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The Search for Self: Childhood Interiors and Identity in Contemporary Young Adult Literature

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The Search for Self:
Childhood Interiors and Identity in Contemporary Young Adult Literature

By
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An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Graduation from the
Western Oregon University Honors Program

Dr. Kit Andrews & Dr. Cornelia Paraskevas,
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Honors Program Director

Western Oregon University
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# Table of Contents

I. Acknowledgments............................................................................................................3  
II. Abstract...........................................................................................................................4  
III. Introduction: Literary Interiority and the Hero's Journey..............................................5  
IV. Chapter 1: The Absence of Home and Self-Identity....................................................26  
V. Chapter 2: Establishing a New Home and New Morals................................................46  
VI. Chapter 3: Relinquishing Home and Immaturity.........................................................69  
VII. Chapter 4: Claiming Ownership of Home and Actualized Self.................................91  
VIII. Afterword: Escaping the Capitol through Platform 9 ¾ and Entering Narnia..........97  
IX. Appendix....................................................................................................................103  
X. Bibliography................................................................................................................107
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Abstract

In accordance with philosopher Gaston Bachelard's interpretation of literary interiors as the cosmoes one creates through inhabited space, this thesis focuses on a narrow yet thorough investigation of how interiority reflects the transformative journey of characters within contemporary children's literature of the Western world. Such interiors are used to compelling effect within the bildungsromane of contemporary youth fiction, with the sanctuaries and prisons depicted throughout such novels linked to the various stages of the protagonists' journeys toward self-actualization (i.e., one's realization of, and movement toward, his or her potential). In particular, three popular young adult series combine the hero's journey with literary interiority in highly compelling ways: *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956) by C.S. Lewis, the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) by J.K. Rowling, and *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010) by Suzanne Collins. The protagonists of these works undergo a transformational journey – the quintessential theme of coming-of-age literature – with the trajectory of their quests definable through the interiors they encounter and the significance of the perceptions regarding both self and community that they gain from their experiences within those interiors.
Introduction: Literary Interiority and the Hero's Journey

“\textit{In the story of his spirit – in that process of brain building by which we are, each of us, what we are. With the image of the place so clear and favorable upon him, he fell to thinking of himself therein, and how his thoughts had grown up to him.}”

– Walter Pater, \textit{Imaginary Portraits}

Literary interiors, in a rudimentary sense, can be described as worlds within worlds which, like Russian nesting dolls, may be unveiled layer by layer to reveal the identities hidden within them. For the purposes of my investigation, literary interiors are defined as the shelters and imprisonments an individual experiences in reality by means of physical frameworks and/or in virtuality by means of the imagination, thoughts, and dreams. The places or locations which engender our sense of self, community, and belonging effectively become microcosms of their own when viewed through the eyes of the inhabitant. This claim, in essence, illuminates one of the most profound connections to be made between man's search for self and the interiors through which he moves – that is, that his perceptions of and experiences within these interiors are shaped by his level of mental, physical, and emotional maturation.

Despite this connection between identity and interiority, it would be false to say that interiors are entirely shaped by man's psychological construction of them. Man cannot simply imagine any desired interior into existence; instead, he physically, mentally, and emotionally molds the interiors he inhabits, viewing them always through the lens of his experiences. In fact, while a majority of literary interiors are at least partially physical in nature, they are more significantly infused with an inhabitant's mental and emotional projections. As French philosopher Gaston Bachelard describes it, “All inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home . . . imagination functions in
this direction whenever the human being has found the slightest shelter: we shall see the imagination build 'walls' of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection – or just the contrary, tremble behind thick walls, mistrust the staunchest ramparts” (5).

In accordance with Bachelard's interpretation of literary interiors as the cosmoses one creates through inhabited space, this thesis focuses on a narrow yet thorough investigation of how interiority reflects the transformative journey of characters within contemporary children's literature of the Western world. I claim that such interiors are used to compelling effect within the bildungsromane of contemporary youth fiction, with the sanctuaries and prisons depicted throughout such novels linked to the various stages of the protagonists' journeys toward self-actualization (i.e., one's realization of, and movement toward, his or her potential). In particular, three popular young adult series combine the hero's journey with literary interiority in highly compelling ways: The Chronicles of Narnia (1950-1956) by C.S. Lewis, the Harry Potter series (1997-2007) by J.K. Rowling, and The Hunger Games trilogy (2008-2010) by Suzanne Collins. The protagonists of these works undergo a transformational journey – the quintessential theme of coming-of-age literature – with the trajectory of their quests definable through the interiors they encounter and the significance of the perceptions regarding both self and community that they gain from their experiences within those interiors.

Continuing a Tradition: The Study of Interiority from the 19th Century to Today

Authors at a Glance

In addition to relying on the philosophical groundwork established by Gaston
Bachelard, I will be referencing three essential theorists of literary interiority throughout my work: Chinese philosopher and geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, German-Jewish intellectual Walter Benjamin, and German-Jewish philosopher and sociologist Max Horkheimer. While each of these scholars' contributions to an understanding of literary interiors is referenced within this analysis, the primary theories I utilize are those held by Bachelard and Tuan. Apart from these philosophers of interiority, the writings of Italian literary critic Franco Moretti are explored in order to 1) better elucidate the past and present status of the bildungsroman and 2) further emphasize the strong relationship between this symbolic form and the symbolism inherent to literary interiority. Elements of German sociologist Gerald Handel's exploration of *The Psychosocial Interior of the Family* have also been incorporated throughout this analysis to illustrate the overlap that exists between a protagonist's family life, their perceptions of interiority, and their understanding of the concept of home. Along with these foundational writers, the insights of numerous authors and critics of young adult literature have been included to provide further evidence of the connection between self, community, domesticity, and belonging as portrayed within the three series. Lastly, passages from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* serve as introductory examples of 19th century interiority in order to 1) help clarify the primary hypotheses behind literary interiority, 2) act as a bridge between contemporary interiority and its predecessors, and 3) be a familiar point of reference for a wide range of readers.

**Bachelard and Tuan**

If the investigation of literary interiority has no established paternal figure, the
title of primary caregiver seems best suited for Gaston Bachelard, a man who divided his life between the study of physics, philosophy, and poetry – a perfect triad of intellectual interests from which to delve into interiority. A few of Bachelard's key theories regarding literary interiors include 1) the view of interiors as sanctuaries or imprisonments and the objects within them as symbols or “mental maps” of a person, 2) the belief in the importance of the relationship between the structure of one's interiors and an individual's psyche, and 3) the notion that the power of one's interiors and exteriors are always tempered by one another (i.e., the comfort of a sanctuary is heightened if the exterior that exists beyond it is a terrifying one). Bachelard aligns all three of these theoretical conjectures when he states, “At whatever dialectical pole the dreamer stands, whether in the house or in the universe, the dialects become dynamic. House and space are not merely two juxtaposed elements of space. In the reign of the imagination, they awaken daydreams in each other, that are opposed” (43). Bachelard's theoretical premises thus align perfectly with a study of the transformational journey and, furthermore, provide a foundational springboard from which to launch my own analysis concerning interiority as it is presented within contemporary children's literature – a genre wherein, as Bachelard states of dreams, “imagination, memories, and perception exchange function” (59).

In turn, Yi-Fu Tuan's philosophy presents an alternate but closely related way of defining interiority – that is, in terms of place and space. While Bachelard's terminology is perhaps a more precise way of encompassing the full meaning of interiority, Tuan's phrasing is conversely more familiar and therefore more understandable to a general readership. By using “place” and “space” as substitutes for “interiority” and “exteriority,”
respectively, Tuan is able to make the discussion of interiority less abstract, defining place and space as “basic components of the lived world” (3). Of this, he states, “If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place” (6). In this and other key ideas, Bachelard's and Tuan's theories about interiority often supplement one another, allowing for substantial analytical interplay between them. Additionally, apart from recognizing the symbolic nature of literary interiors and the contrast between the interior (i.e., place) and the exterior (i.e., space), Tuan places a significant emphasis on the relationship between interiority/exteriority, domesticity, and self-identity, arguing that “children, at least those of the Western world, develop a strong sense of property . . . [that] arises out of a need for assurance of his own worth and for a sense of status among peers” (32). Tuan claims that an individual's relationship with the interior is tempered largely by our stage of development (i.e., our awareness of our own identity) and the figures – often familial and most notably mothers – who play a part in our lives; he relates that a child's understanding of place is defined “broadly as a focus of value, of nurture and support” (29). One's identity is thus entangled within one's status as a member of a familial group, with “home” serving as the inhabitant's most profound interior because of the way in which it simultaneously validates his or her individuality and sense of social belonging.

The Bildung of the Bildungsroman: Mapping the Path Toward Self-Actualization

The bildungsroman (commonly referred to as the coming-of-age novel) depicts the journey toward self-actualization that characterizes the archetypal format of young
adult literature. Although there is no one translation from German for the root word *bildung*, it is associated with ideas of transformation, enlightenment, growth, progression, and maturation. An understanding of this genre of literature has been well-documented by scholars across the globe since its origination by philologist Johann Morgenstern in 1819. Among these experts is Franco Moretti, a Stanford University professor whose book *Way of the World* explores the traditional hero's journey in contrast to the birth of the bildungsroman in the 19th century. Of this transformation, Moretti states, “Achilles, Hector, Ulysses: the hero of the classical epic is a mature man, an adult,” juxtaposing this image with the new paradigm that “sees youth as the most meaningful part of life” (3).

Youth is thus a focal criterion of the heroes and heroines within the modern-day bildungsroman. Moretti relates that the protagonists of traditional tales (almost exclusively male) adhere to a “prescribed youth” which consists of following in the footsteps of their father. With the movement of society from the country to the city, however, the landscape of youth likewise evolved in such a way that “‘apprenticeship’ [was] no longer the slow and predictable progress towards one's father's work, but rather an uncertain exploration of social space . . . through travel and adventure, wandering and getting lost” (Moretti 4). In this way, the heroes of the contemporary bildungsroman seek their identity by looking toward the future rather than back at the past. Equally important for our discussion, these heroes look to “spaces” and “places” as the means of constructing and situating their identity. Yet, while this wanderlust gives rise to “unexpected hopes,” it also leaves the protagonist “perennially dissatisfied and restless” (Moretti 4). In accordance with these classifications, then, the bildungsroman comes to
symbolize modernity as “a bewitching and risky process full of 'great expectations' and 'lost illusions'” (Moretti 5). Moretti explains how these seemingly contradictory concepts correlate:

Freedom and happiness, identity and change, security and metamorphoses:
although antagonistic, they are all equally important for modern Western mentality. Our world calls for their coexistence, however difficult; and it therefore calls for a cultural mechanism capable of representing, exploring, and testing their coexistence. (9)

The bildungsroman acts as this cultural mechanism, bringing together in compromise the contradictions of the human condition that mankind faces, a solution that Moretti identifies as not only “the novel's most celebrated theme” (9), but “a tool for survival” (10). Both concepts – contradiction and compromise – are integral to our examination of interiority as well, as the interiors and exteriors our protagonists face often function multifariously, compelling us to view the meanings found within them not in terms of “either/or” but “as well as” (Moretti 10).

The various trials the protagonist of the bildungsroman must face blossom out of the contradictions he has been tasked with synthesizing, with each trial providing the opportunity to build upon his conception of self via experimentation; the focus thus lies not on the protagonist's success or failure regarding these tests, but in the self-awareness and self-expansion he gains while simultaneously “accepting the deferment of the ultimate meaning of his existence” (Moretti 46). For Moretti, the meaning of the term “trial” therefore shifts from referring to “an obstacle to be overcome while remaining
'intact’” to “something that must be incorporated, for only by stringing together
'experiences' does one build a personality” (48). This tying together of trials as a source
of identity is directly relatable to an exploration of literary interiority, for just as the
protagonist's experiences aid in the formation of the self, so too does her movement
through various “spaces” and “places” along the way become crucial to mapping this
maturation. This correlation between the arc of the protagonist's quest and her encounter
with interiors and exteriors lacks extensive study, however. Thus, it is my intention to link
the contemporary bildungsroman with interiority so that readers may become more aware
of the way in which literary interiority, in similar fashion to the bildungssroman,
“attempts to build the ego and make it an indisputable centre of its own structure”
(Moretti 11).

**Down the Rabbit Hole:**
**Distinguishing Literary Interiority from Architectural Interiority**

Before delving further into interiority as it relates to each of the contemporary
young adult series I examine, it is important to expand the concept of literary interiors
beyond merely the physical. Both in and out of literature, we typically discuss interiors
from an architectural point of view, envisioning an interior as the inside portion of a
building such as a bedroom, living room, or kitchen. Yet, while these physical containers
can and do often function as important thematic identifiers within literary contexts,
interiority as a philosophical concept extends beyond such enclosures to include any
inhabited space that functions as the embodiment of memories, associations, or
experiences for the inhabitant.

Considered from this perspective, literary interiors can more accurately be thought
of as shelters and/or imprisonments which, while perhaps physical in nature, are principally characterized by the way in which they reflect a character's mental and emotional state. Literary interiority thus includes both literal interiors and figurative representations of subjectivity, with “inhabited space [often] transcending geometrical space” (Bachelard 47). As Tuan explains it, “Place [i.e., interiority] can be defined in a variety of ways. Among them is this: place is whatever stable object catches our attention. As we look at a panoramic scene our eyes pause at points of interest. Each pause is time enough to create an image of place that looms large momentarily in our view” (161).

Examples of such interiority may include a favored nook within a home, the grounds of a garden, or even the enclosed space that a child creates when she hides under her blanket. Each of these instances reveals images of interiors that are not tangibly bound spaces in the absolute sense of the word; rather, the human mind establishes mental borders around the spaces one occupies, particularly when these perceived interiors act as a shelter or prison for the individual.

This perception of place and space also allows for an understanding of figurative literary exteriors as distinct from literal exteriors in literature. By this token, spacial exteriors may even function as literary interiors. For instance, what we would commonly refer to as an exterior (i.e., the world outside of or away from houses/buildings) – a forest, for instance – can be utilized as a literary interior if the inhabitant views it as a location of safety or imprisonment. In Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, for example, most of the action takes place within what we would classify as the exterior – that is to say, it happens out of doors and in the open air, and not within the walls of any of the
dwellings mentioned in Wonderland. Nevertheless, Wonderland – apart from being an “underground” world that Alice falls into and thereby literally framed as an interior – can be classified as a literary interior for the way in which the entirety of the land becomes entwined with the identity of its principle characters.

Just as a physical exterior can function as an interior for a particular person – such as the way in which the caterpillar in *Alice and Wonderland* views his garden as his own place of interiority even though it exists “outside” – a physical interior can too be claimed as a literary exterior under certain contexts. For instance, the child who takes refuge under the blankets of his bed will view this crafted space as his interior, with the rest of his room beyond this enclosure correspondingly becoming the exterior. In this way, literary exteriority refers to that which exists in opposition to the literary interiors identified by the inhabitant. The denotation of literary interiors and exteriors is therefore highly dependent on the perception of particular characters within specific contexts.

Although interiors are constructed both in reality and by the imagination, it is also important to note how interiors can and often do function as self-enclosed “worlds” – that is, places by which we can define our own identity. A simple example of the notion of interior worlds is one's childhood bedroom, a place that acts as a world all its own for us by virtue of our inhabiting it. In other words, we create a cosmos as a result of the values, morals, and virtues we implant within that enclosure. In the *Harry Potter* series, for instance, the place in which witches and wizards live is known as the “Wizarding World” despite its location in England; it is labeled as such, however, because it encompasses an entire microcosm of existence that acts as a source of identity for its inhabitants. The
existence of the Wizarding World reaffirms every wizard's and witch's identity as a wizard or witch; at the same time, it is by means of their inhabiting it that the Wizarding World can be identified as such.

**The Notion of Home: Two Central Modes of Viewing Interiority**

Within my analysis, I will be focusing primarily on two types of cosmoses frequently displayed within young adult literature: the interior as a sanctuary and the interior as a prison. Both of these forms of interiority become integral to the hero as he matures toward self-actualization, with his psychological development tempering the nature of his perceptions of both interiority and exteriority. Bachelard gives an example of this dual perspective on interiority when he discusses the drawings of houses made by children:

> Asking a child to draw his house is asking him to reveal the deepest dream shelter he has found for his happiness. If he is happy, he will succeed in drawing a snug, protected house which is well-built on deeply-rooted foundations . . . If the child is unhappy, however, the house bears traces of his distress. (72)

Within these childhood depictions of interiority, the house is viewed as either a sanctuary (a place of security) or a prison (a place of captivity), with the emotional well-being of the child playing a critical role in shifting his point of view in one direction or the other. Thus, in examining how interiors and exteriors function, we are “exploring the recesses of the psyche, the hallways of the mind,” with the interplay between sanctuaries and imprisonments offering mankind a multifaceted “metaphor of humanness” and the
imagination (Bachelard vii).

These opposing perceptions of home are inevitably connected to the concept of family as well. Of this link, Handel explains, “The family's life together is an endless process of movement in and around consensual understanding, from attachment to conflict to withdrawal – and over again,” with “separateness and connectedness one of the underlying conditions of a family's life” (10). In other words, when the emotional separation between a protagonist and her family is severe, her perception of her home interior is equatable to that of a prison. When her feelings of connectedness are strong, by contrast, her view of her interior is reflective of a refuge.

**A Place of Daydreaming: The Interior as a Sanctuary**

The notion of home as a sanctuary is one which has been carried forth in the human psyche and human civilization throughout the centuries, and the quest to build, renew, or rebuild one's home is one of the most popular and repeated themes of literature. Within his *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard depicts the childhood home as the ultimate sanctuary of the dreamer, stating, “The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams. Each one of its nooks and corners was a resting place for daydreaming. And often the resting place particularized the daydream. Our habits of a particular daydream were acquired there” (15). As a result of this connection between the house and the individual, the interior develops into “a domain in which psychic weight is dominant,” reflective of the memories, associations, and personality of the being that inhabits it (Bachelard 12). The interior thus becomes not simply a place of daydreaming, but intertwines with the identity of the individual, acting
as a physical or virtual representation of the emotional psyche.

Such a concept of selfhood and the need for security is most clearly defined within Bachelard's theory outlining the existence of the “I” and the “non-I” (40). Of this phenomenological dichotomy, Bachelard notes that the household interior takes on the definition of “I,” while all that exists outside of this interior becomes the “non-I.” An example of this perception of interiority and exteriority may be observed in the heightened intimacy that is created within the home during winter. At this time, Bachelard notes that the outside world takes on a “universal whiteness [whereby] we feel a form of cosmic negation . . . The dreamer of houses knows and senses this, and because of the diminished entity of the outside world, experiences all of the qualities of intimacy with increased intensity” (41). One's level of intimacy with an interior is thus heightened by an inhabitant's recognition of such a space as “the original shell,” containing and protecting the individual from the vast exterior that lies beyond the self (Bachelard 4).

Bachelard's notion of “the original shell” may also be thought of in terms of the family unit, with Handel reasoning that “however its life spreads into the wider community, there is a sense in which family is a bounded universe . . . The ways in which a family is a unit and the ways it provides for being a separate person are, in one sense, what every family life is all about” (10). Indeed, within all three works that I investigate, the quests undertaken by each protagonist can be tied to their desire to find and/or reclaim a permanent place of refuge wherein they are recognized as both a member of a bonded group and as an individual. The stages of each hero's journey are thus comprised of movement in and out of interiors, with the purpose of their sojourn centered on a
“return to home” as a fully actualized being. The surrogate families that each of the protagonists eventually gain allow for the formation of such a home life, impacting not only the characters' larger social interactions, but more importantly presenting them with a sense of security via their membership as part of an intimate group. Thus, throughout Lewis's, Rowling's, and Collins's series, sanctuaries function on a variety of levels, from providing the protagonists with temporary shelter from the onslaught of their trials to granting our heroes their ultimate measure of victory: a place where they belong.

**The Collected: The Interior as a Prison**

Although all three series deal with interiority in unique ways, entrapment is a key theme alongside salvation, calling into question the ability of the individual to break free from the psychological hold of an overbearing interior. Even more so than Bachelard and Tuan, Walter Benjamin and Max Horkheimer examine this specific relationship between the self and the interior. Benjamin, in particular, focuses extensively on objectivity (i.e., external awareness) and subjectivity (i.e., internal awareness), introducing the concept of 'the collector' and 'the collected' and detailing how such a persona and his objects function within the interior. Specifically, Benjamin outlines the relationship of a collector to his possessions by stating, “Property and possession belong to the tactical sphere. Collectors are people with a tactical instinct; their experience teaches them that when they capture a strange city, the smallest antique shop can be a fortress, the most remote stationery store a key position” (63). In discussing the collector and his collection in both positive and negative terms, Benjamin makes clear the precarious nature of the relationship between owner and object, noting that “the collector's passion borders on the
O'Rourke 19

chaos of memories . . . Thus there is in the life of a collector a dialectical tension between
the poles of disorder and order” (60). The fine line that the collector walks between chaos
and order is directly related to the relationship between an inhabitant and his interior,
wherein a sanctuary may shift into a prison if the inhabitant (i.e., the collector) should
become the collected. This role reversal primarily manifests itself as a result of the
inhabitant transferring the total of his identity from himself to the objects that constitute
his interior, thereby relinquishing his subjectivity in favor of objectivity.

Like Benjamin, Horkheimer's investigation into the interior focuses on an
individual's loss of subjectivity and his subsequent classification as the object of a more
powerful, if abstract, force. Taken from the perspective of the rise and decline of the
individual, Horkheimer chronicles the trajectory of man's journey, beginning with his
awakening to his own subjectivity via the emergence of the Greek hero to the moment
when this self-awareness is overwhelmed by the momentum of the industrial complex.
The mentality of Horkheimer's industrial worker thus aligns with that of the inhabitant
who has lost his subjectivity, with both cases portraying ‘the dwindling away of
individual thinking and resistance . . . [that] renders evolution toward the humane
increasingly difficult” (156). Horkheimer's concept of self-identity provides a valuable
angle from which to examine the relationship between interiors/exteriors and the
protagonists of young adult literature. It suggests not only a basis for categorizing a hero's
maturation into self-actualization, but presents evidence that the conflicts between the
individual and society often result in the commodification of the protagonist and thus
arrest his development. Horkheimer acknowledges this struggle when he argues that
“from the day of his birth, the individual is made to feel that there is only one way of getting along in this world – that is giving up his hope of ultimate self-realization” (141). Keeping in mind that “the perception of the identity of the self . . . is more clearly defined in adults than in children” (Horkheimer 141), my analysis will utilize Benjamin's and Horkheimer's views concerning objectivity and subjectivity as a way of categorizing the protagonists' rise toward greater self-awareness and the different pitfalls they face along the way, as well as how these struggles impact the identity of the characters through the conclusion of each series.

A sanctuary can thus become a prison if the close link between the individual and the interior develops in ways that hinder rather than help the inhabitant, morphing the interior from a place of refuge into a confinement from which the individual cannot escape. Such an experience of the interior and the way in which it suppresses the individual can be seen in varying degrees within *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the *Harry Potter* series, and *The Hunger Games* trilogy. Within all three works, we uncover instances in which the interior's identity eclipses that of the individual. At such times, the focal characters of each work become imprisoned within their interiors, with such places quite often having recently served as beloved sanctuaries. Bachelard, Benjamin, and Horkheimer offer insights into what allows the interior to sustain this stronghold over the individual, how it connects to the larger social mindset, and whether hope remains for the individual to break free from a wayward interior. Thus, although the interior is often viewed as the “embodiment of dreams” (Bachelard 13), it is also capable of very easily becoming a place of nightmares. This shift in perception occurs when an individual
subjugates his identity to the “will” of the interior, rather than formulating and sustaining a selfhood with equal strength in both the interior and exterior.

While the interior, being a metaphorical concept, does not have a “will” of its own in a literal sense, its power comes from the psychological associations the inhabitant builds within it and how these impressions are connected to an individual's well-being. For Bachelard, such intimacy is mostly a positive feature that allows for the creation of a safe haven for the inhabitant. And while such a positive experience of the interior is a common element of all three young adult works, they each depict instances of identity corruption as well, wherein the persona of the interior eclipses the true personality of the inhabitant. Rather than the collector who utilizes the interior as a haven for treasured values, memories, or associations, the inhabitant loses her subjectivity and becomes an object of her interior, clinging to this abode even as it deprives her of her autonomous identity, her individualism, and her capacity to move freely from interior to exterior.

**Why Young Adult literature?: The Connection Between Bildung and Interiority**

Ideas of place and space are integral to the journey of the characters portrayed within young adult literature, with the bildung of the protagonists often mirrored by the interiors these characters inhabit and their interactions within them. This correlation between interior and identity is not exclusive to young adult literature, of course; nevertheless, its presentation within children's literature offers a unique investigation into literary interiority given that young adult compositions are rhetorically less complex – that is to say, these novels' use of linguistic devices and literary techniques are simplified in comparison to works found within the literary canon (e.g., Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*,
Cervantes' Don Quixote, or Joyce's Ulysses) in order to more accurately align with the level of education and development of their readers. As a result of this rhetorical simplification, the exploration of interiority is made more accessible in young adult literature than it would be if one were discussing fiction from the literary canon. By taking a complicated, convoluted philosophy and breaking it down into its fundamental parts, I hope to demonstrate the presence and relevance of theories concerning literary interiors within works that are at once mentally engaging and more easily understood.

For my thesis, I have chosen to represent the genre of young adult literature through an investigation of three series written by C.S. Lewis, J.K. Rowling, and Suzanne Collins for several key reasons: 1) each compilation presents a story meant to both entertain and educate through the exploration of major themes of the human condition, 2) in all three narratives, literary interiors play a complex and intriguing role that enhances the reader's understanding of their core thematic elements, and 3) the popularity of each series allows for an investigation of interiority that is relatable to a broad base of readers.

My analysis begins with The Chronicles of Narnia, moves on to the Harry Potter series, and concludes with The Hunger Games trilogy. This order reflects what I have identified as the least to the most complex of the three series, an assessment based less on the amount of interior theory presented within each storyline than on the intricacy of the morality displayed. As such, I begin with The Chronicles of Narnia – wherein morality is discussed almost wholly in black and white terms – move on to the Harry Potter series – where morality is displayed in various shades of gray – and conclude with The Hunger Games trilogy – in which mankind's morality is continually questioned and ultimately
observed as nothing more (and nothing less) than part of the game humanity plays to survive. A recognition of the varying degrees of moral ambiguity portrayed within the three series is essential to understanding the nature of the interiority presented in each compilation, with greater moral license associated with increasingly complicated, multifaceted interiors and exteriors.

**Wardrobes, Wizards, and War Zones: Interiority in Contemporary Children's Literature**

According to Tuan, the inhabitant both defines and is defined by the characteristics of the places she or he occupies (3). He introduces an excellent example of such a perception regarding interiors in his observations of the Kronberg Castle located in Elsinore, Denmark. Tuan postulates that if one views this interior simply as a castle, it holds a much different meaning than if one imagines the young and moody Hamlet of Shakespeare's play having lived there (Tuan 4). Hamlet's presence in this interior shapes how the dwelling functions and how it is perceived, both by others and by the inhabitant himself.

This same phenomenon occurs within *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the *Harry Potter* series, and *The Hunger Games* trilogy, wherein the interior both shapes and is shaped by the presence or absence of specific characters. In particular, the children's encounters with interiors throughout the three series is defined largely by the presence or absence of capable, nurturing parental/adult figures. Handel and co-author Robert Hess explain the impact of such a support system in their essay on “The Family as a Psychosocial Organization”:

A family constitutes its own world, which is not to say that it closes itself off
from everything else but that it determines what parts of the external world are admissible and how freely. The family maps its domain of accessible and desirable experiences, its life space. The outer limits of life space for any family are fairly definite and reasonably well-marked. There are signposts for goals and signals for danger. (19)

By this token, we can observe how the concept of interiority is closely related to the concept of familial domesticity, ultimately creating a place of safety, or – as is often the case within both series – a space in which the inhabitant suffers from a severe lack of security. Indeed, based on his studies regarding the intricacies of family life, Handel postulates that “parental authority – its scope, the manner in which it is exercised – is one of the forces in shaping the pattern of separateness and connectedness” (22). In the case of all three sets of characters examined here, a lack of parental authority creates both a strong sense of isolation and the need to move from one familial universe to another in search of a deeper sense of connectedness. John Kornfield and Laurie Prothro make similar claims in their analysis of Rowling's narration of home and family life in *Harry Potter*:

The concept of home is inextricably entangled with that of family – individuals who together create worlds of their own, with particular kinds of boundaries separating them from the larger world . . . But family is not always (or only) a team clustered in the dugout, urging you on with hope and faith as you set out on your quest, waiting to welcome you with cheers when you return home, safe . . . And even if the family is a harmonious, loving
community, the journey demands separation from it, a necessary abyss, as a young person comes of age. (121)

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the *Harry Potter* series, and *The Hunger Games* trilogy, interiors play a dynamic role in establishing all of the characters' self-identities. Specifically, the fundamental interiors portrayed within the three series are linked to the protagonists' moral development and self-actualization, with the establishment or negation of a family support system critical to the construction or destruction of an interior. As Tuan explains it, the parental figure “is recognized by the child as his essential shelter and dependable source of physical and psychological comfort . . . A child is adrift – placeless – without the supportive parent” (29). This lack of familial comfort and the subsequent establishment of a new community it begets is in fact the backbone of the children's transformational journey within all three series; it is a quest which, broadly speaking, can be broken down into four focal stages: 1) the absence of home and self-identity, 2) the establishment of a new home and morality, 3) the relinquishment of one's home and immaturity, and 4) the ownership of the home and actualized self. Thus, childhood interiority – defined here as inhabited space which contains intimate memories for the occupant – impacts and reflects the maturation and moral alignment of the main characters within *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the *Harry Potter* series, and *The Hunger Games* trilogy, with the Narnian, Wizarding and dystopian worlds simultaneously functioning as and consisting of places that engender self-identity, self-actualization, and the fulfillment of the transformational journey.
Chapter 1: The Absence of Home and Self-Identity

“Human places become vividly real through dramatization. Identity as place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of personal or group life.”

– Suzanne Collins, The Hunger Games

A key theme within both young adult literature and the contemporary bildungsroman is the idea that the concepts of “home” and family” are closely intertwined. Handel identifies this overlap of ideas as the “psychosocial interior,” that “region of the universe where the members of a family meet and make a life together . . . a region of the mind, a 'place' where there is a meeting of minds primarily in the sense of individual selves confronting, engaging, and being struck off from one another” (1-2). As Collins indicates in her above quote, our understanding of place and identity are the result of our intimate relationships and the impact these interactions have on the structure of our lives. Handel describes these relationships and interactions in terms of the family theme – “a pattern of feelings, motives, fantasies, and conventionalized understandings . . . [in which] are to be found the family's implicit direction, its notion of 'who we are' and 'what we do about it'” (18). Handel argues that by understanding the theme of a family unit, we can come to a better understanding of the identities of the individuals that comprise that group:

Since [the family theme] is a characterization of the family in terms of a significant issue in its life, the concept provides a point of reference for understanding the individual members and particular interpersonal relationships as specific versions and expressions of that theme. The individual's place in the family – what he does and what happens to him there
– can be understood as the way in which he participates in these broader
currents which help to determine the quality of his family membership . . .
By determining the salient themes in a family's life, we are able to see more
clearly how an individual's fate is shaped, what opportunities he has for
interlocking his life with others, and what pressures he must contend with.
(19)
This claim rings true within all three series, with the initial link between each protagonist
centered around the absence of competent, capable familial figures and the subsequent
lack of a powerful home interior this vacancy creates. Thus, when we are first introduced
to each set of characters, we find them notably lacking a clear awareness of not only their
own identity, but how that identity fits into the larger social schema in which they live.
This lack of understanding of self and society is directly tied to the decaying morality that
surrounds all of the characters, resulting in their weak comprehension of the dynamics of
morality in general. As Handel explains it, families have a “tendency toward moral
evaluation of experience” (20), with “a failure or disruption in communication” among
family members equatable to “a failure in meeting the family objective” (18). Therefore,
by first looking at the initial interiors that each of the characters originate from, the reader
can gain a clearer sense of not only how these protagonists move forward along their
journey toward self-actualization, but how the different nuances of morality they discover
within the interiors/exteriors they encounter shape their maturation and moral alignment.
Digory and Polly

When we are first introduced to the main characters, Digory and Polly, within the *Magician's Nephew*, it becomes immediately apparent that they exist within an interior that is devoid of warmth and security as a result of an unhappy family life. Digory, who has been sent with his ill mother to live at his aunt and uncle's house while his father is away in India, is presented to the reader as “a boy who was so miserable that he didn't care who knew he'd been crying” (Lewis, *Magician's Nephew* 4). Unlike the depiction of previous characters such as Edmund and Eustace, Lewis portrays Digory's misery as warranted, quickly thereafter introducing “Mr. Ketterley and Miss Ketterley, a brother and sister, old bachelor and old maid, living together,” and explaining that “there had never been any children in that house” before Digory's arrival (*Magician's Nephew* 4).

Polly's family, on the other hand, remains ambiguous throughout the novel: we are never told anything about her mother and father or her interior life. Nevertheless, we are left to assume that she perceives her house as little better than Digory's home-away-from-home, a fact which we can infer as a result of the children's corresponding desire to

Figure 1. In the absence of an intimate home interior, Polly fashions a “smuggler's cove” for within her attic.
sneak away into the attic and thereby claim a secluded sanctuary of their own. In fact, Polly has already initiated this move by the time the reader is introduced to her, with the narrator detailing the “smuggler's cove” (*Magician's Nephew*) Polly had fashioned from the secret interior she discovered in her attic (see figure 1). Within this space, Polly hides her “cash box containing various treasures, a story she was writing, and usually a few apples” (*Magician's Nephew*). Polly thus attempts to create an interior of her own in the absence of a strong familial one. Indeed, the way this interior allows her self-identity to flourish is portrayed most notably by the story Lewis intentionally notes she is writing while in the attic, a task that requires an active, imaginative, and growing brain.

Despite the fact that this attic serves as a refuge for the children, Polly and Digory are still in search of an interior that is truly their own, with both characters desiring to search on into the even more secluded attic of the empty home next to the Ketterley's house. As the story progresses, this absence of home is mirrored by Charn, one of the first places to which Digory and Polly travel. Charn is a world devoid of life and thereby a non-interior (i.e., a place that reflects qualities directly in opposition to those of an interior), echoing the lack of an interior sanctuary the two children feel they have at home.

*Figure 2. Digory and Polly peer through the portal into the fallen city of Charn, one of many interiors visible within the Wood Between the Worlds.*
in England. In a brief interlude in the Wood Between the Worlds – a non-interior that acts as the gateway between interiors (see figure 2) – Aslan tells Digory and Polly of the fate that has befallen Charn, explaining, “That world is ended, as if it had never been. Let the race of Adam and Eve take warning” (Magician's Nephew 193). The warning that Aslan is giving to the children and all of mankind is the reality of how our interiors come to match our inner desires. Should the race of Adam and Eve seek destruction by way of pride, jealousy, or other immoral properties, as Jadis did by speaking the Deplorable Word, humanity's home will likewise be destroyed. Indeed, this need for moral counseling is the common thread that links all three groups of children together, with Narnia acting as the refuge essential to the maturation and moral alignment of each of the eight guardians of Narnia.

The Pevensie Children

For the Pevensie children, an absence of home is clearly noted by the way in which the siblings are “sent away” from their family in London and taken to Professor Kirke's home in the country, located “ten miles from the nearest railway station and two miles from the nearest post office” (Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 3). Although this home is not described as hostile, it is a very large, empty-feeling abode that required “about ten minutes' walk from here [the children's bedroom] down to the dining room, and any amount of stairs and passageways between” (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 4). It is Lucy who best captures the foreboding nature of the house when she relates how “it was a far larger house than she had ever been in before, and the thought of all those long passages and rows of doors leading into empty rooms was beginning to
make her feel a little creepy” (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 5). Thus, from their first moments within it, the children are overwhelmed by this interior and the way in which it overshadows them.

Described as the “sort of house you'd never come to the end of,” and as “filled with unexpected places” (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 6), the Professor's home, with its immense stature, only serves to make the children feel all the more diminutive in comparison to it. Moreover, its reputation as not simply an old but a famous house entices many tourists to come view it, enhancing the reader's perception of the house as a museum rather than a home, and thereby a place increasingly devoid of life. Peter puts it best when he states, “This is the sort of house where no one is going to mind what we do” (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 4). On the one hand, the description of this interior indicates that the children have a greater amount of freedom over their actions than ever before; however, it concurrently reveals the reality that the siblings must now look to one another and themselves for guidance, as no one else will be there to look after them (see figure 3). Indeed, while the Professor is a kind and helpful person, he remains
largely absent from the house, making the Pevensies’ interactions with him a very minor element of the narrative. The absence of adult figures enhances the speed of the Pevensies' maturation and propels them forward on their search for self. Moreover, this lack of familial support directly correlates to a lack of moral counseling, with the children left to seek ethical guidance on their own or, as is soon the case, in Narnia.

**Eustace and Jill**

Eustace and Jill inhabit similar, if not even more deplorable, interiors than that of the Pevensies. Eustace's house is described as one with “very little furniture and few clothes on beds and [in which] the windows were always open,” indicating a barren, frigid and cold setting, with his parent's “up-to-date, advanced people” (Lewis, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 3) who Lewis characterizes within this socio-historical context as having lost touch with the clutter and warmth indicative of an intimate family life. This image of the interior as a prison is only further displayed when the reader meets Jill at the Experiment House, the school which she and Eustace attend. Lewis depicts this school as an extremely hostile environment in which the adults encourage bullying and/or ignore the suffering of the children:

I will say as little as possible about Jill's school, which is not a pleasant subject . . . Some people say it was not so mixed as the minds of the people who ran it. These people had the idea that boys and girls should be allowed to do what they like. And, unfortunately, what ten or fifteen of the biggest boys and girls liked best was bullying the others. All sorts of things, horrid things, went on. (*Silver Chair* 3)
Eustace conveys the pair's disdain for the school and their feelings of being ostracized within it when he argues, “Look here Pole, you and I hate this place as much as anyone can hate anything, don't we?” (*Silver Chair* 6). Thus, as a result of the school's visual description and the children's feelings toward it, the focal interior within both Eustace's and Jill's life is portrayed as a penitentiary to which they are confined.

**The Harry Potter Series**

Operating under a complex moral framework in which the concepts of “good” and “evil” become blurred, Rowling's *Harry Potter* series explores interiority in an increasingly intricate manner when compared to *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Rowling gives a lot of attention to the way in which Harry's life at the Dursley residence functions within the first four books, emphasizing Harry's unhappiness regarding the necessity of returning to this interior each summer. In every practical sense, Harry, like the eight guardians of Narnia, is alone at the opening of the book, having only the Dursleys to look to for familial attachment. Unfortunately, these relatives show no appreciation for their nephew, primarily treating him “like a dog that had rolled in something smelly” (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 5) and demanding that he “stay out of their way” (Rowling, *Prisoner of Azkaban* 25). Rowling thus displays the Dursleys as emotionally abusive, negligent regarding Harry's well-being and proper nourishment, and deceitful with reference to the lives/characters of his parents and his own place within the Wizarding World (see figure 4).

In contrast to almost every other family within the series, most notably the Weasleys, the Dursleys are portrayed as the exact opposite of what a family should be:
they fail to give Harry the unconditional love and support he deserves and instead often treat him “as though he wasn't there – or rather, as though he were something very nasty that they couldn't understand, like a slug” (Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone* 22). By shunning all interaction with him beyond what is absolutely necessary and giving him only the bare essentials in nourishment and clothing, the Dursleys make life within their home much more of a prison than a refuge for Harry, seemingly hoping that if “they kept Harry as downtrodden as possible, they would be able to squash the magic out of him” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 8).

Harry's understanding of self is thus crippled as a result of this emotional abuse and physical neglect; indeed, for the first eleven years of his life, Harry has no idea about the truth of his wizarding ancestry and is instead told that he is “mentally subnormal” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 25). He is not allowed to participate in family activities but is treated like a house-elf, locked away in his cupboard or forced to do a plethora of household chores. While the Dursleys' house is filled with photos of Vernon and Petunia's son, Dudley, images of Harry are nowhere to be found. Moreover, while Vernon and
Petunia fawn over Dudley, continually referring to him by various pet names, they very rarely address Harry by name, most often referring to him as “boy” and thus stripping him of his individual identity (Prisoner of Azkaban 20). As Chantel Lavoie explains in her critical essay “Safe as Houses,” the Dursleys “seem to shape their family life around the very exclusion of Harry from their triumvirate of parents and only son, an effect which doubles the loss of his own family” (45). By doing all that they can to outwardly act as though Harry does not exist, the Dursleys clearly convey their treatment of Harry as a non-entity within their home, with his physical and emotional isolation from their family life epitomized by the Dursleys' choice to lock Harry away in the cupboard-under-the-stairs.

As a result of the Dursleys' treatment of him, Harry uses his cupboard as his refuge; it is the one space within the house designated as his. Nevertheless, it is littered with spiders (Sorcerer's Stone 19), giving us the image of an isolated, unkempt part of the house that stands in high contrast to the Dursleys' immaculate lawn and spotlessly clean kitchen (see figure 5). Moreover, the cupboard's ability to act as a sanctuary for Harry is extremely limited due to the Dursleys' control over it, for not only do they determine when Harry should be locked within it, but they can also enter into
the cupboard without consulting Harry first, thereby taking away any power or sense of privacy he may feel within this space. As Kornfield and Prothro explain it, violations such as this display the Dursleys' failure to understanding the basic conventions of family:

For Rowling, the contract that holds the family together involves much more than a legal obligation; it is an inviolable covenant among family members to provide care and support for one another, whatever the cost. In breaking that covenant, the Dursleys relinquish any right to Harry's loyalty, and compel him to seek home and family elsewhere. (128)

In correlation with this, Handel identifies, “Families do not merely reflect the larger culture and social structure; they create meanings and relationships and individualities, not all of them welcomed by the larger society” (2). Since Harry cannot build or retain a sense of familial comfort or even solitary peace while at the Dursleys, he gravitates toward Hogwarts and the Wizarding World without hesitation, seeking the sense of comfort and care long absent from his life. Similar to Lewis's characters' journey from England to Narnia, this movement marks Harry's transition from a morally deprived interior to a landscape that will come to define his understanding of morality and its complexities.

The lack of morality found within the Dursleys' home is not only evident through their treatment of Harry, but can also be observed in their derogatory remarks regarding Harry's family and their self-deceit concerning their own glaringly obvious shortcomings. Vernon's sister, Marge, offers the most compelling example of this self delusion and the
moral depravity that accompanies it, telling Harry that his parents “died in a car crash . . . and left [Harry] to be a burden on their decent, hardworking relatives” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 27) and abusing Harry by “whack[ing him] around the shins with her walking stick” and allowing her dog, Ripper, to trap Harry up a tree until late into the night (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 19). Through attitudes and actions such as these, we can observe that the Dursleys and their extended family use emotional and physical abuse as a means of limiting Harry's understanding of himself. Moreover, their moral corruption is easily identified via their sincere belief that they are justified in treating Harry as an “abnormality” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 20).

Harry, in turn, is forced to compromise on his instinctive understanding of right and wrong when in the Dursleys' home, hiding his intense craving for a caring, supportive family and, in one particular instance, letting Aunt Marge belittle him and tell lies about his parents in order to acquire his uncle's signature allowing him to attend Hogsmeade (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 21). Indicating no desire to see Harry flourish in any area of his life – and, indeed, thwarting any of his attempts at success at every chance they get – the Dursleys don't provide Harry with any resources for gaining a healthy understanding of his identity. Instead, they create an inhospitable, morally deprived interior that Harry is only too happy to escape from at the earliest opportunity, with the dysfunctional nature of the Dursleys' home making the contrasting support, love, and moral guidance Harry receives from his surrogate wizarding family shine all the brighter.

In *The Hunger Games* Trilogy

The function of interiors within Collins's dystopian series is notably more subdued
than that of either Lewis's or Rowling's works, with protagonist Katniss Everdeen's journey defined in greater part by her movement across key interiors (e.g., District 12, The Capitol, the Hunger Games arena, and District 13) than her time within any particular one of them. However, such subtlety does not detract from the fact that the focal places Katniss encounters are directly linked to her increased awareness of self, society, and the convoluted nature of morality. Indeed, within the opening scenes of the first novel of the series, Katniss takes the reader on a journey through her home interior, District 12, detailing those particular places within the district that hold special significance for her. One immediately becomes oriented to places of importance within the district according to how Katniss compartmentalizes and labels them, dividing the space into eight distinct components: 1) the Seam, where the lower class and predominantly mining families – including Katniss's family – live, 2) the Mines, where coal, the source of District 12's economy, is harvested, 3) the Hob, where the District's black market operates, 4) the Merchant, where the middle and upper class citizens live, 5) the Square, where town meetings, markets, and other public events are held, 6) Victor's Village, where the champions from the Hunger Games reside, 7) the Meadow, the field on the periphery of the district, and 8) the Woods, the forest outside of District 12's fence line which all citizens are forbidden from entering.

By having Katniss clearly provide the name and function of each segment of her surroundings, Collins is not simply setting the scene for the reader, but creating an atmosphere by which the reader can identify Katniss's relationship with her home district and, later on, with the whole of Panem, the nation that has risen from the ashes of what
was once the United States. In his chapter on “Place, Space, and the Child,” Tuan discusses the correlation between places and the act of naming:

As soon as the child is able to speak with some fluency he wants to know the names of things. Things are not quite real until they acquire names and can be classified in some way. Curiosity about places is part of a general curiosity about things, part of the need to label experiences so that they have a greater degree of permanence and fit into some conceptual scheme. (29)

Names of places, therefore, correlate with Katniss's maturation, and it is important to note both how she functions within them and what power they have over her psyche.

This same phenomenon of naming is also present within both *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the *Harry Potter* series (e.g., Harry's summer home on Privet Drive is often referred to as “The Dursleys'” not simply because it is his aunt and uncle's house, but more importantly because Harry recognizes that it is not a true home for him). Thus, like the focal characters from the other two series, Katniss's search for self necessarily aligns with her deepening understanding of the identity of her nation as a whole. Before being chosen as a tribute for the Hunger Games, Katniss's understanding of the world is limited almost wholly to her own district, outside of which she only knows basic facts concerning the remaining 12 districts and the Capitol – the seat of the nation's government – and nothing whatsoever as it concerns the world outside of Panem's borders. Therefore, in order to comprehend her own interior, Katniss must first come to an understanding of both the interior and exterior of her own society, transforming the obscure exterior of her district into perceptible, concrete places. In relation to this idea,
Tuan states, “Space is more abstract than place. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (6). This again emphasizes the prestige of names within the series, for it is through the process of identifying a location – alongside its objects and persons of distinction – that allows “space” (i.e., exterior) to transform into “place” (i.e., interior) and become a “center of value” (Tuan 18).

Katniss's initial ignorance of the complexities of the world beyond her district contribute to her feelings of insecurity with regard to her home interior; while we are aware of the love which Katniss feels for her district, one is simultaneously aware of the way she feels bound to a lifestyle in which she must work painstakingly hard each day to keep her mother, her sister, and herself alive (see figure 6). Indeed, the reader is introduced to District 12 in Hobbesian terms – that is to say, as a prison in which life is little more than nasty, brutish, and short – with Katniss referring to the Seam as a place “crawling with coal miners . . . Men and women with hunched shoulders, swollen knuckles, many who

Figure 6. Even before Katniss exhibits a full awareness of her government's hypocritical practices, she sarcastically refers to District 12 as a place “where you can starve to death in safety” (Collins, Hunger Games 7).
have long since stopped trying to scrub the coal dust out of their broken nails, the lines of their sunken faces” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 4). Thus, within the opening paragraphs of the first book, the reader is given a clear picture of Katniss's community, with the coal miners' harsh lifestyle infiltrating both their physical appearance and their psychological well-being.

This imprisonment is made all the more obvious by such realities as the “high chain-linked fence topped with barbed-wire loops” that encloses all of District 12, with Katniss relaying how the barrier is “supposed to be electrified twenty-four hours a day as a deterrent to the predators that live in the woods – packs of wild dogs, lone cougars, bears – that used to threaten our streets” (*Hunger Games* 4); nevertheless, both she and the reader can easily identify this fence as a scare tactic used by the Capitol to isolate each district and keep its inhabitants terrorized into passivity by the threat of what lies beyond the fence. Of this, Katniss later ponders, “We have so little communication with anyone outside our district. In fact, I wonder if the Gamemakers are blocking our conversation, because even though the information seems harmless, they don’t want people in different districts to know about one another” (*Hunger Games* 203). This tactic relates directly to Tuan's and Bachelard's theories on place and space, for in order to fully encapsulate an interior into a prison or a sanctuary, the distinction between “I” and “non-I” needs to be made to the highest degree. In other words, for each district, the interior is their identity (i.e., place), outside of which is the unknown exterior (i.e., space). By making its citizens fearful of what lies beyond their district, the Capitol's aim is to present the prison they have created as a sanctuary.
The degree to which the government of Panem succeeds at manipulating its inhabitants' perceptions of their interior can be determined by the way sanctuary and prison imagery overlap within Katniss's description of District 12; even while she depicts a lifestyle that is terribly meager, debilitating, and suffocating (both literally and figuratively), her portrayal yet retains a measure of warmth and security, seemingly against all odds. Of this paradox, Bachelard states, “Even [in a] prison, there is a peace. In these angles and corners, the dreamer would appear to enjoy the repose that divides being and non-being” (145). Thus, when viewed in terms of interiority (i.e., being) and exteriority (i.e., non-being), Katniss's dual perspective of her homeland becomes accessible: when this tangible interior is placed in terms of the intangible exterior that lies outside of it, it makes perfect sense that Katniss – a girl for whom all thoughts and actions revolve around the hope of procuring a stable home – would cling to the known rather than long for the unknown. Katniss's perception of home can be directly related to Harry's relationship with his cupboard-under-the-stairs, with both characters attempting to reconcile the contradictory atmospheres that constitute their interior lives.

The dual identities of home as prison and sanctuary coexist without conflict for Katniss during her childhood. In fact, it is not until the death of her father that one identity begins to outweigh the other, for it is at this point that Katniss's mother goes into a state of shock, effectively leaving an eleven-year-old Katniss to take care of herself and her seven-year-old sister, Prim. As part of her inner monologue, Katniss reveals her mother's state of mind and her own feelings toward her mother's inaction:

She didn’t do anything but sit propped up in a chair or, more often, huddled
under the blankets in her bed, eyes fixed on some point in the distance. Once
in a while, she’d stir, get up as if moved by some urgent purpose, only to
collapse back into stillness. No amount of pleading from Prim seemed to
affect her . . . I suppose now that my mother was locked in some dark world
of sadness, but at the time, all I knew was that I had lost not only a father, but
a mother as well. (*Hunger Games* 27)

By locking herself away within the interior of her own mind, Katniss's mother plays a
critical role in radically reshaping Katniss's identity. Her mother's emotional absence acts
as the catalyst that propels Katniss from childhood toward adulthood, forcing her to not
only take on the role of the nurturing mother to Prim, but to become the provider for both
her sister and her mother by venturing into the Woods to hunt and thus supply sustenance
for her family. Katniss conveys this loss even more poignantly when she states she had
“taken a step back from [her] mother, put up a wall to protect [her]self from needing her”
(*Hunger Games* 53).

In losing the protection of her mother and father, Katniss suffers the loss of her
first stable place in the world, with her home's previous status as a sanctuary defined
largely by the sense of security her parents afforded her. This role reversal forces Katniss
to mature at a faster rate than normal and advances her understanding of – and interaction
within – the various sub-interiors of District 12. Not only does Katniss learn more about
the truth of what lies beyond the fence line of her district (see figure 7), she begins to
question 1) the inequalities in lifestyle that exist between those of the Seam and those of
the Merchant sectors, 2) the underlying discontent which has engendered the existence of
the Hob, and 3) the ways in which the Capitol has suppressed and manipulated not only the members of her own district, but quite possibly the entire citizenry of Panem. Tuan recognizes the type of metamorphosis Katniss undergoes when he states, “To the young child the parent is his primary “place” . . . a haven of stability. The adult is also the guarantor of meaning for the child, for whom the world can often seem baffling. A mature person depends less on other people. He can find security and nourishment in objects, localities, and even the pursuit of ideas” (138). Thus, as a result of her accelerated maturation, Katniss learns to rely not so much on other people, but primarily on her own ability to hunt, to assert herself within the divisions of her district, and to decipher fact from fiction as it concerns the Capitol's treatment of its citizens. Most significantly, however, is the way in which this change forces Katniss to move away from her home – both physically and psychologically – and look for a stronger sanctuary outside of it.

Figure 7. By crossing the fence line that separates her district from the Woods, Katniss initiates her transition from a deprived interior into a refuge. In doing so, Katniss simultaneously expands her understanding of society and self as her eyes are opened to an existence beyond the Capitol's rule.

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Within all three works, an absence of home is strongly tied to an absence of
nurturing parental figures to whom the protagonists may look to for moral guidance. Since “the individual's efforts to take on his own kind of interest in the world, to become his own kind of person, proceed apace with his efforts to find gratifying connection to the other members [of his family],” the protagonists from each series must seek out new homes/sanctuaries, for it is by finding their true families that they simultaneously gain a greater understanding of self (Handel 13). At the conclusion of this stage in their maturation, each characters' moral trajectory is relatively equal. Initially, the protagonists are all subjugated to interiors within which varying degrees of moral depravity thrives (e.g., the Ketterleys' home, the Professor's mansion, the Experiment House); the characters' liberation into new places and spaces (e.g., Narnia) has created the opportunity for them to examine the spectrum of morality in its totality. The defining difference between the new interiors each of the protagonists enter will be how they come to perceive morality, with the characters' establishment of a new home coinciding synonymously with their recognition of a new moral code.
Chapter 2: Establishing a New Home and New Morals

“A place adumbrated itself in his thoughts, wherein those sacred personalities, which are at once the reflex and pattern of our nobler phrases of life, housed themselves; and this region in his intellectual scheme all subsequent experience did but tend still further to realize and define.”

– Walter Pater, Imaginary Portraits

Upon leaving behind their old interiors and entering worlds of greater moral awareness and guidance, our protagonists begin to reflect the ideals of the places, spaces, and occupants they encounter as they begin to mature within their new homes. As Handel explains it, “Responsive judgments and feelings are responsive first to the inward images of self, other, and family. They then become responses to and for others, so that family life is shaped within the participants as well as between them” (17). The concept of morality is not treated identically within all three series, however; instead, each set of characters is introduced to particular viewpoints concerning morality. The eight guardians of Narnia, for instance, are taken from a world in which moral depravity is evident almost everywhere – that is, among family (e.g., Uncle Andrew), society (e.g., World War II), and the education system (e.g., the Experiment House) – and placed within a morally pure interior where the distinction between good and evil is almost always staunchly clear. Harry, by contrast, moves from a morally-debased home to a world where morality is not treated as a black and white concept; therefore, Harry's maturation is highly influenced by the lessons he learns concerning moral ambiguity, namely that people are not merely good or evil. The wider range of moral conduct introduced within the *Harry Potter* series is reflected within *The Hunger Games* trilogy as well. However, Katniss's moral awakening is of the darkest nature, since it arises not from the movement toward a
safer haven than her previous home, but toward various prisons wherein the concept of morality is almost wholly absent. As the shock of being introduced to interiors where moral goodness thrives awakens the eight guardians of Narnia to the true nature of their previous interiors, Katniss is shocked into moral awareness by way of the total abandonment of morality she faces during the Games. Thus, the different modes of morality portrayed within each young adult series play a crucial role in pushing each character toward self-actualization and formulating their identity.

The Chronicles of Narnia

Digory and Polly

When Digory and Polly first enter Narnia, the interior that will serve as their moral compass, they are transported to a non-interior, a world of nothingness. Jadis tells the children that Narnia “is an empty world,” after which the narrator goes on to say, “And it really was uncommonly like Nothing. There were no stars. It was so dark they could not see each other at all and it made no difference whether you kept your eyes shut or open” (Magician's Nephew 104). This nothingness mirrors the lack of moral guidance which Digory and Polly have received in England and serves to highlight the difference between their own morally-
deprived world and that of Narnia, which is created only moments later.

As Aslan begins to fashion Narnia from nothing (see figure 8), the narrator describes the illuminating effect as instantaneous: “In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing . . . the blackness overhead, all at once, was blazing with stars” (*Magician's Nephew* 106-107). He goes on to describe the vibrancy of the valley's green grass, with Digory and Polly there to witness as Aslan calls out, “Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be taking beasts. Be divine waters” (*Magician's Nephew* 126). We are, in fact, observing a dynamic shift from the bleak, seemingly black and white world of gloom from which the two children have come, to the moral absolute that now lies before them.

The reader immediately observes the way in which this luminous interior brings about an enlightenment of thought among the children. Digory, for one, faces the repercussions of his choice to ring the bell and awaken Jadis in Charn, with The White Witch and the evil she represents having been brought into the brand new world of Narnia. Digory must acknowledge his mistakes and learn to confront his character in order to develop his morality. At first, Digory tries to make excuses for his behavior, but Aslan allows for no such hiding, announcing, “This is the boy who did it,” to the crowd of newly born Narnians, thereby pinning the sorrows of Narnia on Digory and forcing him to acknowledge what he has done (*Magician's Nephew* 146). Shortly thereafter, Digory admits to awakening Jadis and bringing her into Narnia in order to get her out of London. This confession not only signifies that Digory is taking on more responsibility and maturing, but that he is beginning to recognize what moral guidelines he would like
to follow and thus gain greater self-identity.

Digory's newly acquired morality is also tested for the first time in this interior when he and Polly are sent by Aslan to retrieve an apple from the sacred tree in Aslan's garden. At this time, Digory once again faces the temptation that is Jadis. The choice set before him is whether to 1) take the apple to his mother and thereby save her life, or 2) follow Aslan's guidelines, return the apple to him, and risk losing his mother forever. When Digory makes the choice to put the good of all of Narnia over his own desires, he shows a significant leap in maturation. Moreover, his decision not to listen to the Witch comes as a direct result of the bond (i.e., family unit) he and Polly have formed through the trials they have faced within their interiors, with Digory describing, “The meanness of the suggestion that he should leave Polly behind made all the other things the Witch had been saying to him seem false and hollow” (Magician's Nephew 179). Here, we observe Digory gaining a stronger moral standing as he chooses friendship and loyalty over selfishness and greed. For his choice to stand by Aslan's orders, Digory is awarded an apple that Aslan has imbued with healing powers to cure Digory's mother (see figure 9). What this sudden change of fate displays to both of the children is the inherent goodness of morality and the way in which the morally sound route will triumph in the end. As

Figure 9. When Digory puts Narnia's well-being above his own desires, Aslan rewards his moral maturation with the gift of a healing apple for his ill mother, thus solidifying Digory's view of Narnia as a sanctuary.
Tuan states of humanity’s adolescent experiences, “The child learns to associate persons with specific places” (30); Digory and Polly thus come to associate Narnia with the good that is Aslan and the morally deprived interiors with that of Jadis, the adults of England, and the human world at large.

**The Pevensie Children**

As it did for Digory and Polly, Narnia acts as the new interior to which the Pevensie children travel and in which they receive the moral guidance that will allow them to become mature, self-actualized adults (see figure 10). Similar to Digory's trials, the Pevensie children must face their own character flaws. This awareness most notably occurs to Edmund within *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* when he realizes his loathsome nature as a result of Aslan's sacrifice and the sorrow that he feels following the Lion's death. As a result of this recognition and the moral understanding he gains while within Narnia, Edmund is transformed and he becomes “a graver and quieter man than Peter, and great in council and judgment” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* 184). The other three children confront their own flaws as well: Susan learns...
humility and the need to trust in her siblings, traits that allow her to become “a tall and gracious woman”; Peter learns the bravery and courage needed to be a high king of Narnia, becoming a “tall and deep-chested man, and a great warrior”; and Lucy learns of the deepest level of sorrow through Aslan's death, as well as the deepest joy in his revival, forever remaining “gay and golden-haired” as a result of the faith she gains (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 184).

Alongside actions, names are highly important to the children's understanding of not only the interiority of Narnia and the surrounding areas, but to their own identity. This calls to mind Katniss's categorization of District 12 and Tuan's passage on the importance of naming places; in both cases, such identifiers function as organizational tools and sources of stability for the characters. It is therefore significant that each child is given a name – King Peter the Magnificent, Queen Susan the Gentle, King Edmund the Just, and Queen Lucy the Valiant – as a result of the maturation and moral growth they undergo, with these traits in

Figure 11. The Pevensies usher in the golden age of Narnia before relinquishing this refuge and returning to England. Their moral goodness transforms Narnia into a world of much greater vibrancy than the ice-filled imprisonment they first enter into as children.
turn displaying their increased awareness of their true identities. The children's place within this interior is thus solidified through the names they are designated. Their position within Narnia also strengthens their bond to the interior, for it releases the children from the frenzied and destructive atmosphere of World War II and gives them greater stability as they grow old within Narnia and rule over this sanctuary (see figure 11). Moreover, Narnia is often depicted with specific reference to places which the Pevensies have strong ties to, such as Cair Paravel and Aslan's How, thereby strengthening their bond to this interior. In his research, Tuan recognizes the link between such treasured places, self-identity, and a child's conception of home:

A homeland has its landmarks, which may be features of high visibility and public significance, such as monuments, shrines, a hallowed battlefield or cemetery. These visible signs serve to enhance a people's sense of identity; they encourage awareness of and loyalty to place. But a strong attachment to the homeland can [also] emerge. . . with the memory of sounds and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time. (159)

Landmarks of this sort and the role which the children play or have played in defining them – as well as the sense of community which these interiors engender – allow for Narnia to become a home to the Pevensies, a place of security where they can reach their moral maturity and understand their opposing potentials for good and evil.

**Eustace and Jill**

Narnia functions as a sanctuary not only for Digory, Polly, and the Pevensies, but for Eustace and Jill as well. Eustace must face the ugliness of his character by being
transformed into a dragon while in Narnia. At this time, Eustace comes to the realization that “he wanted to be friends” with his cousins and the Narnians, understanding himself to be “a monster cut off from the whole of the human race” and beginning “to wonder if he himself had been such a nice person as he had always supposed” (Lewis, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 92). As a result of the insight into his character that he gains within this interior, Eustace observes his true self for the first time and takes action to correct his flaws. Equally important is the fact that Narnia affords Eustace the sense of safety and community necessary for him to transform his character. Indeed, this same metamorphosis would have been nearly impossible for Eustace in England, where amorality surrounded him. Lewis thereby portrays the necessity of an extreme reconstruction of place and space (both bodily and perceptibly) to compel a change in morality.

Narnia is even more distinctly illustrated as an interior within *The Silver Chair*, when we are introduced to Jill Pole alongside the return of Eustace's character. Fleeing from bullies at the Experiment House, Eustace shares the secret of Narnia with Jill (see figure 12). Quickly following this admission, both children are called into Narnia, with Lewis narrating that “before [Jill] quite knew what was happening, [Eustace] grabbed her hand and pulled her

*Figure 12. In their attempts to escape the prison of the Experiment House, Eustace and Jill call out to Aslan, seeking entrance into Narnia and thereby aligning their morals with this interior.*
through the door, out of the school grounds, out of England, out of our whole world into That Place” (*Silver Chair* 13). Jill also grows in character as a result of her time in Narnia. Before coming to Narnia, Jill is a weak and whiny character who does not know how to defend herself. She also shows her arrogant nature in standing so close to the edge of the mountain when she and Eustace first appear in Narnia, consequently causing Eustace to fall over the edge when he attempts to pull her away from the brink. At first Jill tries to deny blame, saying, “It's not my fault he fell over the cliff. If he'd left me alone, we'd both be all right” (*Silver Chair* 19). Shortly thereafter, however, Jill is confronted with her beastly nature when Aslan appears.

A telling sign of Jill's character growth over the course of the book is marked by the change in Aslan's treatment of her from the beginning of the story, when he “looked straight at her and then looked away – as if he knew her quite well and didn't think much of her” (*Silver Chair* 21), to his embracing of her in the end, when he “bent down and touched [her and Eustace's] pale faces with his tongue” (*Silver Chair* 236). As a result of her journey through the Underworld in the accompaniment of Eustace and Puddleglum, Jill gains the responsibility and bravery which will become characteristic of her nature during *The Last Battle*. Within this final chapter of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis portrays Jill as a self-actualized woman in the fullest sense, particularly by comparison to all other female characters within the series. This is represented first by the fact that Jill is allowed to participate in the final war, despite the Narnian mantra that “battles are ugly when women fight” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* 109), and secondly by way of Jill's resolve, with the young girl continuing to fight even after witnessing Eustace
being thrown into the stable containing Tash, the villain behind Narnia's destruction. Of this choice to persevere, Jill tells herself, “Even if I can't stop blubbering, I won't get my string wet” (Last Battle 144).

In accordance with this maturation on the part of Eustace and Jill, it is equally important to observe the connection between The Underworld and Plato's cave that Gareth B. Matthews focuses on his critical essay, “Plato in Narnia”:

Plato thinks of the physical world we experience through our senses as an image or shadow of the real world of external and unchangeable realities . . .

The picture of the Underworld we get in The Silver Chair is also a world dimly lit by its own interior light of only partial comprehension. (173-174)

This tie to Plato is significant, as Eustace and Jill's ability to go into the underworld, save Rilian, and resist the Lady of the Green Kirtle's spell are all signals of their maturation and self-actualization. They cannot be taken in by her spell because of their deep-seated awareness of Aslan's morality and their assurance in their own identity as it functions within Narnia. They thereby act as individuals who, freed from their respective caves within England and the amorality found there, must venture into the darkness once more to challenge their resolve and free others from similar chains.

The Harry Potter Series

In the Harry Potter series, the Wizarding World acts as the equivalent to Narnia for Rowling's young protagonist, with both series' interiors functioning as moral compasses for their respective characters. Of the transition from Muggle to Wizarding world, Kornfield and Prothro note that Harry “yearns to escape the real world, because
only in the world of magic does the vision of home and family take on any meaning or permanence” (124). They go on to relate that “in moving from the Muggle to the magical world, Harry also moves emotionally from a place of isolation and loneliness to a sense of community and belonging” (Kornfield and Prothro 125). At this time, Harry shifts away from the intense loneliness and lack of strong self-identity he felt at Privet Drive to an interior within which his self can be protected and afforded the psychological safety to grow. In particular, the school of witchcraft and wizardry acts as the most important interior within the magical world for Harry, with “life at Hogwarts offer[ing] Harry glimpses into the parents he lost . . . It also offers him, finally, somewhere he belongs” (Lavoie 45). For the first time, Harry understands himself to be someone of importance, not so much for his infamy within the Wizarding World, but for his place as a wizard and a student at Hogwarts.

Within Hogwarts, the Gryffindor house gives Harry his first sense of community, with Professor McGonagall telling the children, “Your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts” (Sorcerer's Stone 114). Like Handel, Lavoie recognizes the
importance of this family bond:

The familial metaphor is significant, as each of the central characters has a complicated family life of one sort or another: dead parents, Muggle parents, lost parents, and, in Ron's case, the fragmented attention of busy parents . . .

Gryffindor fills a need for each of its students. (45)

Thus, Gryffindor tower grants Harry and many of the children a place of belonging. The Gryffindor common room (see figure 13) in particular engenders these relationships for the way in which it acts as the center of celebration – be it during the holidays or such events as the Triwizard Tournament – and thereby bonds the children. As Kornfield and Prothro observe, “The secret location of each house's common room and sleeping quarters fosters a sense of security and community among house members, but it also magnifies the house's sense of separateness from one another: they are sanctuaries in an otherwise perilous environment” (128). The common rooms of all four houses thus serve as refuges for the students, and Harry's attachment to Hogwarts is shaped in large part by the interior community of Gryffindor.

Hogwarts' ability to function as a home for Harry is displayed partly through its communal setting, including the sharing of meals (see figure 14) and its personalized quarters. Harry's bond with Hermione, Ron, and the collective Wizarding World allows him to physically, mentally, and emotionally break free from the prison of the Dursleys' home for the first time. Based on this newly acquired family unit, Harry further learns what is of value to him and is willing to put his friends and surrogate family before his own safety. One instance of this feeling of belonging can be observed when Harry and
Ron rescue Hermione for the first time in *The Sorcerer's Stone*. From this experience, Harry's sense of family is strengthened. Harry indicates his understanding of this by identifying that “there are some things you can't share without ending up liking each other, and knocking out a twelve-foot troll is one of them” (*Sorcerer's Stone* 179). The interior of Hogwarts and the interior of the magical world itself allow for this experience to take place and, as such, create for Harry an authentic family environment.

When Harry is forced to experience his first separation from the Wizarding World, and particularly from Hogwarts, his feelings of loss manifest themselves via an intense inner anxiety. Of this, Harry relates how he “missed the castle with its secret passageways and ghosts, his classes . . . the mail arriving by owl, eating banquets in the Great Hall, sleeping in his four poster bed in the tower dormitory” (*Chamber of Secrets* 5). After only a year at Hogwarts, Harry has gained a much greater understanding of home – of an interior acting as a sanctuary. Thus, when he returns to the Dursleys' house, a hostile interior, he experiences psychological pain, expressing “he missed Hogwarts so much it
was like having a constant stomach ache” (*Chamber of Secrets* 5) and thereby conveying his homesickness for the school and the magical world at large. Likewise, in his third year, even after he is told that the murderer Sirius Black may attempt to break into the castle to kill him, Harry describes that he “felt that he was home at last” upon returning to Hogwarts (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 95). This illustrates how Harry’s identity is closely tied to the castle, with the young protagonist viewing Hogwarts as a sanctuary even in the face of death.

Alongside the castle itself, particular objects within Hogwarts enhance Harry's connection to the interior. As Tuan puts it, “Purposive movement and perception, both visual and haptic, give human beings their familiar world of disparate objects in space” (12). Specifically, the mirror of Erised (see figure 15), the invisibility cloak (which he first gains and primarily uses within Hogwarts' grounds), and the pensieves are all objects of inner illumination for Harry, with critic David Jones noting that all three objects are crucial “to aid [Harry] in seeing and constructing a moral...
code” (197). Through both the objects within Hogwarts and the security/sense of place brought forth by the castle walls themselves, Harry is figuratively “born” within Hogwarts. Bachelard highlights this overarching idea when he claims that “the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us . . . [it] is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams” (14-15). For the first time, Harry understands himself as someone of importance because he is included within the Wizarding World and specifically as a result of his status as a student at Hogwarts. At the same time, however, his fame causes him to attract a variety of unsavory characters, and it is within the protective walls of Hogwarts that Harry begins to gain the skills and moral growth necessary to pinpoint what his own values are, rather than be manipulated by others.

_The Hunger Games Trilogy_

Within Collins's series, Katniss's establishment of a new home is synonymous with the creation of her identity as a hunter, with the forest outside of the perimeter of District 12 serving as a sanctuary while her home simultaneously takes on more qualities of a prison. Katniss describes this transformation by first outlining her struggles within the confines of District 12, wherein she initially attempts to keep her sister and herself alive by selling household objects and old clothes and raiding trash cans in the Merchant sector for spoiled food. Mere days from starving to death, her salvation comes in the form of a common weed, the dandelion:

“... when I saw the dandelion and I knew hope wasn’t lost. I plucked it carefully and carried it home. I grabbed a bucket and Prim’s hand and headed to the Meadow and yes, it was dotted with the golden-headed weeds. After
we’d harvested those, we scrounged along inside the fence for probably a mile until we’d filled the bucket with dandelion greens, stems, and flowers . . .” (Hunger Games 49-50).

From that instant onward, Katniss begins to view the natural world and her ability to function within it as her saving grace, with the Meadow serving as a doorway to the vast interior of the Woods. This movement into the wilderness creates a very deep bond between Katniss (the inhabitant) and the land. As Katniss puts it, “The woods became our savior, and each day I went a bit further into its arms” (Hunger Games 51).

Katniss’s identity shift upon entering the Woods is illuminated even further as a result of her immediate transformation into a hunter (see figure 16). She describes this metamorphosis by observing, “As soon as I enter the trees, I receive a bow and sheath of arrows from a hollow log” (Hunger Games 5). Moreover, the divide between the persona that she wears within District 12 and her growing identity within the Woods becomes increasingly evident:
“In the Woods waits the only person with whom I can be myself: Gale. I can feel the muscles in my face relaxing, my pace quickening as I climb the hills to our place, a rock ledge overlooking a valley. A thicket of berry bushes protects it from unwanted eyes. The sight of him waiting there brings on a smile. Gale says I never smile except in the Woods” (Hunger Games 6).

Bachelard speaks of this awareness of identity as not simply the product of discovering or recovering a sanctuary, but the result of moving outward and confronting the exteriority that lies beyond one's known interior. He outlines the epiphany that the inhabitant experiences in moving past the safety of the interior, describing how “the child has just discovered that she is herself, in an explosion toward the outside, which is a reaction, perhaps, to certain concentrations in the corner of her being” (138-139). This revelation, in turn, forces Katniss to rethink the very foundations of her life within District 12, her primary interior, and thus calls into question the very nature of her identity within it. As Bachelard states of the child, a fundamental inquiry now lies before Katniss: “Now that she knows she is herself, will she resume her game of 'playing houses,' will she return

Figure 17. While Katniss describes the landscape of District 12 in varying shades of gray, her depiction of the Woods is full of both life and color, thereby creating opposing images of a prison (District 12) and a refuge (the Woods).
home, in other words, withdraw again into herself?” (139). At this point during her journey, Katniss begins to reach a crossroads regarding her identity: she can choose to either confront the realities of her society and come to a greater understanding of her own psyche, or willingly abandon the quest for greater social and self-identity in favor of the security (and, ultimately, ignorance) of a known interior.

Although reluctant to fully acknowledge her own rebellion against the Capitol and the prison that District 12 operates as, and choosing instead to hide behind the idea that she is motivated solely by her will to survive and protect her family, Katniss nevertheless rejects her entrapment within District 12. The favor she feels toward the freedom of the Woods is the clearest example of this early defiance against the Capitol and can be demonstrated by the vastly different descriptions she gives to the forest in comparison to her district (see figure 17). Frequently speaking of the degradation to be found within District 12, namely the “layer of coal dust that settled on everything in the Seam” (*Hunger Games* 27), Katniss paints a grim picture of her community. This imagery stands in strong contrast to the life that is infused within her descriptions of the Woods, such as when she portrays the valley of the forest as “teeming with summer life, greens to gather, roots to dig, fish iridescent in the sunlight. The day is glorious, with a blue sky and soft breeze” (*Hunger Games* 9). Descriptions such as these serve as insight into Katniss's shifting psyche and her growing understanding of not only the state of her current interior, but the potential for the existence of other fruitful interiors amid the unknown exterior. In this way, Katniss begins to confront the reality of the “I” (the interior) and the “non-I” (the exterior).
As stated within the introduction, Bachelard describes the home interior as the “I” and all that exists outside of this interior as the “non-I.” This juxtaposition creates a substantial connection between the identity of the inhabitant and the identity of the interior, with the home interior’s status as “the original shell” originating from its position as a source of protection for the inhabitant from the unknown exterior (Bachelard 4). However, in addition to its positive capabilities and associations, the close link between the individual and the interior can develop in ways that hinder rather than help the inhabitant, changing the interior from the sanctuary it once was into a prison from which the individual cannot escape, such as District 12 begins to for Katniss. When this occurs, the inhabitant begins to look toward the cosmos in search of an opening, a doorway, that might aid in the transition from one interior into another – or, as is the case here, an expansion from one interior into its wider form:

The door is an entire cosmos of the Half-open. In fact, it is one of its primal images, the very origin of a daydream that accumulates desires and temptations: the temptation to open up all the ultimate depths of being, and the desire to conquer all reticent beings. The door schematizes two strong possibilities, which sharply classify two types of daydreams. At times, it is closed, bolted, padlocked. At others, it is open, that is to say, wide open.

(Bachelard 222)

For Katniss, this doorway first presents itself in the form of the Meadow, which in turn reveals a new threshold in the form of the Woods. Each of these openings serve not only as outlets to wider scales of interiority, but aid in establishing greater morality, from
which Katniss begins to confront her core identity. Katniss's moral growth exhibits itself primarily through her increased interaction within the sub-sectors of District 12 and the revelations she uncovers there. Namely, she begins to conceive of the double roles many areas of District 12 play and how this masquerading act is perpetrated to the greatest extent by the Capitol itself. Her initial awareness occurs when she begins to frequent the Hob, describing it as “an abandoned warehouse that once held coal,” and going on to revealing how “when [the Capitol] came up with a more efficient system that transported the coal directly from the mines to the trains, the Hob gradually took over the space” (*Hunger Games* 11). In this instance, Katniss recognizes how the Hob functions as a refuge from the tyrannical rulings of the Capitol, with the inhabitants of District 12 symbolically reclaiming a piece of their land as their own to do with what they will, and thereby undermining the overall authority of the Capitol (see figure 18).

When Katniss begins to take refuge within the Hob, she is able to learn more and more about the true feelings of District 12's citizenry toward the Capitol. In learning
about these sentiments, Katniss begins to confront not only the structure of her society, but also the role that she might play should she choose to further undermine the Capitol's aims. More telling than this, however, is Katniss's reaction to the Capitol's interference within the Square at the time of the Reaping, the day when the tributes of each district are chosen for the annual Hunger Games. Although she begins by stating that “on public market days, especially if there is good weather, [the Square] has a holiday feel to it,” she quickly contrasts this description with the atmosphere on the day of the Reaping, noting that “today, despite the bright banners hanging on the buildings, there’s an air of grimness. The camera crews, perched like buzzards on rooftops, only add to the effect . . .” (Hunger Games 15). These conflicting images reveal Katniss's awareness of how the Capitol's presence influences the core experience of the interior, with the government officials bringing with them pronounced images of death and decay (see figure 19).

The reader may justly presume that an awareness of the Capitol's influence would have been evident to Katniss from a very young age – indeed, since the first time she could watch the Hunger Games and understand how the Capitol was forcing boys and girls to fight to the death. What is important about this description, however, is that it comes at a critical period of maturation for Katniss – a time when she is becoming more profoundly aware of the possibility for life beyond the grit and grime that covers District 12 and that existence beyond the rule of the Capitol need not be confined to the realm of daydreams. Most importantly, this revelation occurs at a time when Katniss views the Capitol as more dangerous than ever, for it is the year that marks Prim's first initiation
into the Reaping and thus the first chance that she might be forced to participate in the Hunger Games.

Functioning as the guardian of her sister, Katniss senses that her home is being threatened in an unprecedented manner. This threat against her sister and therefore her interior only serves to heighten the juxtaposition between the life her sanctuary provides and the death the Capitol promises, compelling her to question her previous moral ambivalence regarding past Hunger Games. This intensifies her willingness to do whatever it takes to protect what is left of her sanctuary within District 12, even if it means confronting the Capitol head on, a task which requires her to abandon her known interior in favor of an unknown – and quite possibly uninhabitable – exterior.

Figure 19. Katniss describes the stark contrast between the Square's usual celebratory environment and the oppressive atmosphere on the day of the Reaping, revealing the power of the Capitol's presence to transform a sanctuary into a prison.

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The unique nature of the moral maturation the characters from each series undergo within their newly acquired interiors, as well as the family structures that occupy
theses places, play a critical part in constructing their self-identities up to this point. Once again, we may refer to Handel's explanation regarding the family unit/theme for insight into these diverging perspectives:

From his experience with the other members of his family and from experiences outside of the family, an individual comes to have another kind of image – an image of his family which expresses his mode of relationship to the unit and which defines the kind of impact the family has on him . . . a person's image of his family embodies what he expects from it and what he gives to it, how important it is and what kind of importance it has. (15)

In addition to further clarifying their self and social identity, the moral values our protagonists gain from their interiors and the familial figures they acquire within them highly influences the next steps that they will take along their individual journeys. Although each set of characters has established an interior life that is divergent from one another, all of the protagonists quests are linked through their need to relinquish the protection of their moral fortresses and validate their identities outside of them. This conveys the reality that the characters have yet to reach self-actualization despite the leaps in moral understanding they have undergone, a fact which is largely the result of the way in which the characters have been insulated within their interiors. Having now been given the moral guidance previously denied them, our protagonists must face the most tumultuous stretch of their journey – a time wherein the strength of their moral convictions are put to the test as they confront places and spaces of the greatest threat to their identities.
Chapter 3: Relinquishing Home and Immaturity

“When a person feels that he himself is directing the change and in control of affairs of importance to him, then nostalgia has no place in his life: action rather than mementos of the past will support his sense of identity.”

– Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience

Having left behind their sanctuaries, the protagonists move into the final stages of their self-actualization. The means of testing their identities differs for each set of characters. As Handel describes it, “Moral evaluation also affects the freedom to range outwardly, to be at home in new circumstances, to find out for one's self. The central issue is the need, or lack of it, to condemn and repudiate or even simply shun what is traditionally not one's own” (21). For the eight guardians of Narnia, this means a return to England, where their belief in this sanctuary and the morality Aslan has conveyed to them is challenged with each passing day by wartime mentality and the materialistic notions that tempt them to forget that a morally pure world is still possible. Harry's movement away from his safe haven, in turn, is a self-imposed one, granting him the opportunity to assess his moral understanding free from the imposition of others. Katniss's separation from her refuge is the most harrowing of all: in addition to the total destruction of her district, she must learn how to retain her morality in a world that continually proves to her just how destructive man's nature truly is. In facing these trials, the protagonists from each series seek to overcome the adverse forces of moral depravity working against them in the hope of gaining the chance to return home once again.

The Chronicles of Narnia

Digory and Polly

After discovering the vibrancy of life and morality within Narnia, Digory and
Polly must return to England without the knowledge that they will ever be able to come back to this sacred interior again. They have played a pivotal part in Narnia's beginnings and have grown in their awareness of morality, maturing to greater self-actualization. As a result of this new understanding, Digory, whom the Pevensie children know later in life as Professor Kirke, is one of the few adult characters who is shown as morally righteous and authentically mature. His personality stands in high contrast to the egotistical self-righteousness that Lewis conveys most adults having, namely Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*. Lewis depicts the grown-up version of Digory as the sort of adult that the Pevensies “liked . . . almost at once” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* 3).

Indeed, the reader is able to retroactively see the effect that Narnia has had on the morality and maturation of the Professor, one of only two key characters who grows significantly older in the traditional sense of time within the human world, as opposed to within Narnia (see figure 20).

**Figure 20.** Despite his extended absence from Narnia, Digory portrays his resolve to stand by the morality he gained while in this sanctuary by 1) safeguarding portals into Narnia, such as the wardrobe; 2) housing new generations of Narnian guardians, such as the Pevensies; and 3) transforming his home into a community for those who are awaiting their chance to return to Narnia.

Professor Kirke does not disbelieve the Pevensie children's Narnian stories – as most adults would – or tell them what to believe. Instead, he aids them in understanding
the situation, with Lewis narrating that the Professor, “who was really a remarkable man, didn't tell them not to be silly or not to tell lies, but believed them” (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 187-188). This growth of character once more hints back to Plato, to whom the Professor himself refers to several times in both The Magician's Nephew and The Last Battle. Specifically, Digory speaks of Plato's notion of worlds within worlds (Last Battle 210), with the reader coming to recognize that this is exactly what Narnia is in relation to the human world. The Professor's interest in this philosophy shows that he is still maturing and redefining his understanding of morality even outside of Narnia because of his time within this interior. In this way, the reader observes the Professor retaining the same moral alignment he gained in Narnia, upholding the virtues he discovered while there and thus portraying how the interior of Narnia was truly his place of maturation. His desire to stand by Narnian ethical standards in hope of returning to this sanctuary one day is further conveyed in The Last Battle, wherein all seven friends of Narnia have banded together to form a community of their own in the name of protecting Narnia.

The Pevensie children

Like Digory and Polly, the Pevensie children are removed permanently from Narnia. At the end of Prince Caspian, Peter and Susan are made aware of the fact that they can no longer visit Narnia. Edmund and Lucy face this same separation and inability to return to Narnia at the end of The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. In each of these circumstances, Aslan explains to the children that they “are too old,” and that they must come to discover him and the Narnian morals he has taught them within their own
world (*Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 247). Given the fact that Edmund and Lucy are presumably at least marginally younger than Peter and Susan were when they are told they can no longer return, it would appear that the growth Aslan speaks of pertains more to the psychological than the physical. This points to the maturation and moral alignment each pairing has by the time they leave Narnia for good, as well as their need to test these elements of their identity within the human world. Even after being denied further entrance into Narnia, however, all of the children – minus Susan – hold onto the hope of returning to this sanctuary someday, with Peter explaining to Lucy, “It's okay, Lucy. It's different than I thought it would be, but it's okay” (*Prince Caspian* 254). Peter, Lucy, and Edmund's belief in this interior as their true home is portrayed most evidently by the group they form with the Professor and Polly: their coming together is a direct result of their leap of faith that they will one day again “be wanted over here” (*Last Battle* 58).

The struggle the eight guardians of Narnia go through in attempting to retain the moral framework they have gained in Narnia is best conveyed through Susan. In *The Last Battle*, Susan is said to be interested in “nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations” (208). She chooses to deny the reality of Narnia and mock her former companions, stating, “What wonderful memories you have! Fancy your still thinking about all those funny games we used to play when we were children” (*Last Battle* 208). As a result of her inability to retain the black and white moral identity she has built in Narnia, Susan is denied a return to this sanctuary and labeled as “no longer a friend of Narnia” (*Last Battle* 208). This stands in contrast to the other seven characters, each of whom band together, meeting weekly in Digory's home to discuss their adventures in
Narnia and always at the ready to relinquish their lives in England for the chance to return to their beloved sanctuary. In this way, the seven friends of Narnia find the strength to retain their morality via each others' convictions and the affirmation of their own identities, seeking out the interiors within England which allow them to feel closest to their true home.

**Eustace and Jill**

Unlike the Pevensies or Digory and Polly, Eustace and Jill are detached from Narnia in the most dramatic way with Narnia's demise (see figure 21). They see their beloved interior literally torn away from them in front of their eyes. However, since Eustace and Jill face the greatest test of all within the interior of Narnia – that is, facing a false Aslan – they lose the shadowland of Narnia but immediately move into the perfected form of their sanctuary. Like the other two sets of children, Eustace and Jill undergo a leap of faith. Not only do they congregate with the other five friends of Narnia, but they stay true to their belief that Aslan will protect them from the dreaded Tash when they enter the stable during *The Last Battle* and give themselves over to death. Because of their willingness to face death in the name of Narnia and the morals they have learned there, Eustace and Jill – as well as the other five
friends of Narnia – show how far they have come in terms of maturation and self-identity. As such, they convey themselves as prepared to face the final step in attaining self-actualization by way of entering the true interior of Narnia: Aslan's Country.

**The Harry Potter Series**

While the eight guardians of Narnia are subject to a mandated evacuation of Narnia within Lewis's series, Rowling's protagonist undergoes a self-imposed parting from his sanctuary. Despite the benefits of Hogwarts as an interior and the exponential growth in self-identity that comes with it, Harry's scar and the legacy it forces upon him creates a barrier between him and the other members of the Wizarding World. Thus, even within this newly acquired home, Harry remains an outsider in several crucial ways. However, Harry's sense of isolation within this most beloved interior is necessary, as his feelings of alienation are part and parcel of what eventually propels Harry forward on his journey, causing him to leave behind the protective walls of Hogwarts and head into the unknown.

Hogwarts shifts as an interior over time, becoming less and less safe as it is infiltrated by more and more outsiders, most notably the Dementors in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, the Ministry of Magic in *The Order of the Phoenix*, and the Death Eaters in *The Deathly Hallows*. In *The Goblet of Fire*, Harry and Cedric are literally whisked away by the portkey at the end of the third task, leaving “Hogwart's grounds completely” and traveling “miles – perhaps hundreds of miles – for even the mountains surrounding the castle were gone” (636). From this experience, Harry realizes for the first time the limitations of the protection Hogwarts can offer him – that he is not safe simply for being
within the castle's grounds – and that it may require more from himself than he had anticipated in order to ensure his survival (see figure 22). Thus, while partially shattering his illusion of safety, this circumstance forces Harry to take on a greater burden of self-reliance. No longer can he expect Hogwarts to shelter him from the storm; instead, he must come to grips with his autonomous identity. This is not to say that Harry relinquishes viewing Hogwarts as a safe haven altogether, but that he begins to perceive the need to be in charge of his relationship with the castle, as opposed to regarding it as a quasi-guardian of his well-being.

Harry's growing separation from his sanctuary can also be observed when the Ministry of Magic takes over Hogwarts and when Harry's mind is infiltrated by Voldemort. With both of these events taking place in his refuge, Harry comes to the undeniable realization that the castle is no longer inherently safe for him, and that he must instead seek out protection for himself rather than simply assuming it will be
present. Nevertheless, these outside forces allow for the establishment of a new interior within Hogwarts for Harry: the Room of Requirement (see figure 23). This shape-shifting space serves as the training grounds for Harry and his peers, functioning as a powerful interior because of the way in which it molds itself seamlessly for the inhabitant and allowing “inter-house relationships [to] give way to a sense of community never before seen at the school” (Kornfield and Prothro 134). Within the safety of the Room of Requirement, house divides are broken and a new community is created. Thus, the presence and increased importance of the Room of Requirement points to the need for Harry to gain his own identity and become the owner of his interior.

With the formation of Dumbledore's Army in the Room of Requirement, Harry takes on the task of communing with the castle, asking it for “somewhere to learn to fight” and thus shifting his position from mere inhabitant to owner of his interior (Rowling, Order of the Phoenix 389). In this instance, Harry understands what the next step in his maturation is, and takes on the identity of a leader both among his fellow peers and with respect to his interior. This situation forces Harry to grapple with his own
identity as he assumes the role of a captain, with his moral guidelines as he defies what he perceives as an invasive authority, and with his maturity as he claims ownership of the castle in opposition to that of the Ministry. In some of his finest moments of self-actualization in the Room of Requirement, Harry becomes the true guardian of Hogwarts. In terms of Benjamin's philosophy regarding the inhabitant as either the owner or the object of his interior, Harry shifts from a member of the collected (i.e., a passive object) to the collector (i.e., an active subject); thus, it is his leadership to which this interior bends in *The Order of the Phoenix*.

As a result of his growth toward self-actualization in *The Order of the Phoenix*, in *The Half-Blood Prince*, Harry must travel increasingly outside of Hogwarts in order for him to obtain an identity that is just as strong in the exterior as it is within his interior. The reader sees this transition taking place by way of Harry's interactions with Dumbledore. The two characters leave the castle by physical means (as when they go in search for Riddle's locket) and mental ones (as when they traverse various individuals' memories of Riddle). Both of these types of separation from the castle are marked by instances of growth for Harry. Within the memories he observes, Harry must come to a greater understanding of the enemy he is to face and, therefore, what kind of man he wishes to be. Indeed, in uncovering more and more of Riddle's memories, Harry must confront the similarities that exist between himself and Riddle and seek out what differentiates him from the self-proclaimed Dark Lord. In doing so, Harry comes to define himself to a greater extent, to refine his moral code, and to more fully prepare for the trials ahead of him. Similar circumstances occur when Harry ventures with
Dumbledore to recover Riddle's locket (see figure 24). During this time, Harry is completely removed from the sanctuary he has come to depend on for the last six years, and his identity is both shaken and strengthened by the choices he is forced to make while independent of the castle's reassuring presence. As a result, Harry gains greater maturity and moral strength. Both of these elements (maturity and morality), in turn, contribute to his ability to perceive his identity as predominantly tied to himself and not primarily subject to any of the interior forces that surround him, namely the walls of Hogwarts. Thus, although the school of witchcraft and wizardry remains a sanctuary for Harry, the castle does not define Harry's identity; instead, Harry claims ownership over this interior and allows his personality to play an increasingly important role in defining it.

Dumbledore's death is the catalyst that separates Harry completely from Hogwarts. During this period, Harry must leave the school of magic and go off on his own to gain a complete understanding of who he is and achieve his potential for moral enlightenment. Rowling conveys this notion by having Harry, Ron, and Hermione constantly on the move during the first half of The Deathly Hallows (see figure 25). As Jones states, “The series finale of trio characters (Harry, Hermione, and Ron) wandering
through the woods presents another occasion for a transgressive movement. Their characters are deconstructed, pulled away from their adolescent selves and pulled more fully into the adult world” (196). Harry cannot substitute a new sanctuary for that which he has lost at Hogwarts; instead, he must go through a period in which he is effectively homeless. This forces him to rely almost wholly on the self-identity he has thus far built up. He recognizes his inner self as his only guaranteed interior, and this allows him to cut any remaining constraints that confine him to the childhood interior of Hogwarts.

**The Hunger Games Trilogy**

One unique element of *The Hunger Games* series is that Katniss's separation from home is conveyed as a series of distinct stages, rather than the progression over time that occurs in *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Harry Potter*. The catalyst of Katniss's departure from both her central interior and her sanctuary is The Reaping, the public lottery during which the Hunger Games contestants are determined and whereat Katniss volunteers as tribute in place of her sister, Prim. When she is quickly thereafter forced to leave the
district, Katniss's immediate desire is to seek shelter within her sanctuary: “I put my hands behind my back and stare into the distance. I can see the hills I climbed this morning with Gale. For a moment, I yearn for something . . . the idea of us leaving the district . . . making our way into the woods” (Hunger Games 25). These reminiscent thoughts display the intimacy of place – how specific spaces become interiors through the emotional hold they have on us – and the manner in which our memories and identities become ingrained within them. These feelings are often revealed most vividly when we are forced to abandon the safety of our home; at such times, the powerful role these interiors play within our lives and our identities is felt with astonishing clarity, as Katniss discovers during her final moments before being torn away from District 12. Of this sentiment, Tuan states, “Human groups tend to regard their own homeland as the center of the world . . . Home is the focal point of a cosmic structure. Such a concept of place ought to give it supreme value; to abandon it would be hard to imagine” (149).

With the loss of her home (District 12) and sanctuary-away-from-home (the Woods), Katniss finds herself exposed to the world to a stark degree. The lack of a stable interior thus strips Katniss of a stable identity as well, forcing her to confront her identity in a way she cannot escape. It is fitting, then, that Collins symbolizes the beginning of Katniss's journey toward self-actualization by having the tributes' train pass through a long, dark tunnel, of which Katniss states, “The tunnel goes on and on and I think of the tons of rock separating me from the sky, and my chest tightens. I hate being encased in stone this way. It reminds me of the mines and my father trapped, unable to reach sunlight, buried forever in the darkness” (Hunger Games 59). Tuan describes experiences
such as this in terms of spatial disorientation, claiming that individuals seek out light in order to gain some sense of place. Entrapped in complete darkness, everything is 'space' since we have no greater understanding of what is in front of us than what is behind (Tuan 161). Throughout the entire series, similar images of underground entrapment and the need to be freed into the light of day are prevalent, with the underground's seemingly impenetrable darkness acting to negate any sense of interiority or exteriority and thus negating the inhabitant's sense of identity.

With her identity in flux, Katniss begins to question what will become of her once she enters the arena of the Games. For answers, Katniss turns to Peeta, who has a stronger sense than she does of the correlation between one's identity and one's interiors:

I don’t know how to say it exactly. Only . . . I want to die as myself. Does that make sense?” he asks. I shake my head. How could he die as anyone but himself? “I don’t want them to change me in there. Turn me into some kind of monster that I am not.” (Hunger Games 140)

Here again, the characters are confronted with the question of the degree to which interiors can influence identity. Whether a sanctuary, a prison, or something in between, the atmospheres of interiors shape their inhabitants in addition to being shaped by them. Peeta recognizes the potential to lose his current identity and adopt a new one once he has become ingrained within the atmosphere of the arena, and thus has a clear recognition of the fact that places are not simply the product of people, but that people can also become the product of places (see figure 26).

To further emphasize this potential identity crisis, Katniss relates how “Peeta had
been struggling to maintain his identity. His purity of self” (*Hunger Games* 142). What is most interesting about this conversation is that it calls into question the ability for one to have a “purity of self” and in what ways this notion of self is tied to ideas of space and place.

Peeta's previous interiors have obviously shaped his identification up to this point; as such, is the identity he currently has really his “pure self”? And can there be a “pure self” with regard to how place and space affect inhabitants? These questions go beyond the scope of the series to a large degree, but they nevertheless bring the issue of prime identity that several characters struggle with to light.

Peeta very clearly distinguishes District 12 and the arena of the Hunger Games as two distinct interiors; moreover, he recognizes the potential for his identity to be influenced by the characteristics of either place, thereby indicating his belief in a strong correlation between interiors and individual identity. An understanding of this link ties directly to Benjamin's and Horkheimer's theories concerning objectivity and subjectivity, specifically when an individual is unwillingly placed within an interior. If one is collected...
against their will, do they maintain their subjectivity, or are they nothing more than an object of their collector? Katniss and Peeta argue over this in the following passage:

“Do you mean you won’t kill anyone?” I ask.

“No, when the time comes I’ll kill just like everybody else. I can’t go down without a fight. Only I wish I could think of a way to . . . to show the Capitol they don’t own me. That I am more than a piece of their Games,” says Peeta.

“But you’re not,” I say. “None of us are. That’s how the Games work.”

“Okay, but within that framework, there’s still you, there’s still me,” he insists. “Don’t you see?” (Hunger Games 140)

Although Katniss initially has a hard time grasping the notion of an individual's identity overcoming the identity of his/her interior, her emergence into self-actualization occurs the moment she realizes that, regardless of being unwillingly collected, she need not define herself as merely the Capitol's pawn. In grieving for the loss of a fellow tribute and friend, Katniss states, “I want to do something right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do there is a part of every tribute they can’t own. That Rue was more than a piece of their Games. And so am I” (Hunger Games 237). In this way, Katniss does not allow her identity to be eclipsed by the arena's identity. By refusing to be objectified or collected, Katniss retains her subjectivity and not only survives the arena, but defeats the Capitol at their own game by achieving something never before done: she allows for there to be two winning tributes, Peeta and herself. Had she subjugated her will to that of the Gamemasters and
the arena, Katniss surely would have lost her identity, whether by way of her death or by means of the killer she would have become. This claiming of her identity as solely her own thus sets Katniss in contention with the identity of Panem as a whole, with her act of defiance against the Capitol sowing seeds of rebellion that span across several districts, her homeland included.

Upon returning to District 12, Katniss attempts to disappear back into her old identity, to effectively “play house” (Bachelard 139), rather than stand up to the prison in which she still exists. “I begin transforming back into myself,” Katniss describes as she nears her old interior. “Katniss Everdeen. A girl who lives in the Seam. Hunts in the woods. Trades in the Hob. I stare in the mirror and try to remember who I am and who I am not. By the time I join the others, the pressure of Peeta’s arm around my shoulders feels alien” (Hunger Games 371). During her attempts to reclaim her old identity, Katniss does so by recalling how she fits within each of the subsections of her old interior, a fact which is exemplified when she returns to her old home in the Seam.

Although she and her family now live in Victor's Village, an extremely manicured part of town, Katniss never views it as her home, stating, “. . . At present [my mother and Prim are] both happily installed in the new house in Victor's Village, and I'm the only one who uses the squat little place where I was raised. To me, it is my real home” (Collins, Catching Fire 6). In this instance, the reader observes Katniss clinging to her past home in an attempt to subsequently cling to her past self (see figure 27). Tuan theorizes that this impulse arises from a youthful longing:

Young people live in the future; what they do rather than what they possess
defines their sense of selfhood. Yet the young occasionally look back; they can feel nostalgic toward their own short past and proprietary about things. In modern society the teenager, as both his body and his mind undergo rapid change, may have an infirm grasp of who he is. The world at times seems beyond his control. Security lies in routine, in what the teenager perceives to be his own sheltered childhood and in the objects identified with an earlier, more stable phase of life. (188)

While Katniss has successfully survived the Hunger Games and kept her family safe, she is not the same person she was prior to the Games. This transformation of her psyche has caused a change in her interactions with her interior as well. Her attempts to hide within her old home thus portray an attempt to hide from this new self and retain a measure of innocence and ignorance that she no longer has in truth. In relation to this desire, Bachelard states, “We know perfectly that we feel calmer and more confident when in the old home, the house we were born in, than we do in houses on streets where we have only lived as transients” (43).
Katniss's hope to regain the self-assurance she once had by re-integrating herself into her old interior is completely shattered upon the announcement of the 75th Hunger Games, known as a Quarter Quill, in which the rules of the Game are changed in some startling way in order to once again reinforce the Capitol's power over the people of Panem. Although she has procured many enemies from within the Capitol – namely the commander-in-chief of Panem, President Snow – Katniss is nevertheless shocked to discover that she must once again be ripped away from her family and sent into the arena when President Snow announces that this year's Games will call upon past champions (one male, one female) from every district.

As a result of the decision to have the Games comprised of past winning tributes – of which, in District 12's case, Katniss is the only female – Katniss is once again pulled from her interior and placed into a prison. Beyond the trauma of being brought back into such a nightmare, Katniss finds that the horrors of the landscape have been dramatically increased so that the arena is quite literally a death trap. Young Adult author Blythe Woolston describes this interior as “a carefully designed unnatural disaster” (Wilson 156) that breeds psychological terror in its inhabitants:

Orchestrated wildfires, avalanches, and floods all add to the stress and carnage of the Games. In the arena, the mist that creeps through the jungle at night is nerve gas, and the perfume that rises from the flowers is poisonous. Even gravity is suspended, so a rock thrown over a cliff flies back up, untethered to natural laws. Nothing in the environment is dependable. (Wilson 156)
Every hour brings with it a new form of torture which fewer and fewer of the tributes escape from, and the notion of safety and security as illusions is further embedded within Katniss's psyche. As Woolston describes it, “Fear is constant, and, in response, the brain shifts to a hyper-aroused state and gets stuck there . . . When that happens, it is very difficult to trust the worlds ever again. The whole world is the arena” (Wilson 156). This perspective is only enhanced when, upon her group's success in sabotaging the arena and being rescued by rebel forces, two pivotal sources of interior identity are ripped from Katniss. To begin with, the Capitol kidnaps Peeta, Katniss's fellow tribute, close friend, and sometime-lover, one of the key people in Katniss's life by whom she defines her existence within her interior. Even more viscerally devastating than this, however, is the complete loss of District 12 that Katniss undergoes, for upon learning how she has conspired to bring down the Games, President Snow orders District 12 to be bombed to the ground, with less than 300 people making it out of the destruction alive.

When Katniss visits the remains of her childhood interior, the powerful symbol of self that it functioned as can be understood by the way in which Katniss immediately seeks out her old house. She attempts to reconstruct this sanctuary within her mind, as though if she can rebuild her home within her imagination, she might yet retain a strong foothold on her own identity:

I stare down at my shoes, watching as a fine layer of ash settles on the worn leather. This is where the bed I shared with my sister, Prim, stood. Over there was the kitchen table. The bricks of the chimney, which collapsed in a charred heap, provide a point of reference for the rest of the house. How else
could I orient myself in this sea of gray? (Collins, *Mockingjay* 3)

In the aftermath of this chaotic and overwhelming loss of home, Katniss is taken into an unexpected interior: District 13. This district was thought to have been destroyed by the Capitol decades ago after its citizens attempted to stand up against Panem's government. Thus, Katniss and the surviving inhabitants of District 12 are shocked to learn that District 13 is not only intact in the form of a vast underground city, but that its inhabitants are preparing in military-like fashion to yet again make an attempt to end the Capitol's rule of Panem.

District 13 becomes crucial to Katniss's identity, for it is within this interior that she learns the full extent of her importance as a symbol of rebellion throughout Panem and, consequently, must decide whether or not she will officially stand by the districts as their Mockingjay, the rebellion's symbol of freedom. In this instance, Katniss's path to maturation is clear: should she take on the role of the Mockingjay and subsequently fight out in the open against the Capitol, she will be wholly relinquishing her old interior and thus the version of her self that existed within it. Katniss acknowledges this shift in identity and subsequent maturation by stating, “A new sensation begins to germinate inside me. But it takes until I am standing on the table, waving my final goodbyes to the hoarse chanting of my name, to define it. Power. I have a kind of power I never knew I possessed” (*Mockingjay* 91).

When Katniss does indeed agree to take on the role of the rebellion's figurehead, she becomes further integrated into the military lifestyle that characterizes District 13; however, this choice does not define her complete maturation. Instead, Katniss heralds in
her full transformation when she is able to perceive District 13’s Capitol-like characteristics, namely the manner in which it entraps its citizens while operating under the guise of a sanctuary. Her resolve in her new identity becomes solidified at this point, and Katniss places complete trust in this new version of herself when she stands up against both the Capitol and District 13, relinquishing all sense of a secure interior in order to defend the people of Panem from escaping one prison only to enter another.

Katniss's self-actualization leads to an even more profound conclusion regarding man's overall nature – that is, her belief that the destructive attitude that overtook both the Capitol and District 13 is an unmitigatable part of the human condition. This notion fully hits home for Katniss within the final stages of toppling the Capitol's rule, at which point her sister, Prim, is killed by friendly fire and, more devastatingly, by a plan put into action by her long-time friend and hunting partner, Gale. When she witnesses Gale's choice to "follow the same rule book President Snow used" and stand by the belief that sacrifices are necessary for the greater good – thus taking on the characteristics of the very regime he sought to overthrow – Katniss's understanding of the destructive power of man is solidified (Mockingjay 186). Thus, from this understanding, Katniss not only becomes fully actualized in her own identity, but gains new insight into the overarching identity of man. In correlation, she comes to recognize how all interiors hold the capacity to be either sanctuaries or prisons, depending on the mindset of the occupants within it.

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In standing behind their belief in the truth of Narnia's existence and the validity of the morality they have gained there, the seven friends of Narnia are once again called
upon to act as guardians of this interior in its greatest time of need. This portrays the extent of their maturation and the way in which their moral purity is equal to that of Narnia. Similar to these seven characters, Harry must also return to his sanctuary, Hogwarts, to defend it against Voldemort. Harry is able to come home to Hogwarts as a fully actualized individual because of his strong moral convictions. He does not come to believe in black and white morality like the seven friends of Narnia do; instead, he realizes that morality is not based on the conflicting good and evil desires within man, but how he chooses to act on those desires. Katniss, in turn, becomes a fully actualized individual when she realizes that she cannot look upon any interior as merely a sanctuary or a prison, but that all places and spaces may be manipulated by the intentions of those within them. As such, Katniss's maturation and moral alignment is solidified when she recognizes the need to fight for mankind, the world, and herself despite humanity's overwhelming pull toward destruction. In each of these cases, the protagonists' trials are centered not on ridding their worlds of all moral depravity, but on standing firm behind their moral convictions in the face of seemingly insurmountable adversity.
Chapter 4: Claiming Ownership of Home and Actualized Self

“What can the past mean to us? People look back for various reasons, but shared by all is the need to acquire a sense of self and identity. To strengthen our sense of self the past needs to be rescued and made accessible.”

– Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience

The self-actualization of the seven friends of Narnia is marked not only by a physical transition into the truest of interiors, Aslan's Country, but in gaining their Narnian identities back as guardians of this sanctuary. Similar to these characters, Harry is afforded the opportunity to return to the Wizarding World and claim his self-actualization. By analyzing his own convictions without the influence of either a prison (The Dursleys') or a sanctuary (Hogwarts), Harry comes to a true maturation of his identity and moral alignment. Like Harry, Katniss must abandon the guidance of all others and evaluate for herself the information she has gleaned from each place and space she has encountered. Indeed, it is only after doing so that she can return to these interiors with the moral fortitude needed to defend them. Thus, the protagonists from all three series attain their full maturity as a result of their ability to evaluate and retain the moral footing they have gained from their sanctuaries within the new and old interiors they encounter.

The Chronicles of Narnia

In Lewis's series, seven out of eight of the children return to Narnia as a result of the maturation and moral alignment they gain and retain from this interior. Despite the fact that the older version of Narnia has been destroyed, the children are able to understand how the new world they enter is actually a truer form of the interior which they had previously labeled as their sanctuary. This recognition allows them to fully give
themselves over to their interior, with Tuan explaining, “Cosmic views can be adjusted to suit new circumstances. With the destruction of one ‘center of the world,’ another can be built next to it, or in another location altogether, and it in turn becomes ‘the center of the world’” (150). This once again hints back to the connection Matthews has established between Lewis’s series and Plato’s notion of worlds within worlds:

Lewis saves us from thinking that this succession dwindles into insignificance by making each world bigger on the inside than it is on the outside . . . Lewis suggests that heaven is still a life of exploration and adventure. Even if we have explored Narnia fully, there is always another one to explore. (Matthews 178)

A wardrobe, a picture, a doorway, and the lakes within the Wood Between the Worlds – all of these open into larger worlds, into separate interiors which are counter-intuitively larger than the space in which they appear to be contained. This is, one might say, the inversely proportional law of interiority. However, as Tuan claims, “Center is not a particular point on the earth’s surface; it is a concept of mythic thought . . . [and] in mythic thought, several world centers may co-exist in the same general area without contradiction” (150). The children have obtained a truer form, or truer interior, as a result of their
moral enlightenment and self-identity, with their full measure of self-actualization occurring the moment they cross the threshold into the real Narnia (see figure 28). This idea of worlds within worlds, or in these terms, interiors within interiors, also harkens back to Lewis's concluding statement: “For them it was only the beginning of the real story . . . They were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on Earth has read, which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before” (Last Battle 210-211). This once again recalls Plato's idea of successive worlds, with Tuan putting it best when he notes these interiors as “places of pause within a larger journey within space . . . that are determined by experience” (198).

**The Harry Potter Series**

Similar to the children's return to Narnia in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Harry's wanderings eventually lead him back to Hogwarts, “the first and best home he had known” (Deathly Hallows 697). As Kornfield and Prothro articulate, “Harry's solitary search for his true family is a search for his own identity; his quest for home and family is a journey all young people take trying to find their place in the world” (135). When Harry returns for his final battle against Voldemort, he has become the master of his interior (see figure 29). While he retains feelings of identification with Hogwarts for the way in which it shaped him throughout his childhood and reflects his current values, he is no longer beholden to it; in other words, the school does not determine his understanding of his identity, but rather his identity determines his perception of the school. After Voldemort's defeat, the magical world can finally fully become a home for Harry. He no longer feels isolated by the burden of the prophecy; instead, he can live a life of relative
normalcy, existing in a world of greater safety and predictability.

Figure 29. When Harry returns to Hogwarts, his maturation into a fully self-actualized being is finalized during his last battle with Voldemort. At this time, Harry trusts in the moral identity he has established and sacrifices his life to protect the Wizarding World, thereby becoming the antithesis of Voldemort and the immorality the Dark Lord symbolizes.

**The Hunger Games Trilogy**

Unlike both *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the *Harry Potter* series, *The Hunger Games* trilogy ends on a darker note concerning the return to home. While Katniss does indeed gain a thorough understanding of her actualized self, the physical and psychological sacrifice that it requires is much greater than in the other two series. To begin with, she loses her sister, Prim, the one person who above all else symbolized home for Katniss and whom she would have done anything to protect. Having lived the past seven years of her life with the sole goal of sustaining and protecting Prim's existence, the loss of her leaves a deep scar on Katniss's psyche and, more to the point, forces her to completely reconstruct her notion of the interior. In this way, for the first time ever, Katniss's interior becomes completely her own, and she must learn to regard it as a place
in which she is protected in addition to a place over which she is the protector. Katniss's self-actualization is completed when she learns to live for her own sake and not simply for the sake of others.

A similarly tragic loss for Katniss comes in the form of her relationship with Gale. Although it is never made clear if Gale knew that Prim was on the battlefield at the time of the bombing, his choice to willingly sacrifice whatever and whoever to fulfill his own aims destroys his relationship with Katniss. Moreover, as a product of this revelation, Katniss becomes more aware of the manner in which she would like to fashion her own identity and interior. As a result, Katniss does not stay within the newly reclaimed Capitol to live a life of luxury as a hero of Panem; instead, she returns to the rubble of District 12, where the slow process of rebuilding the city has begun. Like the Pevensies and Harry, Katniss is able to return to an old interior as it, like her identity, re-blossoms. Even within this interior, however, Katniss places herself on the fringe of society, choosing to live in Victor's Village, the one spot within District 12 that was not destroyed by the bombs. With the aid of Peeta, Katniss begins to reshape this interior into a sanctuary for the two of them and, eventually, their two children.

What is unique about Collins's representation of this reclaiming of the interior is that she does not give the reader this image of unrestrained hope and prosperity that one observes within the other two works. Instead, our journey alongside Katniss ends with her discussion of the nightmares that still plague her and Peeta after over twenty years, describing how she often awakens disoriented and believing that she is once again trapped within the Games. Alongside this psychological struggle, Katniss portrays her
worry that the current prosperity and peace within Panem is fleeting and that it is only a matter of time before the destructive tendencies of man places everyone back into the shackles of a tyrannical society. Reiterated by this fear is the idea that no sanctuary exists without the chance for it to become a prison, and, consequently, that the sense of safety and security one's home provides is never permanent. Indeed, the trilogy closes with the image of Katniss listing off the acts of goodness she has observed within the world as a reminder to herself of the stability of her interior and thus the security of all that she holds dear. Of this tactic, Katniss states, “It's like a game. Repetitive. Even a little tedious after more than twenty years. But there are much worse games to play” (Mockingjay 390). This final image of Katniss's interior life thus presents us with a far more tenuous perception of the safety of one's identity following a return home: self-actualization, Katniss teaches us, does not yield complete freedom from the threat of imprisoning interiors.
Afterword: Escaping the Capitol through Platform 9 ¾ and Entering Narnia

“And what is more, the imagination, by virtue of its freshness and its own peculiar activity, can make what is familiar into what is strange. With a single poetic detail, the imagination confronts us with a new world. From then on, the detail takes precedence over the panorama, and a simple image, if it is new, will open up an entire world.”

– Gaston Bachelard, Poetics of Space

There's No Place Like Home: The Correlation Between Interiority and Morality

Within The Chronicles of Narnia, the differing functions of specific interiors is most clearly portrayed by the divide that exists between England and Narnia. Unlike either Harry's or Katniss's journey, the fundamental growth periods of each of the eight guardians of Narnia comes from within the interior of Narnia, for it is there that they gain and perfect their moral alignment. Their return to England acts more as a period of perseverance between moral enhancement/maturation and self-actualization than a time of strife for the children. This idea connects to the Bachelardian concept of the interior as a fortress:

Faced with the hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house's virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body . . . Such a house of this kind invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world. (46)

Similar to Bachelard's concept of the powerful pull of the interior in winter, when the eight guardians of Narnia face the 'winter' of their journey – the time when they are separated from Narnia – this sanctuary comes to encapsulate their idea of morality and
virtue to the highest degree. This is partly based on its contrast to the human world in which the characters live. Indeed, it is the memory of what they have learned in Narnia that allows the children to endure the trials they face in England, helping them recognize their power as inhabitants within whichever world they roam.

Unlike the interiors in which the characters of The Chronicles of Narnia reside, Harry exists within a universe of much greater moral ambiguity. Within both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds, there is not a one-to-one correlation between specific places/spaces and morality; in fact, a focal struggle that Harry confronts several times throughout his journey is the reality that even in locations like Hogwarts – places that at first seem so morally pure – the interplay between good and evil is complex and convoluted. This same moral uncertainty exists for Katniss and her fellow rebels within The Hunger Games trilogy, with life inside and outside of the Capitol – referred to here as both a geographical place and an ideological space – strikingly dissimilar to each other. Moreover, unlike the seven friends of Narnia – for whom morality and maturation are tied almost exclusively to movement within one overarching interior – both Harry's and Katniss's self-actualization is based primarily on their movement in and out of the sanctuaries and prisons that define their individual landscapes, with the crux of their maturation occurring as a result of their separation from such interiors.

The function of their departures from their interiors is one of the most significant differences between the growth of the characters within The Chronicles of Narnia and the protagonists in the Harry Potter series and The Hunger Games trilogy. While Harry and Katniss undergo revelations regarding morality, maturation, and self-actualization within
the walls of their sanctuaries like the eight guardians of Narnia, the peak of their trials comes in being separated from these interiors and their ability to find their way back and function as fully-developed individuals within them. This most directly relates to Kornfield and Prothro's conceptualization of interiority as it connects to the transformational journey, with the authors referencing former Yale president and baseball commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti, who used baseball as a metaphor for life:

He pointed out that life, just as in baseball, you leave home, then spend all the game trying to get back home; back to the place where you know what the score is, you know where you stand, you are safe. This transformational journey – which all young people must take to discover who they are and where they fit in within the world, to create their own version of home out of the strangeness they encounter when they are “away” – forms the basis of much young adult, coming-of-age literature. And unless they leave, they cannot know what it is to seek. We leave home to find home. (121)

In linking Giamatti's analogy to literary interiority, we see that the protagonists' separation from their sanctuaries and their ability to find their way back home defines interiority to the greatest degree in the Harry Potter series and The Hunger Games trilogy, a marked contrast to the initial discovery of a morally pure refuge which Lewis focuses on so heavily within his compilation.

Achieving Self-Actualization: Why Childhood Interiority Matters

Whether presenting right and wrong in primarily black and white terms or confronting morally ambiguous choices, young adult literature can function in unique and
powerful ways within the lives of the children who read such works. At a time in our lives when we are both overwhelmed and constrained by the world that exists outside of our home, these works of fiction hold the power to transport us from the boundaries of our neighborhoods to faraway lands and, in the process, compel us to view our own lives and selves in new, transformative ways. Indeed, Moretti has identified modern culture's perception of youth as “the age which holds the 'meaning of life',” as well as a “necessary and sufficient definition” of the heroes found within contemporary bildungsromane (4). Moreover, by its very nature, young adult literature is overwhelmingly comprised of fantasy-based bildungsromane. These two elements – fantasy and the formation novel – together create the perfect environment for portraying and analyzing the concept of interiority: while the genre of fantasy allows for an infinite number of possibilities with regard to the representation of interiors, the concept of bildung allows for a method by which to convey the theories of interiority in a concrete, relatable manner.

In connecting the lives of the characters within Lewis's, Rowling's, and Collins's series to the larger culture of readers who invest themselves within their journeys, it is important to see how each protagonist's sojourn toward self-actualization can be connected with every reader's need to establish their own 'place' within the constrains of their cultures and societies. As Moretti explains, it is “necessary that, as a 'free individual', not as a fearful subject but as a convinced citizen, one perceives the social norms [of one's culture] as one's own. One must internalize them and fuse external compulsion and internal impulses into a new unity until the former is no longer distinguishable from the latter” (16). Moretti goes on to discuss the power of the
If the bildungsroman appears to us still today as an essential, pivotal point of our history, this is because it has succeeded in representing this fusion with a force of conviction and optimistic clarity that will never be equaled again. We will see in fact that here there is no conflict between individuality and socialization, autonomy and normality, interiority and objectification. One's formation as an individual in and for oneself coincides without rifts with one's social integration as a simple part of the whole. (16)

Thus, the formulation of self-identity is as equally important to the well-being of the reader as it is to the livelihood of the protagonist, with the journey of both the reader and the character revolving around the need to fuse their identity with an understanding of their society.

Whether comparing England to Narnia, Muggle to magical world, or the districts to the Capitol, the protagonists' experiences of their interiors within all three works are equally, if divergently, dynamic. Reflecting specifically on Harry's journey, Kornfield and Prothro note how the transition from one interior to the next “recalls Plato's allegory of the cave, in which prisoners see only their pale shadows that the fire casts on the wall,” with “the division between believers and non-believers highlight[ing] the disparity between the two worlds” (123). In relation to this movement through interiors and the enlightenment it brings about, all three young adult series are reminiscent of one another for the way in which they illustrate the maturation and moral alignment necessary to build one's identity and sense of communal belonging. Thus, within all three works, self-
identity is intertwined with the establishment of home: each character's search for self is fulfilled through their discovery and subsequent relinquishment of the places and spaces that serve as their sanctuaries and prisons, and their reclaiming of home proceeds from their ability to stand as self-actualized inhabitants of both their interior and exterior worlds.
Appendix:

Addressing the Skeptics: Interiority, Interpretation, and Authorial Intent

Skeptics of this study may question the correlation between literary interiors and young adult literature. Their principal concern centers around a potential disconnect between the “facts” of the literature and the projections of the reader (i.e., what the literature conveys in comparison to what the theorist interprets). The potential validity of this assessment should not be ignored; as with any literary analysis, a researcher must be ever vigilant against the impulse to read their chosen theoretical structure into the text, a folly which often results in forced or farfetched interpretations rather than authentic assessments. However, it is equally important to be aware of the expansive spectrum of interpretation available to the literary analyst – an individual whose primary mission is not the dictation of unmitigated “facts,” but the presentation of diverse vantage points from which to explore the relationship between literature and culture, society, and the individual. Bachelard weighs in on this very argument:

There is also the courage of the writer who braves the kind of censorship that forbids “insignificant” confidences. But what a joy reading is, when we recognize the importance of these insignificant things, when we can add our own personal daydreams to the “insignificant” recollections of the author! Then insignificance becomes the sign of extreme sensitivity to the intimate meanings that establish spiritual understanding between writer and reader.

(71)

A key component of the study of literature is an awareness of the myriad theories,
research methods, and forms of literary interpretation available to the scholar. This is a task that not only calls for careful and attentive control of one's theoretical foundations, but, moreover, for an appreciation of the broad scope of analytical approaches through which to investigate literature.

I have crafted my thesis with this understanding of both literature and the literary scholar in mind. My aim has never been to conform the novels to the constraints of interior theory, but to highlight the possible connections between the places and spaces portrayed within each work and the journey toward self-identity each of the protagonists undertakes. By necessity, such an exploration requires a viewing of each series through theory-tinted glasses; nevertheless, I have attempted to stay true to the principles of sound literary interpretation and research by deriving my investigation from a thorough general analysis of each work prior to relating it to concepts of interiority.

What this approach has resulted in is a twofold interpretation: certain interiors have been revealed as pivotal manifestations of maturation and moral alignment while others have simply served as generic points and properties. As stated in the introduction, both of these interior classifications may exist simultaneously without conflict, as the concept of interiority does not exclude the reality that sometimes an interior is just an interior. As such, the goal of my study has not been to present every place and space within each series as symbolic of the transformative journey, but, through sufficient and convincing evidence, to illuminate the idea that some interiors/exteriors serve as powerful thematic indicators. Thus, while some critics may remain wary of the legitimacy of some of my claims regarding interiority, I would contend that 1) my analysis is not intended as
an absolute, but as a well-argued hypothesis from which a more profound understanding of the core themes of young adult literature may be formulated and 2) that the disavowal of such theoretical concepts is far more limiting than their inclusion.

Thus, while the key stages of the transformative journey as portrayed through children's bildungsromane do not always perfectly correlate with the philosophies of literary interiority, in an intriguing number of cases they do. This, of course, relates back to perception: depending on the level of maturation which the character is at, his perception of his interiority – or the depiction of the interiority which is portrayed by the author, as may be a more accurate indicator in the case of third person narratives – is reflective of this self-awareness. Additionally, authors help to portray the maturation of their characters through interiority in ways that might not even be directly linked to the perception of the characters themselves. Bachelard acknowledges this interplay between author, character, and interiority by stating, “Since this is invented childhood, fictionalized metaphysics, the author holds the key to both domains, he senses their correlation. No doubt he could have illustrated otherwise this sudden awareness of 'being.' But since the house preceded the universe, we should be told [the character's] daydreams in it” (139). Bachelard thus recognizes how an author may employ interiors (namely houses, according to his study) as guideposts along a character's journey through the world, with the actions, thoughts, and dreams that take place within the interior revealing much about the maturation and identity of the individual.

Of course, it is important to recognize that few authors are consciously aware of or reflect on the concepts of interiority to nearly the same extent that scholars such as
Bachelard do. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that they are completely ignorant of the function that place and space plays within their works. It is no coincidence, for instance, that Lewis, Rowling, and Collins all depict their characters' inward growth as an outward traversing of landscapes, or that this movement through spaces and places has been identified as fundamental to the arch of the bildungsroman. As Tuan summarizes, “Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to one and long for the other” (3). Indeed, it is through this push-pull relationship between the equally compelling desires for progression (i.e., movement) and stability (i.e., pause) that the core tension that exists within the protagonist is revealed.
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