A FRACTURE IN TIME
ON THE CHRONOTOPE OF COLONISATION IN A SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

Tanja Kudrjavtseva

The purpose of this article is double. Firstly, it is to demonstrate what benefits Bakhtin's notion of chronotope can give to an analysis of a text of science fiction. *The Snail on the Slope*[1] (1965), a novel by Russia's probably most known science fiction writers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, will be the object of my study. My second purpose is to point at the specific assumptions around time and space accompanying the text's colonisation motif. The notion of chronotope stems from Bakhtin's essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (1981). He is primarily concerned with what he calls "historical time", but more specifically this form of time as it is expressed in a literary text:

> The process of assimilating the real historical time and space in literature has a complicated and erratic history [...] Isolated aspects of time and space, however—those available on a given historical stage of human development—have been assimilated, and corresponding generic techniques have been devised for reflecting and artistically processing such appropriated aspects of reality.
> We will give the name chronotope (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. (1981:84)

Time consciousness changes as society changes, but it is documented in the novel's generic form, argues Bakhtin. According to him, the novel is always a mix of genres and thus preserves earlier chronotopes in a hybrid construction. An ambivalence is evident between linear historicity and this ability to preserve. This

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[1]My quotes will be mainly from this English (1980) version of the text. In cases of omission or major discrepancy, I will quote in my own translation from the Russian (1997) edition of the original.

ambivalence, I will argue, allows *The Snail on the Slope* to map the topos of *uneven development*, employed in the rhetoric of colonisation.

Science fiction is often seen as a literary effect of the colonisation history of the world. When humanity ceases to fabulate about the geographically remote regions — the colonial territories both "explored" and utilised — fictional movement in time allows for an accommodation of the fantastic spatially. Another feature that distinguishes science fiction from the earlier conceptions of the fantastic is that the fantastic elements in it have to be explained in terms of scientific innovation. Thus, Darko Suvin (1979:71) defines these elements as cognitive novelties, for which he uses the term *novum*. The rhetoric and logic of science have to be employed in order to make them plausible in the text. Though the actual innovation will probably never become possible, the promise of future scientific progress lends it credibility in the text. According to Albert Wendland 1980), it is not too far-fetched to assume that in some texts of the genre the scientific gaze now becomes the colonial. In what follows I shall argue that the specificity of *The Snail on the Slope*'s chronotope allows reflection over this neo-colonial stance.

Presentation

Suvin points out that the novum has an immediate impact on fictional time-space constellation: "... the novelty in SF can be either a new locus, or an agent (character) with new powers transforming the old locus, or a blend of both" (1979:79). According to Suvin, if a science fiction text is not to come too close to the fairy-tale marvels, the protagonist has to find a proper obstacle in the locus. This may explain why in many science fiction novels the hero's main challenge is a voyage in time-space. Bakhtin's classification of the chronotopes (1981) is well suited for an analysis of the motion of the hero's quest.

In *The Snail on the Slope*, as is characteristic of science fiction, the quest is organised around the chronotope of a *road*. The movements of the protagonists Pepper and Kandid are followed in the course of the story. Their paths never intersect, thus creating the novel's pattern of "Pepper" and "Kandid" chapters. A chronotope of the *threshold* is the corollary of the road, as thresholds are being naturally crossed during this journey. I will suggest that the chronotope of threshold is also transformed into a labyrinthine "time

space" in the text, underlining the protagonists' attempts to comprehend the novum.

Not only the novum, but the whole new locus containing it has to be made plausible for the reader in a science fiction text. Thus, Samuel Delany (1977) argues that the novum creates a fictional world on its own premises. If we are to analyse the novel artefacts in such a world along the lines of Barthes' *S/Z* , they will generate social connotations different from ours (1989). The chronotope in a science fiction text will therefore contain conceptions of time and place which characterise a whole fictive society.

In *The Snail on the Slope* the reader encounters three fictional societies. The Directorate, the first of them, is a research institution, carrying out experiments on the forest, which is the text's novum. Pepper has come to the Directorate in order to attain a permit to visit the forest. Kandid, in his turn, finds himself in the forest suffering from memory loss. He is one of the Directorate's biologists and has been found by the forest's villagers after a helicopter crash. The village is thus the second fictional society of the text.

Kandid sets out to find a way back to the Directorate. On his journey he meets the forest women[2] who apparently have found a way to biotechnologically manipulate the forest. Their world is the third fictional society in the text. Self-sufficient and governed by myth, the village brings to mind Bakhtin's *idyll* chronotope. The Directorate and the Maidens, in their turn, aim to expand their territory in the forest, and Bakhtin's chronotope of growth appears to be suited for the analysis of these two worlds' conceptions of time-space. It remains unnamed in Bakhtin, and I will in this article call it "the chronotope of expansion".

How do these chronotopes co-exist in the overall — hybrid — chronotope of the text? Coming back to Suvin's classification of the chronotopes in the genre, a fictional scientific discovery — for example Julies Verne's submarine — can transform what initially seems a realist depiction of a contemporary world, or "the old locus". Otherwise, his novum chronotopes can exemplify what Samuel Delany (1992:338) terms as typical science fiction plots: "the-future-views-the-present" or "the-alien-views-the-familiar". The first plot involves time travel between the old and the new locus, while in the

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[2] *podrugi* in Russian, "the Maidens" in the English translation.

second the aliens are typical agents possessing new, transformational powers.

The Snail on the Slope contains, however, no signs of time travel devices or of an invasion from another planet. Neither are the stages in the scientific discovery by the Maidens chronologically explained in order to make plausible the co-existence of a pastoral society with a scientifically highly advanced one. The protagonists — mobile focalisers binding the chronotopes together — nevertheless connect the worlds in terms of development. This paradox of the time-space of the novel foregrounds the idea of linear progress, implied by the notions of scientific advancement and backwardness. These notions are interconnected with the text's colonisation motif. The developed/underdeveloped binary doubles itself into culture/nature in the coloniser's rhetoric applied to the colonised as a lesser being. As I will argue, the fractured linearity of time in the text's chronotope fractures also the logic of this representation.

Suspended Motion: Road, Threshold, Labyrinth
The protagonists of *The Snail on the Slope*, driven by the forest mystery, are constantly on the move across the landscapes of either the Directorate or the village. This movement parallels the movement of the reading. New settings and new information is introduced both to the protagonists and to the reader. The chronotope of a road, in Bakhtin's (1981) definition a meeting place across social and distance differences, is actualised in its clearest form in Kandid's journey. Kandid is not content with the villagers' ignorance of the external interference with their world and sets out on a journey which might enable him to understand the novelties of the forest.

The protagonist and his companion Nava meet "deadlings" stealing women; having escaped from them they arrive in another village and witness a frightening experiment on its population. Finally they literally step onto the Maidenian track. Meeting the Maidens makes Kandid realise that they are the ones in power in this forest world and responsible for the above events. The road is a chronotope going across thresholds, here between the village and the Maidenian forest. It appears therefore also to be a form of the chronotope of expansion: the perspective of the protagonist, and finally his knowledge are expanded. In this way it parallels the

movement of reading, which is however not linear, as I will argue in the following.

The threshold line of forest between the Directorate, the Maidens and the village spatialises and allows for a transition in time within the space of the novel. Going into the forest Kandid travels in time, as measured by a linear scientific development, simultaneously backwards to the villagers and forward to the Maidens. According to Bakhtin's (1981) definition, crossing the threshold is a moment "without duration", it "falls out" of the flow of time and indicates a crisis in a protagonist's life. For Kandid crossing the threshold of the forest has been exactly as Bakhtin defines it: instantaneous, in a helicopter crash. The crisis for him has a physical dimension: he is injured and suffers from a partial loss of memory: "Probably I was thrown out of the cabin, he thought. Thrown out of the cabin, he thought for the thouthandth time. Hit my head on something, so I never recovered...." (92). The moment of crossing itself thus literally falls out of the flow of time in his memory, exactly as its chronological account is absent from the time of the text.

Kandid's memory loss enables him to apprehend the world of the village on its own premises, but it also causes a psychological crisis. His few memories of the Directorate cannot account for what he sees in the village. Mentally he moves back and forth between the Directorate and the village in search of understanding, combining the two epistemological worlds across the threshold. Moving abruptly to the first "Kandid" chapter from the first "Pepper" chapter, the reader has a similar experience of threshold "memory loss". The village gives an impression of a world totally different from the Directorate. Swinging back and forth between the two settings occurs both intradiegetically—across the forest—and in the movement of reading—across the blank space dividing the chapters. Exactly like Kandid, the reader gradually learns to see the connection between the two worlds. As Kandid enters the Maidenian chronotope, his and the reader's horizons thus embrace two worlds with different time and space assumptions—the Directorate and the village.

If Kandid is a "threshold character", the Directorate can be described as a threshold city: it is situated between the Mainland and the forest. Pepper, being held on the threshold—the Directorate—stays in a never-ending moment of crisis. At the novel's starting point

he has given up hope to get into the forest. He visits the Directorate's main quarters attempting to attain permission to get back to the Mainland. The space of the Directorate's main building appears labyrinthine when Pepper enters a room with multiple exits: "Beyond the door lay a spacious polygonal hall, with a multiplicity of doors; Pepper rushed about, opening one after another" (115). Also this attempt to leave fail, but behind one of the doors he finds a truck which accidentally takes him into the forest. Time as Pepper experiences it in the Directorate is thus not a straight line aimed at the future.

The labyrinthine main quarters parallel metafictionally the space of the text. The lack of explanation to, along with bureaucratic secrecy about and suppression of the novum, creates "blanks" in the informational structure of the text. Pepper's desired linear motion across the space of the Directorate is always being disturbed by absurd events caused by such informational gaps. Since Pepper is the narrational focaliser in the Directorate part of the text, the reader is also kept in a constant suspense of resolution. The chronotope itself becomes hybrid: expansion and suspense produce a labyrinth.

The same suspended informational structure is characteristic also of the Kandid chapters of the text, until his meeting with the Maidens provides a kind of resolution. Kandid explicitly evokes labyrinth imaginary in order to comprehend his own situation: "I've just got to get out of here, he thought, unless I want to be like that machine in the maze.... We all stood around and laughed as it busily probed and searched and sniffed....then we filled a small trough in its path with water and it panicked touchingly [...]" (158). The ever-changing space of the forest which Kandid is moving across is here compared to the Directorate's experiments. This space parallels the informational structure of the text, making it labyrinthine.

Pastoral

The village which Kandid finds himself in has the traits of a pastoral chronotope. In his essay Bakhtin describes the chronotope of a genre he calls the "idyll". He distinguishes between its four types: "the love idyll (the basic form of which is a pastoral); the idyll with a focus on agricultural labour; the idyll dealing with craftwork; and the family idyll" (Bakhtin 1981:224). As the term "pastoral" is now more often

used as a generic term synonymous with Bakhtin's "idyll", and not only meaning "rural love story", it will be used instead of "idyll" here.

Bakhtin defines the main feature of this chronotope as follows: "The mark of cyclicity, and consequently of cyclical repetitiveness, is imprinted on all levels of this type of time. Time's forward impulse is limited by the cycle" (1981:210). The cyclical chronotope of pastoral is thus opposed to the chronotope of expansion. The time of the village is marked by repetition: the villagers work in the field, they make food, they gather to decide collectively whether one of them is going to be married (Bakhtin's agricultural labour-idyll).

Also the villagers' speech is repetitive, which annoys Kandid. When Nava tells him the story of her mother being taken by the deadlings during the Accession to her village (p. 43 and again on p. 92), he says: "You're telling me that story again. You've told it to me two hundred times" (93). "Deadlings" and "Accession" are mythical self-explanatory labels repeatedly used by the villagers for the forest's intrusions into their life. This repetition is partly motivated by wish to remind Kandid, who is new to the village, of its history. However, repetition is also an aspect the villagers' ordinary way of speech. It underlines the pastoral chronotope and emphasises the importance of storytelling and myth in the villager's way of life. In addition, it helps to keep within memory what is erased by the ever-changing landscape of the forest.

Kandid's mental flashbacks to the Directorate and modernity mark the time of the village as static. It is disrupted by the deadlings stealing the villagers' women and by transmissions from the Maidenian "City"; but these disruptions are integrated in the natural circle of the villagers' time consciousness. Apparently they do not seek other explanations for them than those offered by their animist mythology. "This little spatial world is limited and sufficient in itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world" (1981:225), writes Bakhtin. Kandid's wish to leave the village is provoked exactly by this feature when he sets out in order to find explanations for novelties of the forest.

Expansion

In the course of the story Kandid finds out that the novum of the forest is a biotechnological entity used by the Maidens in order to expand

into the space of the Directorate and the village. A common usage of slogans by the Maidens in order to designate expansional activities — "Accession", "Struggle in the North and South" — bear witness to militant intentions. The Accession, the cause of the never-ceasing changes in the forest surrounding the village, designates their wish to posses all the forest landscape. The village and the Directorate are considered to be an obstacle to its utilisation. Yet also in the Directorate, the spatio-temporal reaction this novum provokes is one of expansion, this time into the forest.

The Directorate is an ambiguous scientific institution, preoccupied both with research into the phenomena of the forest and, simultaneously, with its destruction. Its space is aimed at expanding into the forest, the research object being subjugated by the researching subject. Its technological means are, however, far less subtle than that of the Maidens: "We oppose [the forest] with millions of horsepower, dozens of landrovers, airships, and helicopters, medical science and the finest logistic theory in the world" (81). Expansion in space is tied to the direction of time, to notions of future and progress, as the Directorate's employees envisage the forest both as a future "concrete platform, dry and level" (31) and "a symbol of progress" (398)[3].

Bakhtin connects the chronotope which I have called here "the chronotope of expansion" to the writing of Rabelais, noting that it has roots in a folklore tradition of depicting the hero as giant. The chronotope of expansion in Rabelais is characterised by Bakhtin (1981) as connected to an intrinsic positive value:

> This means that everything of value, everything that is valorised positively, must achieve its full potential in temporal and spatial terms, it must spread out as wide as possible, and it is necessary that everything of significant value be provided with the power to expand spatially and temporally; likewise, everything evaluated negatively is small, pitiable, feeble and must be destroyed—and is helpless to resist this destruction. [...] the category of growth is one of the most basic categories in Rabelaisian world. (168)

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[3]Omitted in the English version in Proconsul's speech on p. 35, my translation after the original.

Listing Rabelais as one of the predecessors of the science fiction tradition, Jurij Kagarlickij (1974) argues that his writings combine the Renaissance principles of scientific credibility and continuous perfectioning of reason with the utopian imaginary of a human body not separated from cosmos. Accumulation of knowledge allows this body to expand ever wider. It should be noted that according to Bakhtin the materiality of body imaginary in Rabelais represents a humanist critique of the medieval spiritual hierarchies. However, as argued by the post-colonial theorists (Spivak 1988; Bhabha 1994), the humanist project has never included the natives, those situated off the centre of knowledge, which now becomes power. Instead, a new hierarchic imaginary—featuring the native as an Other of knowledge—has been constructed.

The expansion of knowledge can become a colonial legitimation, as the villagers' position in-between the two scientifically advanced societies bears witness to. Typically of the colonisers, they conflate the village with its territory and its natural resources, which they wish to utilise. For example, the slogans "Harrowing" and "Swamping" emphasise the territorial value while designating a systematic drowning of the villages by the Maidens. The project of conflation of the people with their territory is interconnected with a legitimation of colonisation by a difference in cultural advancement, or development. In this paradigm, the savageness of the native justifies the colonisers' inhuman colonisation methods.

Thus, swamps, peat and insects, all forest associations, mark the villagers in a negative way in the following quote, which concerns the experiments of the Directorate's "Aid to Native Populations Group" on villagers:

> We built them convenient day houses on piles. They fill them with peat and colonise it with insects of some kind. We tried to offer them tasty food in place of the sour filth they eat. Useless. We tried to dress them like human beings. One died, two fell ill. Well, we're pushing on with our experiments. Yesterday we scattered a truckload of mirrors and gilt buttons in the forest....[...] For instance I suggest catching the children and organising special schools. Unfortunately that's linked with technical difficulties; human hands can't touch them, special machines are needed....(107)

Elements of nature are opposed to dry houses and clothes as elements of convenience and culture. The vocabulary of the quote finally opposes the villagers to what is considered human. Drawing directly on the history of colonisation by mentioning "mirrors and gilt buttons", the text is ironic to this approach. Mirrors and buttons mirror parodically the Directorate in its estimation of its own artefacts' importance to the colonised.

The narrator here, a member of the group Beatrice Vakh, is perplexed over the villagers reaction: "As soon as our groups get near the village, they leave their houses and go. You get the impression they're absolutely uninterested in us" (106). The colonisers' lack of self-insight is evident in this demand for the colonised's attention. At the same time, the colonised's indifference to the colonisers' culture is perceived as a confirmation of their status as inferior. Both reactions are typical for the colonisers, as Bhabha argues in "Sly Civility" (1994). In order to justify colonisation, a whole narrative of the native as an object, as a complete Other of the coloniser's culture is constructed.

Paradoxically, writes Bhabha, the colonised's status is now at the same time different from the status of the object, the land. This is because a demand of confirmation is addressed to them, a demand which cannot be addressed in the same way to a territory, or to nature:

> The narratorial voice articulates the narcissistic, colonialist demand that it should be addressed directly, that the other should authorize the self, recognize its priority, fulfil its outlines, replete, indeed repeat, its references and still its fractured gaze. (Bhabha 1994:98)

As revealed by Beatrice Vakh's perplexity, the colonised refuse to confirm that they are Others; they remain silent and, apparently, indifferent. The project of their conflating them with nature, the underdeveloped and backward, is thus never finally confirmed.

Exactly because of this underlying narcissistic interdependence, the "civilised" are afraid of any identification with the native. Therefore, also Kandid's initial attitude to the village — "vegetable way of life" (92) — employs nature's negativity as a sign of their underdevelopment. He thus brings the Directorate's attitude to the

colonised with him into the village. Later, he himself is subjected to the same metaphoric designation at the Maidens', addressed by them as "kozlik"—"goaty"[4] (177). Their injunctions "Try for once in your life not to be a sheep. Try to imagine a world without sheep...." (184) indicate that nature, taken as as a sign of underdevelopment, motivates also the Maidenian elimination of the village and the Directorate.

Hybrid Chronotopes
How are a pastoral society and two scientifically advanced ones combined so as to make up a single hybrid chronotope, roads and thresholds going across it? I have already mentioned Delany's typical science fiction plots, "the future-views-the present" and "the-alien-views-the-familiar"(1992:338). When not brought in by an alien culture, the novum in science fiction texts is associated with a jump forward in time by means of time travel-devises. Otherwise, the transition in time can be made smoother by a description of the stages in a scientific discovery, which has transformed what Suvin terms "the old locus". Containing no indications of an invasion from another planet, the *Snail on the Slope* employs a future scientific achievement as an explanational hypothesis to the Maidenian novum.

Kandid participates in a discussion on biology with one of the Maidens which reveals that they are apparently able to manipulate the forest on the low-particle level. He also guesses that the deadlings are robots made by the Maidens in order to make the village women join them. After his meeting with the Maidens, the future hypothesis is elaborated by Kandid through the whole of the last chapter of the text:

> To me it's terrible, revolting, and all because to me it's alien, and perhaps one should say not "cruel and senseless driving of the forest over people", but "a systematic, superbly organised, precisely thought-out drive of the new against the old", "a well timed and matured, abundantly powerful offensive of the new against the rotten, hopeless, old order...." (237)

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[4]"Lamb" in the English version.

Also Pepper's meditations on the forest link it to the future: "The hardest part was to accept it was alien and familiar at one and the same time, derived from our world, flesh of our flesh—but broken away, not wishing to know us. An apeman might think the same way about us, his descendants, grieving and fearful..." (31).

While Pepper has earlier thought of himself as closer to the forest than anyone else in the Directorate, his actual confrontation with it makes him realise that its alienness is greater than he has imagined. The forest is impossible for a man of his time to understand, he decides, and should be left alone:

> A good thing I'm getting out of here, he thought. I've been here, understood nothing, found nothing I wanted to find, but I know now that I never will understand anything, that there is a time for everything. There's nothing in common between the forest and me, the forest is no nearer to me then the Directorate is. Anyway, at least I'm not staying here to be covered in shame. I'm going away, I shall work and wait. I shall hope for the time to come when....(140)

The end of the passage is left ambiguously open. It indicates Pepper's new awareness of the future as unknown, but, simultaneously, his hope that this future will be somehow in accordance with his anticipation. An extrapolation into the future through a notion of positive development enables Pepper to hope to meet the forest again, this time better equipped to understand it. He thus anticipates a distant, but final explanation which will resolve his hesitations. This paradox of the unknown, but knowable may be called the paradox of science fiction itself, of Suvin's criteria for the novum. As Lynette Hunter (1989) and Albert Wendland (1980) point out, in order to persuade the reader of the existence of Otherness it is bound to explain the novum to a certain degree, make it known and intra-textually logical, albeit set in the future.

Despite these speculations by the protagonists, the connection of the Maidenian forest to the future of the two other worlds still appears vague. The text contains no science-fictional time-travel devises. Neither does it describe the stages in the scientific discovery which the society of the Maidens is built upon. This "blank" in the informational structure disrupts the chronology of the narrative

events. Elana Gomel (1995) argues that fractures in the chronotope are atypical of proper science fiction. In it, the properties of the other-worldly time and space has to be well-motivated. Christine Brooke-Rose (1981) writes of high attention to chronology as one of the features that science fiction shares with realism. Consequently, this means that "science fiction proper" has to be buildt around the assumption of linear time and progress.

Albert Wendland (1980) disagrees that such assumptions should necessarily be seen as basic in the genre, arguing that they make progress appear neutral in terms of value. He notes that in some texts of the genre the idea of linear progress corresponds to an accumulation of greater possessions, and the radiant enlightenment doubles itself into a colonisation of the whole universe. The solution to this problem for Wendland is to underline the observer's own expectations when confronted with a difference due to be scientifically explored, and thus to include the observer into the observation. To me, the absence of motivation to the chronotope foregrounds exactly the values of the observers in the text. It appears to be related to the ideology of "uneven development", and, thus, to the discourse of colonisation.

Not only the protagonists' redefinition of the Maidenian novum from being a part of the present into being the future, but also the Directorate's assumption of the villagers' backwardness bears witness to an internalisation of such ideology. Also the Maidens redefine parts of the present—the village and the Directorate—as backward and not worthy of survival, and thus consigned to the past. The reason for this temporal displacement might be found in what Schimanski (1996) writes on science fiction and the notion of development:

> Within modernity, however, the dominance of progress as a figure for time moves the marvellous from geographically distant but vaguely contemporary regions into the always deferred future. In the *post-colonial* context, this means that spatial relationships become temporalized — previous colonies have become "backward" within the ideology of "uneven development" and "third world" — and the post-colonialist answer has been to spatialize time. (265)

The birth of science fiction during the epoch of great geographic discoveries is evoked here, an epoch which also initiated colonisation. Schimanski argues that the science-fictional logic of a time jump has in the post-colonial context become a normalised logic. In it, the notions of advancement and backwardness, originally thought of as forms of temporal division, have become spatially co-existent. In *The Snail on the Slope*, where the transition between chronotopes is not explained by a science-fictional logic of time-travel devices or an alien intrusion, science fiction can be said to have moved back to "reality" as formed by the discourse of co-existence between advancement and backwardness.

A projection of one's own past on the other — of a negative self, which is due to be overcome — is part of the discourse of uneven development. The village is such a negative self for the Directorate and the Maidens. The concept of uneven development appears then as paradoxical. On the one hand, it presupposes a linear and inevitable continuation between the past and the future of the self, while on the other it requires an active negative evaluation of the past and a radical separation from it. It is such a separation that the Directorate and the Maidens advocate. At the same time, due to their spatial closeness, a likeness across the presupposed temporal difference is all too obvious. The text foregrounds a continuity between the Directorate's and the Maidens' violent approach to the village.

In order to reveal the rhetoric of uneven development as colonising, the spatial nature of these relationships should again become obvious. The co-existence of the three different worlds in the text offers such a re-spatialisation, and a fracture in the chronology foregrounds a fracture in the colonial legitimation. A change in Kandid's attitude towards the villagers in the final chapter of the text is another instance of this re-spatialisation. The protagonist's association with them adds new characteristics to his being a threshold, or liminal, character.

Through his experience in the village and in the forest he becomes able to perceive his own Directorate from a marginal position: "It's odd, it's never occurred to me before to look at the Directorate from the side. And Hopalong never dreams of looking at the forest from the side. Nor do those Maidens, either, probably. And

it's really a curious spectacle—the Directorate, seen from above" (243). Liminality is defined by Henderson
(1995) as "the possibility ... of standing aside not only from one's own social position but from all social positions". Gainining such an overview over the shared space of the three societies, Kandid becomes able to contextualise the colonisation. As a result he can no longer accept the accustomed definition of linear development: "Natural laws are neither good nor bad, they're outside morality. But I am not!" (243).

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