Engle includes in this passage also represent different ranges of what it means to be good, and thus a range of ways to combat evil. For instance,

Gandhi is known for his philosophy of non-violence and peace. Gandhi inspired and influenced modern civil disobedience, which can also be looked at as a way that good fights evil. Through the inclusion of these diverse figures, L'Engle demonstrates that goodness has many layers to it, and there is not just one singular way to combat evil.

When it comes to evil in *A Wrinkle in Time,* the children travel or "tesser" through time and the Universe to arrive on the planet, Camazotz, in an effort to find Mr. Murry and combat IT, the mastermind behind The Dark Thing and the Dark planets. When they arrive on Camazotz, they are faced with a planet of sameness, similar to the way the Soviet Union and other Communist countries functioned during the Cold War. L'Engle writes,

> Then the doors of all the houses opened simultaneously, and out came women like a row of paper dolls. The print of their dresses was different, but they all gave the appearance of being the same. Each woman stood on the steps of her house. Each clapped. Each child with the ball caught the ball. Each child with the skipping rope folded the rope. Each child turned and walked into the house. The doors clicked shut behind them (L'Engle 115-116).

One of the main characteristics of Communism is a classless society, essentially meaning that all people are equal in economic and social status. This idea is presented through the passage above: each house is the same, and the actions of the women and children are carried out at the same time as well as in the same exact manner. No one stands out and no one behaves differently than one another. In this passage, L'Engle uses a simile to compare the women stepping out of their houses to paper dolls, paper cut outs meant to be exact copies of each other. She also repeats the word "Each," and the phrase, "Each child" at the beginning of multiple sentences to portray a rhythm within her sentence, mimicking the way there is a rhythm between the women and

children of Camazotz. Camazotz at first glance appears to be a utopia with order and procedure, similar to what Soviet Russia portrayed themselves as to the rest of the world during the Cold War. But the utopian communist goal of a world revolution is what Americans recognized as a major threat to humanity and freedom (Paterson 8). Within the appreciation in the 2007 First Square Fish Edition of *A Wrinkle in Time*, Anna Quindlen further perpetuates the idea of Camazotz representing the Soviet Union as she argues the, "tyranny of conformity clearly reflects the time" of state mandated order over the rights of individuals (Quindlen 3).

Not only does Camazotz represent communist Soviet Union, but L'Engle also comments on 1950s American suburbia through the presentation of the planet and the people living there. The article, "'We Do Not Have Whims on the Moon': A Wrinkle in Time, The Lotus Caves, and the Problem of American Exceptionalism in 1960s Science Fiction for Children," by Richard Gooding, demonstrates what post-war American suburbia looks like, and the haven of middle-class affluence and family structure that the Murry family exhibits (Gooding 294-295). L'Engle strategically describes the Murry house and the fact that they have plenty of space in their home as well as food and other aspects of a suburban middle-class home such as a pantry, a garage, a living room, and a treehouse in a backyard maple, and a "big old-fashioned kitchen" (12). Including details about the Murry home life is an indication of the economic conditions of American suburbia and way of life (Gooding 294). During the 1950s, conformity of certain societal values, gender roles and political beliefs were highly encouraged where individualism was discouraged. Meg herself proves to be different from the other kids at school, but her differences and lack of ability to conform are seen as character flaws: "'I *hate* being an oddball,' Meg said. 'It's hard on Sandy and Dennys too. I don't know if they're really like everybody else, or if they're just able to pretend they are. I try to pretend, but it isn't any help" (L'Engle 17-18).

In contrast, Meg's twin brothers Sandy and Dennys "didn't have any problems" (11) because they pass as ordinary American children.

Once actually on Camazotz, Meg hardly notices any differences between this planet and her own, pointing to the ambiguity of Camazotz that L'Engle presents throughout the novel: "As she looked down the hill she could see the smokestacks of a town, and it might have been one of any number of familiar towns. There seemed to be nothing strange, or different, or frightening, in the landscape" (L'Engle 111). The way there is a familiarity on Camazotz as there is on Earth demonstrates the way that, similar to communist Soviet Russia, American suburbia exhibited elements of sameness and conformity throughout the landscape, as well as among all of the houses and people that was seen as the correct way of American life. Despite this familiarity, L'Engle categorizes Camazotz in a negative light, where the uniform suburbs are actually depressing and deprived and, "the town was laid out in harsh angular patterns" (115) and the houses were, "small square boxes painted gray" (115). Through this presentation of Camazotz, L'Engle warns of a grim vision of the future for America that is dominated by conformism. This grim vision of future America can also be represented by The Dark Thing as well as Camazotz, an ominous cloud, or potential future that will linger over the United States for years to come if conformity persists (Gooding 296). The way that Camazotz is both a representation of the Soviet Union and 1950s American suburbia illustrates the way L'Engle simultaneously criticizes and warns against communism as well as conformity in American society. This also points to the idea that Cold War America and Cold War Russia were not all that different, despite these two countries battling head to head on the world stage as a result of their seemingly differing political ideologies and beliefs. The way that L'Engle critiques and compares the United States and the Soviet Union to each other through Camazotz is quite controversial especially during the time of

the Cold War. Most Americans would argue they do not resemble Russian people or politics in any way, and animosity between the two countries was at an all-time high as the threat of nuclear war also loomed over each country. The form of children's literature allows L'Engle the freedom to comment upon such controversial and complex political ideas that she might not otherwise have if she was not writing under the guise of children's literature.

Through the character Charles Wallace L'Engle demonstrates how it is possible to become brainwashed by the idea of communism and its utopian front, as well as the American ideology of conformity that rose to prominence in the 1950s. Following the destruction of WWII, people across the world suffered from post war damages, hoping for a better future. Communist leaders like Stalin and his successors, represented through IT, promised their people a better life and happiness through equality, criticizing capitalism and arguing for its eventual self-destruction. When Charles Wallace is taken over by IT, he says, "'On Camazotz we are all happy because we are all alike. Differences create problems'" (L'Engle 155), demonstrating the Communist ideal that sameness is equivalent to happiness and prosperity, as well as voicing the American value of conformity. Prior to this passage, Charles Wallace describes what happens to people who stray from the norm or appear weak on Camazotz:

> 'We let no one suffer. It is much kinder to annihilate anyone who is ill. Nobody has weeks and weeks of runny noses and sore throats. Rather than endure such discomfort they are simply put to sleep.'
>
> You mean they are put to sleep while they have a cold, or they're murdered?' Calvin demanded.
>
> 'Murder is a most primitive word,' Charles Wallace said. 'There is no such thing as murder on Camazotz. IT takes care of all such things' (L'Engle 152-154).

L'Engle uses descriptive words such as "annihilate" and "murder" to add weight to the violence that IT carries out on the people of Camazotz for showing any difference or weakness. This serves as a similarity and criticism of the way Stalin as a leader carried out a genocide of roughly twenty million of his own people during WWII prior to the Cold War. Charles Wallace then goes on to blame wars that occur on earth on difference and individuality: "'Why do you think we have wars at home? Why do you think people get confused and unhappy? Because they all live their own, separate, individual lives. I've been trying to explain to you in the simplest possible way that on Camazotz individuals have been done away with. Camazotz is ONE mind. It's IT. And that's why everybody's so happy and efficient'" (L'Engle 156-157). The posing of questions in this passage demonstrates the way IT manipulates people into thinking individualism is what creates issues of unhappiness and economic or social inequality. The capitalization of the word 'ONE' is important because it emphasizes communism's core values of sharing and sameness. The reference to wars at home also demonstrates the way Soviet leaders such as Stalin were convinced that capitalism would eventually crumble and communism would prevail.

Following WWII, Soviet leaders repeatedly announced their goals of world domination (Graebner 96). Nikita Khrushchev, the first Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, constantly stressed the superiority of the Communist party, much as Charles Wallace stressed the superiority of Camazotz and IT when he was brainwashed by IT. Similar to the way a brainwashed Charles Wallace warns against wars and unhappiness on earth, Khrushchev warned that capitalism would perish and communism would take over the world (Graebner 96-97). Where Krushchev stressed the superiority of the Soviet Union and the Communist party, L'Engle expresses the excellence of Western democratic ideals through Meg when she recites

the Declaration of Independence as an effort to combat IT: "'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'" (L'Engle 176). Including the introduction of the Declaration of Independence as a tool to combat the influence of IT demonstrates the idea that the founding democratic principles of the United States are strong enough to confront communism and its spread. Even though L'Engle critiques American suburbia and the ideas of conformity in the United States through the representation of Camazotz, she ultimately sees the promise of American democracy as an important response to the perils of communism and the Soviet Union government. The inclusion of the Declaration of Independence also exhibits the way the United States found it necessary to project their power abroad, onto the Soviet Union and other countries impacted by the disasters of WWII (Paterson 6). During the Cold War and the period following WWII, the United States provided economic aid to countries abroad not only to ensure economic stability in Western democratic countries, but also to sustain a high standard of American living and portray that to the rest of the world. Such power projections from the United States were alarming to the Soviet Union as they did not have powerful allies during the Cold War (Paterson 6).

Not only does L'Engle include American democratic ideals as a weapon against IT and Camazotz, or the Soviet Union and communism, she also emphasizes the importance of love and how it relates to the fight of good versus evil. L'Engle writes, "If she could give love to IT perhaps it would shrivel up and die, for she was sure IT could not withstand love. But she, in all her weakness and foolishness and baseness and nothingness, was incapable of loving IT…But she could love Charles Wallace" (L'Engle 229). As life, liberty, and happiness are all important democratic principles for the United States, L'Engle implies that values such as love,

selflessness, and caring for others are equally important to goodness (Oziewicz 228). Love is a fundamental Christian value and one of the most important virtues that is taught about Jesus Christ and living a Christian life. The emphasis that L'Engle puts on love, and the fact that love is what ultimately conquers IT and saves Charles Wallace, further illustrates L'Engle's own Christian beliefs and values.

Just as *The Jungle Books* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* bring questions about who the audience is because of the inclusion of violence and complicated political references, L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* includes many complex scientific, philosophical, and political topics that raise questions about whether or not this book is meant for the child reader. On one hand, the child protagonist and heavy attention on the children Meg, Calvin, and Charles Wallace, make it seem like this is a novel written for and about children. The fantastical elements of traveling through space and time to other planets is also another indicator that *A Wrinkle in Time* is meant for the child audience. On the other hand, the level of maturity that surrounds global political topics such as the Cold War and the spread of communism, as well as conformism in the United States, is unlikely to be picked up and understood by the child reader, making this a book for the adult audience.

These more mature topics that I briefly mentioned above involve scientific concepts such as tessering, as well as the many philosophical quotes and ideas that Mrs. Who introduces throughout the entirety of the novel. Tessering is the concept of human beings traveling, or wrinkling through space and time, to get to a far away location in a shorter amount of time. In *A Wrinkle in Time,* tessering is described as the act of traveling faster than the speed of light using a fifth dimension. The idea of time travel to begin with is a concept that might be difficult for children to fully comprehend, and the idea of tessering adds another level of complexity to the

concept. Children are more likely to have a difficult time understanding a complicated concept such as tessering because the idea of traveling back and forth through time and dimensions is not only very abstract, but it goes against the everyday experiences of a child and their young understanding of how the world works. Adults on the other hand are more likely to have the kind of background knowledge about space and time that is beneficial to understanding more mature topics such as tessering and the other scientific concepts introduced in the book, making this novel operate on a level aimed not only at the child audience but also the adult audience.

For instance, L'Engle includes Einstein's theory of relativity that only an older audience would understand because of the intricacy of such an equation and the idea that prior mathematical and scientific knowledge such as algebra and physics would be helpful to the understanding. L'Engle writes,

'Whats a megaparsec?' Calvin asked.

'One of Father's nicknames for me,' Meg said. 'It's also 3.26 million light years.'

'What's $E = mc^2$?'

'Einstein's equation.'

'What's E stand for?'

'Energy.'

'M?'

'Mass.'

'c^2?'

'The square of the velocity in light in centimeters per second" (L'Engle 50-51).

Einstein's equation and the theory of relativity are widely known and accepted in science and mathematics, and something that adults would be familiar with while reading this novel.

However, even though such a scientific and mathematical theory might be more widely understood by an adult audience, in this scene, L'Engle puts such an equation and concept within the grasp of a child, Meg, who is teaching Calvin what each aspect of the equations means. The idea that Meg can be so knowledgeable about such a complex theory further illustrates the idea that *A Wrinkle in Time* is both aimed at the adult audience and child audience simultaneously.

L'Engle also includes different philosophical ideas and moral lessons throughout the book through quotes and phrases in different languages that apply to whatever situation the children are in. "'*Le coeur a ses raisins que la raison ne connaît point.* French. Pascal. *The heart has its reasons, whereof reason knows nothing*'" (L'Engle 42). Adults undeniably have more life and cultural experience than children, making them likely to have been exposed to famous philosophers such as Pascal or Seneca, who L'Engle also quotes, as well as foreign languages. Most children, on the other hand, are still trying to become experts at reading and understanding their own language. Adults reading *A Wrinkle in Time* can better appreciate Mrs. Who's many phrases, as they may understand them as valuable lessons of philosophy and reasoning, and even be relatable to them as a reader.

The fantastical elements such as the setting in outer space and the idea of traveling through time suggest that this novel is appropriate for the child audience, as well as L'Engle's inclusion of small educational lessons and definitions throughout the entirety of the book. For instance, L'Engle puts particular emphasis on five year old Charles Wallace and his extraordinary intelligence: "'*A change in gene,'* Charles Wallace quoted, '*resulting in the appearance in the offspring of a character which is not present in the parents but which is potentially transmissible to its offspring'"* (L'Engle 38). Charles Wallace recites what a genetic mutation is and demonstrates his capability of learning and retaining knowledge even though he

is so young. On the very next pages, Charles Wallace provides the definition of compulsion when Calvin questions whether he knows what it means: "'*Constraint. Obligation. Because one is compelled.* Not a very good definition, but it's the Concise Oxford'" (L'Engle 39). Not only does the inclusion of definitions actually teach the audience something, but having Charles Wallace demonstrate such high intelligence as a very young boy encourages the idea that children reading the novel can be like him too.

L'Engle also includes different points of the novel where the children refer back to the science and math they have learned in school. For instance, Meg attempts to resist IT through concentration on things she knows such as the periodic table of elements and her square roots: "'Hydrogen. Helium,' she started obediently. Keep them in their proper atomic order. What next. She knew it. Yes" (L'Engle 178). When reciting the periodic table became too rhythmical, she turned to concentrating on her square roots: "For a moment she was able to concentrate. Rack your brains yourself, Meg. Don't let IT rack them. 'The square root of five is 2.236,' she cried triumphantly, 'because 2.236 times 2.236 equals 5!'" (L'Engle 179). The periodic table of elements and square roots are basic aspects of a school curriculum that many children would at least be familiar with while reading this novel. In the article, "Mrs. Whatsit 'Socks' it to Probability," Virginia Usnick discusses the idea that children's literature offers many opportunities for teachers to help their students make connections to the world around them and between the different disciplines they are learning in school (Usnick 246). She describes *A Wrinkle in Time* as an important springboard for introducing mathematical topics and probability concepts to upper elementary students (Usnick 246).

Not only does L'Engle include textbook definitions as a way to educate the child reader on particular words or topics they may not be familiar with, she also includes drawings as a way

to inform the audience of concepts difficult to describe solely through words. For instance, L'Engle incorporates the use of a drawing to describe what "tessering" is to her audience. L'Engle includes an image of two hands holding a string straight across with an insect walking along it. Within the next image, the hands are closer together, the string collapses so that it is no longer straight, and the insect makes it to the other hand faster than it would have if the string were still held in a straight line by the two hands (L'Engle 86). Utilizing a visual mimics the style of a children's picture book, encouraging the reader to visualize the words on the page alongside the image and use their own imagination to understand what is happening.

Despite the childish nature of elementary educational lessons and drawings, L'Engle's undeniable references to the Cold War, communism, and American suburbia blur the idea that this is a book meant only for the child audience. As I discussed in the previous chapter through the scholarship of J.R.R Tolkien, children's knowledge of the world is so small compared to that of adults, providing the idea that even the books categorized under "children's literature" are created from the adult imagination and thus meant for the adult audience (Tolkien 17-18).

Even though children may not have the experience or depth of knowledge that adults do because of their age, L'Engle highlights their ability to perceive and comprehend, an idea that many critics such as Tolkien might argue against: "'*Allwissend bin ich nicht; doch viel ist mir bewißt.* Goethe. *I do not know everything; still many things I understand*'" (L'Engle 113). This quote from Goethe is recited by Mrs. Who as she gives Charles Wallace a last piece of advice before he begins his journey on Camazotz. Similar to Charles Wallace, it is indisputable that child readers do not and will not be able to comprehend everything they are encountering; however, L'Engle gives credit to the child audience just as she does to Charles Wallace, alluding to the idea that children are wiser than many adults might believe. As I discussed in the first

chapter through the scholarship of Jerry Y. Diakiw, children are often underestimated in their ability to understand complex adult topics. Diakiw argues that children are capable of understanding complex "adult" topics such as politics, religion, and the developing world, sometimes even better than adults because of their open mind and curiosity (Diakiw 296).

As I argue in the previous two chapters regarding *The Jungle Books* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, A Wrinkle in Time* demonstrates itself as a children's novel that is simultaneously meant for the child and adult reader. Because both the child and adult reader can and will benefit from reading this book in particular, or even more broadly, the genre of children's literature as a whole, the argument of who the form is truly meant for is complex. The way that L'Engle includes complicated global political topics as well as educational lessons and fantastical elements throughout *A Wrinkle in Time* illustrates the idea that both children and adults will gain some sort of understanding and insight from reading, even if that understanding is not identical between the two audiences.

Conclusion

Children's literature as a form does not just have one function, rather it can be used as an outlet for authors to display commentary on complex political issues as well as provide meaningful insight into historical, cultural, and social contexts during and even after the time a particular text is published. *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, and *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle are three classic works that depict their time of publication and the global conflicts going on. Not only do Kipling, Lewis, and L'Engle portray the global socio-political climate during the time of publication, but their work also calls into question the audience of children's literature as a genre, challenging the assumption that this form is solely for the child reader or that child readers are simple. As I discuss throughout this project, there is the assumption that texts like these automatically cater to the child reader not only because they fall under the form of children's literature, but because of the many elements included in each text that are relevant to the child audience. I have demonstrated that alongside those elements that make children's literature for children, such as fantasy, lessons, child protagonists, talking animals, and made up creatures, there are equally as many aspects that cater to an adult audience simultaneously. These elements might include more complex lessons, mature or complicated topics, and violence.

Whether for children or adults, each of these texts clearly comments on global political conflicts as issues when they were published, yet these texts also prove to have contemporary impacts on the world as they speak differently to our present moment. Another level of ambiguity that these texts produce, though not necessarily foreseen by the authors at the time of publication, is how they have shifted to address current crises, and readers now try to find

meaning in them to meet the problems of our own day. For instance, many scholars have taken a new approach to reading *The Jungle Books,* arguing that aside from the obvious imperialistic reading of the text, there is also a modern environmental reading that Kipling himself was commenting on, and something readers can pick up on now as environmental crises in the world are much more prevalent. Kipling highlights the fragility of the Jungle ecosystem throughout some of his stories. In "The White Seal," Kipling highlights the destructive impact of human beings on animals and the environment. The seals in this story are hunted and killed which illustrates the way human beings can have such a negative impact on the natural environment around them. With a more contemporary reading of *The Jungle Books,* this story can serve as a criticism of people who hunt and kill wildlife for economic gain with no regard for that particular species and the possibility of endangerment. Christie Harner's article, "Geopolitical Temporalities and Animal Ecologies in *The Jungle Books,*" discusses the way human actions fundamentally alter and harm existing animal ecosystems. She uses *The Jungle Books* as an example of measuring positive and negative human impact on the environment and changing ecosystems. Instead of highlighting the anthropomorphism within *The Jungle Books,* Harner emphasizes the human-animal relationships as they are presented by Kipling and the way these relationships tell a story about the impacts of human beings on the environment (Harner 135-136).

Though I do not analyze this particular story in chapter one, the story "How Fear Came" is from *The Second Jungle Book* by Kipling, and highlights a water crisis that the Jungle animals face together. In this story, there is a drought in the Jungle, rains have been nonexistent, plants are dying due to heat and the animals have nowhere to drink from. The animals of the Jungle create a Water Truce where they can all travel to the Waingunga River, which has not dried up,

to drink without fear of being killed by predators. Reading this story through a contemporary lens, the impacts of climate change are prevalent as droughts are a consequence of warmer temperatures enhancing evaporation, reducing surface water and drying out soil and vegetation. This is just another example of human impact on the environment, and more specifically how it negatively impacts wildlife. Kipling's readers may not have been primed to focus on such environmental issues as much as imperial ones during the time of publication, demonstrating the way his stories have different meanings today than they did in 1894.

Similar to *The Jungle Books, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* has also taken on more contemporary readings, one of them also being from an environmentalist perspective. For instance, Narnia can be seen as a mirror to our modern world, calling attention to the environmental crises human civilization is facing (Etcherling 100). The spell from the White Witch that causes a forever winter in Narnia is symbolic of the destructive impact humans can have on their environment such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, all which have caused ecological imbalances in nature, like the endless winter in the novel. There is also a contemporary reading of characters in the book such as Mr. and Mrs. Beaver who demonstrate the importance of sustainability by teaching the children to take only what they need and to try and not waste anything. Aslan then becomes a modern symbol of conservation and preservation as he brings an end to the White Witch's forever winter and restores the natural balance of Narnia by bringing back spring. Ultimately, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* takes on a modern conservationist approach and consciousness (Etcherling 100) that is important in demonstrating how humans should be interacting with the environment and the natural world.

Similar to the way *The Jungle Books* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* produce contemporary environmental readings, *A Wrinkle in Time* generates conversation about mental

health and depression. I discuss throughout chapter three the way The Dark Thing has multiple meanings, those being the spread of communism, American suburbia, and the potential for nuclear war. Today, The Dark Thing can be read as a modern interpretation of depression and the book as a whole may address mental health and self esteem awareness. When describing The Dark Thing, L'Engle writes, "'Did it just come?' Meg asked in agony, unable to take her eyes from the sickness of the shadow which darkened the beauty of earth'" (L'Engle 98-99). The way The Dark Thing "darkened the beauty of earth" is similar to the way depression can have major psychological and physical impacts on a person. Even though Meg does not want to look at it, she is "unable to take her eyes from the sickness of the shadow," similar to the way people do not choose depression, rather depression changes the way the world looks and feels for many people.

In the article, "Self Esteem in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time,"* Aillen Robiatul Adawiyah discusses how Meg Murry struggles with issues of self esteem and self-confidence as a teenage girl. Meg constantly compares herself to others, hating herself and believing she is ugly and stupid (Adawiyah 49). Many young girls who might be reading this book today likely face some of the same struggles as Meg, especially during a time where social media is extremely influential and also detrimental to young people as they have a place to constantly compare themselves to others. Meg often compares herself and her imperfections to her seemingly perfect mother, saying, "Maybe if I weren't so repulsive looking—maybe if I were pretty like you…" (L'Engle 18). Adawiyah goes into depth about how self esteem can be defined as a mechanism that stimulates self-development which can be a very painful process for young people growing up and having different environmental factors that affect them (Adawiyah 50). Despite Meg's mental health struggles with self-esteem, *A Wrinkle in Time* ultimately shows

readers that being different and individual is what makes someone unique and powerful. Because L'Engle has Meg save Charles Wallace in the end with her differences and faults, she demonstrates to her readers that sometimes what we see as imperfections are actually the greatest strengths. L'Engle shows her audience that loving and respecting one's true self can lead to happiness and achievement just as it did for Meg.

Environmental concerns were certainly relevant during the time of publication of *The Jungle Books* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* and mental health was also relevant when *A Wrinkle in Time* was written. However, as I discuss throughout this project, there were other pressing issues going on during the publication of each of these texts such as imperialism, the world wars, and the Cold War, that proved to be central global concerns of the time. Reading these texts with a contemporary lens, issues of environmentalism and mental health now rise as central concerns today in ways they may not have at the time of publication for each text. With this idea in mind, *The Jungle Books, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* and *A Wrinkle in Time* are all stories that can be interpreted in multifaceted ways that reflect the time and global context they are read in. Not only can these texts be read in different ways depending on what is going on in the world, but even the contemporary readings I bring up in this conclusion have new ways of being meant for the child and adult audience. For instance, adults might understand the science and complicated web of issues involved in climate change differently than children do when it comes to contemporary environmental problems Teachers selecting *A Wrinkle in Time* for a classroom full of young students on the other hand might choose it for its ability to speak to social-emotional learning which is at the forefront of K-12 education today. Children's literature is such an important form to study because of the way it not only allows authors the unexpected freedom to comment on complicated political topics, but it also serves as a medium that is

pertinent and valuable to both child and adult readers. Because this form includes complex global political issues while simultaneously offering multidimensional interpretations of those issues, readers are challenged to think critically about the historical and contemporary context of the work, as well as understand new and often differing beliefs or viewpoints. Children's literature is also a medium that allows children and adults to be in conversation with each other, demonstrating the way this form provides both children and adults the opportunity to share their unique perspectives of the world with one another. Stories such as *The Jungle Books, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* and *A Wrinkle in Time* all demonstrate the way in which children's literature is an important tool for introducing complex political discourse, as well as a platform for shared conversation and understanding between children and adults.

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