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CHRONOTOPE AND THE FEMALE JOURNEY

By

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ABSTRACT

CHRONOTOPE AND THE FEMALE JOURNEY

By

Cynthia Lynn Schofield

This study investigated the use of chronotope in the female journey. The following questions were explored: What chronotopes are utilized in the female journey; what activities occur within the chronotopes; do the activities differ from the traditional *Bildungsroman* or hero's journey?

A review of the literature pertaining to the hero's journey and the male *Bildungsroman* was provided to the reader. In addition, Bakhtin's concept of chronotope as a unit of analysis for dealing with time and space was examined and criticism of the historical issue of space was presented. The review was followed by the investigation of four novels - Kim Chernin's *In My Mother's House: A Daughter's Story* (1983), Christina Garcia's *Dreaming In Cuban* (1992), Laura Esquivel's *Like Water For Chocolate* (1992) and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989). The investigator, through chronotopic analysis, examined the texts for their construction of the female journey.

The investigator found that each of the novels utilized everyday, biographical and historical chronotopes. The everyday chronotope recognized the repetition of women's days. Within these moments of repetition the space was provided for personal affiliations, transmission of culture, and the teaching of resistance through the telling of stories. The biographical chronotope conveyed the protagonists' life spans. Within this chronotope the women were provided the space to testify to the monumental moments in their lives and to

bear witness to their era. The historical chronotope dominated the texts and offered the space for historical perspective and the individual's context in history was given new meaning when layered upon the personal and historical context of others. In this space a feminist consciousness was given voice.

The investigator concluded that not one of the texts resorted to the traditional *Bildungsroman* formula/hero's journey. The formats were modified to recognize and reflect the diverse barriers to women's self-discovery. The authors, through chronotope, provide the reader not so much a clear definition of self-discovery or a woman's journey but rather a penetrating examination of the obstacles - familial, cultural, racial, sexual, intellectual, and political - incorporated into their journeys.

For my grandmother, Maybelle Ruth Henry
For her sisters, Mildred Marie Judkins and
Dorothy Elizabeth Tallmadge
And for my mother, Beverly Jo Henry

I am the keeper of your stories.

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INTRODUCTION

A PERSONAL CONTEXT

Perhaps it is appropriate to offer a "her"story of my fascination with myths and the woman's journey. I taught emotionally impaired students for over ten years, at a variety of age levels. Myths, no matter what the age level of students, enabled my students to perceive their lives with new understanding. Students particularly identified with the hero's journey, a journey easily applied to the journey of adolescence to adulthood. I too could identify with the hero's journey. Though long past adolescence, I felt the call to adventure, the need for mentors, and was actively engaged in a search for an elixir.

In 1992 I entered graduate school and became aware of the male stance I acquired each time I identified with the hero in the hero's journey. I was a woman, with two teenage stepsons and two pre-school daughters. I was embarking upon a journey with encumbrances and gifts that the hero's journey with its generic view of hu"man" did not incorporate. My journey could not be an individual achievement nor could it be a solitary event; friends and family would be participants. My life was too connected to others to separate at the call to adventure. I had to discover and envision a hero's journey that included the presence of others.

My quest led me to the texts of women. I found myself discovering women writers

who "re"framed the monomyth of the hero's journey. Their voices alluded to alternative journeys. In addition, the years of graduate school reinforced my suspicions that my journey was not the traditional hero's journey. For example, my tests were not of physical endurance, unless sleep deprivation counts, but rather they were feats of balancing. Car pools, graduation and first communion parties were balanced against and/or interwoven with comprehensive exam weekends and dissertation chapters. Meals, laundry, baths and bedtimes were woven amidst journal entries, assigned readings and required papers. Seldom was I blessed with solitude or a room of my own.

Yet, the gifts were numerous. If I was overwhelmed with the needs of others, I was also blessed with the support of others. My mother met my eldest daughter's needs and established a relationship with her that I believe will be enduring. My husband assumed a greater role in parenting and never once complained of financial difficulties due to the loss of half of our household income. My brother, Jeffery, flew me to Washington D.C. when I was overwhelmed and needed a room of my own. He willingly slept on his sofa so that I might have the quiet and solitude I craved. Women friends were willing baby sitters and sounding boards. It was apparent that my *becoming* affected and involved the *becoming* of my family and friends.

However, I was constantly reminded of my privileged status. I was surrounded by other women graduate students whose children did not have milk with all their meals or faced their quest without the aid of a spouse. Others did not always have the luxury of a childhood grounded in the canon nor the support system one establishes through a lifetime in the same city. Thus, our journeys were similar yet different. Autobiographies of

women and texts by women emphasized the variety of journeys available to women. I searched for a pattern.

My committee led me to chronotopes as a way of framing and analyzing journeys. If women's journeys were different from men's journeys, then how did time and space play a role in that difference? It became clear that the chronotopes of my life impacted my perception of my journey. Many of the obstacles I faced were within the everyday chronotope. Often, I was so immersed in everyday time, I lost the whole picture of historical time. Yet, there were moments of grace when I perceived a historical context. Usually, I associated historical time with those moments that I perceived a generational pattern. A consciousness has developed over the generations in my family and perhaps this consciousness is my legacy to my daughters.

If "the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons," perhaps the gifts of the mothers are visited upon the daughters. I saw my *emergence* and *becoming* affect my daughters' *emergence* and *becoming*. They are becoming critical readers of their world. They are perceiving choices for their future unattainable in my grandmother's era. Yet, I am conscious of the fact that these choices are due in part to my grandmother's achievements and the achievements of her sisters. The family mythology has enabled me to envision an open future. My life is not preordained by fate.

My consciousness is reinforced and reaffirmed by literature about women by women. This personal knowledge could have tremendous implications for my future English classrooms. What would happen if I introduced mythology in the classroom that did not immediately force young girls to take a male stance or be "other." What would happen if

the first line of a text started with the words, "Call me Cynthia," instead of "Call me Ishmael?" What insight, inspiration, or options did literature of women's quests offer me in my own journey? Thus, this private journey of knowledge may have implications for public knowledge. My journey is a woman's journey. It is a journey that will continue after my death through my daughters and perhaps the following dissertation is my contribution to their feminist consciousness.

CHAPTER I

FOUNDATIONS

> I would like to imagine the way to womanhood not as a single path to a clear destination but as the endless negotiation of a crossroads. Women take various routes depending on what class of woman they are; each woman, at the same time, is divided among several routes, so that she lives her gender as a continuous movement in contradictory directions, some more sanctioned than others.
>
> Susan Fraiman, *Unbecoming Women*

In researching and writing this dissertation, I set out on a journey, in search of an answer to my question: is the female journey significantly different from the male journey? I discovered that I had to narrow my search to one concept. The question became not are the journeys different but which difference should I explore? I narrowed the difference/question to the use of time and space in the female journey and turned to Bakhtin's concept of chronotope as a unit of analysis for dealing with time and space. Bakhtin borrowed chronotope from Einstein's theory of relativity and adapted it for literary criticism. Chronotope recognizes that time and space are not separate but rather fused and recognition of time and space/chronotope can provide insights to the nature of actions and events. Thus, my journey became the exploration of the chronotope in four novels --Kim Chernin's *In My Mother's House: A Daughter's Story* (1983), Christina

Garcia's *Dreaming In Cuban* (1992), Laura Esquivel's *Like Water For Chocolate* (1992) and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) -- all have women's journeys at the core of their plots. That, of course, is one reason I have selected them. Yet, I also chose these novels because they are written by women, are multicultural and matrilineal, provide more than one possible journey, and utilize time and space in a nonlinear manner. More importantly, I chose these novels because I was haunted by them. Perhaps that is an unscholarly admission for the opening of one's dissertation, but I chose all four of the novels because they deal with mothers and daughters, a relationship I am continually examining in my own life. I am a mother of daughters and I am a daughter. My quest or journey is intricately connected to my identity as a mother and as a daughter and my relationships to my mother and daughters.

Initially, it seemed to me that I was studying two disparate things: the female quest and chronotope in the novel. Yet, as I continued in my reading and journey, I came to the realization that the author's choice or construction of chronotope emphasizes, according to Bakhtin, "the image of a person in the process of becoming in the novel" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 19). Thus, in the opening chapter, I have sketched for the reader a review of the existing literature as it pertains to the areas to be examined in this dissertation. First, I review the role of myth and our need for myth. Second, I take a look at some of the major criticism of the hero's journey. Third, I explore the historical issue of space and Bakhtin's definition of chronotope. Finally, I examine Bakhtin's theories on historical time and establish his work as a framework for my dissertation.

THE ROLE OF MYTH

Myths serve a variety of roles and purposes within given cultures. Joseph Campbell in his text, *The Power of Myth* (1988), perceives four functions of myth. According to Campbell; the first function of myth is the mystical function, the second is the cosmological dimension, the third function is sociological and the fourth is the pedagogical function. I am concerned with all four functions but particularly in the sociological and pedagogical functions of myth. Campbell states,

> Every mythology has to do with the wisdom of life as related to a specific culture at a specific time. It integrates the individual into his society and the society into the field of nature. It unites the field of nature with my nature. It's a harmonizing force. (55)

Campbell's words indicate the social role of myth. It is necessary for a culture, if it is to survive, to maintain consistency through generations. Myths offer a means by which to maintain the values of a society. Furthermore, they provide models which enable individuals to integrate their society and contribute to the maintenance of the status quo. Levi-Strauss elaborates upon the social role of myth in his text, *Myth and Meaning* (1978). He states,

> . . . in our societies, history has replaced mythology and fulfills the same function, that for societies without writing and without archives the aim of mythology is to ensure that as closely as possible - complete closeness is obviously impossible - the future will remain faithful to the present and to the past. (42)

It is interesting to note Levi-Strauss's inference that mythology and history serve similar functions. History also enables a culture to maintain and convey its rules, beliefs, and rituals. His words indicate the tremendous power myths and history can have in our

lives. If our myths and history change, so too does our construction of ourselves.

Rollo May expands upon the role of myth in the construction of self in his text, *The Cry For Myth* (1991). He states,

> A myth is a way of making sense in a senseless world. Myths are narrative patterns that give significance to our existence. Whether the meaning of existence is only what we put into life by our own individual fortitude, as Sartre would hold, or whether there is meaning we need to discover, as Kierkegaard would state, the result is the same; myths are our way of finding this meaning and significance. Myths are like the beams in a house; not exposed to outside view, they are structure which holds the house together so people can live in it. (15)

May's definition alludes to the social and personal function of myth. Myths are "a way of making sense in a senseless world." Furthermore, they offer a "narrative pattern that gives significance to our existence." May in his text, *The Cry For Myth* (1991), examines a variety of literature and the myths they convey. He states "that myths do not require that one have read them specifically" (37). Instead myths are, as he points out, archetypal patterns in human consciousness, and "The great dramas like Hamlet are mythic in the sense that they present the existential crises in everyone's life" (37). At a later point he states,

> Great dramas, like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, speak to the hearts of all of us. By the same token they remain in our memories as myths, year in and year out, giving us an increasingly profound application of our humanness. (42)

It is interesting to note that May's text is devoid of myths or literature written by women. Rather, he applies male myths/literature to women and men in psychotherapy. For example, he offers Alex Haley's text, *Roots*, as one man's search for his own myth. He compares Haley's search to Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex*. "In both figures, Haley and

Oedipus, having a myth of their past was crucial to having a present identity and, if the truth were known, crucial to having a future as well" (48). Yet, if myths of the past are crucial in present and future identity, could gender play a role in that identity? Furthermore, could gender affect the conclusions and telling of the past? Oedipus and Haley are not alone in their search for roots or meaning. Kim Chernin states, in the forward of *In My Mother's House: A Daughter's Story* (1983),

> My mother always said, "Behind every story is another story." This is one of the stories. It must have been there, but could not be told until the other story had been completed. The story behind another story, which emerges spontaneously when the first story falls silent, then joins up with that string of revisionary acts through which the story is questioned, added onto, annihilated, embellished. (xvii)

I would suggest that it is revisionary in today's world to give voice to the woman's search for meaning. In fact, only in recent years has the journey or quest of the woman been recognized.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Joseph Campbell, in his text, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1968), summarizes the traditional hero's journey. He states,

> The mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother battle, dragon-battle; offering charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward... The final

> work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold the transcendental power must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir). (245-246)

Campbell, pronounced that his pattern was equally applicable to both sexes: "The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past her personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms . . . The hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man - perfected, unspecific, universal man - he has been reborn" (19-20). Campbell reveals his primary concern with the male as hero by his "generic" use of "he" and "man". He was not alone. Until the rise of feminist criticism, the *Bildungsroman* and the hero's journey were traditionally regarded as narratives that dealt with the development or journeys of young men. During the nineteen seventies feminist critics began to identify a new or at least a revised genre, the female *Bildungsroman*, the novel of the development of a female protagonist.

The cacophonous discourse and interest that resulted over women's stories and perceptions encouraged a "re"examination of the symbols, metaphors, and plots in the quest motif of women's literature. Furthermore, contemporary feminist critics began to question whether Campbell's grid, the classic analysis of the quest motif, can be accurately used to describe the journeys which female characters make. Contemporary writers began to note dramatic changes in the hero's journey in the twentieth century. For example, Jungian analyst June Singer in "Finding the Lost Feminine in the Judeo-Christian Tradition" (*To Be A Woman* 1990) defines the hero as follows:

> . . . the individual who by strength or wit has prospered - often at the expense of less ambitious, weaker, or more socially conscious individuals. . . The hero myth in modern culture expresses itself in the growth of great corporations, conceived and developed by dedicated individuals who let nothing stand in the way of their accomplishments. (224-225)

Thus, the first part of the heroic journey is accomplished. The hero continues to successfully set out alone and slay the dragon. However, the second part of the journey is abandoned. Maureen Murdock in her text, *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* (1990), states, "Missing in today's heroic pattern is the triumphant return of the hero to the community in a relational capacity, in which he brings with him a spirit of cooperation and joint accomplishment rather than that of competition and dominance" (74).

Nadya Aisenberg elaborates upon the negative attributes or consequences of the traditional hero's journey. In her text, *Ordinary Heroines: Transforming the Male Myth* (1994), she states, "Specifically, what must be exposed are the heroic emphasis upon physical courage, the hero's position as separate from his society, the premise of a god-given destiny - the hero as savior, that is - and most importantly, the prototype of the hero as warrior" (12). She goes on to state,

> Examining the hero, we discover his essential narrowness which neglects concerns with community, negotiation, nature, human relations, and the ennoblement of individual destinies to flourish in their differentness. The heroic code is conservative in its essence, which means it does not commit itself to broad social issues particular to a time, such as the illiteracy, poverty and violence which permeate our society now. (12)

Murdock and Aisenberg both allude to the need of a hero/heroine with new strengths. Their words also emphasize the separateness of the hero. Our national myths are filled

with single heroic figures who make it alone. For example, Daniel Boone, Kit Carson and Charles Lindbergh embody the "American Spirit" of individualism. Thus, it is not surprising that until recently the *Bildungsroman* was defined and examined in terms of a single hero whose character enabled him to reach his destiny.

Christa Wolf in her text, *Casandara* (1984), asks, "What would happen, if the great male heroes of world literature were replaced by women? Achilles, Hercules, Odysseus, Oedipus, Agamemnon, Jesus, King Lear, Faust, Julien Sorel, Wilhelm Meister?" (260). I suggest, in a partial response to her question, that the replacing of heroes with heroines creates narratives of affiliation. Susan Fraiman in her text, *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers And The Novel Of Development* (1993), suggests that female protagonists "tend to insist that personal destiny evolves in dialectical relation to historical events, social structures, and other people" (10). So, how do these protagonists "insist" their destiny is connected to historical events, social structures, and other people? How do the authors of these female protagonists emphasize their connection? It is my contention that chronotope plays a crucial role in the author's conveyance of the female journey and the female protagonist's connection with others.

THE CHRONOTOPE

The issue of space is not new to feminist critics. Virginia Woolf noted the importance of space in a woman's life in her text, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and her essay "Professions For Women" (1942). Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their text, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1984), explore in depth the patriarchal structures which enclosed 19th century women writers. They note Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austin, Charlotte Bronte,

Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson and Slyvia Plath all struggled, through their novels, with their anxiety over space. Gilbert and Gubar emphasize the struggle with space through Charlotte Perkin Gilman's poem, "In Duty Bound".

> In duty bound, a life hemmed in,
> Whichever way the spirit turns to look;
> No chance of breaking out, except by sin;
> Not even room to shirk -
> Simply to live, and work.
>
> An obligation preimposed, unsought,
> Yet binding with the force of natural law;
> The pressure of antagonistic thought;
> Aching within, each hour,
> A sense of wasting power.
>
> A house with roof so darkly low
> The heavy rafters shut the sunlight out;
> One cannot stand erect without a blow;
> Until the soul inside
> Cries for a grave - more wide.
> (cited in *The Madwoman in the Attic* 84)

"Literally confined to the house, figuratively confined to a single place, enclosed in parlors and encased in texts, imprisoned in kitchens and enshrined in stanzas, women artists naturally found themselves describing dark interiors and confusing their sense that they were house-bound with their rebellion against being duty bound" (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 84).

Space continues to be an issue for contemporary writers. For example, Nadya Aisenberg explores space as a traditional form of confinement for the would-be heroine. She states in her text, *Ordinary Heroines: Transforming the Male Myth* (1994),

> . . . space, instantly provides a contrast between the hero, whose god-given destiny most frequently impels a literal and metaphoric

> quest journey, and the heroine, whose circumscribed state, also literal and metaphoric, inhibits adventure. The heroine, operating within narrow bounds, has difficulty claiming a public space, a stage from which to air her views. Further, genderization also denies her the space of solitude in which to develop selfhood and to grow in ways that would in turn strengthen her contribution to the community. Finally, traditional gender views of woman's space lead to debilitating passivity; the fairy tale princess awaiting the rescuer from the outside world becomes the contemporary victim of agoraphobia. As gender roles become less rigid, the heroine's relation to space alters accordingly. (21)

Aisenberg perceives women's space as defined through the perceptual modes of biological and social definitions. It is her belief that both perceptual modes contribute to a woman's gendered sense of identity; she suggests that the predominately women's diseases of anorexia and agoraphobia are results of the resistance to and internalizing of biological and social definitions.

The examination of women and space has not been limited to literature. Sandra Lee Bartky, in her essay, "Foucault, Femininity and Patriarchy" (*Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* 1990), cites remarkable evidence of women's relation to space in a different type of text:

> In an extraordinary series of over two thousand photographs, many candid shots taken in the street, the German photographer Marianne Wex has documented differences in typical masculine and feminine body posture. Women sit waiting for trains with arms close to the body, hands folded together in their laps, toes pointing straight ahead or turned inward, and legs pressed together . . . Men on the other hand, expand into the available space, they sit with legs far apart and arms flung out at some distance from the body. Most common in these sitting male figures is what Wex calls the "proffering position," the men sit with legs thrown wide apart, crotch visible, feet pointing outward, often with an arm and casually dangling hand resting comfortably on an open, spread thigh. (68)

Wex's examination of women and space is limited to photographs. However, the

realization of space and women has been recognized in a variety of texts. For example, Teresa de Lauretis (*Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* 1984 and *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* 1987) has expanded the dialogue to include cinema.

Mickey Pearlman and Katherine Usher Henderson in their text, *A Voice of One's Own: Conversations With America's Writing Women* (1992), emphasize the issue of space as an area of exploration for many women writers. They state,

> To quote Francine Pose, "It's not about the space you're in, it's about the space that's in your head . . . It's not accidental, it's not biological, that women tend to write about the family, the garden and [that] men, for whatever reason, feel free to write about seafaring and wargoing. That's about the life you live. Jane Austen was not going to write *Moby Dick*." Alsion Lurie talked about "the war between men and women for control of space." Where women are concerned, "If you can't range freely, then the space you live in becomes more important to you." The "landscapes" of men and women, said Alice McDermott, "probably are different." Much more conversation took place in these interviews about the usually enclosed emotional, physical, psychological, and financial spaces of women, fictional or otherwise, and about what we might call the "right space". (4)

It is apparent the issue of space will continue to prompt lively theoretical debate among feminist critics and authors. However, an area for future exploration and an area that this text will attempt to identify is the connection between time and space in the female novel of awakening. Bakhtin's theory of chronotope adds a further dimension to the issue of space in the woman's journey.

Mikhail Bakhtin recognized that all contexts are shaped fundamentally by the kind of time and space that operate within them. In his essay, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (*The Dialogic Imagination* 1981), he gives the name

"chronotope (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (84). Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson state in their text, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (1990), "Bakhtin's crucial point is that time and space vary in qualities; different social activities and representations of those activities presume different kinds of time and space" (367). Literature is heterochronous, it offers a multiplicity of chronotopes. Bakhtin claims in his essay, "Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope in the Novel" (*The Dialogic Imagination* 1981), some genres do a better job than others of "assimilating real historical time and space" and placing "actual historical persons in such a time and space" (84). He notes, in each chronotope, "time thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movement of time, plot and history" (84). The image of a person offered through a genre is due in part to the chronotopes utilized. Thus, chronotopes can impact readers' insight into the actions, events and experiences of individuals in their world.

For example, adventure time, one of the chronotopes identified by Bakhtin in his essay, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (*The Dialogic Imagination* 1981), is particularly evident in the "adventure novel of ordeal."

> "Suddenly" and "at just that moment" best characterize this type of time, for this time usually has its origin and comes into its own in just those places where the normal, pragmatic and premeditated course of events is interrupted - and provides an opening for sheer chance, which has its own specific logic. This logic is one of *random contingency* [*sovpadenie*], which is to say chance *simultaneity* [meetings] and *chance rupture* [nonmeetings], that is, a logic of random *disjunctions* in time as well. In this random contingency, "earlier" and "later" are crucially, even decisively, significant. Should something happen a minute earlier or a minute later, that is, should there be no chance

> simultaneity or chance disjunctions in time, there would be no plot at all, and nothing to write a novel about. (92)

Adventure time is controlled by chance. The heroes act or react to adventure time, "as merely physical persons, and the initiative does not belong to them" (95). Adventure time continues to shape our view of the world as is apparent through our fascination with romance novels or adventure movies like *Waterworld, Mad Max, Rambo* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Gods, fate, demons, sorcerers, fairies and villains decree the future and take the initiative. The hero "enters adventuristic time as a person to whom something happens. But the initiative in this time does not belong to human beings" (95). The hero is not any different at the end of the adventure than he/she was at the start of the adventure.

The hero is "ready-made" and "predetermined". The events or actions do not form or change the hero and "in that very immutability of the hero lies the entire point" ("The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism" 13).

> The novel of ordeal always begins where a deviation from the normal social and biographical course of life begins, and it ends where life resumes its normal course. Therefore, the events of a novel or ordeal, whatever they may be, do not create a new type of life, a new human biography that is determined by the changing conditions of life. Beyond the boundaries of the novel, biography and social life remain ordinary and unchanged. ("The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism" 14-15)

Thus, the world does not change the hero nor does the hero change the world. Individuals are completely passive and endure events. "The hammer of events shatters nothing and forges nothing - it merely tests the durability of an already finished product" ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 107). "This explains why the nature of heroism is so unproductive and uncreative in this type of novel (even when historical

heroes are depicted)" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 16).

No particular space is required in adventure time. However, a great deal of space is necessary for pursuit, separation, escape, persecution, quests and various obstacles. Space is "interchangeable." The adventure requires an alien country, but any alien country will do. *Rambo* can take place in Vietnam, an African country or any land that is alien to the hero and the reader. The same is true with romance novels. Any foreign space will achieve the heroine's pursuit and capture. Note the following cover descriptor of a current romance novel by Iris Johansen.

> Now, from nationally best-selling Iris Johansen comes a thrilling tale of abduction, seduction, and surrender that sweeps from the shimmering halls of Regency England to the decadent haunts of a notorious rouge . . . . (*The Beloved Scoundrel* 1994)

The heroine does not change the world in the romance novel. However, she does endure and "unexpectedly" discovers love. Pratt and White ("The Novel of Development" 1981) state,

> In the woman's novel of development (exclusive of the science fiction genre), however, the hero does not *choose* a life to one side of society after conscious deliberation on the subject; rather, she is radically alienated by gender-role norms *from the very onset*. Thus, although the authors attempt to accommodate their hero's Bildung, or development, to the general pattern of the genre, the disjunctions that we have noted inevitably make the woman's initiation less a self-determined progression *towards* maturity than a regression *from* full participation in adult life. It seems more appropriate to use the term *Entwicklungsroman*, the novel of mere growth, mere physical passage from one age to the other without psychological development, to describe most of the novels that we have perused. (in *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* 36)

It would be interesting to know the chronotopes utilized by the novels of development

Pratt and White examined. Could chronotope be a means by which to maintain the status quo? If so, could the recognition of the operation of chronotopes have pedagogical significance?

For example, Pratt and White note, in the woman's novel of development, "mere physical passage from one age to the other" (36). Their words indicate a cyclical time. Bakhtin elaborates on cyclical time in his essay, "*The Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism."

> Another type of cyclical emergence, which retains a connection (but not such a close one) with man's age, traces a typically repeating path of man's emergence from youthful idealism and fantasies to mature sobriety and practicality. This path can be complicated in the end by varying degrees of skepticism and resignation. This kind of novel of emergence typically depicts the world and life as experience, as a school, through which every person must pass and derive one and the same result: one becomes sober, experiencing some degree of resignation. (22)

Note that though the hero changes and emerges in this chronotope, the future is predetermined. Fate continues to designate his/her destiny. The world remains unchanged.

However, Bakhtin does identify the *Bildungsroman* as a novel of emergence in which the hero emerges "along with the world and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself" (23). According to Bakhtin, the emergence takes place in the chronotope of historical time. In historical time, the choices made by the hero develop his/her identity rather than just reveal it. In addition, this chronotope conceives of the world as not given, but created through the effort of individuals. The individual and society shape one another. Bakhtin attributes crucial chronotopic discoveries to Goethe

and celebrates Goethe's ability to "see time" and "read time." To see time involves seeing "heterochrony."

> The main features of this [chronotopic] visualization are the merging of time (past with present), the fullness and clarity of the visibility of the time in space, the inseparability of the time of an event from the specific place of its occurrence (*Localitat and Geschichte*), the visible *essential* connection of time (present and past), the creative and active nature of time (of the past in the present and of the present itself), the necessity that penetrates time and links time with space and different times with each other, and finally, on the basis of the necessity that pervades localized time, the inclusion of the future, crowning the fullness of time in Goethe's images. ("*The Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 41-42)

Goethe understood time and its interconnection with specific space and space as saturated with historical time. In historical time the past is interconnected to the present and future. Furthermore, in the intersection of past, present, and future time is the space for dissent, contingency and change. I would suggest the authors I am examining are attempting to create such a space. All realize that their present is connected to the past. For example, in *Like Water For Chocolate* (1992), Laura Esquivel writes, "They say that under those ashes every kind of life flourished, making this land the most fertile in the region" (241). Under the ashes of our past life blooms our present and future.

Chernin, Garcia, Esquivel and Tan are involved in providing space for the examination of the intricate interconnection of the past, present and future. Amy Tan starts *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) with a story. The story attempts to convey a Chinese immigrant's reason for coming to America.

> But when she arrived in the new country, the immigration officials pulled her swan away from her leaving the woman fluttering her arms and with only one swan feather for a memory. And then she had to

> fill out so many forms she forgot why she had come and what she had left behind. (3)

Only a portion of the woman's memory remains. It has been ripped from her being. Yet, through Tan's novel/story her memory gains flesh, her feather becomes a swan. Tan's intention to connect with the past from the present moment is apparent in her dedication,

> To my mother
> and the memory of her mother
>
> You asked me once
> what I would remember,
>
> This, and much more.

This is not the end. Through the past, the future and present are laden with possibility and endowed with potential.

Finally, it is important to note "the chronotope is the place where the knots of the narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them [chronotopes] belongs the meaning that shapes narrative" ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 250). In addition, texts often contain more than one chronotope. "Chronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships" (252). It is at this intersection my journey begins. What is the nature of the interactions among chronotopes in the novels by Chernin, Garcia, Esquivel and Tan? How do they (chronotopes) interact dialogically? "How are the chronotopes of the author and the listener or reader presented to us?" (252).

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The following text examines four female novels of emergence. Each novel offers a generational perspective of a family. The family lineage provided to the reader is through the female line. Yet, what is unique about these novels is their creative exploration of time and space. As previously mentioned, Bakhtin noted that in the *Bildungsroman*, the hero's emergence takes place in the chronotope of historical time. He acknowledges the visible signs of historical time in his essay, "The *Bildungsroman*" (*Speech Genres & Other Late Essays* 1986).

> These are visible vestiges of man's creativity, traces of his hands and his mind: cities, streets, buildings, artworks, technology, social organizations, and so on. (25)

However, historically women's visible vestiges of creativity have not been "cities, streets, buildings, technology, social organizations, and so on." Their historical legacies have been less visible. Recipes, family stories and rituals are often not recognized as valuable contributions to historical time. In addition these legacies often are nurtured and developed in other chronotopes, for example biographical and everyday time. It is through the link of generations they become historical.

Bakhtin does not offer an in-depth analysis of the chronotopes that intersect with historical time. However, he notes Goethe's use of everyday time and biographical time in his historical vision. According to Bakhtin, Goethe was concerned with the internal necessity of a creative work.

> Goethe searches for and finds primarily the visible movement of historical time, which is inseparable from the natural setting (Localitat)

> and the entire totality of objects created by man, which are essentially connected to this natural setting. (32)

He goes on to state,

> . . . Goethe's historical vision always relied on a deep, painstaking, and concrete perception of the locality (Localitat). The creative past must be revealed as necessary and productive under the conditions of a given locality, as a creative humanization of this locality, which transforms a portion of terrestrial space into a place of historical life for people, into a corner of the historical world. (34)

Goethe's historical time relies on "*man the builder*" to transform the world through visible creative works deemed "essential" and "necessary" by historical man. These creative works are "visible, concrete, and material" (39).

> He builds, drains marshes, lays routes across mountains and rivers, develops the minerals, cultivates the irrigated valleys, and so on. One sees the essential and necessary character of man's historical activity. And if he wages wars, one can understand how he will wage them (that is, there will be necessity here, too). (38)

Yet, seldom do women leave such monuments. How is their historical time recognized? How do women create historical time if not through amphitheaters, temples and aqueducts? Could their historical time be less visible to the hu"man" eye?

The following four chapters utilize chronotopes as a unit of analysis. Yet, they "re"vise the defining characteristics of chronotopes. Adrienne Rich, in her essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writings as Re-Vision" (*On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* 1979) defines re-vision.

> Re-vision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction - is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And

> this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. A radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse, would take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been till now a male prerogative, and how we can begin to see and name - and therefore live - afresh. A change in the context of sexual identity is essential if we are not going to see the old political order reassert itself in every new revolution. We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us. (35)

I relay this long passage for a purpose. Adrienne Rich envisions the act of reading as a cultural strategy toward revisioning our identity. The recognition of chronotopes plays a crucial role in this self-knowledge. The time and space in which we envision ourselves can affect our visions of possibilities. In addition, it plays a role in our imagined identities. It offers insight into the "assumptions in which we are drenched." It can awaken our consciousness to a "her"story.

My goal is to show that a feminist "re"vision of historical time and its intersecting chronotopes can construct new visions of possible journeys and dismantle the traditional vision of a solitary hero's journey. In each novel, historical time is recognized by the daughter or granddaughter through the matrilineal line. It becomes apparent, as the women tell their stories, that their stories cannot be conveyed or evaluated until the entire "her"story is known and understood. Thus, through multiple layers of biographical time, the authors weave a vision of historical time. Yet, historical time in these novels of emergence is not recognizable through "essential" and "necessary" man-made artifacts. It is less visible. The heroines become, through story, conscious and awake to the past's

contribution to the present and future. Their historical time is not made of brick and stone but rather memory and metaphor.

The mothers and/or grandmothers have ceased to perpetuate the patriarchal history by daring to voice their own stories and ways of knowing. Their stories are an attempt to resist hegemony. The daughters' internalizing and voicing of their mothers'/grandmothers' stories and knowledge are able to emerge in historical time. However, the daughters do not discount the time and space of their ancestors, rather they value and evaluate the other chronotopes of "her"story, refusing to discount their contribution to the present. For example, the traditional acts of their foremothers, through historical time, are recognized as essential and necessary. Consequently, they celebrate the traditional acts of their foremothers and at the same time celebrate their ability to transcend and resist the cultural definitions of gender.

Often the chronotopes are revealed through the external and internal dialogue of the characters. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson note in their text, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (1990), the connection between discourse and chronotope theories of the novel.

> In effect, the discourse and chronotope theories of the novel are two aspects of the same theory. The form-shaping ideology of the novel includes both a view of languages of heteroglossia and a way of understanding time and space. (372)

Thus, in order to establish the chronotopes utilized, I quote liberally from the four texts examined in the following chapters. In addition, the discourse compliments the insight available through chronotopic analysis. For example, does the chronotope contribute to

and/or resist hegemony? Does the selection of certain chronotopes reinforce scripted roles or offer the possibility for the disruption of assigned roles?

In the texts I examine, the women resist the gendered scripts of their culture and through their acts enable their daughters to envision possibilities. Madeleine Grumet in her text, *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (1988), emphasizes the possible potential of thinking back through our mothers.

> What would thinking back through our mothers mean to us, we the women who educate? It invites us to recollect, to re-collect the process of our own formation. Rarely does one hear, a woman proclaim, "I made myself"; the defensive arrogance of the self-made man is not available to women, who cannot forget what men cannot remember. Because our separation from our mothers is rarely as defined as that of our brothers, we are more modest, a bit unsure. Beginnings and endings are not quite so clear to us, where one leaves off and another begins. . . . (191)

The daughters, through historical time, are able to recognize and embrace their mothers' journeys and their mothers in themselves. Thus, they are embracing more than the culturally assigned roles of gender. They are embracing their courageous acts of resistance and through voice their mothers' resistant acts become visible.

My project is to examine the chronotopes in four novels and to locate in the chronotopes the journeys of women. I submit that a reader's recognition of chronotope can expand the exploration and dialogue of the female *Bildungsroman*. Bakhtin elaborates upon the crucial connection of chronotope and meaning in his essay, "Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel":

> We somehow manage however to endow all phenomena with meaning, that is, we incorporate them not only into the sphere of spatial and temporal existence but also into a semantic sphere.

> . . . For us the following is important: whatever these meanings turn out to be, in order to enter our experience (which is social experience) they must take on the form *of a sign* that is audible and visible for us (a hieroglyph, a mathematical formula, a verbal or linguistic expression, a sketch, etc.). Without such temporal-spatial expression, even abstract thought is impossible. Consequently, every entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope. (277-258)

Chronotope provides, as a unit of analysis, a means by which to "re"vise our reading/listening of texts. My effort, then, is to identify the chronotopes of the texts and construct meaning through the "gates of chronotope." If the female journey is significant to our ***becoming***, as I maintain, than chronotopic analysis adds new dimensions to its possibilities.

CHAPTER II

THE "RE"BUILDING OR "RE"VISION OF A HOUSE

I permit no woman to teach . . . she is to keep silent.

- St. Paul

Kim Chernin's title, *In My Mother's House: A Daughter's Story* (1983), notifies the reader of a reclaiming of the past. One is immediately reminded of the biblical quotation, "In my Father's house are many rooms." Yet, Chernin is claiming the space to "re"vise the patriarchal past. Her story is not of the father, but of the mother. It is the matrilineal that she is attempting to explore. At one point in the text, she promises her dying Aunt Gertrude to tell the story of her sister Celia. Gertrude shouts to her sister Rose to tell the story of their sister Celia and then,

> . . . in a voice grown dreadfully weary, so that I imagine her whole life now repeats its sacrifice, its typical gesture, "Do this for me, Rose. Do this for me." (52)

One is once again reminded of a biblical phrase, "Do this in remembrance of me." Mary Daly in her text, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (1973), states, "it is necessary to grasp the fundamental fact that women have had the power of naming stolen from us. We have not been free to use our own power to name ourselves, the world, or God" (8). Kim Chernin is attempting to name herself and realizes

that her naming of self is connected to the past, to her mother's house.

Kim Chernin conveys the importance of her story, a woman's journey, in the foreword of her text. She quotes her mother, "You want to fly? Grow wings. You don't like the way things are? Tell a story" (xxiii). The story or myth has the potential to change the world. The telling of the story opens the space for possibility. Yet, she realizes that her shaping of the present is grounded in her shaping of the past.

> I sat down one day to tell my mother's story. I wrote for seven years. Each time I finished I started again, something was missing, the untold had not yet been told. Writing that book, I was so preoccupied with the struggle to be different from my mother that I did not notice how much I regretted my failure to become one of the things she undeniably is. For my mother, in spite of critical ideology and personal ambivalence, is very much a Jewish woman. (xvii)

Her present is bounded by the constraints of the past. Yet, the past also endows the present with potential. It is at this point, a point of recognition, that she begins her story. This recognition is apparent in her dedication,

> For my mother, Rose Chernin
> For her mother, Perle Chernin
> And for my daughter, Larissa Chernin.

The naming is through the mother, not the father. Once more a clear indication of an attempt to "re"vise the patriarchal past. Judith Butler in her text, *Bodies That Matter: On The Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), states, "The patronymic operation secures its inflexibility and perpetuity precisely by requiring that women, in their roles as wives and daughters, relinquish their name and secure perpetuity and rigidity for some other patronym, and daughters-in-law are imported to secure the eternity of this patronym" (216). Through the characters' dialogue the theme is emphasized and given voice.

For example, we learn in the first chapter, through her mother's dialogue, that Kim Chernin's work is "Mat-ri-archy" (6). In addition, we learn through Kim's dialogue to her mother, the two women share common ground through their individual heroes, namely Marx and Engels, as both "believed there was once a matriarchal stage of social organization" (8). Chernin is interested in forming a space for a story beyond the traditional role of mother and wife. Yet, the story must recognize the traditional roles are part of the narrative. She is a mother as was her mother and her mother before her.

The issue of time and space is initially brought up in the foreword of the text. Chernin writes,

> When I first began to work on *In My Mother's House* I recorded my mother telling her stories, then transcribed the tapes. The words missed her, they suffered from her absence . . . To get my mother to sound like my mother on a page, I had to find a voice that was as richly textured as her presence, a voice that could, being a paper voice, rely entirely on itself, having been forced to dispense with lemon, teacups, apples, living breath. (x)

Chernin is in another chronotope, one that is recognized by Bakhtin. "If I relate (or write about) an event that has just happened to me, then I as the teller (or writer) of this event am already outside the time and space in which the event occurred" ("Forms Of Time And Chronotope In The Novel" 256). Her represented world can never be "chronotopically identical with the real world it represents . . ." (256). However, she can create a "zone of familiar contact" ("Epic and Novel"). Her creation of a "zone of familiar contact" enables the reader to identify with the heroines in a present-day reality.

Time is not distanced through an image of the absolute past. One is immediately drawn into a space familiar to women. Note the beginning of Chernin's text,

July 1974

> She calls me on the telephone three times the day before I am due to arrive in Los Angeles. The first time she says, "Tell me, you still like cottage cheese?" "Sure," I say, "I love it. Cottage cheese, yogurt, ricotta..." "Good," she says, "we'll have plenty."
>
> The second conversation is much like the first. "What about chicken? You remember how I used to bake it?"
>
> The third time she calls the issue is schav - Russian sorrel soup, served cold, with sour cream, chopped egg, and onion, large chunks of dry black bread. "Mama," I say. "Don't worry. It's you I'm coming to visit. It doesn't matter what we eat." (3)

Chernin's mother is comically familiar. She wears a human face and creates a familiar space. "Laughter destroyed epic distance; it began to investigate man freely and familiarly, to turn him inside out, expose the disparity between his surface and his center, between his potential and his reality" ("Epic and Novel" 35). Thus, Chernin reminds us at the beginning of her text of a reality and space familiar to women. The potential has yet to be revealed, though it is alluded to in the first page.

> She worries. She is afraid she has not been a good mother. An activist when I was growing up, Communist Party organizer, she would put up our dinner in a huge iron pot before she left for work each morning, in this way making sure she neglected no essential duty of a mother and wife. For this, however, she had to get up early. (3)

Through these words the reader becomes aware that this is not a story of entrapment. This is a story that will transcend traditional roles and stereotypes and perhaps offer an alternative journey.

EVERYDAY TIME

Three chronotopes are particularly evident in Kim Chernin's text, *In My Mother's House* (1983). Each chronotope provides space for crucial dialogue and emphasizes three

journeys of women. The first apparent chronotope is everyday time. It is in the space provided through everyday time that the private lives of the heroines are revealed. It is in this space that the personal affiliations and relationships are revealed, often around food. In fact, a food motif plays a crucial role in the chronotope of everyday time. Kim Chernin writes, "I learned to understand my mother's life when I was a small girl, waiting for her to come home in the afternoons. Each night I would set the table carefully, filling three small glasses with tomato juice while my father tossed a salad" (13). Note, it is in this space she learns "to understand" her mother. This is a space of nurturing, often through food, and intuition. The mundane detail of meal preparation becomes a crucial moment of memory and insight. The patriarch tradition is "re"vised. The father, through food, participates in the nurturing of the mother.

Mary Ann Doane in her text of women's films of the forties, *The Desire To Desire* (1987), notes the constrictions of home space.

> Space is constricted in the woman's film, usually to the space of the home. The opposition between inside and outside in relation to the house attains a significance which it rarely reaches in other genres . . . In this narrowing of space the most humble object signifies . . . In a patriarchal society, women's genres are characterized by a kind of signifying glut, an overabundance of signification attached to the trivial. In the woman's film there is a hypersignification of elements of the domestic - doors, windows, kitchens, bedrooms . . . In watching a woman's film, one actively senses the contraction of the world attributed to the woman, the reduction of meaning and its subordination to affect. (179)

I suggest that the "overabundance of signification attached to the trivial" emphasizes everyday time and in this time the trivial detail becomes heroic. Lives are comprised of everyday details and every day acts have a heroic quality. The acts themselves dramatize a

type of strength not based on physical domination.

> She was a woman who woke early, no matter how late she went to bed the night before. Every morning she would exercise, bending and lifting and touching and stretching, while I sat on the bed watching her with my legs curled up. Then, a cold shower and she would come from it shivering, smelling of rosewater, slapping her arms. She ate toast with cottage cheese, standing up, reading the morning paper. But she would always have too little time to finish her coffee. . .
>
> It was the invariable pattern of her life, as I learned to know it when I was a little girl, still hoping to become a woman like my mother. To this day I rise early, eat a frugal meal, take a cold shower and laugh as I slap my arms, bending and stretching, touching and reaching. (13-14)

Through an everyday ritual, the mother's physical and internal strength is revealed. Rose celebrates her physical being through a common-day act of life, a tradition which in turn establishes a family tradition and a cyclical motif is established through the daughter's repetition of her heroic act.

Bakhtin notes in Goethe's text, *Italian Journey*, his depiction of everyday time.

> All his descriptions of Italian everyday life are pervaded with a sense of everyday time, measured by the pleasures and labor of the vital human life . . .
>
> Against the background of these times of nature, daily existence, and life, which are still cyclical to one degree or another, Goethe also sees interwoven with them signs of historical time - essential traces of human hands and minds that change nature, and the way human reality and all man has created are reflected back on his customs and views. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 32)

At a later point in his essay, Bakhtin defines the "historically active man."

> Historically active man is placed in this living, graphic, visual system of waterways, mountains, valleys, boundaries, and routes. He builds, drains marshes, lays routes across mountains and rivers, develops the minerals, cultivates the irrigated valleys, and so on. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 37-38)

Thus, the historically active man is creator and builder. Yet, the history of woman is not one of draining marshes and irrigation of valleys. Her history is ignored in this definition of time and space and finds voice and space in the everyday chronotope.

Woman's building is celebrated in everyday time. Bakhtin recognizes the celebration of everyday time in his carnival chronotope. However, though everyday time is celebrated in the carnival chronotope, it is often celebrated through exaggeration. In contrast, everyday time in Chernin's text does not depend upon exaggeration for celebration. Chernin *sees* what Bakhtin and Goethe do not *see* because she *sees* through a mother's and daughter's *eyes*, a point that she emphasizes in her text. She sits down next to her daughter and *sees* a "deep look in her eyes, which at such times are so much like the eyes of my mother" (30). She goes on to state,

> These eyes run in our family. In the older world, my mother says, they were known as the eyes of the *macheschaefe*, the witch. But then, I suspect, the word was never used lightly and I wonder what it means that my grandmother used it of my own mother, who has frequently used it of me. (30-31)

The ability to *see* is a multigenerational gift. With her question, she raises the issue of perception or gaze. "The Gaze" has been and continues to be a crucial subject with feminists. For as Nadya Aisenberg points out in her text, *Ordinary Heroines: Transforming The Male Myth* (1994), "the gaze is male, and in itself constitutes gender positioning, the displacement of women's experience and her definition as 'other' " (63). She goes on to state,

> Creating a female gaze can only follow from a change from women as object viewed to women as subject viewer. (71)

Kim Chernin *sees* her mother and her daughter. Thus, Chernin, as narrator and protagonist, is offering the reader a female gaze. It is a gaze her daughter will continue.

> For an instant she glances again into my eyes, touching a carefully guarded place few people are able to reach. And then something closes inside her, locking the words away. Later, they will become her conscious knowledge. For now they are simply the guarantee that understanding is possible. (31)

Kim Chernin's daughter, Larissa, will need a female gaze if she is to *understand* the *possible*.

Chernin, the narrator, conveys the value she places on her mother's gaze and her daughter's gaze as she gives both space in the text. She mentions, throughout the text, their gazes as well as hers. Often the gaze is celebrated in the chronotope of everyday time. In the chronotope of everyday time we come to know our mothers. We acquire our perceptions of them through their housekeeping acts and through their play. At one point in the text, Kim and Rose make a bed. Later, Rose and Larissa undo the bed.

> My mother looks down at her, startled, suspicious and then, as she takes in the expression on her face, triumphant. "Ha," she says and picks up a corner of the blanket. She holds it up in the air and gazes at it reverently. "Oy, my enlightenment," she chants, winking at my daughter, "how shall I fold you so that you will never come out from your fold again?" (33-34)

In the chronotope of everyday time, the female gaze offers enlightenment. However, too often the chronotope of everyday time is offered through the male gaze. In her text, *Where The Girls Are: Growing Up Female With The Mass Media* (1994), Susan Douglas reveals the far reaching implications of such a gaze.

> When our mothers sat back to relax in front of the TV after a twelve-to-fifteen-hour day, they were surrounded by allegories

> about masculine heroism and the sanctity of male gonads. Rarely, if ever, did they see any suggestion that the incessant, mundane, and often painful contortions of a woman's daily life might, in fact, be heroic too. (44)

There is liberation and celebration in the female gaze and as Chernin implies, "enlightenment." The daily, incessant, and mundane become heroic through the female gaze.

The male gaze often defines women through their bodies. The female gaze "re"defines the value of the body. Chernin's female gaze celebrates the female's body and her daily acts. She writes of her Aunt Gertrude, "it is her hands that betray the greatest eloquence. They are, unmistakably, the hands of a nurse and they carry the story of her life's long sacrifice. In them, I see the history of beds turned, heads lifted, pillows straightened, bedpans emptied, all the patient heroisms of her compassion" (50). In addition, through Chernin's female gaze we come to the realization that knowledge and culture are transmitted through daily acts.

> Now we are making the bed together, smoothing the sheet and tucking it with careful folds at the corners, while my mother discourses upon women and the making of beds. Listening, half-listening to her, I observe the way she never loses an opportunity for giving instruction. "My own mother," she says, "told me not to learn to cook or sew. 'You'll marry a rich man? then you won't need it. If he's a poor man, better you don't know how to become his slave.'" (29)

The chronotope of everyday time provides a space for female stories and training. Perhaps it is in this space, through a female gaze, women can "re"vise their identities and liberate themselves from the male gaze.

Kim Chernin's attributes to her grandmother the query, "What is the background,

this matters also to the story" (55). The daily acts of women make up the background of other stories. Perhaps that is why Chernin chooses to begin her last chapter the way she begins her first, in the everyday chronotope.

> She calls us on the telephone two times the day before we are due to arrive in Los Angeles. The first time she says: "You know that spinach loaf I make? You think Larissa would like it?" "The spinach loaf? With carrots and wheat germ? She'd love it." "Good," says my mother, "I already baked it." (295)

BIOGRAPHICAL TIME

Kim Chernin's text also utilizes the chronotope of biographical time. Bakhtin describes biographical time as "quite realistic."

> All of its moments are included in the total life process, and they describe this process as limited, unrepeatable, and irreversible. Each event is localized in the whole of this life process and therefore it ceases to be adventure. The moment, the day, the night, and immediate contiguity of short moments lose almost all of their significance in the biographical novel, which works with extended periods, organic parts of the whole of life (ages and so forth). Arranged against the background of this basic time in the biographical novel is, of course, the depiction of individual events and adventures on a larger plane, but the moments, hours, and days of this larger plane are not adventuristic and are subordinate to biographical time. They are immersed in that time, and it fills them with reality. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 17-18)

Biographical time introduces the concept of generations. Chernin's text emphasizes the concept of generations. "Generations introduce a completely new and extremely significant aspect into the depicted world; they introduce the contiguity of lives taking place at various times" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 18). According to Bakhtin, the family-biographical novel took shape in the eighteenth century. It was constructed "not on deviations from the normal and typical

course of life but precisely on the basic and typical aspects of any life course; birth, childhood, school years, marriage, the fate that life brings, works and deeds, death, and so forth, that is exactly those moments that are located before the beginning or after the end of a novel of ordeal" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 17). Chernin is able through biographical time to bring in the life course of the generations.

Her text is the story of her "mother's aging" (xxiii). Biographical time offers Chernin the space to convey her mother's life course and to recognize the role of her mother's mother in this story. She writes, "My mother, her daughter, was obsessed by the fate of her mother and this obsession has descended to me" (15). Thus, she recognizes she cannot explore her mother's life without the exploration of her grandmother's life.

> For here finally is the clear shape of the story my mother wants me to write down - this tale of four generations, immigrants who have come to take possession of a new world. It is a tale of transformation and development - the female reversal of that patriarchal story in which the power of the family's founder is lost and dissipated as the inheriting generations decline and fall to ruin. A story of power. (16)

Chernin introduces her mother's biographical time through alternate chapters in the first two-thirds of her text. Note the following chapter titles,

> The First Story My Mother Tells: Childhood in Russia
>
> The Second Story My Mother Tells: America, the Early Years
>
> The Third Story My Mother Tells: A Larger World
>
> The Fourth Story My Mother Tells: I Fight for My Mother
>
> The Fifth Story My Mother Tells: Motherland

The Sixth Story My Mother Tells: The Organizer

The Seventh Story My Mother Tells: Letters

The Eighth Story My Mother Tells: A Birth and a Death

It is through these chapters that the reader witnesses Rose's birth, childhood, marriage etc. In addition, it is through these chapters, in biographical time that the reader is exposed to the journey of aging. Germaine Greer in her text, *The Change: Women, Aging and the Menopause* (1991), notes,

> In fiction, whether written by men or by women, middle-aged women are virtually invisible. All our heroines are young. Even women writers who are themselves fifty or over write about young women. Barbara Cartland, who is over ninety, has written more than 550 books, but I doubt that one of them has a heroine over twenty-five. Older women themselves suffer from youthism, and contribute to the prejudice against themselves; they endure the never-ending gibes against menopausal women, against mothers-in-law, against crones in general, without a word of protest. Even the Women's Liberation movement has consistently identified with the young, sexually active woman, and treated the older woman as one of her oppressors. (20-21)

It is interesting to note Barbara Cartland is a writer of romance. The romance genre, as mentioned in chapter one, often occurs in adventure time. In the Greek romance, as in contemporary romance, there is no "biological or maturational duration" ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 90). "At the novel's outset the heroes meet each other at a marriageable age, and at the same marriageable age, no less fresh and handsome, they consummate the marriage at the novel's end" (90).

Chernin's use of biographical time offers the heroine or heroines a place/space to age, thus providing the reader a role model for the journey of aging. In this text, Chernin offers a *vision* of how one might deal with the loss of a parent, the growing away of

children and increasing infirmities of age. Once more she accomplishes this feat through the female gaze.

> What does she *see*? I look at myself with her *eyes*. Suddenly, I'm a giant. Five feet, four and a half inches tall the last time I measured myself, now I'm strolling along here as if I'm on stilts. She has to tip back her head to *look* into my eyes. This woman, whose hands were once large enough to hold my entire body, does not now reach as high as my daughter's shoulder. (italics mine, 4)

Biographical time recognizes the aspect of physical aging. For example, Kim Chernin notes her Aunt's physical appearance, "I watched the wrinkles gnawing at her face, deepening perceptibly every time I saw her" (10).

Biographical time provides space for the realistic portrayal of death.

> When I lean close to her I can smell the acrid sweetness I have known since childhood, when my sister was dying. It makes me want to run toward her, to grab her so tight death cannot get hold of her, and it makes me want to run away. (10)

The contradictory emotions one feels with the death of a loved one is recognized and affirmed in this space. In fact, the general contradictory emotions of life are recognized. Note the contradictory emotions she experiences when asked by her mother to write the story of her life.

> "You are a writer," she says, "So, do you want to take down the story of my life?"
>
> I am torn by contradiction. I love this woman. She was my first great aching love. All my life I have wanted to do whatever she asked of me, in spite of our quarreling.
>
> She's old, I say to myself. What will it take from you? Give this to her. She's never asked anything from you as a writer before. Give this. You can always go back to your own work later.
>
> But it is not so easy to turn from the path I have imagined for myself. This enterprise will take years. It will draw me back into the family, waking its ghosts.

> It will bring the two of us together to face all the secrets and silences we have kept. The very idea of it changes me. I'm afraid. I fear, as any daughter would, losing myself back into the mother. (12)

The female gaze is a "and/both" rather than an "either/or" gaze. Thus, Chernin through biographical time and the female gaze is able to emphasize the reality of "and/both" emotions.

Biographical time allows space for the "private life". Thus, the "internal man" or woman in this space is allowed voice. The chronotope of biographical time illuminates the decisions and the actions of the heroines. For example, Rose's words to Kim provide the reader insight into her mothering and the choices she made as a mother.

> "You never knew how to protect yourself," she says, "You never knew. I would stand there and watch you weep. You wept for everything. The whole world seemed to cause you pain. And I would say to myself, This one I will strengthen. This one I will make a fighter. And you, why can't you forgive me I wanted to teach you how to struggle with life? Why can't you forgive?" (17)

The words alone do not offer the insight. However, through biographical time they gain meaning. The reader learns Rose has lost a daughter and that her mother, a victim of spousal abuse, tried to commit suicide. It becomes clear why she wants her daughter to know "how to protect" herself. She wants her daughter to possess the knowledge that she herself acquired. Through the chronotope of biographical time she relays her confrontation with her father.

> All we wanted was for him to leave Mama alone. One day, finally, I said to him, "If you ever hit my mother again I am going to hit you back." (41)

She goes on to state, "After that childhood everything was easy, Nobody could break me.

I knew, even as a child, that this would be so" (41).

Yet, woman as victim and a woman's life as "hell on earth" (48) is not limited to the journey of Rose's mother, Perle. Through biographical time we are able to *see* similar journeys. "You think maybe you invented the struggle for women. But this struggle we knew, believe me, already in our time" (59). Rose's story reveals the abuse of her sister, Gertrude.

> "Mama and Gertrude were cut from the same cloth. That we have always known. What Celia and I never wanted to be, Gertrude became. The man she married, could you say he was like Papa? Maybe not, maybe not. But still, I tell you, the way he treated Gertrude was like Papa." (82)

The reader learns that Rose attributes to her father the breaking of their spirits. She writes of her mother, "She was a gentle person and he broke her spirit. He broke her mind" (38). On the next page she writes, "I loved my mother, I wanted to help her. I would lie awake at night and remember those fists beating at her, breaking her down. Destroying her. And I knew it would not be me. I would not be my mother and no child of mine would be my mother. I would see to it" (39). After her father beats her sister Gertrude, she states, "I am witness to this: she has never lost her temper again. He broke her spirit. Never again in childhood, never again in adulthood. She never stood up to anything or anybody. And I tell you this, you my children, I date her character back to this first night. After that, she was a good girl, self-denying, always giving to others" (36). Rose, through biographical time, is able to transmit numerous examples of journeys.

Biographical time allows Rose space to reveal and acknowledge her strengths and weaknesses. For example, she admits to her role in the oppression of her sister and

mother. She recognizes that as a child she did not support her mother. She states, "We kids were mean to her, too. We couldn't sympathize with her; we preferred our aunt and our aunt encouraged us against our mother. From the time we came to this country it was unmitigated misery in our home" (37). She later states, "We forgot it could be different" (37). She also admits to her participation of Gertrude's oppression. She states, Gertrude "never got a chance to come to New York. After Mama broke down, Gertrude took care of the family. She did the very thing Celia and I didn't want to do" (66). Only through the chronotope of biographical time could such intricacies be revealed.

In biographical time the family mythologies are given voice. A family consciousness is given space. Kim Chernin states,

> But who could have imagined these old stories would awaken my child to an interest in the family? She is growing up, I say to myself, she is becoming conscious, my heart already stirred by the magnitude of this, she is entering the mythology of this family. (15-16)

Rose Chernin has already inferred the potential of story. Throughout biographical time Rose states, "What could I do?" The reader, in another chronotope, realizes she could tell a story. How else can alternative journeys be revealed? Note, her journey is not the journey of her mother or her sister Gertrude.

> If you have sisters, and one of them lives a story, the others listen. That is what my mother used to say. And you know what she meant? What one sister does, the others will follow. Oy, will it come out the same? (54)

Gertrude's journey is similar to her mother's journey. Yet, Rose is allowed the space to give voice to another path. She states, "a woman is not the same thing as a slave" (63). Later, she admits she was hesitant to marry, "I felt that there must be more to me

than would be developed at a kitchen sink" (65).

Rose's choice of an alternative journey is due in part to her mother's journey and her sister's journey. She *listened* to their stories and their stories contributed to her story. Her story incorporates their stories. In the text, *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives* (1989), the authors write,

> . . . women's personal narratives suggest how women's lives are shaped through and evolve within relationships with others. Feminists have long noted the special reliance of women upon the resources of networks of family and kin, and the important role women play in nurturing and maintaining such networks. (20)

Rose's story is not one of isolation. Biographical time reveals the role of others in her story. The lives of others are entangled in her life. They have participated in each other's stories. Rose admits their participation and hers. For example, she encouraged her sister to marry Harry as she thought his security would be a "good thing" for her sister. "Who could foresee, one day because of this my sister would break down and go into a mental hospital, like Mama? Could I know the future? Could I tell one day Celia would kill herself?" (70-71). How can one untangle the journeys? Rose's listening to others' stories was crucial in the construction of her own.

Bakhtin writes,

> Biographical time as real time cannot but be included (participate) in the longer process of historical, but embryonically historical, time . . . Generations introduce a completely new and extremely significant aspect into the depicted world; they introduce the contiguity of lives taking place at various times . . . This already provides an entry into historical duration. But the biographical novel itself does not yet know true historical time . . . Secondary characters, countries, cities, things, and so on enter into the biographical novel in significant ways

> and acquire a significant relationship to the main hero. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 18)

I would suggest that the "secondary characters" in Rose's life become primary. It is their stories that "acquire a significant relationship" to Rose. "My sisters you can only understand if you know my mother's life. And my life, too, you can only understand if you know my mother" (82). Though Rose mentions the countries, cities, ideologies and other "things" in her life, it is the people within her life that are significant. In this space she asks Kim, "Could I love anybody better than I love you?" (156) and in this space the text offers its final words, "I love you more than life, my daughter. I love you more than life" (307). Love for others, particularly women, defines her life.

Finally, I would like to conclude with the idea that the biographical chronotope allows voice space for a feminist consciousness. Through the act of storytelling the private has become public. Rose's voice is given space. Kim Chernin states, "My mother is a brave woman; she will say what everyone is terrified of hearing and this utterance will often prove to be everyone's release" (51). Through the chronotope of biographical time, Kim's mother, Rose is allowed the space to release others. For example,

> "Daughter," she will say in a voice that is stern and admonishing,
> "always a woman must be stronger than the most terrible circumstance.
> You know what my mother used to say? Through us, the women
> of the world, only through us can everything survive." (16)
>
> or
>
> Kate Richards O'Hare became for me the symbol of what I
> wanted to be. A woman who stands up to injustice. I sat there,
> and I thought, why shouldn't I be a woman like this? What is to
> stop me? (43)

Her voice offers the reader a different possibility. Adrienne Rich in her text, *On Lies,*

Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978 (1979), states,

> In teaching women, we have two choices: to lend our weight to the forces that indoctrinate women to passivity, self-depreciation, and a sense of powerlessness . . . or to consider what we work against, as well as with, in ourselves . . . And this means, first of all, taking ourselves seriously: Recognizing that central responsibility of a woman to herself, without which we remain always the Other, the defined, the object, the victim; believing that there is a unique quality of validation, affirmation, challenge, support, that one woman can offer another. Believing in the value and significance of women's experience, traditions, perceptions. Thinking of ourselves seriously, not as one of the boys, not as neuters, or androgynes, but as *women*. (240)

Rose *sees* herself as a *woman*. She *names* herself *woman*. At one point in the text she relays to her daughter her meeting of a prostitute in prison. The woman states to Kim, "Your mother, she saved me." Rose tells her daughter,

> When the others would talk to us, she would look over,
> the eyes angry. Then, one day, she and I began talking.
> She could tell right away, I had no senses of us and them.
> We were people together, prisoners. She saw in me,
> a possibility, no more, no less. (21)

Rose's voice in biographical time enables us to envision possibility, no more, no less. It is a possibility that is illuminated and elaborated upon through the next chronotope of historical time.

HISTORICAL TIME

The text, *In My Mother's House*, is dominated by the historical chronotope. Bakhtin notes, "Within the limits of a single work and within the total literary output of a single author we may notice a number of different chronotopes and complex interactions among them, specific to the given work or author; it is common moreover for one of these chronotopes to envelop or dominate the others" ("Forms of Time And Of The Chronotope

In The Novel" 252). Chernin, through historical time, is given the space for historical perspective and that which appears "stable" and "immutable" in the previous chronotopes "begins to pulsate."

> . . . historical time, which is inseparable from the natural setting (Localitat) and the entire totality of objects created by man, which are essentially connected to this setting. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 32)

Historical time recognizes that "All history is encamped about us and all history sets forth again from us" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 40).

Photographs with commentary, after the foreword, reveal a biographical chronotope utilized by Kim Chernin. Next to a picture of herself and her sister, Nina, she states,

> I think it would have been my sister who prepared the family album, perhaps with my father's help. My mother cherished it, in the sense of hiding it away, preserving it, but after my sister died, it took great courage to look into it. For the most part, I was the only one equal to that. (xxxv)

Kim Chernin is "equal" to the task of historical perspective, painful as it may be. Her mother, Rose, has cherished and preserved the stories revealed, to the reader, in the biographical chronotope. Yet, the stories gain significance in another chronotope.

> I came into the world as my mother's listener, saturated in the broodings, misunderstandings, visions of a life that had begun in the first year of the twentieth century, long before the First World War, in which my father was too young to fight. During the Second World War he was, by the time of my birth, too old. Both these wars, the revolutions that followed them, the sufferings that gave rise to them, had made their way into my mother's stories, along with the lost world of European Jewish life. (xi)

Historical time recognizes the impact of the world upon the lives of these women and at

the same time recognizes their impact upon the world. Individual agency and social structure shape one another.

Rose, born in a Russian *shtetl*, grew up in poverty and oppression. Her involvement in communism introduces her to "culture", "politics" and "what was possible for a worker."

> In the Russian Club we were speaking every day about what happened in Russia. The years passed, the revolution maintained itself. You see what this meant? *The people* were governing. They were transforming old Russia. They were *creating a new world.*
>
> *The people* were doing this. Think of it. *The people*. (italics mine, 63)

She begins to perceive herself not as a Jew, but as *the people*. Socialism and Communism offer a new vision of the world.

> . . . suddenly, she is standing outside of time. This, I imagine, is what she was like when she climbed up on a soapbox in the Bronx. There is that quality, a fervor, a capacity for vision, which makes you want to listen to whatever she has to say. Does it matter that the dream failed to come true so long ago? The wonder is, simply, she is still a dreamer. (83)

It is important to note that the "dream" initiates in Rose's private life. Her mother, Perle, committed by her father to an insane asylum, begs Rose to release her. Rose achieves the impossible.

> This was the first battle I won against injustice. It made on me a deep impression. I had a sense now of what was possible. An ignorant woman could oppose a doctor. She would win against an educated man. A woman could stand up against an institution. (88)

Historical time reveals the individual's knowledge that fate is not predestined. Rose can stand up against oppression and communism offers her a vehicle for change. The future is not closed. In fact, it becomes open and filled with potential and possibility.

Historical time enables Kim's voice to emphasize, through distance, insight not attainable in biographical time. Kim states,

> I see the truth of her life in her eyes, in all its severe, problematical beauty, willing the world to fit the architecture of her dream. (125)

Rose continues, even in her old age, to dream that communism is the answer. Yet, Kim reveals her own disillusionment. "To tell her life I would have to be able to listen to these stories about the Soviet Union the way I listened as a child. But now I can only hear them through my disillusion" (124). Kim is aware of a reality Rose is not aware of in her space. Kim knows of the failure of the revolution. Kim, by revealing her trip to the Soviet Union in 1957, enables the reader to witness her knowledge.

> Traveling in a bus with Tolya, one night I saw two women standing outside the subway station. He told me they were prostitutes and at first I wouldn't believe him. How could there be prostitution in a socialist county?

Through historical perspective the reader is allowed to see the world's impact on individuals. An ideology that promised to change the world is merely maintaining the status quo. Adrienne Rich in her text, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976), states,

> Frederick Engels identified father-right and the end of the matrilineal clan with the beginnings of private ownership and slavery. He saw women as forced into marriage and prostitution through economic dependency, and predicted that sexual emancipation would come with the abolition of private property and the end of male economic supremacy. For Engels (as for succeeding generations of Marxists) the oppression of women has, simply, an economic solution. He actually discourages our trying to speculate on how the transaction to sexual equality would come about. (110)

Kim, through historical time, enables the reader to see the merging of the past, present and

future.

> . . . the revolution had not occurred.
>
> A great change was coming, but it would take much longer than she imagined. It would not happen first out there, in the social world. It would happen slowly, to one human being after another. It would be subtle and overpowering and would take the form of a gradual change of heart. (273)

The possibility still exists. One wonders if she perceives women's telling of their stories as contributing to the "subtle and overpowering" "change of heart."

In historical time, the reader is able to see the generational patterns of pain inflicted upon the mothers by the daughters. A pain that is generated by the patriarchal society. Adrienne Rich defines "Matrophobia" as the "fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of becoming one's mother" (*Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* 235). She goes on to state,

> Matrophobia can be seen as a womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mothers' bondage, to become individuated and free. The mother stands for the victim in ourselves, the unfree woman, the martyr. Our personalities seem dangerously to blur and overlap with our mothers'; and, in a desperate attempt to know where mother ends and daughter begins, we perform radical surgery. (237)

Historical time reveals matrophobia. Kim Chernin writes, "Tradition is the mother one finds oppressive, the source of one's inspiration, and intolerable" (xxii). Throughout the text, Kim struggles with her relationship to her mother. Her struggle appears similar to Rose's struggle with her mother Perle.

Historical time allows the space for the pattern to emerge. Thus, when Gertrude's daughter, Vida, withdraws all her mother's money, Rose refuses to judge her actions.

> "But who," she says finally, "am I to judge or forgive? I'm not God. I'm not a God of vengeance. And wasn't I once," she asks, with only the slightest tremor in her voice, "wasn't I once also a daughter?" (115)

The reader is reminded of Rose's abandonment of her own mother. Yet, the future is open:

> Larissa will not look up at me; but that is a relief . . .
> But then she takes my hand and squeezes it, insisting that I look at her. She says nothing, but her eyes tell me she sees. I look closer. Has she already caught the habit of seeing things in patterns? She grabs my arm and leans passionately against me. For a moment we think the same thought, both of us stricken by the fear that one day the same thing will happen between us. (114)

It does not have to continue. Yet, the pattern is there. It is up to the present and future generations to break the cycle.

> The most important thing one woman can do for another is to illuminate and expand her sense of actual possibilities. For a mother, this means more than contending with the reductive images of females in children's books, movies, television, the schoolroom. It means that the mother herself is trying to expand the limits of her life. To *refuse to be a victim*: and then to go on from there. (*Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* 246)

Rose attempts to offer that vision to her daughter and Kim attempts to offer the vision to the reader.

Yet, both women acknowledge the influence of the world upon their perception of self. Rose would look at her mother and think of her own life. "Hers was so small. And mine? Who could describe it? The revolution was coming, I would play a part. But I could never forget my mother's words. 'I? A Communist? I am an ignorant woman" (162).

Several times in the text, Rose refers to herself as an "ignorant woman." She has been shaped by her culture and her time. She states in her sixth story,

> *A person* who works for the people grows bigger than ***himself***.
> If this is a miracle, there you have it, a Communist miracle. (italics mine,157)

Her words reveal her identification with the male stance. This woman, who has struggled all her life for "the people", perceives the "Communist miracle" as male and herself as an "ignorant woman."

The historical chronotope recognizes historical context.

> But how could I become my mother? She arrived in this country as a girl of twelve. An immigrant, struggling for survival, she supported her family when her father ran off and deserted them. To me she gave everything she must have wanted for herself, a girl of thirteen or fourteen, walking home from the factory, exhausted after a day of work.
>
> What she is grows up out of her past in a becoming, natural way. She was born in a village where most women did not know how to read. She did not see a gaslight until she was twelve years old. And I? Am I perhaps what she herself might have become if she had been born in my generation in America? (14-15)

The history of the world illuminates Rose's history and Rose's history illuminates the history of the world. Kim's journey cannot be identical to Rose's journey. Her world is different. Her journey will grow up "out of her past in a becoming, natural way." Her world will grow out of her historical context and her mother's journey and her grandmother's journey and ultimately her daughter's journey will grow out of her journey.

In My Mother's House offers possibilities. The chronotope of historical time encourages the reader to "re"vise "his"story.

> Maybe she's been able to do what she's done because she believes so strongly in something. There are hundreds

> of people who would have been jailed or deported if it weren't for her. Or some other organizer with the same system of belief. It makes you wonder, should you judge a life by the ideology that inspires it? Or by what that ideology, true or false, inspires the life to do? It's a whole different way to measure truth. (301)

Bakhtin writes that what was important to Goethe was "Not abstract moral truth (abstract justice, ideology, and so on), but the *necessity* of any creative work or historical deed . . ." ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 39). Kim has come to the realization that Rose's historical deed was necessary. Together, they have come to the recognition that the telling of women's stories is necessary.

> I can feel from my own love for her the certainty that nothing can destroy the bond between us. It is stronger than ideology, unshakable in its binding. It is not the birth bond which made us a mother and daughter; that we could have trampled down, in our impatience and confusion. This bond is comradeship, won from the work we have done together. It comes so rarely to a mother and daughter, but once it is achieved it tangles itself in with all the nature and shared flesh. And then even they, if they wished, could no longer pull it down. (263)

They are comrades, separated by chronotope, united through their telling of stories.

Historical time enables the author to convey an alternative vision of the future. Kim writes of her mother;

> She would always find it hard to step back into domestic life. We limited her, we tied her back down to the earth. She was made for larger confrontations, for crises and battles. And I, seeing this, knew I was exactly the same. Someday, when my time came, I would be just like her. (237)

Larissa's presence symbolizes the future possibility. Her presence reminds the reader that the past, present and future are intersecting in historical time. She is the reason for the

stories.

> She was born in the first years of this century, in that shtetl culture which cannot any longer be found in this world. Her language is that haunting mixture of English, Yiddish, and Russian, in which an old world preserves itself. It is a story that will die with her generation. My own child will know nothing of it if it is not told now. (17)

What a loss that would be! If the story is not told the individual effort will not lead to a collective advancement in consciousness. Larrisa has the opportunity to break repetitive destructive patterns.

> . . . here of course, we have come to Larissa's story. For me, the narrative is almost at an end. Those years, after her birth, belong to my daughter and must be told, if ever, in her voice. That, after all, is the pattern my mother has established. (294)

The reader is left with the sense that Larissa's story will be told. After all, the pattern has been established.

CHAPTER III

SHIFTING BOUNDARIES

AND

DREAMING NEW ONES

> O woman, you are not merely the handiwork
> of God, but also of men; these are ever endowing
> you with beauty from their own hearts . . . You are
> one-half woman and one-half dream.
> - Rabindranath Tagore, The Gardener (ca. 1920)

Dreaming In Cuban (1992) is the story of a family divided politically and geographically by the Cuban revolution. The author, Cristina Garcia, utilizes a variety of chronotopes to emphasize the emergence of her characters. The genealogy of the family is provided to the reader prior to the story, through a patriarchal family tree. The matriarch, Celia, has three children. The eldest daughter, Lourdes, born in 1936, moves to America shortly after the Cuban revolution. The middle child, Felicia, born in 1938, remains in Cuba until her death. The youngest child and only son, Javier, born in 1946, migrates to Czechoslovakia in 1966. The family tree, strategically placed at the start of the text, notes their marriages, dates of birth and the birth of their children. However, it is through everyday time, biographical time and historical time that Garcia reveals their lives. Their voices, through internal and external dialogue, fill in the spaces so evident in the

hierarchical genealogy. Thus, though Garcia's text acknowledges the patriarchal history through the family tree format, her chapters attempt to create or establish a family self consciousness through women's voices.

Bakhtin notes the Roman patrician family engaged in autobiographies in an attempt to testify "to a family-clan consciousness of self." He states,

> Self-consciousness organizes itself around the particularized memory of a clan and ancestors, while at the same time looking toward future descendants. The traditions of the family and clan had to be passed down from father to son. Thus every family had its own archive, in which written documents on all links in the clan were kept. ("Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" 137-138)

Note the concern with the patriarchal "his"story of the Roman family. Bakhtin does not mention any concern with the traditions of women. Yet, this is not surprising given the fact that women's stories, among other stories, are noticeably omitted in history books. Garcia's text repeatedly refers to these missing stories in history and at the end of the text, the heroine Celia assigns to her granddaughter, Pilar Puente del Pino, the task of memory.

Celia's Letter: 1959

January 11, 1959

My dearest Gustavo,

The revolution is eleven days old. My granddaughter, Pilar Puente del Pino, was born today. It is also my birthday. I am fifty years old. I will no longer write to you, *mi amor*. She will remember everything.

My love always,
Celia (245)

Throughout the text, Pilar's internal dialogue justifies Celia's faith. Pilar remembers the stories of the oppressed as well as the stories of her grandmother.

> My father knew I understood more than I could say. He told me stories about Cuba after Columbus came. He said that the Spaniards wiped out more Indians with smallpox than with muskets. (28)

and

> I think about all the women artists throughout history who managed to paint despite the odds against them. People still ask where all the important women painters are instead of looking at what they did paint and trying to understand the circumstances. (139)

Pilar gives voice to those who have no voice. Garcia, through Pilar's internal dialogue, reminds the reader of countless stories beyond Celia and her children. Thus, though Pilar is assigned the family stories, she expands her role to incorporate stories of others. She becomes a keeper of stories as is evident in her bus ride to Miami.

> The bus ride down isn't too bad. After New Jersey, it's a straight shot down I-95. I'm sitting next to this skinny woman who got on in Richmond. Her name is Minnie French . . . Minnie tells me she was born in Toledo, Ohio, the last of thirteen children, and that her mother died giving birth to her. The family split up and Minnie was raised by a grandmother who can quote the Bible chapter and verse and drives a beat-up Cadillac with a CB radio in it. . . . When Minnie wakes up, . . . Minnie says she's going down to Florida to see a doctor her boyfriend knows and get herself an abortion. She doesn't have any children and she doesn't want any either, she tells me. Her voice is flat and even and I hold her hand until she falls asleep again. (27 - 31)

Minnie floats in and out of sleep/consciousness. Pilar *keeps* her story, offers comfort, and has no solution. At one point she attempts to engage Minnie in the questioning of history.

> "Why don't we read about this in history books?" I ask Minnie. "It's always one damn battle after another. We only know about Charlemagne and Napoleon because they *fought* their way into posterity." Minnie just shakes her head and looks out the window. She's

> starting to fall asleep. Her head is lolling about on her shoulders and her mouth is half open. (28)

Minnie's inability to respond and her temporary escape through sleep is reminiscent of a defense mechanism. Note Pilar's consciousness continues through Minnie's slumbering.

> If it were up to me, I'd record other things. Like the time there was a freak hailstorm in the Congo and the woman took it as a sign that they should rule. Or the life stories of prostitutes in Bombay. Why don't I know anything about them? Who chooses what we should know or what's important? I know I have to decide these things for myself. Most of what I've learned that's important I've learned on my own, or from my grandmother. (28)

Pilar is *awake*. Sleep offers her no escape.

> I know what my grandmother dreams. Of massacres in distant countries, pregnant women dismembered in the squares. Abuela Celia walks among them mute and invisible. The thatched roofs steam in the morning air. (218)

Abuela Celia "mute" and "invisible" bears witness to the oppression and atrocities towards women. Pilar, vocal and visible, offers voice to the stories of their lives. Pilar's *knowing* is intuitive. Yet, by giving voice to her knowledge she enables the reader to envision "her"story.

EVERYDAY TIME

Garcia, throughout her text, utilizes the chronotope of everyday time to emphasize the daily existence of her heroines. Through the female gaze, in the everyday chronotope, the daughters and mothers bear witness to each other's courage.

> Felicia turns to her mother as if seeing her for the first time. Seaweed clings to her skull like a lethal plant. She is barefoot and her skin, encrusted with sand, is fringed a faint blue. Her legs are cold and hard as marble. (10)

or

> She combs her daughter's room for the Jimi Hendrix poster she made her take down and tacks it back on the wall. Then Lourdes scoops up an armful of Pilar's grubby overalls and her paint-spattered flannel shirts and lies beneath them on her daughter's bed. She inhales the turpentine, the smell of defiance that is Pilar. (23)

In this text, the understanding of one another eludes each mother and daughter. The mothers and daughters are often separated ideologically. Yet, in the everyday chronotope they are able to recognize and celebrate the various forms of defiance necessary to survive in a patriarchal culture.

In addition, when the defiance is drained, it is in the everyday chronotope that they nurture one another through their despair.

> . . . Felicia remains quiet. She has no energy left for defiance.
> Celia strokes her daughter's hair, murmuring a worn lullaby, a poem she set to music once. Felicia remembers the tune, mouths the words as she cries. (91)

or

> We wash Abuela's hair and rinse it with conditioner, then we pat her dry with towels as if this could somehow heal her. Abuela says nothing. She submits to my mother like a solemn novitiate . . .
> Mom replaces Abuela's bedding with fresh sheets and a lamb's wool blanket we brought from home. I help Abuela into a new flannel nightgown while Mom prepares bouillon and instant tapioca pudding. Abuela Celia tastes a spoonful of each, swallows a vitamin C tablet, and falls into a deep sleep. (218)

Note, the nurturing primarily involves the act of maintaining the body's strength and spirit. The space is noticeably devoid of man-made words, but a language is spoken through the acts of these women. Celia's lullaby is "worn" indicating it has been used countless times through Felicia's life. It is Celia's own creation, "a poem she set to music once" and it is well known to Felicia as she "mouths the words as she cries." Lourdes and Pilar create

space for Abuela to rest and heal. The bouillon and tapioca are to sustain the body's strength, but the space they provide for sleep sustains the spirit.

In contrast, Garcia provides a different mother and daughter scenario in everyday time through the dialogue of Silvia Lores.

> "It was my daughter who turned me in for insisting we say grace at the dinner table," Silvia Lores complains. "That's what they teach her at school, to betray her parents. (108)

Consequently, Silvia Lores is assigned to a unit of malcontents to be integrated into society and reshaped as a revolutionary. The reader can infer from Silvia's dialogue that her relationship with her daughter is barren of mutual nurturing. The daughter does not turn *to* her mother but rather turns her *in* to a government that does not value defiance.

Garcia utilizes the everyday chronotope to emphasize the daily rituals of life.

> Felicia pulls a rusted nail file and a small plastic bottle of hand cream from her knapsack, and gets to work. She pushes back her cuticles with the rounded edge of the file, then expertly picks and scrapes under her nails until they are spotless. With short, brisk strokes she evens the broken nail on her left thumb. Then she squirts the pink lotion onto the backs of her hands, massages it in with a circular motion, and rubs her palms together until her hands are soft and slightly greasy again. (108)

Felicia perceives little choice or control in the direction of her life. The maintenance of her hands is an act of defiance. She begins to lose her identity as she is forced to march and be "re"shaped into a revolutionary. Her internal dialogue indicates the separation of her self from her self, "Her hands are a stranger's, swollen and coarse, her fingernails dirty" (106). Thus, Felicia's care of her hands is an attempt to "re"discover or "re"connect with her self.

Felicia's silent act speaks to the brigade of the defiance they once possessed.

> The other members of the troop, except for Lieutenant Rojas, who is listening to a crackling radio in her tent, watch Felicia attentively, as if witnessing an intricate ritual they'll be required to duplicate, like the dismantling and reassembling of their rifles. When Felicia finishes, they turn away, clumping together in twos or threes to talk. (108)

Felicia's defiance was acquired through her mother, in the everyday chronotope, in a space void of man-made language.

> Sometimes, when Felicia was a child and couldn't sleep, she'd join her mother on the porch. They'd sit together for hours listening to the rhythm of the sea and the poems her mother recited as if in a dream . . .
>
> Felicia learned her florid language on those nights. She would borrow freely from the poems she'd heard, stringing words together like laundry on a line, connecting ideas and descriptions she couldn't have planned. The words sounded precisely right when she said them, though often people told her she didn't make any sense at all. Felicia misses those peaceful nights with her mother, when the sea had metered their intertwined thoughts. (109-110)

The heroines in Garcia's text, unlike Chernin's text, communicate in a language that transcends words. Felicia's language makes no "sense" to other people, just as her mother's language made no sense to her husband, Jorge del Pino.

> "I left her in an asylum. I told the doctors to make her forget. They used electricity. They fed her pills. I used to visit her every Sunday. She told me to turn on my electric brooms and then laughed in my face. She told me that geometry would strangle my nature. She made a friend there who had murdered her husband, and I became afraid. Her hands were always so still." (195)

She refuses to speak the linear language of men exemplified by "geometry" and attaches herself to a woman who symbolically defies the patriarchal rules.

Garcia emphasizes the language of her heroines through her table of contents. Her

choice of words creates images that transcend man-made language as the headings in the table of contents show:

Contents

The only linear time, recognized in the Table of Contents, are Celia's Letters.

> For twenty-five years, Celia wrote her Spanish lover a letter on the eleventh day of each month, then stored it in a satin-covered chest beneath her bed. (38)

Celia forsakes the letters and the linear time of man with the birth of Pilar, her granddaughter. She entrusts her stories to Pilar whose birth coincides with the birth of the revolution.

The chronotope of everyday time provides Celia the space to convey "her"story to her granddaughter. Celia notes, "Solitude, . . . exists for us not to remember but to forget" (92). Everyday time provides Celia the space to tell her story.

> Abuela Celia is in her wicker swing looking out to sea. I settle in beside her. There's a comforting wilderness to Abuela's hands, to the odd-shaped calluses, the split skin on her thumb.
>
> "When I was a girl, I used to dry tobacco leaves one at a time," she begins in a quiet voice. "They stained my hands, my face, the rags on my body. One day, my mother bathed me in a tin tub behind our house and rubbed me with straw until my skin bled. I put on the ruffled dress she had made, a hat with ribbons, and patent-leather shoes, the first I ever wore. My feet felt precious, tied up like shiny parcels. Then she left me on a train and walked away." (221-222)

The reader does not know if Celia's story is known by her daughters. However, Pilar's "re"telling indicates its continuation. Pilar's acquiring of Celia's stories, in the everyday chronotope, ensures Celia will be remembered and not forgotten.

BIOGRAPHICAL TIME

Garcia interweaves Pilar's biographical chronotope with other biographical chronotopes to create a unique vision of "her"story. The Cuban Revolution offers the characters a temporary carnival. Bakhtin defines carnival in his text, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984). He states,

> The laws, prohibitions, and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary life, that is noncarnival, life are suspended during carnival: what is suspended first of all is hierarchical structure and all forms of terror, reverence, piety, and etiquette connected with it - that is, everything resulting from sociohierarchical inequality or any other form of inequality among people (including age). All *distance* between people is suspended, and a special carnival category goes into effect: *free and familiar contact among people*. (137-138)

Yet, as Bakhtin notes, the carnival cannot last. The Cuban Revolution resisted established

conventions and revised them, without destroying them completely. Patriarchy is still firmly entrenched in the lives of each of these women. Garcia reveals, through their biographical chronotopes, their reinvented lives. Each woman "re"invents her life in a different way. Thus, a multitude of women's journeys/stories are provided to the reader.

Garcia identifies the various biographical chronotopes through the use of individual names. The chapter either starts with a specific name and/or names are bold printed and centered within chapters. Thus, the reader is able to shift from one biographical chronotope to biographical chronotope. Within the biographical chronotopes the various journeys are revealed and interwoven. Each biographical chronotope offers an image of being and argues an ideology of existence. Thus, Garcia's biographical chronotope differs from Chernin in that she emphasizes the protagonists' ideologies through their actions rather than their words. It is crucial to note Garcia's protagonists are geographically separated. Celia never leaves Cuba. Thus, her biographical chronotope is impacted by the events of Cuba after the revolution. In contrast, Lourdes leaves Cuba for the United States. The majority of Lourdes biographical chronotope takes place in a different country and space. I have examined the biographical lives of Celia and Lourdes to emphasize the differences in their biographical chronotope due to geographical space and culture.

CELIA

Celia del Pino, grandmother to Pilar and matriarch of the family remains in Cuba after the revolution. The reader meets her on the first page of the text "wearing her best house dress and drop pearl earrings" sitting in a wicker swing "guarding the North coast of

Cuba" (3). Celia's biographical chronotope since the revolution has been intricately interwoven with the life of the collective.

The radio in the background alludes to her existence since the revolution.

> Eleven years ago tonight, *companeros*, you defended our country against American aggressors. Now each and every one of you must guard our future again. Without your support, *companeros*, without your sacrifices, there can be no revolution. (4)

Celia has dedicated her life to an ideology which promotes the collective.

> Celia is honored. The neighborhood committee has voted her little brick-and-cement house by the sea as the primary lookout for Santa Teresa del Mar. (3)

She has been willing to sacrifice her life to "the greatest social experiment in modern history" (117).

One can understand Celia's connection to the collective. Prior to the revolution she was aware of her powerlessness to implement change.

> I'd forgotten the poverty of the countryside. From the trains, everything is visible: the bare feet, the crooked backs, the bad teeth. At one station there was a little girl, about six, who wore only a dirty rag that didn't cover her private parts. She stretched out her hands as the passengers left the train, and in the bustle I saw a man stick his finger in her. I cried out and he hurried away. I called to the girl and lowered our basket of food through the window. She ran off like a limping mongrel, dragging it beside her. (54 - 55)

Before the revolution she could only offer temporary relief to a few. However, even within her powerlessness she imagined alternatives.

> If I was born to live on an island, then I'm grateful for one thing: that the tides rearrange the borders. At least I have the illusion of change, of possibility. To be locked within boundaries plotted by priests and politicians would be the only thing more intolerable. (99)

The revolution offered her the possibility to change the existing world.

Celia's exterior life/collective life is emphasized through folkloric chronotopic motifs. Bakhtin distinguishes between chronotopes of whole genres and "chronotopic motifs."

> When a word figures frequently in utterances belonging to a specific genre, the values and meanings of that genre will somehow be sensed when the word is spoken. The word acquires a "stylistic aura," and that aura is likely to remain even when the word is used in a different genre; the word in effect "remembers" its past. (*Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* 374)

Garcia's use of words associated with folkloric collective life emphasizes Celia's ideology. For example, Garcia emphasizes Celia's exterior life through the chronotopic motif of the public square.

> Celia del Pino settles on a folding chair behind a card table facing the audience. It is her third year as a civilian judge. Celia is pleased. What she decides makes a difference in others' lives, and she feels part of a great historical unfolding. What would have been expected of her twenty years ago? To sway endlessly on her wicker swing, old before her time? (11)

Celia's sense of self is firmly rooted in the public square. The public square emphasizes the collective life and her connection to the collective.

Her connection to the collective is also emphasized through the chronotopic motif of collective time.

> Since her husband's death, Celia has devoted herself completely to the revolution. When El Lider needed volunteers to build nurseries in Villa Clara province, Celia joined a microbrigade, setting tiles and operating a construction lift. When he launched a crusade against an outbreak of malaria, Celia inoculated schoolchildren. And every harvest, Celia cut the sugarcane that El Lider promised would bring prosperity. Three nights per month, too, Celia continues to protect her stretch of shore from foreign invaders. (111-112)

However, what there is no space for in the collective life is "interior time." Bakhtin notes, in collective life "the individuum lives completely on the surface, within a collective whole" ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 207). He defines collective time as follows:

> . . . it is differentiated and measured only by the events of the collective life; everything that exists in this time exists solely for the collective . . . This is the time of labor. Everyday life and consumption are isolated from the labor and production process. Time is measured by labor events . . . This sense of time works itself out in a collective battle of labor against nature. The practice of collective labor gives birth to this new sense of time, and the ends of this practice serve to differentiate and reshape this sense of time. ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 206-207)

After the revolution, Celia measures her life by collective events. However, through her internal dialogue the reader gains insight into her individual life.

Celia turns to daydreams in search of a private sphere. In addition, Garcia emphasizes Celia's private sphere by exposing the reader to her old letters to her first love, Gustavo.

> We also find oriental and fairy-tale motifs that are ultimately linked to the issue of identity: enchantments of every sort, which temporarily take a man out of the ordinary course of events and transport him to a strange world. ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 151)

Celia's dreams of El Lider "transport" her out of her ordinary existence. The reader is reminded of romance texts and their similar effect upon readers. Celia envisions being "feted at the palace, serenaded by a brass orchestra, seduced by El Lider himself on a red velvet divan" (3). In fact, the reason she protects her stretch of the shore wearing red lipstick is due to the fact that she "imagines that El Lider is watching her, whispering in her ear with his warm cigar breath" (112).

Dreams of romance and fairy tales offer the promise of a happy ending. It is interesting Celia needs to feel desired by El Lider in order to fulfill her night vigils of shore protection. She cannot conceive of changing society other than through a powerful man. In effect, Celia, through her fantasies, positions herself as the object of another's desire, namely El Lider. Janice A. Radway suggests in her text, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984), "a demand for real change in power relations will occur only if women also come to understand that their need for romances is a function of their dependent status as women" (220).

Yet, Celia acknowledge her illusions. Even before the revolution she infers in a letter to Gustavo that illusions offer her hope (99). At the end of the text she recognizes the reality of her situation.

> It occurs to Celia that she has never been farther than a hundred yards off the coast of Cuba. She considers her dream of sailing to Spain, to Granada, of striding through the night with nothing but a tambourine and too many carnations. (243)

She removes her pearl earrings, a symbol of her belief in romance and offers them to the sea.

> Celia reaches up to her left earlobe and releases her drop pearl earring to the sea. She feels its absence between her thumb and forefinger. Then she unfastens the tiny clasp in her right ear and surrenders the other pearl. Celia closes her eyes and imagines it drifting as a firefly through the darkened seas, imagines its slow extinguishing. (244)

With her symbolic act she has surrendered her illusions. It is for the reader to determine whether or not her belief in the collective is as effectively extinguished as her illusions of romance.

It is interesting to note that Celia's daughter, Felicia, also turns to fantasies of romance. Her acquisition of this escape technique has been effectively modeled by her mother. She is comfortable with her illusions. "Her eyes, she decides, could get accustomed to this darkness. Perhaps she should have lived in the night all along, with the owls and bats and other nocturnal creatures" (109). When she attempts to become a "New Socialist Woman" she turns to El Lider as her fantasy man.

> Still, Felicia muses, what would he be like in bed? Would he remove his cap and boots? Leave his pistol on the table? Would guards wait outside the door, listening for the sharp pleasure that signaled his departure? What would his hands be like? His mouth, the hardness between his thighs? Would he churn inside her slowly as she liked? Trail his tongue along her belly and lick her there? Felicia slips her hand down the front of her army fatigue pants. She feels his tongue moving faster, his beard against her thighs. "We need you, Companera del Pino," she hears him murmur sternly as she comes. (110-111)

Though her dreams of romance are more graphic than Celia's dreams of romance, they effectively connect her to a man of power. Both women, through their fantasies, address their unmet needs. In addition, their illusions do not upset the status quo of patriarchy. They do not challenge the male right to politics or power. Their illusions reconcile and reintegrate them to their current existence and world.

Finally, Garcia utilizes a folkloric chronotopic motif in Celia's biographical chronotope. Bakhtin notes,

> Folklore is in general saturated with time; all of its images are profoundly chronotopic. Time in folklore, the fullness of time in it, the folkloric future, the folkloric human yardsticks of time - all these are very important and fundamental problems . . . Each spring, hillock, grove, and bend in the coastline had its own legend, its own memories,

> its own events, and its own heroes. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 52-53)

The community legends play a crucial role in Celia's life and through her internal dialogue and memories the reader is able to envision objects "saturated" with time. For example, the ceiba tree in the Plaza de las Armas.

> She places an orange and a few coins by its trunk, and says a short prayer for her daughter. (90)

Though the particular historic legend concerning the ceiba tree is never revealed, it is inferred.

> Tia Alicia took her to museums and the symphony and the ancient ceiba tree. Celia ran around it three times for every wish, until the tree repeated itself like a flashing deck of cards. (93)

The tree is seeped in time. As a child Celia wished upon it and as an adult she continues to believe in its magical power. Garcia emphasizes folkloric time by interspersing the local myths throughout her text.

LOURDES

Lourdes, Celia's eldest daughter and mother to Pilar perceives no hope in the great socialist experiment her mother embraces. She has personal knowledge of the patriarchal violence embedded in communism. The "greatest socialist experiment in the modern history" (117) punished her for her strength and voice.

> "Get out of my house!" Lourdes yelled at the men, more fiercely than she had the week before.
>
> But instead of leaving, the tall one increased the pressure on her arm just above the elbow. (71)

She is raped.

> When he finished, the soldier lifted the knife and began to scratch at Lourdes's belly with great concentration. A primeval scraping. Crimson hieroglyphics. (72)

The men have embedded their words in her skin. Man-made language has literally been engraved upon her being. The violation is implicit.

Consequently, Lourdes rejects the opportunities and oppression of Cuba's new government and turns towards the North and capitalism. She is her father's daughter. Adriene Rich (*Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* 1986) writes, "It is a painful fact that a nurturing father, who replaces rather than complements a mother, ***must be loved at the mother's expense***, whatever the reasons for the mother's absence" (245).

Ironically, it is Lourdes's father who is physically absent. However, her mother appears to Lourdes to be emotionally absent. Thus, Lourdes directs all her love towards her father.

> When Lourdes was a child in Cuba, she used to wait anxiously for her father to return from his trips selling small fans and electric brooms in distant provinces. He would call her every evening from Camaguey or Sagua la Grande and she would cry, "When are you coming home, Papi? When are you coming home?" Lourdes would welcome her father in her party dress and search his suitcase for rag dolls and oranges. (68)

Lourdes does not comprehend the love her mother bears her. It was because of her birth Celia remains in Cuba and sacrifices her dreams of Spain.

> If she had a girl, Celia decided, she would stay. She would not abandon a daughter to this life, but train her to read the columns of blood and numbers in men's eyes, to understand the morphology of survival. Her daughter, too, would outlast the hard flames. (42)

Yet, the misunderstanding of mother love continues through the generations. Lourdes believes her own daughter hates her. She states, "No matter what I do, Pilar hates me" (74). Her father's specter responds,

> "Pilar doesn't hate you, *hya*. She just hasn't learned to love you yet." (74)

Lourdes dilemma is not unique. Adrienne Rich elaborates upon the complex relationship of mother and daughter.

> Few women growing up in patriarchal society can feel mothered enough; the power of our mothers, whatever their love for us and their struggles on our behalf, is too restricted. And it is the mother through whom patriarchy early teaches the small female her proper expectations. The anxious pressure of one female on another to conform to a degrading and dispiriting role can hardly be termed "mothering," even if she does this believing it will help her daughter to survive. (*Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* 243)

Lourdes had a choice to identify with her apparently healthy traveling father or her powerless mother who was a temporary resident of a mental institution. It is not surprising she choose her father. Her father's life appeared to be filled with adventure and travel. Her mother's life was filled with a "shifting horizon" (53) and no concrete or absolute answers.

Lourdes's father, Jorge, offered the concrete and absolute answer of capitalism.

> For many years before the revolution, Jorge had traveled five weeks out of six, selling electric brooms and portable fans for an American firm. He'd wanted to be a model Cuban, to prove to his gringo boss that they were cut from the same cloth. Jorge wore his suit on the hottest days of the year, even in remote villages where the people thought he was crazy. He put on his boater with its wide black band before a mirror, to keep the angle shy of jaunty. (6)

He believed in capitalism. In fact, Lourdes attributes her joining of the auxiliary police

"so she'd be ready to fight the Communists when the time came" (132) to her father's spirit.

Maureen Murdock (*The Hero's Daughter* 1994) defines a father's daughter as follows:

> Because a father's daughter had a strong positive relationship with her father as a child, as an adult she identifies primarily with him, favors men and male power, and views as secondary the opinions and values of women. During childhood, a father's daughter is her father's confidante, functioning more as a wife than as a daughter. (7)

Lourdes was her father's confidante. After his "terrible accident" Lourdes "refuses to leave his side." Her mother is forced to "set up a child's cot for her next to his bed" (54). She would welcome him home "in her party dress and search his suitcase for rag dolls and oranges" (68).

> On Sunday afternoons, after high mass, they went to baseball games and ate roasted peanuts from brown paper cones... These are her happiest memories. (68)

As a child Lourdes assumed a role that was more of a wife than a daughter. Given her identification with her father, it is not surprising she transplants her family to the United States of America.

Nor is it surprising she is financially successful in America. Maureen Murdock notes, a father's daughter "demands perfection from herself and has little tolerance for her own vulnerability. She is considered a success by the standards of a patriarchal, goal-oriented, power-based culture" (*The Hero's Daughter* 8). Though Lourdes starts off in a new country with "riding crops, and her wedding veil, a watercolor landscape, and a paper sack of birdseed" (69), she becomes a "proprietor" of two successful bakeries in New York.

> Lourdes ordered custom-made signs for her bakeries in red, white, and blue with her name printed at the bottom right-hand corner LOURDES PUENTE, PROPRIETOR. (170)

Her financial success validates her choice and her father's choice.

> A father's daughter embodies her father's potential future; she will make him whole. She will carry his youth, his whimsy, his intellect, his spirit, his unrealized dreams. She will continue his life. (14)

It is interesting to note, Lourdes credits her dead father with the idea of a second bakery. Even after his death she continues to wait for his visitations. "The phantom father has just as much power as a father who is present, but his power comes from his *absence* and the *promise* of *his return*" (*The Hero's Daughter* 135).

Whereas Celia's biographical chronotope emphasizes the collective, Lourdes's biographical chronotope emphasizes her "interior nature." Bakhtin notes, "Out of the common time of collective life emerge separate individual life sequences, individual fates" ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 214). He goes on to state,

> Within the boundaries of individual life-series, an interior aspect makes itself apparent. The process of separating out and detaching individual life-sequences from the whole reaches its highest point when financial relations develop in slaveholding society, and under capitalism. Here the individual sequence takes on its specific private character and what is held in common becomes maximally abstract. (215)

Lourdes's financial success emphasizes her "individual life-sequence." She has assimilated to capitalism and embraced the values of her new country. For example, Pilar indicates that the holidays of Lourdes's new country hold special meaning for Lourdes.

> The worst is the parades. Mom gets up early and drags us out on Thanksgiving Day loaded with plastic foam coolers, like we're going to starve right there on Fifth Avenue. On New Year's Day, she sits in front of the television and comments on every single

> float in the Rose Parade. I think she dreams of sponsoring one herself someday. Like maybe a huge burning effigy of El Lider. (137)

Lourdes does not appear to retain or celebrate any of her native holidays. She "considers herself lucky. Immigration has redefined her, and she is grateful" (73). Her side line participation as a spectator in America's national holidays enables her to exhibit her patriotism and nationalism. Furthermore, it enables her to nurture and retain the bond that existed between her and her father. "The internalized phantom father reigns like an overthrown monarch; he rules his daughter's psyche in absentia. She continues to uphold the values she knows he supports" (*The Hero's Daughter* 136). Lourdes and her father shared a belief in capitalism, the American way and America's obsession with baseball. Even while he was dying in the hospital, they embraced and laughed when the Mets won the championship.

Lourdes' obsession with food serves as a constant reminder of America's obsession with weight and emphasizes her separateness from others. Lourdes' eating is not a celebration but rather an attempt to feed or nurture the emptiness within her. She initially opens a bakery because she wants to work with bread and perceives no sorrow in the working of bread. She turns to food and sex as a substitute for love and nurturing as she observes her father deteriorate physically.

> . . . after her father arrived in New York her appetite for sex and baked goods increased dramatically. The more she took her father to the hospital for cobalt treatments, the more she reached for the pecan sticky buns, and for Rufino. (20)

and

> Rufino's body ached from the exertions. His joints swelled like

> an arthritic's. He begged his wife for a few nights' peace but
> Lourdes's peals only became more urgent, her glossy black
> eyes more importunate. Lourdes was reaching through
> Rufino for something he could not give her, she wasn't sure what. (21)

She is alone. Her eating is not done with others or in a community setting but rather it serves to illustrate and emphasize her isolation. She does not battle her cravings; rather she submits to them. However, no matter what she eats, the craving continues.

Her weight loss also serves to emphasize her aloneness. She contributes her 118 pound weight loss to "Willpower" (172). Thus, she infers one can achieve any goal through "Willpower." The reader is reminded of American individualism and the numerous American heroes who achieved their goals through "willpower." Joyce Warren notes in her text, *The American Narcissus: Individualism and Women In Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (1989), the heroes of America "were all solitary male figures, without wife, family, or any other human relationships" (13). Garcia, through the word "willpower," is able to emphasize the extent Lourdes has assimilated into American culture.

Finally, Lourdes' weight serves another purpose. It insulates her from being *seen* as a sexual being. Her weight makes her visible in terms of geographical space, but causes her to be invisible to others as a sexual object. She notes, "men's eyes no longer pursued her curves" (21). Her weight serves to insulate her from the eyes of others as does winter.

> Lourdes relishes winter most of all - the cold scraping sounds on side-
> walks and windshields, the ritual of scarves and gloves, hats and zip-in
> coat linings. Its layers protect her. (73)

Her uniforms emphasize her insulation and isolation.

> Lourdes puts on a size 26 white uniform with wide hip pockets and flat, rubber-soled shoes. She has six identical outfits in the closet, and two more pair of shoes. Lourdes is pleased with her uniform's implicit authority, with the severity of her unadorned face and blunt, round nose. (17)

Note, she celebrates the uniform's "implicit authority" similar to the authority she achieves through her auxiliary police uniform. She is fascinated or obsessed by objects of power.

> Lourdes slides her hand up and down her wooden nightstick. It's the only weapon the police department will issue her. That and handcuffs. (129)

The wooden nightstick, a phallic symbol, enables Lourdes to transcend her powerlessness momentarily through fantasy. Her act, reminiscent of masturbation, is done in solitude. The fantasy is temporary. Even with her uniforms of authority and objects of power, she remains powerless. She cannot save a boy from drowning nor herself from the pain of the rape. Her exhibition of external power are merely symbols of patriarchy. She is still imprisoned in a patriarchal society that envisions power as power over others.

Power over others is lonely. Lourdes appears to feel little connection with others though her desire for food and sex imply a desire to be nurtured and connected. Her journey is one of assimilation. She has reinvented and redefined her role at a great cost.

> . . . fathers' daughters worn out by their efforts to be like men. They commonly reported significant professional and economic success, yet, at the same time, they expressed a deep sense of alienation. They had dutifully followed the rules and guidelines of the patriarchal culture, and, as a result, their inner lives were in disarray. Their overidentification with their fathers and their quests to be like their fathers left them with unanswered questions about how to be comfortable with who they were as women. (*The Hero's Daughter* xiii)

Lourdes has followed the "rules and guidelines of the patriarchal culture," but is alienated

from her mother, daughter and self. "Central to the experience of being a father's daughter is a rejection of the mother" (*The Hero's Daughter* 10).

> The subtle collusion between daughter and father, with its implicit rejection of the mother, constitutes the initial wounding of the daughter's feminine nature. This wounding impedes or entirely blocks off her receptivity to her intuition, her tolerance of feelings, and her acceptance of the wisdom of her natural body rhythms. In rejecting her mother, the father's daughter rejects herself as a woman. (*The Hero's Daughter* 13-14)

Lourdes was loved by her mother, but does not retain this memory and thus rejects her. Ironically, her mother, Celia, has participated in Lourdes's rejection of her "feminine nature" and "intuition." Celia shares with Pilar her maternal goals in raising Lourdes. She states, "I made a promise to myself before your mother was born not to abandon her to this life, to train her as if for war" (222). Celia at that time believed that raising Lourdes as a warrior would protect her from harm. Yet, by buying into the patriarchal values she has essentially wounded her daughter and separated her from a potential inner power and power with others.

Carol S. Pearson notes in her text, *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By* (1989), "it is the archetype of the Warrior that is our culture's definition of heroism" (74). The warrior represents the traditional hero's journey. Lourdes is unable to think about the world in an affiliative manner. She envisions power as mastery, domination, achievement and agency. Thus, she is constantly engaged in battle with others. For example, when visiting her mother in Cuba, she attempts to convert those she comes into contact with on her trip.

> "Look at those old American cars. They're held together

> with rubber bands and paper clips and *still* work better than the new Russian ones. *Oye*!" she calls out to the bystanders. "You could have Cadillacs with leather interiors! Air conditioning! Automatic windows! You wouldn't have to move your arms in the heat!" Then she turns to me, her face indignant. "Look how they laugh, Pilar! Like idiots! They can't understand a word I'm saying! Their heads are filled with too many *companero* this and *companera* that! They're brainwashed, that's what they are!" (221)

She is not interested in being a part of a collective community. "Companero" and "companera" hold no meaning for her, nor have they ever held meaning. Her biographical chronotope is seeped in chronotopic motifs of the individual. She has lost the language of the collective, "The language she speaks is lost to them. It's another idiom entirely" (221). She has been socialized from birth to be a Warrior. Carol Pearson defines the warrior in her text, *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By* (1989).

> The hero's task is to defeat or subject whatever is inferior, within or without, to his will. This phase typically is not only sexist, but racist and classist. (81)

Lourdes has embraced this task at the expense of her inner self. No food will ever fill the emptiness within her being.

HISTORICAL TIME

Pilar's biographical chronotope is constantly intersecting with historical time.

> For there to be a real sense of becoming, according to Bakhtin, the future, and especially the immediate or near future in which we concretely act, must be seen as significant, valuable, and open to change. (*Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* 397)

Pilar is struggling to keep her future open. She recognizes the necessity of connecting to the past if she is to keep the future open. Thus, she resists the destruction or revision of "her"story.

> I resent the hell out of the politicians and the generals who force events on us that structure out lives, that dictate the memories we'll have when we're old. Every day Cuba fades a little more inside me, my grandmother fades a little more inside me. And there's only my imagination where our history should be. (138)

She has an intuitive sense that her present and future are connected to the past. Yet, as an immigrant and product of another culture, she can never fully comprehend the past. She recognizes this difficulty through her internal dialogue.

> Cuba is a peculiar exile, I think, an island-colony. We can reach it by a thirty-minute charter flight from Miami, yet never reach it all. (219)

Like her grandmother, she is aware of boundaries. Like her grandmother, she resents the patriarchal forces and resists traditional history. Yet, unlike her grandmother, she struggles with the loss of her mother tongue and native culture. However, she recognizes that by connecting to the mythic past of Cuba and/or her grandmother, she might be provided with a potential avenue of freedom from the state of loss and alienation.

Pilar struggles to find a voice and a language that can represent her becoming. Her music and painting serve as her attempts to transcend man-made language and the language of her oppressors.

> . . . who needs words when colors and lines conjure up their own language? That's what I want to do with my paintings, find a unique language, obliterate the clichés. (139)

Painting is her form of resistance and provides her the space for voice.

> . . . a paintbrush is better than a gun so why doesn't everybody just leave me alone? Painting is its own language, I wanted to tell him. Translations just confuse it, dilute it, like words going from Spanish to English. I envy my mother her Spanish curses sometimes. They make my English collapse in a heap. (59)

Pilar, unlike her mother, is not interested in carrying a gun, a patriarchal symbol of power. She wishes to resist and speak in her own language.

Pilar's music serves a purpose similar to her painting. She buys an acoustic bass after her lover betrays her with another. It is interesting to note, she discovers the bass for sale under a subheading of "WOMEN SEEKING WOMEN". The lover who betrayed her spoke Spanish.

> We speak in Spanish when we make love. English seems an impossible language for intimacy. (180)

She believed Spanish to be the "language for intimacy" and discovers that the man-made language of Spanish was just as much a vehicle for betrayal and pain as English. So, she turns to another language and purchases the bass. She states, "It's like I'm buying my own heirloom." (181) and in a sense she *is* buying her own heirloom.

> I don't know what I'm doing but I start thumping that old spruce dresser of an instrument for all it's worth, thumping and thumping, until I feel my life begin. (181)

She is creating a new language. No longer will she trust the language of men.

Pilar's painting of the Statue of Liberty is her attempt to transcend man made language, capitalism, and patriarchy. She takes a symbol of the United States, the Statue of Liberty, a promise of freedom to incoming immigrants, and transforms it into a statement of injustice and disillusion.

> . . . I do a perfect replication of her a bit left of center canvas, changing only two details: first, I make Liberty's torch float slightly beyond her grasp, and second, I paint her right hand reaching over to cover her left breast, as if she's reciting the National Anthem or some other slogan.
>
> The next day, the background still looks off to me, so I take a medium-thick brush and paint black stick figures pulsing in the air

> around Liberty, thorny scars that look like barbed wire. I want to go all the way with this, to stop mucking around and do what I feel, so at the base of the statue I put my favorite punk rallying cry: I'M A MESS. And then carefully, very carefully, I paint a safety pin through Liberty's nose. (141)

She is refusing to embrace the assimilationist affirmation of the melting pot. Her "re"vision of the past makes possible an open future. The Statue of Liberty ceases to be a fixed symbol of the epic past.

> But epic time itself, in its entirety, is an "absolute past," a time of founding fathers and heroes, separated by an unbridgeable gap from the real time of the *present day* (the present day of the creators, the performers and the audience of epic songs). ("Forms of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 218)

Pilar's Statue of Liberty is "from the real time of the *present day*" and recognizes the possibility of change. The safety pin in the nose and punk rallying cry are present day symbols of resistance. Fate is not fixed. Pilar's painting reclaims the present and as a result reinterprets the past.

Pilar's geographical and generational distance and her connection to the historical past enables her to *see* historical time. In contrast, Celia and Lourdes are unable to connect to a past beyond their biographical time and thus cannot *see* historical time. For a variety of reasons, neither Celia or Lourdes are aware of their mothers' "her"story. Or, aware in only a limited manner. Thus, there is no connection to the past and their *consciousness* does not go beyond their own time. Pilar notes her connection to her Abuela Celia. She states,

> . . . she's left me her legacy nonetheless - a love for the sea and the smoothness of pearls, an appreciation of music and words, sympathy for the underdog, and a disregard for boundaries. Even in silence, she gives me the confidence to do what I believe is right, to trust my own perceptions. (176)

Celia has given her granddaughter what she did not receive as a young woman and what she was unable to give her own daughter, the knowledge of inner power.

Whereas Celia and Lourdes fantasize and/or depend on men for their power, Pilar is attempting to establish or trust her inner power. In addition, she is struggling between the separate ideologies her grandmother and mother embraced. Her inner dialogue emphasizes her struggle between individualism and the collective. For example, "The family is hostile to the individual" (134). She is unsure of her place in the world and believes connection to her cultural roots will offer her insight into the future. Her trip to Cuba awakens her to the world's effect on her emergence.

> I wonder how different my life would have been if I'd stayed with my grandmother. I think about how I'm probably the only ex-punk on the island, how no one else has their ears pierced in three places . . . I ask Abuela if I can paint whatever I want in Cuba and she says yes, as long as I don't attack the state. Cuba is still developing, she tells me, and can't afford the luxury of dissent. (235)

Cuba is not what she imagined and yet her connection to it is crucial in her historical emergence.

> I've started dreaming in Spanish, which has never happened before. I wake up feeling different, like something inside me is changing, something chemical and irreversible. There's a magic here working its way through my veins. There's something about the vegetation, too, that I respond to instinctively - the stunning bougainvillea, the flamboyants and jacarandas, the orchids growing from the trunks of the mysterious ceiba trees . . . I'm afraid to lose all this, to lose Abuela Celia again. But sooner or later I'd have to return to New York. I know now it's where I belong - not *instead* of here, but *more* than here. (pp. 235-236)

Pilar is emerging into a new woman, a woman that could not exist in previous times and cultures. She is in transition and this transition is accomplished in her and through her.

Bakhtin elaborates upon emergence in historical time. He notes that in the novel of historical emergence the hero "emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 23). He goes on to state,

> He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. The organizing force held by the future is therefore extremely great here - and this is not, of course, the private biographical future, but the historical future. It is as though the very *foundations* of the world are changing, and man must change along with them. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 23-24)

Pilar takes Cuba with her into the future. She cannot go back to Cuba. There is no room for dissent and dissent is a crucial element in her emergence. Yet, she will not forget the others. Like her grandmother, Pilar is aware of those who have no voice. She loves Lou Reed's concerts because "he sings about people no one else sings about - drug addicts, transvestites, the down-and-out" (135).

Pilar must return to the United States. Yet, she will not embrace the United States of her mother's dream, economic individualism. Pilar is interested in talking back, resisting and dissenting against the part of American culture that emphasizes individualism, competition, and ignores the collective. Nor, will she deny or forget her heritage. She will retain her memories, unlike the boys in the park who sexually assaulted her. "Their eyes are like fireflies, hot and erased of memory" (201). The boys are products of individualism. They are isolated from other human beings, no memory attaches them to

others. Rollo May elaborates on memory in his text, *The Cry For Myth* (1991). He states,

> Memory can liberate us from attachment from desire or attachment to the wrong things. Memory is our internal studio, where we let our imaginations roam, where we get our new and sometimes splendid ideas, where we see a glorious future that makes us tremble. (70)

Pilar's memory is part of her marrow. It connects her to others. It enables her to envision an open future.

Pilar's grandmother, Abuela Celia, has entrusted her with her memories and her unsent love letters.

> As I listen, I feel my grandmother's life passing to me through her hands. It's a steady electricity, humming and true. (222)

It is through Pilar that Celia will live. "Death begins nothing decisive, and ends nothing decisive, in the collective and historical world of human life" ("Forms of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 204).

> Women who outlive their daughters are orphans, Abuela tells me. Only their granddaughters can save them, guard their knowledge like the first fire. (22)

Pilar's return to Cuba was an act of survival. Her previously fragmented and unarticulated "her"story has become integrated and interwoven in her emergence. Her "re"connection with Celia was a crucial element in the integration of her being. For Pilar, having a myth of her past is essential to having a present and future identity.

CHAPTER IV

A RECIPE OF RESISTANCE

> We uphold the custom which, rectifying the errors
> of the law, denies women the right to give evidence.
> We hereby give this custom legal force and forbid
> women's evidence to be taken in matters concerned
> with contracts. But in purely feminine affairs, where men
> are not permitted to be present - I refer to childbirth
> and other things which only the female eye may see -
> women may testify.
> - Byzantine Law, By Emperor Leo The Wise,
> Novels Of Leo (ca. A.D. 900)

Laura Esquivel's text, *Like Water For Chocolate* (1992), offers another matrilineal story/myth. Her myth involves the resisting of a repressive patriarchal tradition. Yet, she embraces and interweaves the creative traditions of women. Through recipes, tall tales and home remedies she constructs an alternative vision and tradition. She "re"claims "her"story. The novel begins with a revealing epigram,

> To the table or to bed
> You must come when you are bid.

The reader is immediately reminded of the role or function of women in a patriarchal society, a life of servitude to others' needs is the legacy women inherit. The epigram infers the physical and sexual demands placed upon women. Esquivel, through this initial phrase, recognizes women's history in "his"story.

The story, *Like Water For Chocolate*, is about a Mexican family at the turn of the

century. It centers around a woman, Mama Elena, and her three daughters. Mama Elena's rigid and repressive rules evoke different responses in each daughter. Gertrudis, the eldest daughter, abandons Mama Elena's house to become a prostitute and eventually a general in the revolution. Rosaura, the middle daughter, never questions the traditions of the family and attempts to establish them in the succeeding generation. Tita, the youngest of the family is provided with a unique and repressive script, revealed through the mother's dialogue.

> You know perfectly well that being the youngest daughter means you have to take care of me until the day I die. (9)

Tita attempts to respond, "But in my opinion . . ." (9). Mama Elena silences her with the following words:

> "You don't have an opinion, and that's all I want to hear about it. For generations, not a single person in my family has ever questioned this tradition, and no daughter of mine is going to be the one to start." (9)

Yet, Tita does have an opinion and refuses to embrace the fate allotted to her through tradition; through her story alternative possibilities are revealed to the reader. Esquivel utilizes a variety of chronotopes to unveil "her"story.

EVERYDAY TIME

Esquivel, as in the previous texts by Chernin and Garcia, emphasizes the connection between the past and present. However, she accomplishes this feat through a unique use of time and space. The story is framed through the chronotope of an anonymous woman. Thus, readers are encouraged to make her story their story.

PREPARATION:

> Take care to chop the onion fine. To keep from crying when you chop it (which is so annoying!), I suggest you place a little bit on your head. The trouble with crying over an onion is that once the chopping gets you started and the tears begin to well up, the next thing you know you just can't stop. I don't know whether that's ever happened to you, but I have to confess it's happened to me, many times. Mama used to say it was because I was especially sensitive to onions, like my great-aunt, Tita. (3)

Esquivel, through everyday time, is "preparing" the reader for a female stance. Women's lives are filled with the preparation of food. Esquivel, by creating a "zone of familiar contact" ("Epic and Novel"), enables the reader to identify with the family story about to be revealed.

Maxine Harris in her text, *Down From The Pedestal: Moving Beyond Idealized Images of Womanhood* (1994), states,

> One of the first places that we learn of specific idealized images of womanhood is from our personal families. Each woman extends back in time to her mother, grandmother, and to her foremothers in the distant past. (10)

The anonymous woman in *Like Water For Chocolate* is extending back in time through her foremothers. She is not offering a "idealized" image of woman. Her story/myth is filled with onions and tears. Her words foreshadow and "prepare" the reader for the pain. Yet, her "recipe" acknowledges the joy of creation.

INGREDIENTS:

1 can of sardines

1/2 chorizo sausage

1 onion

oregano

1 can of chiles serranos

10 hard rolls

The same ingredients can be used in a variety of recipes. Laura Esquivel is merely offering possibilities.

In each chapter, Esquivel draws the reader into a space familiar to women. The chapters are introduced with the ingredients of a recipe and the subsequent directions of preparation. For example,

> Begin shelling the nuts several days in advance, for that is a big job, to which many hours must be devoted. After the nut is taken from the shell, you still have to remove the skin that covers the nut. Take care that none of this skin, not a single bit, is left clinging to the nuts, because when they're ground and mixed with the cream, any skin will make the nut sauce bitter, and all of your previous work will have been for nothing. (223)

and

> First the beans have to be boiled with baking soda, and then washed and boiled again with pieces of pork and pork rind. (203)

and

> Heat the vinegar and add the chiles after removing the seeds. When the mixture comes to a boil, remove the pan from the heat and put a lid on it, so that the chiles soften. (83)

Esquivel, by interweaving the chronotope of everyday time, disintegrates epic distance and enables the reader to identify with the heroines in a present-day reality.

Yet, everyday time is not solely conveyed through Tita's grand niece. Tita's life story is often revealed through everyday time. This is particularly evident in the narrator's

description of Tita's food preparation.

> The quail are placed on a platter, the sauce is poured over them, and they are garnished with a single perfect rose in the center and rose petals scattered around the outside; or the quail can be served individually, on separate plates instead of a platter. That's how Tita liked to do it, because then there was no chance of the garnish sliding off center when it was served, and that's what she specified in the cookbook she started writing that night, after crocheting a big section of bedspread, as she did every night. (55-56)

The placement of garnish is an event of everyday time. Tita's life is comprised of everyday details. The heroic quality of her life is voiced through her creation of a cookbook and bedspread.

It is important to note that Tita has no voice space. It is only through the cookbook she is able to speak and leave pieces, fragments and/or clues to "her"story.

> . . . she looked over the recipe she had written to see if she had forgotten anything. And added: "Today while we were eating this dish, Gertrudis ran away . . . " (57).

Tita reveals, through everyday time, her personal affiliations and relationships. It is through this space that she is able to acknowledge the actions of Gertrudis. The mundane detail of garnish placement provides her with a crucial moment of memory.

In fact, Tita's memory is often provided space through everyday time. Not only does everyday time provide Tita with memory and/or voice space, it also provides her the opportunity to conjure her memories. Given her physical space, the kitchen, it is not surprising her memories are evoked or triggered through aromas.

> . . . smells have the power to evoke the past, bringing back sounds and even other smells that have no match in the present. Tita liked to take a deep breath and let the characteristic smoke and smell transport her through the recesses of her memory. (7)

and/or

> The moment Tita opened the jar, the smell of apricots transported her to the afternoon they made the marmalade. (29)

Tita's memories are limited to her experiences and her experiences are limited to the domestic art of cooking.

In contrast to Gertrudis' extraordinary life, Tita's life is ordinary. She has not participated in "the revolution" nor has she been the leader of men. She has been confined to the kitchen. "Tita's domain was the kitchen" (5). Nadya Aisenberg states in her text, *Ordinary Heroines: Transforming the Male Myth* (1994),

> Socially, space also shapes a woman's definition, her gendered sense of her identity. Women are projected into a domestic space, which is again an interior space, a space which contains the container, and within which the activities of the house are enacted. (45)

Tita is "attuned to the kitchen routine" (5), it is her space. It is her identity.

> . . . for Tita the joy of living was wrapped up in delights of food. It wasn't easy for a person whose knowledge of life was based on the kitchen to comprehend the outside world. That world was an endless expanse that began at the door between the kitchen and the rest of the house, whereas everything on the kitchen side of that door, on through the door leading to the patio and the kitchen and herb gardens was completely hers - it was Tita's realm. (5-6)

Tita's realm is saturated with everyday time. The cooking and preparing of food for a family is a continual activity. Esquivel emphasizes this point at the conclusion of each chapter with these words: "TO BE CONTINUED . . ."

The sense of continuation is further emphasized through the motif of cyclical time. The text is comprised of 12 chapters, each chapter is titled with the name of a month and a corresponding food. The titles are chronological. For example:

Chapter One	January	Christmas Rolls
Chapter Two	February	Chabela Wedding Cake
Chapter Three	March	Quail in Rose Petal Sauce
Chapter Four	April	Turkey Cole With Almonds & Sesame Seeds
Chapter Five	May	Northern-Style Chorizo
Chapter Six	June	A Recipe For Making Matches
Chapter Seven	July	Ox Tail Soup
Chapter Eight	August	Champandongo
Chapter Nine	September	Chocolate and Three Kings' Day Bread
Chapter Ten	October	Cream Fritters
Chapter Eleven	November	Beans With Chile Tezcucanna-style
Chapter Twelve	December	Chiles in Walnut Sauce

Tita's everyday time is comprised of months and eventually years of recipes. Many of the recipes are connected or linked to the holidays, the seasons and a community of women.

> On Mama Elena's ranch, sausage making was a real ritual. The day before, they started peeling garlic, cleaning chiles, and grinding spices. All of the women in the family had to participate: Mama Elena; her daughters, Gertrudis, Rosaura, and Tita; Nacha, the cook; and Chencha, the maid. They gathered around the dining-room table in the afternoon, and between the talking and the joking the time flew by until it started to get dark. (8)

and

> To get the number of eggs together, they preserved all the eggs laid by the best hens for several weeks. This preserving technique had been employed on the ranch since time immemorial to ensure a supply of this nourishing and indispensable food throughout the winter. (23)

Esquivel's use of a cyclical motif merely emphasizes the everyday time of women.

The chronotope of everyday time provides Tita with space for female stories, identity and training. It is in the kitchen, through Nacha, the cook, Tita learns of her birth.

> Tita made her entrance into this world, prematurely, right there on the kitchen table amid the smells of simmering noodle soup, thyme, bay leaves, and cilantro, steamed milk, garlic, and, of course, onion. Tita had no need for the usual slap on the bottom, because she was crying as she emerged; maybe that was because she knew then that it would be her lot in life to be denied marriage. The way Nacha told it, Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the kitchen floor. (4)

Her birth is celebrated by Nacha. Note, Nacha has no children of her own. Nor is Tita's destiny motherhood. However, both women in everyday time and through their recipes have left a legacy for future women, as is evident through Tita's grand niece's retelling of the story.

Finally, it is in the chronotope of everyday time through which Tita's power is revealed. Her power is not of physical courage or strength, though her kitchen realm requires physical endurance. Her power is from her creations.

> The moment they took their first bite of the cake, everyone was flooded with a great wave of longing. (37)

and/or

> With that meal it seemed they had discovered a new system of communication, in which Tita was the transmitter, Pedro the receiver, and poor Gertrudis the medium, the conducting body through which the singular sexual message was passed. (48)

Tita's options are limited. She is defined by her space. Yet, she refuses to be limited by it. In his essay, "Forms Of Time And Chronotope In The Novel," Bakhtin states,

> It is always the case that the hero cannot, by his very nature, be a part of everyday life; he passes through such life as would a man from another world . . . Everyday life is that lowest sphere of existence from which the hero tries to liberate himself, and with which he will never internally fuse himself. The course of his life is uncommon, outside everyday life; one of its stages just happens to be a progression through the everyday sphere. (121-122)

Tita cannot just pass through such life. She cannot liberate herself from the everyday sphere. However, she can liberate herself within this sphere through her cooking creations. Her common and traditional acts, when examined closely, are uncommon and in reality she is creating new traditions.

BIOGRAPHICAL TIME

Laura Esquivel's text also utilizes the chronotope of biological time. Biographical time, as mentioned in Chapter One, introduces the concept of generations. Biographical time offers Esquivel the space to convey Tita's life course. The story begins with her birth and ends with her death, it notes the crucial events in her life. Biographical time enables Esquivel to reveal Tita's aging, longings, losses, disappointments and joys. Thus, the reader is provided a role model for these experiences. In this text, Esquivel offers a vision of how one might deal with the loss of love, the resistance of tradition, and the individual's responsibility to community and future generations. Questions are voiced, through Tita's internal dialogue, that can only be answered through historical time. For example

> Doubts and anxieties sprang to her mind. For one thing, she wanted to know who started this family tradition. It would be nice if she could let that genius know about one little flaw in this perfect plan for taking care of women in their old age. If Tita couldn't marry and have children, who would take care of her when she got old? Was there a solution in a case like that? Or are daughters who stay home and take care of their mothers not expected to survive too long after the parent's death? And what about

> women who marry and can't have children, who will take care of them? And besides, she'd like to know what kind of studies had established that the youngest daughter and not the eldest is best suited to care for their mother. Had the opinion of the daughter affected by the plan ever been taken into account? If she couldn't marry, was she at least allowed to experience love? Or not even that?
>
> Tita knew perfectly well that all these questions would have to be buried forever in the archive of questions that have no answers. In the De la Garza family, one obeyed - immediately. (10-11)

Tita questions the tradition of her family, symbolic of the unquestioned patriarchal family tradition. However, due to the family rule, "discussion was not one of the forms of communication permitted in Mama Elena's household," she is denied the answers to her questions. Her gift, in biographical time, is to record her journey, so future generations will not be deprived of the knowledge of "her"story.

Nadya Aisenberg elaborates upon the gift of story and women's voices in her text, *Ordinary Heroines: Transforming the Male Myth* (1994).

> As long as women remain silent, history will be a recital of male patronymics. How can anyone, male or female, decide whose version of experience, of culture, is authoritative, significant, true, normative, when we possess but one account? (105)

She goes on to state,

> To the extent that women, for historical, social and biological reasons, experience a different reality from men's they complete an incomplete story. Women writers, for instance, are able to describe from their own knowledge a different role for the mother, a role apart from Freud's Oedipal romance. Women's writing is a directive toward autonomy, presenting faithfully what the reader's sense of experience tells her is true. (105)

Tita's refusal to remain silent offers another account of history. It adds another version or experiential account of a life.

Yet, Tita's biographical life is not the story of one life. Her sisters' lives are also

revealed through the biographical chronotope. The reader learns of Gertrudis' success and independence.

> She was a *general* in the revolutionary army. The commission had been earned by sheer hard work, she fought like mad on the field of battle. Leadership was in her blood, and once she joined the army, she began a rapid ascent through powerful positions until she arrived at the top; moreover, she was coming back happily married to Juan. (175)

Note, Gertrudis' experience closely resembles the male model of "his"story. She is honored and revered among men. Yet, she prays for Tita.

> Eyes closed, Gertrudis offered up a silent prayer, asking that Tita be granted many more years in which to prepare the family recipes. Neither she nor Rosaura knew how to make them; when Tita died, her family's past would die with her. (175-176)

Gertrudis shapes her destiny through a classical hero's journey. She abandons all relationships to follow her calling. Her journey leads her into unknown geographical space. In contrast, Tita shapes her destiny within her space. Tita maintains her relationships and envisions an alternative beyond the existing scripts.

Nadya Aisenberg explores in her text, *Ordinary Heroines: Transforming the Male Myth* (1994), the contrasting visions of the classical hero and the heroine' journey. She states,

> . . . the classical hero *as warrior* ceases to think of the future because he must stake everything on the success of the moment. The heroine, with a vision of change, has, by contrast, a futuristic sense of time. Like the postmodern artist and writer, the new heroine works without established rules, formulating in the present what needs to be done. Her actions are more improvisatory [sic] because she has not inherited the legacy of male goals: to win a princess, to be initiated into a fraternity, to defeat a mythical beast, to carve a glorious name for herself. (34)

Gertrudis is her father's daughter. She inherits his "rhythm and other qualities" (176). In

addition, she achieves the male goals: she wins a mate, is initiated into an army, defeats men on the battle field, and carves a glorious name for herself. She has embraced the rules or *recipe* for success in a patriarchal society. Yet her achievement has come at a high price. She is unable to participate in the creation of a recipe. "Gertrudis read this recipe as if she were reading hieroglyphics" (186). Only through Tita's cooking can she return to her "maternal home" (175). In contrast, Tita carries the maternal home within her and changes the rules and/or recipes as needed.

> . . . it was like the fear she felt when she was cooking and didn't follow a recipe to the letter. She was always sure when she did it that Mama Elena would find out and, instead of congratulating her on her creativity, give her a terrible tongue-lashing for disobeying the rules. But she couldn't resist the temptation to violate the oh-so-rigid rules her mother imposed in the kitchen . . . and in life. (193)

and/or

> Instead of eating, she would stare at her hands for hours on end. She would regard them like a baby, marveling that they belonged to her. She could move them however she pleased, yet she didn't know what to do with them, other than knitting. She had never taken time to stop and think about these things. At her mother's, what she had to do with her hands was strictly determined, no questions asked . . . Now seeing her hands no longer at her mother's command, she didn't know what to ask them to do, she had never decided for herself before. They could do anything or become anything. They could turn into birds and fly into the air! (105)

Tita envisions other alternatives, beyond those prescribed by the culture.

Whereas Gertrudis embraces the classical male myth, Rosaura and Mama Elena can only envision one female myth. They can not recognize alternatives to tradition. Rosaura assigns her daughter, Esperanza, her fate or role in life at birth.

> . . . this little girl was destined to take care of her until the day she died, Tita felt her hair stand on end. Only Rosaura could have thought to perpetuate such an inhuman tradition. (146)

and/or

> Her only consolation was that at least she had her daughter Esperanza, who was obliged to stay with her forever. (167)

Rosaura bequeaths to her daughter a scripted life. Adrienne Rich in her text, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1986), states, "As daughters we need mothers who want their own freedom and ours. We need not to be the vessels of another woman's self-denial and frustration" (247). Rosaura cannot envision her own freedom, nor her daughter's freedom. Her daughter is merely a vessel placed upon the earth for her needs. It is not surprising that when Rosaura shrieks, the baby, Esperanza, wails (209). Rosaura's anger and bitterness can only offer Esperanza sorrow. It is only through Tita's intervention she avoids such a fate. However, the creation of an alternative vision or alternate tradition is not without a struggle, "The house became a battlefield" (234).

> She fought with everything she had, she fought like a lioness to defend what according to tradition was her right - a daughter who would stay with her until she died. She kicked, she screamed, she yelled, she spit, she threw up, she made desperate threats. (234)

Yet, in the end Tita triumphs. She does not allow Rosaura to poison her daughter "with sick ideas" or "ruin her life" by "forcing her to follow some stupid tradition!" (209).

Biographical time enables Tita to reach an understanding of her mother and a consequential healing.

> Only now after her death, she saw her as she was for the first time and began to understand her. (132)

and/or

> During the funeral Tita really wept for her mother. Not for the castrating mother who had repressed Tita her entire life, but for the person who had lived a frustrated love. (135)

Tita does not possess the knowledge of her mother's institutionalized oppression in her youth. Thus, a healing was impossible. However, with her mother's death and her legacy of old love letters, Tita is able to acquire intuitive insight. Mama Elena's vision of motherhood is culture-bound, it was based upon her own experience as a daughter.

> When Mama Elena's parents discovered the love that existed between their daughter and this mulatto, they were horrified and forced her into an immediate marriage with Juan De la Garza, Tita's father. (134)

She could not envision an alternative relationship of communication. Germaine Greer writes in her text, *The Change: Women, Aging and the Menopause* (1991),

> It is a permanent aspect of all kinds of oppression among human groups that the oppressed are forced to act out institutionalized oppression and exert pressure on those immediately beneath them in the power structure. (236)

Mama Elena's power over her daughters and hired help was abusive. She exerted her oppressive pressure over her daughters' lives throughout her life. Yet, through the written letters she leaves behind, she provides Tita with an understanding not possible during her life.

Finally, Bakhtin notes in biographical time, events in a life are consequently "unrepeatable and irreversible" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 17-18). Tita's journey is a series of events that are unrepeatable and irreversible. Her mother's refusal to let her marry her one love, Pedro, cannot be reversed. However,

she has choices, as is evident by her decision to carry on an affair with Pedro rather than marrying John. Her emergence is the result of "changing life circumstances and events, activity and work" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 22). Yet her destiny is not fated. She is awake to her choices.

> Life had taught her that it was not that easy; there are few prepared to fulfill their desires whatever the cost, and the right to determine the course of one's own life would take more effort than she had imagined. (164)

Tita has the opportunity to have Pedro, but is not willing to fulfill her desires whatever the cost.

> She and Pedro were on one side; on the other, at a total disadvantage, was her sister. Rosaura was weak, it was important to her how society saw her . . . What would happen if Pedro abandoned her for Tita? How much would that hurt Rosaura? What about Esperanza? (182)

She is connected to others and her internal dialogue indicates her journey is not an individual accomplishment. She is conscious of the effect her decisions have upon others in her world.

However, she is also conscious and awake to her own needs.

> "I know who I am! A person who has a perfect right to live her life as she pleases. (194)

When her sister, Rosaura, accuses her of breaking family tradition, she responds, "And I'm going to break with it several more times if I have to, as long as this cursed tradition doesn't take me into account" (207). Tita's breaking of family tradition is her gift to the future.

Tita is not alone in her awakeness to choice. Gertrudis also leaves a legacy of choice.

> Gertrudis thanked her sister for the happy moments she had spent with her, advised her not to give up the battle for Pedro, and before departing gave her a recipe the prostitutes use so they don't get pregnant: after having intimate relations, use a douche of boiled water with a few drops of vinegar. (197)

The recipes of creation are not limited to food. The family cookbook reveals a choice over motherhood. Adrienne Rich in her text, *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (1979), elaborates upon this essential choice. She states, "This elemental loss of control over her body affects every woman's right to shape the imagery and insights of her own being" (196). When Tita writes of this recipe, it enables future generations the right to imagine other possibilities.

HISTORICAL TIME

Esquivel introduces historical time through the insight of the anonymous woman, Tita's grand niece. In historical time, "human emergence is of a different nature. It is no longer man's own private affair" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 23). Tita's grand niece has given voice to Tita's story and thus what was once private is now public. The reader, through Tita's grand niece's dialogue and insight, is able to see and/or reflect upon "the historical emergence of the world itself" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 23).

Tita had little time for reflection. Her biographical life was seeped with everyday chores.

> She *couldn't continue her reflections* because the chickens were starting to make a huge ruckus on the patio. (emphasis mine, 211)

Yet, her grand niece does have the time necessary to make connections with the past. In

addition, through Tita's written text, she has an opportunity denied to Tita.

> When Esperanza, my mother, returned from her wedding trip, all that she found under the remains of what had been the ranch was this cookbook, which she bequeathed to me when she died, and which tells in each of its recipes this story of a love interred.

Questions that remained unanswered in Tita's life span can be answered in the life of her grand niece, through Tita's recipes/words, she has a "her"story.

Gerda Lerner's text, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy* (1993), explores women's deprivation of knowledge of their own past. She states,

> Men develop ideas and systems of explanation by absorbing past knowledge and critiquing and superseding it. Women, ignorant of their own history, did not know what women before them had thought and taught. So, generation after generation, they struggled for insights others had already had before them. . . . the endless repetition of effort, the constant reinventing of the wheel. (19)

Tita never knew "her"story, except through individuals in her immediate life. Thus, she had to reinvent the wheel. However, her grand niece is spared the reinvention and provided space for further imaginings. Due to her connection to the past, she is able to build upon the inventions and images of her grand aunt Tita.

> I am as sensitive to onions as Tita, my great-aunt, who will go on living as long as there is someone who cooks her recipes. (241)

Tita's gift to historical time is a feminist consciousness.

In addition, Tita's story offers future generations a different image than the one culture espouses. Few images were available to Tita when envisioning possibilities. Her mother's specter, who rants and raves at her acts and actions, indicates the idealized image of

womanhood according to tradition and culture.

> "What you have done has no name! You have forgotten all morality, respect, and good behavior. You are worthless, a good-for-nothing who doesn't respect even yourself. You have blackened the name of my entire family, from my ancestors down to this cursed baby you carry in your belly!" (169)

Tita is offered no alternative image. Maxine Harris elaborates upon this dilemma in her text, *Down from the Pedestal: Moving Beyond Idealized Images of Womanhood* (1994).

> Almost fifty years ago, Simone de Beauvoir had warned us that the positive images which keep us securely perched on pedestals are far more difficult to ignore than the negative images which leave us feeling bad about ourselves. When we identify with the images that are valued by our families, honored by our culture, and immortalized by our mythologies we win love and approval for ourselves. (x)

She goes on to say,

> Women who are trapped by idealized images do not change when the time and context changes, not because these women will not change, but because they cannot change. They are so confined within the bounds of a particular image that they do not have within their emotional and behavioral repertoire the new actions and behaviors that are demanded by the new circumstances. (31)

Tita's mother could not envision an alternative image. Thus, she participated in the perpetuation of an oppressive culture. However, Tita created a new image and through her creation has provided future generations with other possibilities of being.

Tita's new images are often relayed through her words. For example, she does not deny her sexuality, but rather embraces it through her metaphors.

> Tita knew through her own flesh how fire transforms the elements, how a lump of corn flour is changed into a tortilla, how a soul that hasn't been warmed by the fire of love is lifeless, like a useless ball of corn flour. (65)

Tita, through voice, is able to gain access to her own inner thoughts and feelings. By applying her personal knowledge to new experiences, she is able to construct new knowledge thorough the creation of metaphor. Her metaphors, along with her recipes are passed down to future generations. Future generations build upon her knowledge.

> . . . she could not find the words for what she was feeling.
> How unfortunate that black holes in space had not yet been
> discovered, for then she might have understood the black hole
> in the center of her chest, infinite coldness flowing through it. (14)

Like her predecessor, her great aunt Tita, the anonymous writer is attempting to capture in words, through metaphor, the experience of the female journey.

Adrienne Rich explores the necessity of making visible the experience of women in her essay, "Conditions for Work" (*On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*, 1979). She states, "For spiritual values and a creative tradition to continue unbroken we need concrete artifacts, the work of hands, written words to read, images to look at, a dialogue with brave and imaginative women who came before us" (205). The reader of *Like Water For Chocolate* (1992) is aware of a continuing creative tradition. Tita's recipes and metaphors live on through her grand niece.

Yet, it is not just Tita who lives on through the metaphors and recipes. Tita's writing and vocalizing of the stories and recipes enables the voices of Nacha, Morning Light, and Gertrudis to be heard. However, the reader is unsure what is written and what is oral.

> Tita wanted Esperanza to have a different education from the
> one Rosaura had planned for her. So even through it wasn't
> part of the deal, she took advantage of the moments Esperanza
> spent with her to provide the child with a different sort of knowledge
> than her mother was teaching her. (232)

The medium varies, but the message remains the same. There is a "her"story of women who have refused to be limited and confined by others' imposed ideas.

The reader has no doubt the "her"story will continue through the grand niece. Yet, the story will be different,

> . . . I am preparing Christmas Rolls, my favorite dish. My mama prepared them for me every year. My mama!. . . How wonderful the flavor, the aroma of her kitchen, her stories as she prepared the meal, her Christmas Rolls! I don't know why mine never turn out like hers . . . (241).

The rolls cannot be the same from generation to generation. The creative act changes the recipe, but the ingredients remain the same. This anonymous woman has a different "potential" and different problems of freedom and necessity" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 24). Yet, one does not doubt that her "creative initiative" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 24) will prevail.

CHAPTER V

A COMMUNAL JOURNEY:

EMBRACING HER STORY IN OUR STORY

Eighteen goddess-like daughters are not equal to one son with a hump.
- Chinese Proverb

Amy Tan's text, *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), is a narrative account of eight women, four mothers and their daughters, whose blurring of voices and interwoven stories provide the reader a "her"story of one family or human community. Each woman's journey/story is framed and/or linked by the stories of other women. Thus, Tan's text structure emphasizes the women's interconnection to one another. David Leiwei Li summarizes the structure of the text in his essay, "Chinese American Literature" (1992).

> The Joy Luck Club is organized into four "sections" (my word instead of "chapters" because of the latter's suggestion of sequence) and each section contains four stories. All sixteen stories are told by a narrative "I" who is differentiated each time by her name and the title preceding the story. With the exception of the first and last stories - where Jing-Mei Woo substitutes her mother Suyuan Woo's narrative voice as she does in replacing her mother's place at the mah jong table - the first section of the book reads like the autobiographical narratives of the four mothers, the next two depict the journeys of the four daughters, and the last one returns to the mothers. (*Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature* 196)

David Leiwei Li's words indicate the circular nature of the text and story. However, I would argue Jing-mei Woo is not substituting her mother's voice, but rather incorporating

her mother's voice into her own journey. In addition, she is not *replacing* her mother at the mah jong table, she is *embracing* her mother's place in her own story. "I am sitting at my mother's place at the mah jong table, on the East, where things begin" (32). "I am here in her spirit, to be the fourth corner and carry on the idea my mother came up with on a hot day in Kweilin" (17).

In the first chapter, Jing-mei Woo introduces her mother and the creation of the Joy Luck Club.

> My mother started the San Francisco version of the Joy Luck Club in 1949, two years before I was born. This was the year my mother and father left China with one stiff leather trunk filled only with fancy silk dresses. (6)

The reader quickly recognizes Jing-mei's knowledge of the details and facts of her mother's life, as well as her knowledge of her own place in the story. Her mother, Suyuan Woo, through the ritual of story telling, has ensured Jing-mei's connection to the past.

> Joy Luck was an idea my mother remembered from the days of her first marriage in Kweilin, before the Japanese came. That's why I think of Joy Luck as her Kweilin story. It was the story she would always tell me when she was bored, when there was nothing to do, when every bowl had been washed and the Formica table had been wiped down twice, when my father sat reading the newspaper and smoking one Pall Mall cigarette after another, a warning not to disturb him. (7)

It is through the "re"tellings of the stories, Jing-mei has been able to internalize the words. She states, "Over the years, she told me the same story, except for the ending, which grew darker, casting long shadows into her life, and eventually into mine" (7). Yet, though Jing-mei knows the words of the stories, the meanings of the stories elude her.

> My mother and I never really understood one another. We translated

> each other's meanings and I seemed to hear less than what was said, while my mother heard more. (27)

Jing-mei's journey is the journey of all four daughters; a search for meaning. It is a search that can only be achieved through the mother.

> In me, they see their own daughters, just as ignorant, just as unmindful of all the truths and hopes they have brought to America. They see daughters who grow impatient when their mothers talk in Chinese, who think they are stupid when they explain things in fractured English. They see that joy and luck do not mean the same to their daughters, that to these closed American-born minds "joy luck" is not a word, it does not exist. They see daughters who will bear grandchildren born without any connecting hope passed from generation to generation. (31)

The daughters appear to be as lost to their mothers as the mothers are lost to their daughters. This is particularly evident, when the three remaining Aunties of the Joy Luck Club provide Jing-mei Woo the opportunity to visit her two *lost* sisters in China.

> "You must see your sisters and tell them about your mother's death." says Auntie Ying. "But most important, you must tell them about her life. The mother they did not know, they must now know." (30)

Jing-mei responds,

> "See my sisters, tell them about my mother," I say, nodding. "What will I say? What can I tell them about my mother? I don't know anything. She was my mother." (30-31)

Jing-mei does not *know* her mother and thus the journey begins for Jing-mei and the reader. Indeed the loss of mother is apparent in each daughters' story. Adrienne Rich indicates the tragedy of such a loss in her text, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1986).

> The loss of the daughter to the mother, the mother to the daughter, is the essential female tragedy. We acknowledge Lear (father-daughter split), Hamlet (son and mother), and Oedipus

> (son and mother) as great embodiments of the human tragedy; but there is no presently enduring recognition of mother-daughter passion and rapture. (237)

Tan emphasizes the mothers' concern over the loss of their daughters through their internal and external dialogue. For example, Ying-ying St. Clair, mother of Lena St. Clair, states,

> For all these years I kept my mouth closed so selfish desires would not fall out. And because I remained quiet for so long now my daughter does not hear me. (64)

Lindo Jong, mother of Waverly Jong, states,

> It's too late to change you, but I'm telling you this because I worry about your baby. I worry that someday she will say, "Thank you, Grandmother, for the gold bracelet. I'll never forget you." But later, she will forget her promise. She will forget she had a grandmother. (42-43)

Each woman combats the loss through story and through a collective story "re"claims the past. Thus, through stories the mothers and daughters are awakened to their present and future "her"story. Tan's use of chronotopes accentuates the loss and discovery of "the mother" in each woman's quest.

EVERYDAY TIME

Tan, throughout her text, utilizes the chronotope of everyday time. The chronotope of everyday time, as in the previous texts, often revolves around food and conversation. For example, Jing-mei Woo, one of the four daughters, states on the first page of the text,

> The week before she died, she called me, full of pride, full of life: "Auntie Lin cooked red bean soup for Joy Luck. I'm going to cook black sesame-seed soup."
> "Don't show off," I said.
> "It's not showoff." She said the two soups were almost the same, *chabudwo*. Or maybe she said *butong*, not the same thing

> at all. It was one of those Chinese expressions that means the better half of mixed intentions. I can never remember things I didn't understand in the first place. (5-6)

Thus, Tan reveals through everyday time, the *call* of Jing-mei Woo's journey. It is in the simple conversations of everyday time, the quest is revealed to the reader. Yet, it quickly becomes apparent that Jing-mei's journey of discovery and understanding cannot be achieved alone. It is only through the Joy Luck Club stories that the expressions which evade her become clear.

Lena St. Clair indicates a similar confusion over her mother's words. "I could understand the words perfectly, but not the meanings. One thought led to another without connection" (109). Her words could easily be applied to Tan's text. Yet, if the reader and daughter are awake, the questions raised in one section are answered in the next.

Insights to questions are often conveyed through everyday conversations of "daily existence" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 32). For example, Auntie An-mei conveys to Jing-mei the meaning of joy luck during the preparation of food.

> "We used to play mah jong, winner take all. But the same people were always winning, the same people always losing," she says. She is stuffing wonton, one chopstick jab of gingery meat dabbed onto a thin skin and then a single fluid turn with her hand that seals the skin into the shape of a tiny nurse's cap. "You can't have luck when someone else has skill. So long time ago, we decided to invest in the stock market. There's no skill in that. Even your mother agreed." (18)

Jing-mei, raised in a capitalistic/individualistic society, is given a lesson community. Thus, what appears to be a traditional and common act, the preparation of food, is in reality an opportunity to instruct the next generation in resistance.

Partial insights or clues are given during everyday time. Jing-mei's conversation with her mother, while cleaning up after a meal, reveals crucial information. The space and time, available through the everyday chronotope, enables her to continue her quest of *knowing the mother*, while at the same time establishing a sense of community that even death can not destroy. Her mother unclasps her gold necklace containing a jade pendant and places it in Jing-mei's palm. Jing-mei protests and her mother responds,

> "Nala, nala" - Take it, take it - she said, as if she were scolding me. And then she continued in Chinese. "For a long time, I wanted to give you this necklace. See, I wore this on my skin, so when you put it on your skin, then you know my meaning. This is your life's importance." (235)

Jing-mei still has to uncover the meaning of her mother's existence. However, a clue has been given, a clue that becomes more clear through the revelation of others.

Jing-mei is conscious, after her mother's death, that she could ask her Aunts the meaning of the pendant. Yet, she states, "I also know they would tell me a meaning that is different from what my mother intended" (222). Thus, she is constantly reflecting upon its meaning.

> And because I think about this all the time, I always notice other people wearing these same jade pendants - not the flat rectangular medallions or the round white ones with holes in the middle but ones like mine, a two-inch oblong of bright apple green. It's as though we were all sworn to the same secret convenant, so secret we don't even know what we belong to. Last weekend, for example, I saw a bartender wearing one. As I fingered mine, I asked him, "Where'd you get yours?"
>
> "My mother gave it to me," he said.
>
> I asked him why, which is a nosy question that only one Chinese person can ask another; in a crowd of Caucasians, two Chinese people are already like family.
>
> "She gave it to me after I got divorced. I guess my mother's telling me

> I'm still worth something."
>
> And I knew by the wonder in his voice that he had no idea what the pendant really meant. (222)

However, the reader notes the community established in a kitchen is being continued in a bar. Jing-mei is connected to others through the pendant and consequently she belongs to a community of people who "are already like family" (222). The pendant appears to transcend one meaning and offers the wearer the message he/she needs to hear. It is important to note that Jing-mei's mother gave her the necklace after an evening of humiliation. Jing-mei feels small, tired and foolish. Yet, her mother's words in the kitchen are said "in a way as if this (her acts) were proof - proof of something good" (234). Thus, the bartender's message is applicable to Jing-mei.

Jing-mei, through the everyday chronotope, is provided the space to acquire the literacy of her mother and consequently her Chinese heritage.

> Every time I went with her to Chinatown, she pointed out other Chinese women her age. "Hong Kong ladies," she said, eyeing two finely dressed women in long, dark mink coats and perfect black hairdos. "Cantonese, village people," she whispered as we passed women in knitted caps, bent over in layers of padded tops and men's vests. And my mother - wearing light-blue polyester pants, a red sweater, and a child's green down jacket - she didn't look like anybody else. . . . My mother came from many different directions. (223)

Note, Jing-mei's use of "every time." Her mother is seventy-one, they have made this journey to Chinatown numerous times and the ritual of the journey has enabled her to acquire the knowledge to tell the story. Her mother is dead, but Jing-mei can distinguish between Hong Kong ladies and Cantonese village people.

Yet, there are gaps in her literacy and these gaps become evident through the

chronotope of everyday time.

> I picked up my mother's plate, the one she had carried into the kitchen at the start of the dinner. The crab was untouched. I lifted the shell and smelled the crab. Maybe it was because I didn't like the crab in the first place. I couldn't tell what was wrong with it. (233)

Jing-mei can not distinguish between a good crab and a crab "Not so good" (234). Yet, everyday time allows her the space to give voice to her questions and continue her acquisition.

> "What happened to your crab? Why'd you throw it away?"
> "Not so good," she said again. "That crab die. Even a beggar don't want it."
> "How could you tell? I didn't smell anything wrong."
> "Can tell even before cook!" She was standing now, looking out the kitchen window into the night. "I shake that crab before cook. His legs - droopy. His mouth - wide open, already like a dead person." (234)

Suyuan Woo knows through experience what Jing-mei Woo has yet to learn. The chronotope of everyday time provides her the space to reinforce her belief in Jing-mei's ability to eventually achieve her quest. Her words, while presenting Jing-mei with her pendant, serve as a blessing.

> "Not so good, this jade," she said matter-of-factly, touching the pendant, and then she added in Chinese: "This is young jade. It is very light color now, but if you wear it every day it will become green." (235)

Note, Suyuan's choice of words. She describes the crab and the pendant as "Not so good." However if given time, she informs Jing-mei, the pendant will deepen to a rich color. So too, will Jing-mei deepen as she experiences life. The pendant, worn next to Suyuan's skin will now be worn next to Jing-mei's skin and her "life's importance" (235) will deepen through her daughter's existence.

The everyday chronotope enables each character the space and time to acquire their mothers' stories and literacies. For example, An-mei Hsu, mother of Rose Hsu Jordan, relays an incident of her youth. Her mother, a widow and first wife of a scholar, is tricked and then forced into marriage as a fourth wife. An-mei, naive of the intrigues and politics of her new home accepts a "beautiful piece of jewelry" from the second wife. "It was designed in the Western style, a long strand, each bead the same size and of an identical pinkish tone, with a heavy brooch of ornate silver to clasp the ends together" (259-260). It is over tea, in the everyday chronotope, An-mei's mother reveals her lesson.

> "Be careful, An-mei," she said. What you hear is not genuine. She makes clouds with one hand, rain with the other. She is trying to trick you, so you will do anything for her." (260)

Yet, An-mei does not hear her mother. So, the lesson continues.

> "You do not believe me, so you must give me the necklace. I will not let her buy you for such a cheap price."
>
> And when I still did not move, she stood up and walked over, and lifted that necklace off. And before I could cry to stop her, she put the necklace under her shoe and stepped on it. When she put it on the table, I saw what she had done. This necklace that had almost bought my heart and mind now had one bead of crushed glass. (260-261)

Later, An-mei's mother removes the crushed bead and knots the necklace to look whole again. In addition, she has An-mei wear the necklace "every day for one week so I would remember how easy it is to lose myself to something false" (261).

> And after I wore those fake pearls long enough to learn this lesson, she let me take them off. Then she opened a box, and turned to me: "Now can you recognize what is true?" And I nodded.
>
> She put something in my hand. It was a heavy ring of watery blue sapphire, with a star in its center so pure that I never ceased to look at that ring with wonder. (261)

The lesson is learned. An-mei states, "I saw second Wife's true nature" (268). More importantly, she acquires knowledge of her mother's nature and her own value and worth.

BIOGRAPHICAL TIME

Tan, as did the previous authors, utilizes the chronotope of biographical time to convey the concept of generations.

> And even though I taught my daughter the opposite, still she came out the same way! Maybe it is because she was born to me and she was born a girl. And I was born to my mother and I was born a girl. All of us are like stairs, one step after another, going up and down, but all going the same way. (241)

Biographical time enables Tan the space to convey the "unrepeatable, individual stages" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 22) of a life and at the same time provide the correlation between generations and the individual. However, the chronotope of biographical time, in this text, provides more than the "testifying to a family-clan consciousness of self" ("Forms Of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 137). Tan is concerned with the testimony of a family/community that extends beyond blood lines.

Tan, at the beginning of her text, after the dedication page and the table of contents, incorporates the following table of sisterhood.

THE JOY LUCK CLUB

THE MOTHERS	THE DAUGHTERS
Suyuan Woo	Jing-mei "June" Woo
An-mei Hsu	Rose Hsu Jordan
Lindo Jong	Waverly Jong
Ying-ying St. Clair	Lena St. Clair

David Leiwei Li analyzes the table in his essay, "Chinese American Literature" (1992). He states,

> This table certainly has a semblance to the kind of family tree format of the nineteenth century realistic tradition, but the analogy stops there. Instead of a hierarchical genealogy, Tan's is a horizontal one. Instead of tracing the progenitor of a family, Tan groups four families unrelated by blood under the seal of the club, signifying a formal sharing of communal identity. (*Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature* 197)

There is no quest or recognition of a specific family lineage. Rather, the table recognizes "the destinies of mother-daughter are filiated as the course of life among mothers and daughters are affiliated" (*Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature* 197-198).

Tan emphasizes the familial relationship among club members through their stories. Note, Jing-mei's description of Waverly.

> We had grown up together and shared all the closeness of two sisters squabbling over crayons and dolls. In other words, for the most part, we hated each other. I thought she was snotty. (148)

The daughters display typical sibling rivalry. Yet, they acquired this rivalry through their observations of their mothers. Jing-mei states,

> Auntie Lin and my mother were both best friends and arch enemies who spent a lifetime comparing their children. I was one month older than Waverly Jong, Auntie Lin's prized daughter. From the time we were babies, our mothers compared the creases in our belly buttons, how shapely our earlobes were, how fast we healed when we scraped our knees, how thick and dark our hair, how many shoes we wore out in one year, and later, how smart Waverly was at playing chess, how many trophies she had won last month, how many newspapers had printed her name, how many cities she had visited. (27)

Jing-mei has yet to learn the power and support of community. It is only when her Aunties fulfill her mother's dream through her that she begins to comprehend "the mah jong table is not for an individual's gain but for the interest of the club, and when the Aunties saved money for June Woo to fulfill her mother's wish to find her lost daughters in China, one begins to understand the transgenerational and transfamilial tenacity of a community" (*Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature* 198).

Biographical time offers Tan the space to convey the characters' life courses. For example, through biographical time, Tan reveals the crucial events of their lives. The reader experiences their births, their aging, and their deaths as well as their friendships. Carolyn Heilbrun notes in her text, *Writing A Woman's Life* (1988), the rarity of space available for the stories of friendship between women.

> Indeed, friendship between women has seldom been recounted. Women have been seen to support one another in the crises of their lives, particularly in those family crises so central to a woman's experience of marriage, birth, death, illness, isolation. From the love of women for one another as they work and live side by side, however, recorders of civilization have, until the last decade, averted their eyes... If one sets out to survey the annals of friendship (as annals go, a rather short collection), one ends by reading - in Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Plutarch, Erasmus, Montaigne, Johnson, Rousseau, Emerson, Thoreau, et al. - of male friendships. If the friendships of women are considered at all, and that is rare enough, they intrude into the male account the way a token woman is reluctantly included in a male community. (98-99)

Membership in the Joy Luck club is a crucial life event in each character's life. Suyuan, the initiator of the club in China and America, indicates the importance of the club.

> "So we decided to hold parties and pretend each week had become the new year. Each week we could forget past wrongs

> done to us. We weren't allowed to think a bad thought. We feasted, we laughed, we played games, lost and won, we told the best stories. And each week, we could hope to be lucky. That hope was our only joy. And that's how we came to call our little parties Joy Luck." (12)

Note, each week is a new year. Thus, according to the Chinese zodiac cycle, an opportunity for a new beginning and new joy luck for each individual. Biographical time offers the space for the creation of new traditions. However, the value of new traditions is not revealed except through historical time. Biographical time merely enables the characters to record their journeys, so future generations can grasp the alternatives available in "her"story.

Biographical time, as in the previous stories, concentrates "on deeds, feats, merits, and creative accomplishments, or on the structure of the hero's destiny in life, his happiness, and so on" ("*The Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 17). For example, Waverly Jong, the child prodigy, reveals her accomplishments.

> I was ten years old. Even though I was young, I knew my ability to play chess was a gift. It was effortless, so easy. I could see things on the chessboard that other people could not . . . And this gift gave me supreme confidence. I knew what my opponents would do, move for move. I knew exactly what point their faces would fall when my seemingly simple and childlike strategy would reveal itself as a devastating and irrevocable course. I loved to win. (187)

Waverly, through biographical time and in the first person, reveals her gifts and talents. Yet, because this is a collective story, the reader gains insight into her accomplishments through the voices of others. The reader, through Jing-mei's voice, learns of Waverly's continued success. She is a tax attorney at Price Waterhouse. Thus, she continues to utilize her ability for strategy and seeing what other people can not see. In addition, she

continues to love to win. It is her words that leave Jing-mei feeling as if her "hair were coated with disease" (229).

However, biographical time does not only reveal the strengths of the characters.

> I [Lindo Jong] wiped my eyes and looked in the mirror. I was surprised at what I saw. I had on a beautiful red dress, but what I saw was even more valuable. I was strong. I was pure. I had genuine thoughts inside that no one could see, that no one could ever take away from me. I was like the wind. (53)

It also provides the space for the acknowledgment of individual weaknesses. The characters' ability to perceive their weaknesses is painfully apparent.

> . . . I [Jing-mei] looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink and when I saw only my face staring back-and that it would always be this ordinary face - I began to cry. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high-pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror. (144)

Tan's use of a mirror motif emphasizes the characters' self reflection. Their ability to give voice to their reflections reminds the reader of their internal quests. Yet, their answers are not to be revealed in an individual reflection. Their answers are to be found within the reflections of themselves and others. Tan reveals this insight through Waverly and her mother Lindo at the beauty parlor.

> So my daughter and I are alone in this crowded beauty parlor. She is frowning at herself in the mirror. She sees me looking at her.
>
> "The same cheeks," she says. She points to mine and then pokes her cheeks. She sucks them outside in to look like a starved person. She puts her face next to mine, side by side, and we look at each other in the mirror.
>
> "You can see your character in your face," I say to my daughter without thinking. "You can see your future."
>
> "What do you mean?" she says.
>
> And now I have to fight back my feelings. These two faces, I think, so much the same! The same happiness, the same sadness, the same good

> fortune, the same faults.
>
> I am seeing myself and my mother, back in China, when I was a young girl. (291-292)

Lindo proceeds to flash back to her youth. She relays to her daughter her mother's examination of her [Lindo's] own character. Lindo and her mother shared the same nose, chin, forehead and eyes. Waverly cannot achieve her quest of knowing herself or her mother without reflecting upon her mother and her mother's mother. This reflection can only occur through the historical chronotope, an issue to be explored at the end of this chapter.

Biographical time offers the characters space to convey their lives, their mothers' lives and to recognize the role of their mothers' in their stories. Note, though the chapters are identified by the individuals telling their stories, it is impossible for them to separate their stories from their mothers' stories or the others in their lives. For example, the first chapter/story told by Jing-mei Woo mentions her mother, Suyuan, her Auntie Lin, Auntie An-mei, Auntie Ying, Rose, Waverly, Lena and Jing-mei's twin sisters lost in China. Her biographical life is connected to her community. Her journey is not a solitary journey. There is no one character the reader can recognize as the heroine. David Leiwei Li states,

> The tables with which Tan begins her novel are therefore ploys that may give illusory satisfaction to those of us who are prone to identify the individual heroines of the book, while they serve others as a moral about enabling communions. In a decade of greed when American individualism takes the shape of predatory egoism, the narrative structure of Amy Tan's may be suggesting an alternative of a fructifying collectivity. . . . The blurring of voices and indistinguishable qualities of the characters therefore help to create a narrative sense of personal and social dependency not as symptoms

> of immaturity as male-centered Western psychology will diagnose it, but as signs of healthy human relationships. (*Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature* 198)

Jing-mei's journey is intricately connected to the journeys of all the club members. Her life is interwoven with their lives. Thus, her "birth, childhood, school years, marriage, works, deeds, death and so forth," ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 17) must be told in relationship to the others in her life.

Finally, biographical time allows the characters to reveal the process of aging, and give voice to their individual losses, particularly the loss of their mothers through death or separation. In addition, each woman must deal, in biographical time, with the deterioration of her own body and her own unfulfilled dreams. For example, Lindo Jong notes the drooping of her mouth (293) and Ying-ying her "poor feet, once so small and pretty! Now they are swollen, callused, and cracked at the heels. My eyes, so bright and flashy at sixteen, are now yellow-stained, clouded" (279).

Yet, it is not their physical decline they most mourn. Rather, it is the loss of their mothers. An-mei's poignant memory of her grandmother's death and her mother's action illustrates the depth of grief involved with the loss of a mother.

> And then my mother cut a piece of meat from her arm. Tears poured from her face and blood spilled to the floor.
>
> My mother took her flesh and put it in the soup. She cooked magic in the ancient tradition to try to cure her mother this one last time . . . She fed her this soup, but that night Popo flew away with her illness.
>
> Even though I was young, I could see the pain of the flesh and the worth of the pain.
>
> This is how a daughter honors her mother. It is *shou* so deep it is in your bones. The pain of the flesh is nothing. The pain you must forget. Because sometimes that is the only way to remember

> what is in your bones. You must peel off your skin, and that of your mother, and her mother before her. Until there is nothing. No scar, no skin, no flesh. (41)

The mother is bred in the bones, she is in the marrow of each woman. To lose her is to lose a part of the self, to lose her memory is to lose "her"story.

> . . . I had no memory of my mother. That is the way it is with a wound. The wound begins to close in on itself, to protect what is hurting so much. And once it is closed, you no longer see what is underneath, what started the pain. (40)

It is through historical time the generational pain is revealed as well as the generational hope.

HISTORICAL TIME

Historical time is revealed through the entire collection of stories. Bakhtin, as mentioned in previous chapters, notes in historical time the "hero emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself" ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 23). Individually, the chapters are incapable of revealing the historical emergence of the heroines or the world. Yet, when connected they create a vision of "her"story.

For example, the new traditions, mentioned in biographical time, gain historical significance when contrasted with the traditions of old. Carolyn Heilbrun in her text, *Writing A Woman's Life* (1988), states, "Women have long been nameless. They have not been persons. Handed by a father to another man, the husband, they have been objects of circulation, exchanging one name for another" (121). This is particularly evident in the story of An-mei, in her chapter titled "Magpies." Her mother is stripped of her identity

and given the name or title "Fourth Wife." The other women of the household carry similar titles of possession; First Wife, Second Wife, Third Wife and Fifth Wife.

Julia Kristeva in her text, *About Chinese Women* (1986), explores the interaction of women within the Chinese patriarchal household.

> Without a right to the human - i.e. male - hierarchy, and, consequently, largely without an education: condemned to endless humiliation if she is not a 'principal wife' and back-breaking labour when she doesn't belong to a wealthy family, woman is subjected as well to the internal rivalry within the female contingent of the family, which reflects in microcosm the power-structure in the male hierarchy. Internal rivalries between wives and concubines at various levels (first wife, second wife, etc.), but also between daughter-in-law, where the war between the brothers for succession to the fathers is echoed . . . Thus, in their own society, they give free rein to the impassioned violence that gnaws at the apparent interior harmony of the patriarchal class . . . they reveal the wretchedness of the female condition . . . (77)

An-mei is raised in a house of women in constant competition with one another. She has no model or script of a community in which all can gain through a collaborative effort. Yet, her mother's suicide is an attempt to offer her a new vision, "When the poison broke into her body, she whispered to me that she would rather kill her own weak spirit so she could give me a stronger one" (271).

Her mother has broken from the patriarchal script and provided her daughter, through her act, an opportunity for an alternative destiny. Her careful planning of her death, two days before the lunar new year, ensures her daughters security and future.

> . . . on the third day after someone dies, the soul comes back to settle scores. In my mother's case, this would be the first day of the lunar new year. And because it is the new year, all debts must be paid, or disaster and misfortune will follow.
>
> So on that day, Wu Tsing, fearful of my mother's vengeful spirit,

> wore the coarsest of white cotton mourning clothes. He promised her visiting ghost that he would raise Syaudi and me as his honored children. He promised to revere her as if she had been First Wife, his only wife. (271)

An-mei's mother's sacrifice is given new meaning through Ying-ying's vignette.

> My half-sisters were all dreaming of being married to worthless young boys from families not as good as ours. My half-sisters did not know how to reach very high for a good thing. They were the daughters of my father's concubines. I was the daughter of my father's wife. (278)

There is no future for the daughter of a concubine. Ying-ying's half sisters illustrate the scripted bondage awaiting An-mei.

Yet, because of her mother's gift, An-mei discovers her voice and thus, changes her script. On the day her mother's spirit returns to settle scores, An-mei achieves what her mother could not achieve given her script in patriarchy.

> And on that day, I showed Second Wife the fake pearl necklace she had given me and crushed it under my foot.
> And on that day, Second Wife's hair began to turn white.
> And on that day, I learned to shout. (272)

An-mei's mother had no voice. Her story is told to An-mei through Yan Chang, her mother's servant. Her mother, trapped in a script she did not write, leaves her daughter the legacy of voice and thus the potential to write her own script. Her gift is given historical significance through Rose Hsu Jordan's story.

Rose, An-mei's daughter, in the midst of a divorce, perceives no choices.

> She cried, "No choice! No choice!" She doesn't know. If she doesn't speak, she is making a choice. If she doesn't try, she can lose her chance forever.
> I know this, because I was raised the Chinese way: I was taught to desire nothing, to swallow other people's misery, to eat my own bitterness. (241)

An-mei, before her mother's death, *swallowed* her words. Her mother, perceiving no choice, swallowed opium.

> That is why the story of Persephone and Demeter is the story of all women who marry: why death and marriage, as Nancy Miller pointed out in *The Heroine's Text*, were the only two possible ends for women in novels, and were, frequently, the same end. For the young woman died as a subject, ceased as an entity. (*Writing A Woman's Life* 121)

An-mei, due to her mother's gift, recognizes the alternatives available to her daughter. She realizes her mother had no choice. "That was China. That was what people did back then. They had no choice. They could not speak up. They could not run away. That was their fate" (272). She goes on to state,

> But now they can do something else. Now they no longer have to swallow their own tears or suffer the taunts of magpies. I know this because I read this news in a magazine from China. (272)

Her daughter, Rose, because of "her"story, has a choice.

Rose's choice is revealed to her through her mother's *words*. Initially, Rose hopes to find a solution to her problems through a psychiatrist. Yet, An-mei knows the solution does not lie in therapy. "A psychiatrist does not want you to wake up. He tells you to dream some more, to find the pond and pour more tears into it" (272). The psychiatrist, according to An-mei, merely participates in her continued oppression. He reinforces her immobilization. Whereas, her mother's words offer liberation.

> "I am not telling you to save your marriage," she protested. "I only say you should speak up." (216)

Rose follows her mother's advice and arranges a final meeting with her husband. During this meeting she announces she has "found a place" (219) to live, she will not surrender

the house.

> Ted pulled out the divorce papers and stared at them. His x's were still there, the blanks were still blank. "What do you think you're doing? Exactly what?" he said.
>
> And the answer, the one that was important above everything else, ran through my body and fell from my lips: "You can't just pull me out of your life and throw me away."
>
> I saw what I wanted: his eyes, confused, then scared. He was hulihudu. The power of my words was that strong. (219)

Her grandmother, with the advent of the Fifth Wife, had been thrown away. Historical time provides Rose the space for a new script. She is "re"constructing her house. Yet, the "re"construction is due to her grandmother's act which resulted in her mother's voice. The garden, no longer well groomed, is according to Ted, her husband, "a mess" (218). In response, Rose, through her internal dialogue, states,

> And I knew he was calculating how long it would take to get the place back into order. (218)

Then, through external dialogue, she responds to his remark.

> "I like it this way," I said, patting the tops of overgrown carrots, their orange heads pushing through the earth as if about to be born. And then I saw the weeds: Some had sprouted in and out of the cracks in the patio. Others had anchored on the side of the house. And even more had found refuge under loose shingles and were on their way to climbing up to the roof. No way to pull them out once they've buried themselves in the masonry; you'd end up pulling the whole building down. (218)

Rose has been "re"born. The weeds, symbolic of women's stories, are literally buried in the masonry of her house. Women are no longer possessions to be used and discarded. The stories told in everyday time and preserved in biographical time gain significance in historical time. Historical time recognizes their impact on "her"story. Her grandmother's

story fought its way out through a "crack in the patio" that was the only space available. Her mother's story is "anchored on the side of the house" and her story is "climbing up to the roof."

Carolyn Heilbrun states in her text, *Writing A Woman's Life* (1988), "Women must turn to one another for stories; they must share the stories of their lives and their hopes and their unacceptable fantasies" (44). Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, offers a vision, to the reader, of women sharing their stories and the consequential power it creates.

The daughters, through historical time, "re"discover their mothers. This is particularly evident in the last chapter, told by Jing-mei and titled "A Pair of Tickets." Jing-mei, sent by the Joy Luck Club to China, meets her twin sisters.

> I am thirty-six years old. My mother is dead and I am on a train, carrying with me her dreams of coming home. I am going to China. (307)

Yet, the Joy Luck Club is not content with merely sending Jing-mei to China. They first send her sisters a letter, a collaborative endeavor.

> So this is what they wrote to my sisters in Shanghai: "Dearest Daughters, I too have never forgotten you in my memory or in my heart. I never gave up hope that we would see each other again in a joyous reunion. I am only sorry it has been too long. I want to tell you everything about my life since I last saw you. I want to tell you this when our family comes to see you in China." . . . They signed it with my mother's name. (309)

Suyuan is dead. Yet, the community gives her voice. She lives on through their words.

In China, Jing-mei discovers her mother's name means "Long-Cherished Wish" and her own name translates to "pure essence" and "younger sister."

> I think about this. My mother's long-cherished wish. Me,

> the younger sister who was supposed to be the essence of
> the others. I feed myself with the old grief, wondering how
> disappointed my mother must have been. (323)

The night before meeting her sisters, Jing-mei cannot sleep.

> I lay awake thinking about my mother's story, realizing
> how much I have never known about her,
> grieving that my sisters and I had both lost her. (330)

However, it is not too late. She "re"discovers her mother in China through her sisters.

> And now I see her again, two of her, waving, and in one hand
> there is a photo, the Polaroid I sent them. As soon as I get beyond
> the gate, we run toward each other, all three of us embracing, all hesitations
> and expectations forgotten.
> "Mama, Mama," we all murmur, as if she is among us.
> My sisters look at me, proudly. "Meimei jandale," says
> one sister proudly to the other. "Little Sister has grown up."
> I look at their faces again and I see no trace of my mother in them.
> Yet they still look familiar. And now I also see what part of me is
> Chinese. It is so obvious. It is my family. It is in our blood.
> After all these years, it can finally be let go. (331)

Jing-mei's quest is complete. Through community her mother is revealed. Her father captures the moment with a Polaroid and the sisters "watch quietly together, eager to see what develops" (331).

> Together we look like our mother. Her same eyes, her
> same mouth, open in surprise to see, at last, her long-
> cherished wish. (332)

The mother is within them and lives through their lives and stories. The Joy Luck Club has ensured her memory will not be forgotten.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION OR A BEGINNING?

> I suspect that female narratives will be found where women exchange stories, where they read and talk collectively of ambitions, and possibilities and accomplishments.
>
> Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Writing A Woman's Life*

"RE"VIEW

I began this dissertation/journey in the hopes of gaining insight into the female journey. The chronotope, as a unit of analysis, focused me effectively upon women's use of time and space. I specifically examined, though there are a multitude of chronotopes, the authors' use of everyday time, biographical time, and historical time. Future studies will need to incorporate additional chronotopes, specifically collective time, if the dialogue is to continue. In addition, the female *Bildungsroman* pool of texts examined through chronotope needs to be expanded if cross-cultural comparisons are to be introduced into the theoretical debate.

A search of available research reveals, to date, no texts pertaining to chronotope and the female journey or the female *Bildungsroman*. However, a great deal of research is available on the female journey or the female *Bildungsroman*. I refer the reader to Laura Sue Fuderer's annotated bibliography of criticism titled, *The Female Bildungsroman in*

English (1990). Her text effectively compiles the research available through books, chapters in books, articles in periodicals and dissertations. It serves as a springboard for those interested in further reading concerning the female *Bildungsroman*.

In contrast, less information is available on chronotope and the literature available is primarily an analysis of Bakhtin's work. However, as a unit of analysis, it has been applied to other types of literature. For example, in one instance it is applied to children's literature by M. Mackey in an essay titled, "Ramona The Chronotope, The Young Reader And Social Theories Of Narrative." Its impact upon female consciousness has yet to be explored.

The novels examined, in this text, of four women writers, each from a different cultural background, have been examined for their use of chronotope. The four novels - Kim Chernin's *In My Mother's House: A Daughter's Story* (1983), Christina Garcia's *Dreaming In Cuban* (1992), Laura Esquivel's *Like Water For Chocolate* (1992) and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) - effectively utilize everyday time, biographical time and historical time. Consequently it is possible, due to their similarities, to draw conclusions, limited in scope, as to the contribution chronotope analysis brings to the study of the female *Bildungsroman*/journey/myth.

I return to the role of myth before proceeding to the use of chronotopes in the novels, elaborated upon in chapter one. Joseph Campbell in his text, *Myths To Live By* (1972), notes "man's" consciousness of "himself" and his unique awareness that "he, and all that he cares for, will one day die" (20). He goes on to state,

> This recognition of mortality and the requirement to transcend

> it is the first great impulse to mythology. And along with this there runs another realization; namely, that the social group into which the individual has been borne, which nourishes and protects him and which, for the greater part of his life, he must himself help to nourish and protect, was flourishing long before his own birth and will remain when he is gone. (20)

Thus myths enable individuals to integrate their society and provide members of the community with a sense of historical time. However, Campbell notes, the hero-cycle of the modern age collapses the social group. "The social unit is not a carrier of religious content, but an economic-political organization . . . in hard and unremitting competition for material supremacy and resources" (*The Hero With A Thousand Faces* 387).

> The problem of mankind today, therefore, is precisely the opposite to that of men in the comparatively stable periods of those great co-ordinating mythologies which now are known as lies. Then all meaning was in the group, in the great anonymous forms, none in the self-expressive individual; today no meaning is in the group - none in the world: all is in the individual. (The Hero With A Thousand Faces 388)

Campbell wrote these words in 1949 and they are applicable today. With the advent of modern individualism the community lost its meaning. The male *Bildungsroman* exemplifies individualism as it concerns the development of a single male protagonist. The initial female *Bildungsroman* imitated the male pattern. It concerned itself with the development of a single female protagonist. Yet, the formal pattern of the European (male) *Bildungsroman* proved to be "inadequate as a vehicle for portraying the reality of a woman who, from her earliest years, is aware of herself living a number of lives simultaneously" ("*The Female* Bildungsroman *in Commonwealth Literature*" 260-261). Consequently, the form changed due to the "recognition of the duality of women's existence: the self and the social role" ("*The Female* Bildungsroman *in Commonwealth*

Literature" 261).

Women's journeys incorporate their roles as daughters, mothers, lovers and friends. Their journeying is a collaborative endeavor. Thus, in the female *Bildungsroman*, community still maintains meaning. The four novels examined emphasize the number of lives connected to a life. The reader can note similarities in their stories. However, there are also apparent differences. According to Campbell, mythology recognizes the "unity" of our species, and the "differentiation" of our species. For example, "Not only does all mankind face death, but the various peoples of the world face death in greatly differing ways. A cross-cultural survey of the mythologies of mankind, consequently, will have to note not only universals but also the transformations of those common themes in the ranges of their occurrence" (*Myths To Live By* 21). Campbell notes the differentiation of species, but not of gender. Traditionally, males have been the constructors of myth. It is their "his"story that has defined time and space.

Anne Valley-Fox recalls a meeting with Joseph Campbell in 1972 in her co-authored text with Sam Keen titled, *Your Mythic Journey* (1973).

> . . . he spoke with us of the danger and bliss of the hero's journey. I was twenty-five at the time, still reveling in the aftershocks of the 1960s in America - socially disillusioned, yet expecting somehow to stun the world through my personal brilliance. So I asked Campbell how it was that the hero was so often cast in masculine form. Surely women are heroic, too? He didn't respond by narrating, as I had hoped, any of the hundreds of myths at his fingertips featuring intrepid females. What he did say caused everything else we spoke of that day to fall out of my memory. He said that he and his wife, Jean, had chosen not to have children because their life's work was already cut out for them. But most women are set inexorably on the heroic path through childbirth and the challenge of maternity. (xx)

At the time Anne "refused" to think of herself as "most women." Yet, she now states, twenty years later, "I am, as Joseph Campbell prescribed it, a woman among women, surrounded by mate, children, friends, and world peoples journeying together some distance down a road" (*Your Mythic Journey* xxi). Campbell's vision of women's journeys is prescriptively narrow. His words indicate maternity as the heroine's journey and though I concur it is a challenge, to simplify it to this role alone ignores the complexity of the journey and the alternative journeys. In contrast, Anne Valley-Fox's definition of self as "a woman among women" rings true. There is an openness in her definition that allows space for the differentiation of race, color, class and choice.

Campbell was a product of his time. The myths he examined were primarily products of patriarchal cultures as is indicated by the male hero and though he allows for cultural differences, he avoids the differences of gender in the construction of myths. Yet, to be fair, the myths bequeathed to us by tradition were in all probability told, then written, by men. The advent of women writers allows space for the construction of alternative myths and a "re"telling of myths heretofore conveyed through oral story.

Julia Kristeva's essay, "Women's Time," notes the possibilities of these "recent productions by women, the symptom is there - women are writing, and the air is heavy with expectation: What will they write, that is new?" (*The Kristeva Reader* 207). The authors examined in this text offer new myths. They attempt to give voice to the voices left mute by "his"story. Within each text, multiple journeys are conveyed and given recognition. The journey of motherhood is recognized in each novel, but not all the protagonists choose this journey. Nor is their journey totally defined by this choice.

Toril Moi, editor of *The Kristeva Reader* (1986), summarizes Kristeva's distinction between two generations of feminists and the emergence of a new generation.

> . . . the first wave of egalitarian feminists demanding equal rights with men or, in other words, their right to a place in linear time, and the second generation, emerging after 1968, which emphasized women's radical difference from men and demanded women's right to remain outside the linear time of history and politics. . .
>
> A new generation of feminists is now emerging, however, a generation which will have to confront the task of reconciling maternal time (motherhood) with linear (political and historical) time. . . The new generation, or more accurately the corporeal and desiring mental space now available to women is one that advocates the parallel existence or the intermingling of all three approaches to feminism, all three concepts of time within the same historical moment. Presupposing as it does the deconstruction of the concept of 'identity', this demand opens up a space where individual difference is allowed free play. (*The Kristeva Reader* 187)

I suggest that Tan, Chernin, Garcia and Esquivel, in their texts, are attempting to deconstruct the concept of identity and through their use of chronotope "re"construct a "her"story that provides space for the "parallel existence or the intermingling" of stories/journeys/myths. Their texts are attempts to transform the female myth by recognizing the complexity of the female experience.

EVERYDAY TIME

Everyday time is recognized in each of the four texts. In this chronotope the personal lives of the women are revealed through their inner and outer dialogue. This chronotope recognizes the repetition of their days, the time that is spent in the preparation of food, the maintenance of a household and the caring of others in their lives. Tan and Esquivel particularly note the time spent in the kitchen and the revealing dialogue that emerges in this setting.

> "Now we're alone in the kitchen, so go ahead and cry, my child, because I don't want them to see you crying tomorrow." (*Like Water For Chocolate* 27)

The chronotope of everyday time offers personal space for the protagonists to reveal their emotions, thoughts, and personal lives. In addition, it allows the reader to witness their tears, laughter, pain and joy.

> My father hasn't eaten well since my mother died. So I am here, in the kitchen, to cook him dinner. I'm slicing tofu. I've decided to make him a spicy bean-curd dish. My mother used to tell me how hot things restore the spirit and health. But I'm making this mostly because I know my father loves this dish and I know how to cook it. (*The Joy Luck Club* 236)

Women's lives are filled with the preparation of food and the care of others. In these few words Tan captures, in everyday time, a familiar act of the female experience. However, there are moments when this chronotope offers only the repetition and monotony of the moment.

> She finishes chopping the onions and stirs them in a frying pan with a teaspoon of lard. They turn a golden yellow, translucent and sweet. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 48)

Yet, it is within these moments of repetition and monotony the space is provided for personal affiliations and the telling of stories.

Everyday time initiates women to the myths/stories of "her"story. The four novels use this space and time to convey family mythologies. The myths provided, in this space and time, connect the young to the stories of the past and enable them, through repetition, to internalize the words until they are part of their being. Note, the ability of Kim Chernin's daughter, a second generation American, to translate her grandmother's song.

> My mother reaches up for a pillow and puts it under Larissa's head. "Ticha smotret mesyats yasni," she sings. And Larissa says, "I know what it means. The bright moon looks on quietly." (*In My Mother's House* 305)

The daughters or granddaughters, in each story, are able to convey their mothers' stories. They acquire the stories/myths of "her"story while watching their mothers make beds, wash laundry and dishes, cut vegetables and cook meals.

In addition, the authors of these texts utilize this space and time to convey a female gaze. The reader and the heroines are able to perceive the daily, incessant, and mundane acts of women as heroic.

> They often made enormous batches of jam, using whatever fruit was in season, which they cooked in a huge copper saucepan on the patio. The pan was set up over a fire, and they had to cover their arms with old sheets to stir the marmalade. This prevented the bubbles from boiling up and burning their skin. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 29)

or

> Milagro touches a blister on her grandmother's palm. Celia displays her hands, marred by cuts and callouses. Her granddaughters explore the scarred terrain. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 46)

The physical stamina required of women in the maintenance of a household is recognized and consequently, as it is given voice space, celebrated. Each text, through the female gaze, recognizes the value of these acts.

> Now she is telling us, as the blanket flaps up into the air, and, laughing, we take hold of the corners and spread it out, the way the world is ordered by these smoothings and tuckings. The way, as I remind her, I needed her there at night when I was a child because no one else could tuck me in tightly enough. How, when she was arrested during the McCarthy time and went to jail, it seemed that my father, no matter how hard he tried, could

> not make the bed covers smooth, and could not braid my hair so that the braids were tight enough. The way, without her, things always seemed to come undone. (*In My Mother's House* 29)

It is during this everyday time that the daughters are trained in the traditional tasks of women. In this space and time, they acquire the knowledge necessary to maintain the status quo.

> Now we pull the corners taut and slip them under the mattress. My mother passes her hand over the blanket and I recall how much I loved this gesture when I was a girl, believing it made sleep possible and kept it peaceful. (*In My Mother's House* 29)

The acts of women are crucial in the daily existence of life and the maintenance of consistency. The reader knows innately that Kim makes a similar gesture during the act of making a bed with her daughter.

Everyday time provides the space for the transmission of culture. Esquivel emphasizes the transmission of culture through the motif of recipes, each chapter relays a recipe and a story.

CHAPTER NINE

SEPTEMBER

Chocolate and Three Kings' Day Bread

INGREDIENTS FOR THE CHOCOLATE:

2 pounds Soconusco chocolate beans

2 pounds Maracibo chocolate beans

2 pounds Caracas chocolate beans

4 to 6 pounds sugar, to taste

Esquivel, through Spanish words and Mexican holidays, incorporates and transmits the Mexican culture. Tan conveys the transmission of culture through the relaying of Chinese tradition.

> "Put it back," whispered my mother. "A missing leg is a bad sign on a Chinese New Year." (*The Joy Luck Club* 225)

Culture is transmitted in Garcia's text through a folklore motif.

> . . . Celia wanders to the ceiba tree in the corner of the Plaza de las Armas. Fruit and coins are strewn by its trunk and the ground around the tree bulges with buried offerings. Celia knows that good charms and bad are hidden in the stirred earth near its sacred roots. Tia Alicia told her once that the ceiba is a saint, female and maternal. She asks the tree permission before crossing its shadow, then circles it three times and makes a wish for Felicia. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 43)

and

> Now and then she runs into Herminia Delgado carrying baskets filled with crusty roots and ratoons and fresh, healing spices for Felicia. Aniseed for hysteria. Sarsaparilla for the nerves and any remaining traces of syphilis. River fern and *espartillo* to ward off further evil. Herminia never mentions the ceiba tree, but Celia recognizes the distinct cluster of its leaves among her many herbs. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 90)

Each author, through her specific choice of motifs and the chronotope of everyday time, recognizes her unique culture. Thus, the culture is preserved in the chronotope of everyday time. Additional texts will need to be examined to determine if the motifs utilized are author specific or culture specific.

Yet, if everyday time enables women to preserve and maintain culture, it also offers the space and time for the teaching of resistance and acts of resistance. For example, Pilar's painting is an act of resistance.

> I suppose I'm guilty in my own way of a creative transformation or two. Like my painting of the Statue of Liberty that caused such a a commotion at the Yankee Doodle Bakery. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 177)

Tita offers an active form of resistance with her experimentation of recipes.

> Tita was never able to convince her that she had only added one extra ingredient to the cake, the tears she had shed while preparing it. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 39)

Kim is taught resistance, in the everyday chronotope, through a more organized and structured form of resistance/protest.

> . . . I remember my carriage. My mother, walking behind me, pushing. I am folding blue papers. "Hold tight," she says, "don't let them go." We come to a place. There are mothers pushing. Children, holding blue papers in their hands. "Look," my mother says, "there they are." And then all of us, the children and the mothers, walk around and around in a big circle. The mothers are singing and they are carrying signs. (*In My Mother's House* 204-205)

Rose Hsu Jordan is taught resistance through allegory.

> . . . for thousands of years birds had been tormenting the peasants. They flocked to watch peasants bent over in the field bent over in the field, digging the hard dirt, crying into the furrows to water the seeds. And when the people stood up, the birds would fly down and drink the tears and eat the seeds. So children starved.
>
> But one day, all these tired peasants - from all over China - they gathered in fields everywhere . . . And they said, "Enough of this suffering and silence?" They began to clap their hands, and bang sticks on pots and pans and shout, "Sz! Sz! Sz!" - Die! Die! Die! (*The Joy Luck Club* 272-273)

Rose's challenge, the challenge of all the protagonists in the texts, is the decoding of her mother's meaning. She must apply the lessons learned in everyday time to her biographical chronotope.

In conclusion, everyday time provides the space for the telling of story. In this

chronotope, "her" stories are given voice space. Women transmit culture as well as resistance through their stories and acts. Yet, through the female gaze, their daily struggle is recognized as heroic. Tan, Garcia, Esquivel and Chernin recognize the crucial role of everyday time and effectively utilize it to convey their stories/myths.

BIOGRAPHICAL TIME

Biographical time is utilized by the authors to convey the protagonists' life spans and the life changing events that impact their lives. It is interesting to note the similar life experiences offered voice space in each novel. Each author has at least one character relay the birth of her spiritual and/or biological daughter.

> I don't know what caused me to change. Maybe it was my crooked nose that damaged my thinking. Maybe it was seeing you as a baby, how you looked so much like me, and this made me dissatisfied with my life. (*The Joy Luck Club* 303)

and

> I knew that I had been born quickly and that my mother had not cried out. I, too, wanted to be brave, but the baby had its head in the wrong position, the delivery was slow and long and painful . . . I had the overwhelming feeling that I was at the hub of the world. I knew that God existed, tears were pouring down my face, my pain seemed transfigured and I wept because I knew that I was giving birth to my new self. (*In My Mother's House* 288-289)

and

> I've named my new baby Felicia. Jorge says I'm dooming her. She's beautiful and fat with green eyes that fix on me disarmingly. I'll be a good mother this time. Felicia loves the sea. Her skin is translucent, much like the fish that feed along the reefs. I read her poetry on the porch swing. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 52)

and

> She chose instead to provide Esperanza with the same diet Nacha had used with her when she was a tiny baby: gruels and teas.
>
> She was baptized Esperanza at Tita's request. Pedro had insisted that the child should be given the same name as Tita, Josefita. But Tita refused to hear of it. She didn't want her name to influence the child's destiny. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 142)

The advent of the next generation forces the women to reflect upon their past and present lives and envision an alternative journey for their daughters. The birth of a child transforms a woman's identity of self and has monumental consequences. Adrienne Rich's text, *Of Woman Born* (1976), indicates the potential interruption a child can create in a woman's life, "The mothers: collecting their children at school, sitting in rows at the parent-teacher meeting; placating weary infants in supermarket carriages . . . wakened by a child's cry from their eternally unfinished dreams . . ." (280). Rich's examples are noticeably culturally biased. Yet, each author notes the unfinished dreams interrupted by the experience of motherhood and provide them voice space in the biographical chronotope.

> . . . "In America I will have a daughter just like me. But over there nobody will say her worth is measured by the loudness of her husband's belch." (*The Joy Luck Club* 3)

and

> I look at you. I think about my mother. I think, perhaps in you her great spirit has another chance at life. (*In My Mother's House* 180)

and

> If she had a girl, Celia decided, she would stay. She would not abandon a daughter to this life, but train her to read the columns of blood and numbers in men's eyes, to understand the morphology of survival. Her daughter, too, would outlast the hard flames. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 42)

and

> "There's one thing for sure. I'm not going to allow you to poison your daughter with those sick ideas you have in your head. I'm not going to let you ruin her life either, forcing her to follow some stupid tradition!" (*Like Water For Chocolate* 209)

The unfinished, aborted, and/or unspoken dreams are given voice. The mother, spiritual or biological, becomes awake to her place in her daughter's story.

In addition, in the biographical chronotope, the dreams of the mothers and grandmothers are transferred to the daughters . The biographical chronotope provides the time and space for the characters to experience a sense of generation and thus a sense of continuity. They awake to the possibilities that are open to the next generation. Their mothers' stories hold more meaning and a distance is gained that is not possible in everyday time.

> "O!" Hwai dungsyi" - You bad little thing - said the woman, teasing her baby granddaughter. "Is Buddha teaching you to laugh for no reason?" As the baby continued to gurgle, the woman felt a deep wish stirring in her heart.
>
> "Even if I could live forever," she said to the baby, "I still don't know which way I would teach you. I was once so free and innocent. I too laughed for no reason.
>
> "But later I threw away my foolish innocence to protect myself. And then I taught my daughter, your mother to shed her innocence so she would not be hurt as well . . .
>
> The baby laughed, listening to her grandmother's laments.
>
> "O! O! You say you are laughing because you have already lived forever, over and over again? You say you are Syi Wang Mu, Queen Mother of the Western Skies, now come back to give me the answer! Good, good, I am listening . . .
>
> "Thank you, Little Queen. Then you must teach my daughter this same lesson. How to lose your innocence but not your hope. How to laugh forever." (*The Joy Luck Club* 239)

Biographical time connects the generations across time and space. Adrienne Rich infers in

her text, *Of Woman Born* (1976), the necessity of this experience. "Until a strong line of love, confirmation, and examples stretches from mother to daughter, from woman to woman across the generations, women will still be wandering in the wilderness" (246).

The consciousness or awakening of self to generational history provides a seed/embryo of historical time. The impact of generation recognition is particularly evident by three of the authors' dedications.

> To my mother
> and the memory of her mother.
> (*The Joy Luck Club*)

> For my mother, Rose Chernin
> For her mother, Perle Chernin
> And for my daughter, Larissa Chernin
> (*In My Mother's House*)

> For my grandmother,
> and for Scott
> (*Dreaming In Cuban*)

They cannot write a woman's life or women's lives without recognizing those that went before them in "her"story. Their dedications indicate the impact their mothers and grandmothers had upon their imagining of possibilities and alternative journeys/myths.

Historical context, the specific time period of the protagonist, is provided space and time in the biographical chronotope. Each author, reveals through the characters and biographical time, the political events impacting their lives and the lives of those they love.

> Two young soldiers were pointing their rifles at Rufino. His hands circled nervously in the air. She jumped from her horse and stood like a shield before her husband. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 70)

and

> The threat of the revolution hung over them, bringing famine and death in its wake. But for those few moments they all seemed determined to forget the bullets flying in the village. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 78)

and

> I sat in the dark corners of my house with a baby under each arm, waiting with nervous feet. When the sirens cried out to warn us of bombers, my neighbors and I jumped to our feet and scurried to the deep caves to hide like wild animals. (*The Joy Luck Club* 9)

and

> When I was a girl we lived with my grandfather in a town called Chasnik, in the Russian Pale of Settlement. What was the Pale? It was the area, inside greater Russia, where the czar made Jews live. If there were Jews who wanted to live or to work in any area outside the Pale, they had to get a special permit. (*In My Mother's House* 19)

Their biographical lives are impacted by the events of the world, just as their mothers before them. Consequently, the ideologies and beliefs offered in this space in time directly reflect their perception of the world and their interaction with the world.

> Reform, not punishment, is her modus operandi, and Celia has succeeded in converting many young delinquents into productive revolutionaries. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 112)

and

> Tita held her and comforted her as she had every night since her return. She couldn't see any way to draw Chencha out of her depression, to dissuade her from the belief that no one would marry her after the violent attack she had suffered at the hands of the bandits. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 131)

and

> My mother, she suffered. She lost her face and tried to hide it. She found only greater misery and finally could not hide that.

> There is nothing more to understand. That was China. That was what people did back then. They had no choice. They could not speak up. They could not run away. That was their fate. (*The Joy Luck Club* 272)

and

> "In 1950," she repeats . . . "I founded an organization to protect the people arrested for deportation. It was called the Los Angeles Committee for the Protection of the Foreign-Born." (*In My Mother's House* 210)

Rose Chernin's life is impacted by the fact she is a Jew and a Russian immigrant. In addition, the rise of communism and capitalism affect her biographical chronotope. Just as they affect Celia del Pino, an ocean away in physical space. The women, through biographical time, are provided the space to testify to the monumental moments in their lives and to bear witness to their lives and their time era. Additional texts need to be examined, as to the historical events shaping women's biographical chronotope, before cross-cultural distinctions can be determined.

I noted the monumental moment of childbirth earlier in this section. In addition to childbirth, the women in the texts note their marriages, the loss of their mothers, the aging process and their acts of resistance. Each author, through the biographical chronotope, offers her protagonists' individual stories as a possibility, one script among many. Thus, their lives provide the reader a model/script of one possibility among multiple possibilities. Carolyn Heilbrun in her text, *Writing A Woman's Life* (1988), notes the potential power one life can inscribe upon the female imagination. She notes, specifically, her fictional character, Kate Fansler.

> Her beauty was the only attribute I regretted bestowing, and age has

> tempered that, although, unlike her creator, she is still a fantasy figure in being eternally slim. But most important, she has become braver as she has aged, less interested in the opinions of those she does not cherish, and has come to realize that she has little to lose, little any longer to risk, that age above all, both for those with children and those without them, is the time when there is very little "they" can do for you, very little reason to fear, or hide, or not attempt brave and important things. Lear said, "I will do such things, what they are yet I know not, but they shall be the terrors of the earth." He said this in impotent rage in his old age, but Kate Fansler has taught me to say it in the bravery and power of age. (123)

Tan, Garcia, Esquivel and Chernin, through the biographical chronotope, are offering the time and space for women to tell their individual stories of bravery.

HISTORICAL TIME

The texts discussed in this study are dominated by the historical chronotope. "Within the limits of a single work and within the total literary output of a single author we may notice a number of different chronotopes and complex interactions among them, specific to the given work or author; it is common moreover for one of these chronotopes to envelop or dominate the others" ("Forms of Time And Of The Chronotope In The Novel" 252). The authors, through historical time, are given the space for historical perspective. The individual's context in history is given new meaning when layered upon the personal and historical context of others. The multiple "her"stories add a complexity and depth not available in biographical time. Patterns are revealed, patterns too great in scope to be recognized through a family mythology. "All history is encamped about us and all history sets forth again from us" (The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism" 40).

The reader, in historical time, gains the perspective to see the complex interaction

among the stories and the chronotopes. Consequently, she can envision/perceive choices beyond the family myths. Kristeva's use of 'generation' indicates the potential power, offered through historical time, of such a vision.

> My usage of the word 'generation' implies less a chronology than a signifying space, a both corporeal and desiring mental space. So it can be argued that as of now a third attitude is possible, thus a third generation, which does not exclude - quite to the contrary - the parallel existence of all three in the same historical time, or even that they be interwoven one with the other. ("Women's Time" 209)

The texts, through historical time, offer space for the dialogue between possible journeys/identities. The women are given, through historical time, the voice space to explain their choices, to tell their stories, share their dreams and engage in a dialogue not possible in any other space. Carolyn G. Heilbrun's text, *Hamlet's Mother And Other Women* (1990), indicates the power of women's words/stories.

> In the old myths, weaving was women's speech, women's language, women's story. Of all human accomplishment, Freud granted woman only the invention of weaving: an art, he conjectured, they had devised to conceal their genital deficiencies. But the old stories confirm that women wove, not to conceal, but to reveal, to engage, to counter male violence. For this they are punished, but not before "the voice of the shuttle" had been heard, if only to be silenced again. Women's weaving was women's answer to their enforced silence about their own condition, their own mutilation. (120)

Tan, Garcia, Esquivel and Chernin are weaving. They are weaving words. Their texts cannot be silenced. Heilbrun goes on to state,

> It is, of course, ironic that Freud's annoying question of what women want must still haunt us. It is not a question we can answer, because we cannot tell stories we have never heard. We women today who have entered the public sphere exist there in a state of intermittent anxiety and pain. Nor is it possible to foretell the source

> of the pain or the pattern it will follow. When women have had their stories written for them, played out their destinies toward marriage or death, they knew the pain that might follow: the first penetration; childbirth; rejection; aging; the suffering of one's children; the diverted attention of one's husband; the rending away from women whose place, like one's own, changed at the behest of male relatives. Pain is not easier for having been suffered before in the same way, but it is more bearable for having been narrated. That, indeed, is the chief source of patriarchal power: that it is embodied in unquestioned narratives. (127)

The authors examined in this text question the narratives of patriarchy in their "re"construction of stories. They provide story space for past, present and future women. In addition, they provide the reader the space to piece together new stories. They recognize new journeys.

Historical time allows the reader to go beyond the biographical chronotope of an individual and perceive the multiple choices available beyond the marriage plot. For example, in Laura Esquivel's text, each of the three sisters chooses a different path. Tita chooses against marriage but incorporates a passionate life-long love affair into her life. Rosaura chooses a loveless marriage and motherhood. Gertrudis chooses to become a *general* in the army and ultimately settles for a career and a passionate and childless marriage. In addition, Esquivel reveals through Gertrudis' recipe of birth control the possibility of choice in the matter of motherhood, yet reveals through Rosaura's life the lack of choice available to some women. Esquivel does not just offer the choices of the Dela Garzas. She reveals, through historical time, the choices of Tita's great-niece and John's grandmother, "a Kikapu Indian who John's grandfather had captured and brought back to live with him, far from her tribe" (*Like Water For Chocolate* 107). It is the story of John's grandmother, Morning Light, that enables Tita to heal and "re"create her story.

> She stayed with the woman for a little while. The woman didn't speak either, but it wasn't necessary. From the first, they had established a communication that went far beyond words. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 106)

The dialogue between these two stories is possible only in historical time. Morning Light is not a "biological" ancestor. She would not be incorporated into the traditional biographical time of a biography or autobiography. Nor, due to her death, would it be possible for them to meet in everyday time. Yet, through historical time, her story is shared and interwoven into Tita's vision of possibility.

> . . . each of us is born with a box of matches inside us but we can't strike them all by ourselves; just as in the experiment, we need oxygen and a candle to help . . . Each person has to discover what will set off those explosions in order to live, since the combustion that occurs when one of them is ignited is what nourishes the soul. (*Like Water For Chocolate* 112)

Esquivel's words could easily be applied to the female journey and the awakening of the female consciousness. Each woman must discover her own journey, "Each person has to discover what will set off those explosions in order to live." The stories of other women through historical time provide the "oxygen" and light necessary to ignite our own journeys.

Bakhtin notes in historical time, "One sees the *essential* and *necessary* character of man's historical activity" (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism 38). In each of the examined texts, the stories of the women are revealed as *essential* and *necessary* in the search for identity. He goes on to state,

> Goethe cannot and will not see or conceive of any locality, any natural landscape, as an abstract thing, for the sake of its self-sufficient naturalness, as it were. It must be illuminated

> by human activity and historical events. A piece of the earth's space must be incorporated into the history of humanity. Outside the history it is lifeless and incomprehensible, and nothing can be done with it. But, conversely, nothing can be done with the historical event, with the abstract historical recollection, if it is not localized in terrestrial space, if one does not understand (does not see) the necessity of its occurrence at a particular time and in a particular place. (The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism 38)

Women's stories illuminate their activities and historical events. There are no aqueducts or pyramids to note the necessity of their actions. Their necessary actions, cooking, washing, cleaning, sewing, giving birth, caring for the young, ill and elderly, leave no trace upon a "piece of the earth's space." Thus, without their stories their "her"story is lifeless and incomprehensible." Yet, through stories, the homes that were burned, as in Esquivel's text, or left behind in another country, as in the texts by Garcia, Tan and Chernin, are saturated with time. Consequently, the women's achievements are "localized in terrestrial space" and the necessity of their acts "at a particular time and in a particular place" are revealed. Their stories "incorporate" them into "his"story and create a "her"story.

Finally, Bakhtin notes historical time includes the fullness of the future ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 42). Tan, Chernin, Garcia, and Esquivel offer visions of possibilities. The future is open. Each novel includes a generation yet to be fully lived. Yet these women of the future possess what their predecessors did not possess. They are enriched with stories and a past. They have acquired a consciousness of "her"story. Bakhtin cites Goethe's *Italian Journey* to emphasize the inclusion of the future in historical time.

> The observation that all greatness is transitory should not make

> us despair; on the contrary, the realization that the past was great should stimulate us to create something of consequence ourselves, which, even when, in its turn, it has fallen in ruins, may continue to inspire our descendants to a noble activity such as our ancestors never lacked. ("The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism" 41)

The heroines, in each of these texts, by "re"discovering the past and its stories realize their potential/possibilities. They are inspired to continue the journey and through their self discovery they contribute to their inheritance of a legacy of consciousness. They create new stories interwoven with those of the past and construct new possibilities for those who are to follow.

DIFFERENCES FOR FUTURE INVESTIGATION

It becomes clear that the authors of each text examined and employed the everyday, biographical and historical chronotope. However, not one of the texts resorts to the traditional *Bildungsroman* formula. The format is modified to recognize and reflect the diverse barriers to a woman's self-discovery. Each text offers several journeys. In addition, the journeys vary according to each heroine and her particular set of circumstances. Thus they provide the reader not so much a clear definition of self-discovery or a woman's journey but rather a penetrating examination of the obstacles - familial, cultural, racial, sexual, intellectual, and political - incorporated into their journeys.

A noticeable difference between the texts is the struggle of the heroines with language. Their struggle with language appears to be directly proportional to their generational distance from the homeland of their ancestors. Esquivel's heroines never deal with immigration. Her text, originally written in Spanish, takes place in Mexico and the

generations remain in Mexico. Thus, her heroines are not actively searching for a lost language but rather attempting to recognize in their cooking a language void of words. Chernin's heroine, Kim, is three generations removed from immigration. She interweaves a motif of language but primarily incorporates Russian words, phrases, and poems into her stories. The words are liturgical and have been passed down with a translation. Tan's heroine, Jing-mei Woo, is a generation removed from immigration. She has yet to translate the words of her mother. The meaning of Chinese words elude her and she is actively engaged in a translation that will give meaning to her life. Finally, Garcia's heroine, Pilar is an immigrant and mourns the loss of her language. Intimacy eludes her in this foreign country due to the loss of language and she is actively engaged in the pain/violence of assimilation. Additional texts will need to be examined in order to note if the search/use of language in time and space is directly proportional to the heroine's generational distance from her ancestral homeland.

Only Tan's text, of the four texts, actively envisions a community beyond family blood lines. Only in *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), though all texts include stories of women outside the family, is the reader exposed to a vision of community larger than blood family. However, Chernin and Garcia do note a collective vision via communism. Their visions fall short of providing a specific model of community. Cross-cultural comparisons are needed in order to note if the employment of time and space in this vision of community is unique to certain cultures.

> The abundant poetic, dramatic, and novelistic gestures of family devotion, be it biological or cultural, demonstrate some consensual movement toward the end of Chinese American

> literary reconstruction. The filiative tribute to ancestors and the affiliative effort at community building interact to claim both historical anchorage and present legitimacy for the ethnic entity. What appear at first glance as separate textual maneuvers have, in fact, constituted a nourishing dialogue, ensuring the continuity and contemporaneity of Chinese American expression. (*Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature* 198)

David Leiwei Li's words indicate a potential pattern, but the chronotope as a unit of analysis has yet to be applied to the texts he notes in his essay, "Filiative and Affiliative Textualization in Chinese American Literature." In addition, it has yet to be applied to texts beyond the four examined in this essay. Noticeably lacking in this text is a female journey by an African American author. If cultural heritage impacts the vision of community, it could be that the examination of African American literature would add another dimension to this dialogue as historically African Americans were forced to create communities, due to slavery, beyond family blood lines. Furthermore, this text lacks a female journey by a Native American. I am wondering if tribe affiliation would impact perceptions of community and family.

Finally, Garcia's text appears to be substantially different in its concept, structure and execution of chronotope. I have already mentioned Pilar's struggle with language as an immigrant. However, she faces additional layers of complexity. First, the women in Garcia's text are geographically separated. It is physically impossible for Pilar to consistently experience everyday time with her grandmother. Nor, is she able to witness certain aspects of her grandmother's biographical chronotope, for example, aging. Consequently, Garcia interweaves motifs of additional chronotopes to emphasize their

geographical, cultural and ideological separation. For example, Garcia's use of a collective time motif enables Celia the time and space necessary to convey the impact of the era on her biographical chronotope. However, through a fantasy time motif, Celia is provided the space and time to give voice to private aspects of her biographical chronotope. In addition, Garcia's use of a folkloric chronotopic motif enables her to bridge the geographical distance. Celia and Pilar speak to one another over the ocean.

> I might be afraid of her if it weren't for those talks I have with Abuela Celia late at night. She tells me that my mother is sad inside and that her anger is more frustration at what she can't change. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 63)

or

> For many years, Celia spoke to Pilar during the darkest part of the night, but then their connection suddenly died. Celia understands now that a cycle between them had ended, and a new one had not yet begun. (*Dreaming In Cuban* 119)

Garcia's use of a folkloric time motif enables a transference of stories. Additional texts of the female *Bildungsroman* whose heroines are separated geographically and divided ideologically from their mothers and grandmothers due to migration need to be examined. Specific attention should be given to the implementations of chronotopic motifs by authors to deal with the transference of stories across geographical distance.

Thus, I end this text with questions. The journey continues. The quest continues. Carolyn Heilbrun states,

> Why do I say Penelope is without a story? Because all women, having been restricted to only one plot, are without story. In literature and out, through all recorded history, women have lived by a script they did not write. Their destiny was to be married, circulated; to be given by one man,

> the father, to another, the husband; to become the mothers of men. Theirs has been the marriage plot, the erotic plot, the courtship plot, but never, as for men, the quest plot. Women have been tempted into romantic thralldom, and then married, like the heroines of our great novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or like the heroines of Harlequin romances. Their story was over. (*Hamlet's Mother And Other Women* 126)

Given the gender of the author of Penelope's story, Heilbrun's words raise another possible investigation: the exploration of chronotopes in male generated stories of women's journeys. However, I quote her here not for possible future investigations but rather to point out that the story is far from over. In fact, the stories are just beginning to be constructed and women's use of time and space is a crucial element in understanding the possibilities of the future. An individual's perception of time and space can change one's view of self - say, from the role of enduring victim to the role of active participant. Texts, such as the ones explored in this dissertation have the potential to dramatically change women's view of self.

New destinies/plots are emerging as the world emerges. The use of chronotope by Esquivel, Garcia, Tan and Chernin illustrates the impact of time and space in a woman's journey. The actions of the protagonists in their texts may appear, at times, stereotypic. Yet, through historical time the reader is able to recognize the complexity of the female journey. The journeys of their foremothers, as well as their own journeys, are impacted by race, culture, era and socio-economic status. Consequently, the activities and dialogues within a chronotope vary according to the story. For example, in Garcia's text, the protagonist Celia spends a portion of her everyday time guarding the boarders of Cuba against possible aggressors. In contrast, her granddaughter, Pilar spends a portion of her

everyday time expanding her boundaries through her painting. The reader can only imagine the activities that will occur in the everyday time of Pilar's granddaughter.

Women are molded by their environment but also mold their environment. Historical time recognizes the relationship between the individual and the world. Chronotope analysis, in the female journey, awakens the reader to the fact that the sacrifices of the past are directly connected to the possibilities of the future. The stories of our foremothers, when perceived through historical time, provide us with a rich "her"story and offer more than one plot. There is no one female journey. There are many female journeys. Each separate journey, in all its complexity, is a gift to the past, present and future. Acknowledging the relationship between past, present and future journeys is crucial if a "her"story is to be constructed and celebrated.

PostScript

I have acquired a consciousness of time that I did not possess at the start of this journey. I am awake to the moments in everyday time when my daughters are acquiring stories and/or I am acquiring stories. I am awake and more reflective upon the choices/scripts I provide them through my biographical time and space. Finally, I am awake to the necessity of historical time if a legacy of "her"story is to be continued. Literature provides my daughters more possibilities than I can possibly offer/expose them to through family and friends. So I will continue my quest in the belief that my emergence and becoming will continue to affect their emergence and becoming. I will continue to expand my family mythology to include other women's stories because it can only provide further possibilities. I will continue and my daughters will continue after me and their daughters after them. I am the crossroads. The past leads to me and the future leads from me and it is with this knowledge that I will go on in my quest.

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