



From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature

Maria Nikolajeva

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Now available in paperback! In this radically new approach to text typology, Maria Nikolajeva examines the depiction of time in literature for children. Nikolajeva identifies a continuum of texts ranging from those that depict non-linear time, typical of archaic, or mythical, thought, to those that express linearity, typical of contemporary mainstream literature. The author argues that literature is a deconstruction, a displacement, of myth, and that it depicts a symbolic coming-of-age process rather than a strictly representational reflection of a concrete "reality." The texts are categorized by the degree to which the coming-of-age process is accomplished; the movement is from an initial condition of primary harmony (Arcadia, Paradise, Utopia) through different stages toward either a successful or a failed passage.

From Mythic to Linear is a broad study, encompassing a number of children's novels from different epochs and countries: Scandinavian, British, American, Canadian, Australian, South African, and East European. The international character contributes a better knowledge of children's literature from different parts of the world?widening the horizons of children's literature research too often confined to one particular country.

Nikolajeva's unique approach allows her to disregard the traditional, and some would argue obsolete, division of children's novels into realism and fantasy.

With its unique approach and broad international scope, *From Mythic to Linear* will be of interest to all those interested in children's literature and in comparative literature in general. Includes bibliography and footnotes.



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