MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS' THE YEARLING: A STUDY IN THE RHETORICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF A NOVEL

BY

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To Grady Earl Johnson, Junior

(Ila rafik hayati mahabaten abadiyah)

الى رفيقه حياتي محبة ابدية

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In 1939 Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Letters for her novel, The Yearling, and elected to the Academy of Arts and Letters. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote with a preset concept of effectiveness. Her theory of composition as evinced by her personal papers, lecture notes, scrapbooks, newspaper articles, and correspondence housed in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection at the University of Florida Library, was based upon the creation of a sense of reality, which she believed necessary in order to communicate beauty. Her theory incorporated the process of characterization, true-to-life depiction, universality, unity, the use of facts and details, objectivity, simplicity, and dialect.

Regionalism was the literary vehicle Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings chose for her novel, and in so doing, she responded

rhetorically to an exigence, in accordance with the constraints of her personal theory of composition. Regionalism, at that point in history, served as a response to a crisis; that is, the untenable situation of a population in the midst of society's ills during the Depression. Her writing had as its purpose the communication of the beauty which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings found in the Big Scrub country and its people, and by extension, of humanity in harmony with the environment. That Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' purpose was effectively achieved has been borne out by thorough investigation of the responses of both her general readership and her professional critics.

This investigation places the effectiveness of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel into the broader context of modern rhetorical criticism and attempts to illume the rhetorical interaction of sender, message, and receiver in which the author of a novel determines a method or theory of composition predicated upon the effect she wishes to achieve.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Yearling was first published in 1938. For it, Majorie Kinnan Rawlings was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Letters for a Novel in 1939 and elected to the Academy of Arts and Letters. Receiving universal acclaim, The Yearling was subsequently translated into thirteen languages and cited as the most "distinguished novel published during the year by an American author dealing with American life."[1] Reissued with a special "Study Guide" geared to secondary schools, the novel has been a part of the curriculum throughout the country; and the book has been designated "a classic" and "a literary masterpiece"[2] on a regional, national, as well as an international level. Chosen as a Book-of-the-Month Club selection at publication, accolades were heaped upon it

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[1] R. R. Bowker, Literary Prizes and Their Winners (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967), p. 28.

[2] M. K. Rawlings, The Yearling, Study Guide by Mary Louise Fary and Edith Cowles (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962).

not only from the commercial marketplace but also from professionals journals. In 1938, The North American Review, a prestigious professional journal, considered the work "flawless," and the author an "intelligent and meticulous craftsman . . . [who] with The Yearling rightfully takes her place among our most accomplished writers of fiction."[3]

The concept the public had of this "intelligent and meticulous" craftsperson was often distorted not only by the artistic milieu of the 1930's, but also by commercial publications. For example, a Saturday Evening Post article, "Marjorie Rawlings Hunts Her Supper: Menu: Alligator, Turtle, and Swamp Cabbage," contributed to the public image of the author as Great White Huntress. This public facade was based upon a contemporary tradition of author-as-hero that her peers deliberately perpetuated: Fitzgerald, the international playperson; Hemingway, the great outdoors person; Faulkner, the country gentleperson. However, behind this appearance was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Wisconsin, an experienced journalist, and a creative artist who had as her goal in writing The Yearling the accomplishment of a predetermined effect achieved by adherence to her personal audience-oriented theory of composition. In so doing she performs

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[3]Lloyd Morris, "A New Classicist," The North American Review, 246 (September, 1938), 179-184.

what Bryant has called the rhetorical function of "adjusting ideas to people and of people to ideas," and illustrates likewise Bitzer's concept of rhetoric as a response to an exigence subject to the constraints of the author's personal theory of composition.[4] In examining Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' personal theory of composition, as well as reader response to it, this study will explore the rhetorical role of the novelist's language manipulations as they contribute to suasory effectiveness.

Universal Theme of The Yearling

As a basis for understanding this novel as rhetorical discourse, recall that The Yearling evoked the environment of the Florida "Cracker" and yet, at the same time, transcended and universalized this environment. The international popularity achieved attested to the universal appeal of the novel, which concerned the relationship of an individual to this environment. The Baxter's pine island in The Yearling defined the microcosm or "small world" that implied its corollary, the macrocosm, or

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[4]Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Function and Scope," in The Province of Rhetoric, edited by Joseph Schwartz and John Rycenga (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1965), p. 34.

Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," in Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, edited by Richard Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 381-389.

"great world." In the close relationship that existed between the small world and the great world, the microcosm functioned as a closed, complete system, maintaining its own individuality and integrity. The pine island of The Yearling reflected the macrocosm; yet, simultaneously, it was a self-contained unit that illustrated equilibrium between the individual and the environment achieved through balance and harmony with nature. Within this context, the pine island functioned as a symbolic garden of the middle landscape as defined by Leo Marx in his book, The Machine in the Garden, for the island garden became a symbol for fruitfulness and blessed labor, placed within a landscape that had neither the corruption of civilization nor the savagery of the jungle.[5]

The individual interacting within an environment reflected total humanity interacting with the universe, for each individual contained the unity and the variety of the universe; thus, Penny Baxter functioned as Every Person. Universality was in part achieved through characterization, for according to a definitive text in literary terminology, "of all qualities which make for universality in literature, successful portrayal of human character is

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[5]Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Gordon E. Bigelow, Frontier Eden (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964).

the most important."[6] In the classic tradition, Penny Baxter in The Yearling was a person, bruised by civilization and society, who returns to the land of the middle landscape in an attempt to survive. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings expressed this philosophy most directly in The Yearling:

> He had perhaps been bruised too often. The peace of the vast aloof scrub had drawn him with beneficence of its silence. Something in him was raw and tender. The touch of men was hurtful upon it, but the touch of the pines was healing. Making a living came harder there, distances were troublesome in the buying of supplies and the marketing of crops. But the clearing was peculiarly his own. The wild animal seemed less predatory to him than people he had known. The forays of bear and wolf and wildcat and panther on stock were understandable, which was more than he could say of human cruelties.[7]

In paraphrasing Rawlings' philosophy, Bigelow believed that a person "can be happy only in the degree to which he is able to adjust harmoniously to his surroundings. The more natural these surroundings, the more completely he is in harmony with them, the greater will be his

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[6]William F. Thrall, Addison Hibbard, and Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 500.

[7]M. K. Rawlings, The Yearling (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 13.

happiness."[8] Living in harmony with and closeness to Nature creates a type of Noble Savage. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' "account [of The Yearling] reminds one of the eighteenth century theorists like Rousseau or Chateaubriand, who claimed that virtue would most abound in men who lived in a state of nature."[9]

The personal region of Penny Baxter was bounded by the environs of his daily life; yet, in the generic sense, these personal regions of the individual expanded to the personal regions of all, and the environs of Penny Baxter's daily life expanded to the environs of each and every other person. Thus, Penny Baxter and the pine island were able to function symbolically as a universal metaphor for the human condition.

Regionalism as a Symbolic Basis of Universality

Universality was achieved through the vehicle of regionalism; for in the genre of literary regionalism, the locale functions as a medium for understanding the universal by seeking out in the geographic region the

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[8] Gordon E. Bigelow, "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Wilderness," The Sewanee Review, 72 (April-June, 1965), 299-310.

[9] Ibid., p. 302.

particular aspects "of the human character and of the human dilemma common to all men in all ages and places."[10] A region may be geographically, politically, socially, or economically defined as a territory within which there are greater mutual dependency and homogeneity than exist outside its boundaries. Regionalism in a literary production usually concerns itself with a specific culture and its customs, speech patterns, physical landscape, legends, traditions, and ideological or social point of view. The resultant interaction of the human individual with the immediate environment through the peculiarities of language, landscape, culture, race, and tradition are the domain of regionalism.

Usually infused in this process is a sentimental romanticism for an historical period by which the past becomes a vehicle for the study of the present and the future. The artists often fashioned their fiction from vanishing aspects of the region. "What historical literature reflects in terms of time and age, regional literature reflects in terms of space and locality."[11] By making "human drama from neighboring scrub and hammock country,"

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[10]Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman, pp. 406-407.

[11]Heinrich Staumann, American Literature in the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 67.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to preserve that which was lost and dying, the traditions of the past, and for this she has been acclaimed a great Southern Regionalist.[12] Through the time warp of Cross Creek, the American past, the frontier, the tradition of nature, and the purity of the individual all could be brought into focus. As a result, according to one Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings scholar, her writings reflect some of the most deeply imbedded attitudes of the American people, and belong to a main current of American culture flowing from Crevecoeur and Bartram in the eighteenth century, through Cooper, the transcendentalists, and Whitman in the nineteenth century, to Faulkner in modern times."[13]

Yet, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings cared little for the mantle of Southern Regionalist. She described herself "as a writer who often suffers under the epithet of regional," for in the late 1930's, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings considered regionalism limited.[14] She denigrated her title thus:

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[12]John M. Bradbury, Renaissance in the South: A Critical History of the Literature, 1920-1960 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 20.

[13]Bigelow, "Wilderness," p. 300.

[14]M. K. Rawlings, "Regional Literature of the South," College English. I (February, 1940), 381-389.

> Regionalism written on purpose is perhaps as spurious a form of literary expression as ever reaches print. It is not even a decent bastard, for back of illegitimacy is usually a simple, if ill-timed, honesty.[15]

Her concern at being neatly classified as a regionalist is understandable. During the 1930's she was working in the literary milieu of Hemingway, Wolfe, and Fitzgerald, who were the outstanding literary figures of her time, and the apparently popular modes were realism, naturalism, or social consciousness. The title of Southern Regionalist was praise, however, for as stated by Bradbury, the literary historian:

> . . . by no means all of the important novelists of the first generation (of what was referred to as the Southern Renaissance, 1930-1940) can be neatly catalogued under the label of symbolic naturalism . . . regional colorists like Edwin Granberry and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings write substantially outside the developing new tradition.[16]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings proffered a second approach to her definition of regional writing which she found more amenable and valid.

> It is the approach of the sincere creative writer who has something to say and who uses a specialized locale—a region—as a logical or fitting background for the particular thoughts or

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[15] Ibid., p. 334.

[16] Bradbury, p. 16.

> emotions that cry out for articulation. This approach results in writing that is only incidentally, sometimes even accidentally, regional.[17]

Though her "second approach" broadened the concept of regionalism and though two of her contemporaries basked in the term—Robert Frost and William Faulkner—Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings still chafed under her own regional definition and opinion of the term. Yet in the 1930's, Robert Frost's New England, William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Steinbeck's Dustbowl, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Big Scrub each furnished a portrait or regional unit complete and self-contained. From the multiplicity of these parts the totality of the whole may be comprehended. In explicating the basic conceptions underlying the works of outstanding American writers, Heinrich Staumann states that the literary "stress on regionalism is just another powerful symptom of that quest for a national tradition based on a profound love for the variety of its ethnographical aspects."[18] Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings achieved such thematic universality in her novel, The Yearling, and it therefore is as one of the great Southern Regionalists that she is remembered.

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[17] Rawlings, "Regional," p. 385.

[18] Staumann, p. 67.

Regionalism as a Rhetorical Response to a Crisis

In the 1930's, regionalism was often discourse in response to a crisis; and as a response to the social and cultural change of the 1930's, The Yearling may be treated not only as a literary novel, but also as a rhetorical document. It fits the rhetorical paradigm of a response to a situation, for Bitzer regards a rhetorical situation as

> . . . a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance . . . Rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation in the same sense that an answer comes into existence in response to a question.[19]

Following the collapse of the economic and industrial structure in 1929, the literary world argued for an agrarian as opposed to industrial culture. As Bigelow, in his study of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' career, described that movement:

> . . . economic catastrophe and social unrest produced a widespread renewal of interest in the regions, so that life in the village [the agrarian culture] began to receive new scrutiny as a source of those virtues which could heal the ills brought on by too much city and too much big business [industrial culture].[20]

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[19] Bitzer, pp. 385-386.

[20] Bigelow, Frontier, pp. 70-71.

October 28, 1929, stands as the augur of the crisis. National income plummeted from a high of 81 billion in 1929 to 68 billion in 1930, and finally to 41 billion in 1932. Salaries dropped off 40 per cent from 1929-1932; wages were down 60 per cent and dividends 56.6 per cent. Unemployment ultimately peaked at 17 million, half the work force of the country. When 22,821,857 citizens voted for Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the presidential election of 1932, "the clash between the industrial and agrarian minds [became] apparent in the conflicting personalities of Herbert Hoover and Franklin Delano Roosevelt."[21] Herbert Hoover's political philosophy in support of financial institutions and big business as opposed to Roosevelt's "distrust of big business and his concept of individual rather than corporate well-being as the cornerstone of our welfare brought back into our national thinking an agrarian point of view that had been moribund since the triumph of Northern capital in 1865."[22]

The literary revival of the agrarian point of view was reflected in the voluminous outpourings of

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[21] Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards, Backgrounds of American Literary Thought (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1952), p. 375.

[22] Ibid., p. 375.

regional literature reported by Howard Odum and Harry Moore in their 1938 comprehensive study. Using the listings in The Publishers Weekly as the source, and restricting titles to fiction, Howard Odum catalogued more than two thousand regional titles that appeared in the two decades from 1916 to 1936. As part of a pattern that peaked first after the Civil War and then more significantly after World War I in the late 1920's and 1930's, the ten years preceding the publication of The Yearling showed the Southeast to be strong both in numbers and in literary quality.

> The Northeast leads with 449 titles followed strongly enough by the Northwest with its 'westerns' with 344, the Southeast with 281, the Middle States with 183, the Southwest with 138, and the Far West 137 . . . Strangely enough the Southeast has the largest number of Pulitzer Prize winners and best sellers and has tended to give the best regional portraiture.[23]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was already classified among "the best" for her novel, South Moon Under. Two years later, she was to prove again, with the publication of The Yearling and subsequent winning of the Pulitzer Prize, her worthiness to be classed with the other great regional writers. These ranks included William Faulkner, Erskine

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[23] Howard W. Odum and Harry E. Moore, American Regionalism: A Cultural-Historical Approach to National Integration (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1938), p. 186.

Caldwell, Ellen Glasgow, Zora Neale Hurston, Margaret Mitchell, James Farrell, Sinclair Lewis, Louis Bromfield, Edna Ferber, John Dos Passos, and John Steinbeck.

The major impetus for the Southern literary renaissance of regionalism was a 1930 volume of far reaching impact, I'll Take My Stand, compiled by twelve distinguished Southerners: John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Frank Owsley, John Gould Fletcher, Lyle Lanier, Allen Tate, Herman Clarence Nixon, Andrew Nelson Lytle, Robert Penn Warren, John David Wade, Henry Blue Kline, and Stark Young. The main thesis of this volume was stated in the preface of the 1930 edition.

> All of the contributors tend to support a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way; and all as much as agree that the best terms in which to represent the distinction are contained in the phrase Agrarian versus Industrial.[24]

The influence of and reaction to this volume was vast and immediate, as well as of long duration. The author of a compilation of Southern literature addressed the impact of the volume: "The statement of principles, together with accompanying essays, precipitated a more widespread controversy, perhaps than has attended any other Southern

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[24]Twelve Southern Authors, I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), p. ix.

book ever printed. Copies of editorials, newspaper articles, and letters of protest from every part of the country virtually deluged the authors."[25] William Knickerbocker, editor of The Sewanee Review, termed it "the most audacious book ever written by Southerners . . . the most challenging book published since Henry George's Progress and Poverty." H. L. Mencken responded in both the American Mercury and Virginia Quarterly Review. Henry Hazlitt assailed it in The Nation on the grounds that the Agrarians would be obstructionists in attempting to stem the tide of progress. The volume was attacked in Harper's by Gerald W. Johnson and disparaged in Dallas before a large audience by Howard Mumford Jones. The contributors were called Fugitives, Escapists, sufferers from nostalgic vapors, romanticists unwilling to face the realities of modern life.[26]

However, the twelve authors proudly bore the name "Fugitives," for their volume was an alert, a reaction, a response, and a reply for the prevailing economic, political and social conditions. Their volume was a call to a return to the way of life of the "middle landscape." The upsurge and responses of literary regionalism attempted

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[25]Thomas D. Young, Floyd C. Watkins, and Richard C. Beatty, The Literature of the South (Atlanta: Scott Foresman and Company, 1968), p. 606)

[26]Ibid., p. 606. See for total idea.

to bulkhead the encroaching disaster, for as Mumford stated in 1934, "regionalism is in part a blind reaction against outward circumstances and disruptions, an attempt to find refuge within an old shell against the turbulent invasions of the outside world."[27]

Thirty years after the book was first published, Louis Rubin, Jr., in the introduction to the 1962 edition of I'll Take My Stand, elaborated on the continued influence of the volume and the philosophy that addressed the question of people separated from the well being of the natural land who are brutalized by the machinery of civilization.

> It is about something far more generally important and essential than the economic and social well-being of any one region. Man was losing contact with the natural world, with aesthetic and religious reality; his machines were brutalizing and coarsening him, his quest for gain blinding him to all that made life worth living. The tenuous and frail spiritual insights of western civilization, achieved so arduously over the course of many centuries were being sacrificed. The result, if unchecked, could only be dehumanization and chaos.[28]

As the Paris expatriates of the Lost Generation of the 1920's represented rejection of the prevailing literary

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[27]Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1934), p. 292.

[28]Twelve Southern Authors, I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

and social attitudes, so then in the 1930's did the fugitive authors of I'll Take My Stand represent rejection of prevailing literary and social attitudes. In so doing, they "initiated the current regional movement."[29] And, as C. Hugh Holman states, "the movement was a response to social and cultural change."[30]

The Yearling was an integral part of this movement. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' retreat in 1928 from a career as syndicated feature writer for two Northern papers to the precarious ownership of an orange grove in middle Florida can be viewed, in part, as subscription to the Agrarian philosophy. This poem, found among her papers in the Collection, may provide additional perspective.

> Now, having left cities behind me, turned
> Away forever from the strange gregarious
> Huddling of men by stones, I find various
> Great towns I knew fused into one, burned
> Together in the fire of my despairing.
> And I recall of them only those things
> Irrelevant to cities: murmurings
> Of rain and wind: moons setting and rising.
>
> There was a church spire on a distant hill
> Clamorous with birds by day and stars by night,
> Devout and singing. I have forgot its site--
> Boston, or Rochester, or Louisville---

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[29] Paul R. Beath, "Regionalism: Pro and Con, Four Fallacies of Regionalism," Saturday Review of Literature, 15 (November, 1936), 4-14.

[30] C. Hugh Holman, "Literature and Culture: The Fugitive-Agrarians," Social Forces, 37 (October, 1958), 19.

> Of a certain city all I can remember
> Is wild ducks flying southward in November.[31]

At the Cross Creek grove, as she later related to the National Council of Teachers of English, "she found herself, for the first time since leaving her father's farm to go to college, in full spiritual harmony with her environment."[32] She knew almost immediately that these Cracker people of inland Florida had not been dehumanized by industrialization and for that reason, as she told Stephen Vincent Benet, she began again to write.

> I had met only 2 or 3 of the neighboring crackers when I realized that isolation had done something to these people. Rather, perhaps civilization remained too remote, physically and spiritually, to take from them something vital.[33]

In one of her earliest autobiographical writings found within the Collection, she addressed the isolation from civilization of the Cracker country and predicted that the "inland core of this state is part of America's vanishing frontier . . . [and] it will be the last to vanish."[34]

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[31] Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "Having Left Cities Behind Me." Unpublished poem in Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection.

[32] Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "Regional Literature of the South," College English, 1 (February, 1940), 389.

[33] New York Herald Tribune, February 9, 1941. In Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection.

[34] Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "Cracker Florida." Early Autobiographical Writings. In Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection.

Other of her writings offered further evidence of her reaction against industrialization.

> We need above all, I think, a certain remoteness from urban confusion, and while this can be found in other places, Cross Creek offers it with such beauty and grace that, once entangled with it, no other place seems possible to us . . .[35]

Finally, in another of her personal writings, she addressed civilization as a contributing agent to negative aspects of human behavior, for "man's savagery and personal selfishness and greed, his materialism which seems to increase in direct ratio to the technical advance of so-called civilization, are the stumbling block, the impasse. Plain people seem to be ahead of the leaders."[36] Thus, not only her life, but also her writings, indicated a reaction against a national threat.

Bigelow quite often referred to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' reaction against the cities, for he found her to be a "regionalist," "inextricably enmeshed with agrarian attitudes," drawn to a people "full of grace and dignity she has never found in city life."[37] Previously,

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[35]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Cross Creek (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 3.

[36]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "Autobiographical Sketch." In Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection.

[37]Bigelow, Frontier Eden, p. 70.

Bigelow, "Wilderness," 303, 310

reviewers in 1938 had addressed Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings as a regionalist author, yet, as one who wrote "unlike the average regional novelist," for The Yearling as another stated, "represents the best of the so-called regionalism school."[38]

Thus, during the 1930's there was a regional reaction to a national threat, and based not only upon the personal writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, but also from the writings of literary historians and scholars as well as from reviewers of her book, The Yearling was an integral part of this movement.

The Study of Regional Literature as Rhetorical Discourse

Functioning as a response to a change in the social and cultural situation is but one aspect of the rhetorical nature of The Yearling. In 1972, addressing the direction of rhetorical criticism, Barnet Baskerville noted that "we now enthusiastically advocate the rhetorical criticism of literature."[39] Baskerville may have

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[38]Durham North Carolina Morning Herald, April 3, 1938.

Chicago Illinois News, April 6, 1938.

[39]Barnet Baskerville, "Rhetorical Criticism, 1971: Rhetrospect, Prospect, Introspect." Southern Speech Communication Journal, 27 (Winter, 1971), 115.

revived an anachronistic debate concerning the relatively obscure distinction between rhetoric and poetics. Not only have time and proximity, as well as usage, tended to blur the distinctions between these two areas, but also the various attempts to discriminate between these two modes have proven unsatisfactory. The interface between rhetoric and poetics is even more obscured by Kenneth Burke, who, according to Baskerville, "seems not to acknowledge alleged distinctions," for in Burke's philosophy "effective literature could be nothing else but rhetoric."[40] Then the obvious conclusion must be Bryant's, for though theorists and critics have sporadically attempted to keep apart rhetoric and poetic and to deal with them as separate entities, "the two rationales have had an irresistable tendency to come together."[41]

Continuing the focus on the rhetorical qualities of literature, other theorists have articulated their opinions. Wayne Booth argues "that the author cannot choose to avoid rhetoric; he can choose only the kind of rhetoric he will employ. He cannot choose whether or not to affect his readers' evaluation by his choice of

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[40] Ibid., p. 115.

Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), p. 265.

[41] Bryant, p. 34.

narrative matter; he can only choose whether to do it well or poorly."[42] Black, in his provocative article, "The Second Persona," provided further evidence concerning the rhetorical aspects of literature, for, as he wrote, even the person "who aspires to be nothing more than a simple chronicler still must make decisions about perspective."[43] Thus, not only the historian, but the literary author as well, meets Bitzer's concept of rhetoric as

> . . . a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. The rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes mediator of change. In this, rhetoric is always persuasive.[44]

Again, the Black article amplifies Bitzer's concept of rhetoric as a mode of altering reality, for Black views discourse as having

> enticements not simply to believe something, but to be something. We

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[42]Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 149.

[43]Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (April, 1970), 109.

[44]Bitzer, p. 384.

> are solicited by the discourse to fulfill its blandishments with our very selves.[45]

So then did these writers address the rhetorical qualities of literature.

To Bitzer a rhetorical work comes into being "as a response to [a] situation . . . the natural context of persons, events, objects, relations and an exigence which strongly invites utterance."[46] Regionalism as a response to the conditions of the 1930's was likewise a rhetorical response, persuading the audience of the value of an individual struggle with nature and self in an environment removed from a dehumanized and mechanical society. Citing the relationship of literature to the culture and simultaneously defining rhetorical discourse, C. Hugh Holman expressed the point that in the Regional Agrarian movement of the 1930's, the artists "were making a literary use of economics and politics. They have taught us that artists respond to the pressures of their culture, not by making political gestures or by accurate reporting, but by imprisoning through their talents its themes and its subjects."[47] Thus, as an artist responding to the

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[45] Black, p. 119.

[46] Bitzer, p. 385.

[47] Holman, "Literature and Culture," p. 19.

cultural pressures within the context of the 1930's, Majorie Kinnan Rawlings created rhetorical discourse which addressed the universal struggle of nature and self played out in the world of the middle landscape—the land between the jungle and civilization.

Methodology

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to evoke a predetermined response through her manipulation of language in The Yearling. In this study, her readership will be debriefed in order to ascertain achievement of the specific effects upon which the author had predicated her personal theory of composition. Debriefing was a term used by Munro in a paper read at the 1969 CSSA Convention.[48] Later, the term was elaborated upon by Tompkins in "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works."[49] Both critics defined the term in the militaristic sense of questioning or interrogating or seeking to obtain knowledge or information from an audience; for unless critics

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[48]Hugh P. Munro, "The the Wall, Enthymeme!" Paper read at the 1969 CSSA Convention, St. Louis.

[49]Phillip Tompkins, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 55 (December, 1969), 431-439.

have access to the audience, as Tompkins pointed out, they are in a poor position to explain the effect of language manipulation or other rhetorical strategies.[50] The focus of this investigation shall not be into the discourse itself, but into the intention of the author and the resultant reaction of the readers to the discourse. Intentionality is clearly an integral part of the rhetorical function, for as Bryant has stated in his now-familiar definition: "the rhetorical function is the function of adjusting to people and of people to ideas."[51]

Chapter Two will focus upon the delineation of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition and articulation of the rhetorical impact she sought. These shall be derived from the autobiographical writing of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, from her speeches, lecture notes, articles, and from various secondary sources. Her concept of the creative act was predicated upon her personal theory of language usage necessary to achieve a result or create an effect. Investigation of her intentionality is consonant with Kenneth Burke, the iconoclast, who defines rhetoric as "the use of language in

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[50] Ibid., p. 435.

[51] Bryant, p. 19.

such a way as to produce a desired impression upon the hearer or reader."[52]

From her lecture notes as a visiting professor at the University of Florida teaching creative writing, and from various articles she has authored, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings delineated those constraints under which an author must operate so as to achieve, through her personal theory of composition, a predetermined effect upon her readership. Utilizing Bitzer's concept of a rhetorical situation, constraints are one of the three constituents of a rhetorical situation, the other two being exigence and audience.

> Standard sources of constraints include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like; and when the orator enters the situation, his disclosure not only harnesses constraints given by situation but provides additional important constraints—for example, his personal character, his logical proofs, and his style.[53]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition was a constraint that regulated or limited her writing. Wayne Booth has stated that the author's "attitudes towards the three variables, subject matter, structure, and technique, depend finally on notions of purpose or function

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[52]Burke, p. 265.

[53]Bitzer, p. 388.

or effect"; and thus Chapter Two will be addressed to articulation of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' "notions of effect" or theory of composition.[54]

The focus of Chapter Three will be upon debriefing her readership through utilizing of the correspondence in the substantial Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection housed at the University of Florida. The methodological approach for this impact study is similar to the debriefing of a readership for their situationally bound reactions as employed by Carpenter in his study, "Alfred Thayer Mahan's Style on Sea Power: A Paramessage Conducing to Ethos."[55] As in the Carpenter study, the extent of effectiveness will be based upon the reactions of her general readership to her language usages. For as Carpenter stated, achievement of effectiveness is "most accurately discernible in the responses of people for whom the discourse was intended"; and therefore, the methodological focus of this investigation is not on the discourse itself, but rather on debriefing the readership.[56]

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[54] Booth, p. 57.

[55] Ronald Carpenter, "Alfred Thayer Mahan's Style on Sea Power: A Paramessage Conducing to Ethos," Speech Monographs, 42 (August, 1975), 191-202.

[56] Ibid., p. 192.

Since The Yearling is currently in publication, all correspondence in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection from her general readership relating to the novel was examined. The bulk of the Collection, however, covers the period from the original publication of The Yearling in 1938 to her death in 1953. Only those responses dealing specifically with areas of composition or which indicate relationship to language usage shall be utilized in order to focus in on the achievement of the specific effect. Comments by the readership dealing with the process of her language manipulation in The Yearling were catalogued and analyzed to indicate recurring patterns. Through analysis of these responses, an attempt will be made to establish the causal relationship between technique and effect in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four will focus on the responses of her professional readership, such as critics in newspapers, magazines, and periodicals. Six large scrapbooks containing the reactions of these critics are a part of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection. Phillip Tompkins refers to these critics and reviewers as "a sizable important body of receivers who 'debrief' themselves voluntarily."[57] The methodology for cataloguing and analyzing

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[57]Tompkins, p. 435.

the reactions of this professional readership shall proceed in the same manner as followed with her general readership. This professional readership, according to Tompkins, brings to the novel a familiarity with the genre and a perception more sophisticated than the average reader which "makes them even more useful in rhetorical analysis; [for] they do, after all, reveal their perceptions and value judgments of the art form under analysis."[58] Several rhetorical critics have found the approach of debriefing critics most useful: William Jordan in reviews of the novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, Phillip Tompkins in reviews of In Cold Blood, Patricia Weygandt in the reviews of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.[59]

The results of this study should indicate that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings accomplished her rhetorical function as intended or not as intended, or that her rhetorical function was not accomplished. The methodology employed is similar to that proffered by Carpenter, for the focus of this study is upon establishing a methodology whereby documents as responses to discourse may be

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[58] Ibid., p. 436.

[59] William Jordan, "A Study of Rhetorical Criticism in the Modern Novel," Debut Paper, SAA Convention, 1967.

Phillip Tompkins, "In Cold Fact," Esquire, 65 (June, 1966), 125.

Patricia Weygandt, "A Rhetorical Criticism of St. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." Unpublished paper, 1969, Kent State University.

analyzed in order to ascertain whether a predetermined effect has been achieved by that rhetorical effort.

Utilization of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection

In order to accomplish this study, the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection in the University of Florida Manuscript Collection will be fully utilized. The Rawlings Collection is composed of extensive correspondence, from famous people as well as from her readers; also manuscrips of books, short stories, and unpublished poems. Her personal scrapbooks, as well as two previously kept by relatives and one forwarded from another library, photographs, newspaper clippings, early drafts of speeches and lecture notes, as well as personal memorabilia are likewise included in this large collection, which covers mainly the period from 1930 to 1953.

Although there has been some published scholarly work on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, most of the theses and articles that have been written tend to investigate her work in a purely literary or biographical sense. Indeed, even the Collection itself has been only slightly employed for these purposes. The first, and only, extensive study of her work was published by Gordon Bigelow in 1966. This volume, Frontier Eden, "though scholarly in the sense I [Bigelow] tried to gather all the facts I [Bigelow]

could find," is considered more a biography than a research or scholarly document since it lacks documentation through either footnotes or bibliography.[60] However, the Bigelow book was not just the first extensive study of both her work and life but also the only study. The Bigelow book employed the Collection, yet the recent minor study of works by Samuel Bellman did not. Through the Twayne Authors Series, Samuel Bellman published in 1974 a book entitled, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, which dealt mainly with her writings. Bellman described her motivation for creativity as "blighted motherhood . . . a basically unfulfilled . . . deep need . . . of having and nurturing a young male child."[61] Bellman in no way utilized the Collection and acknowledges his one visit with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' three paternal aunts as, in his own words, his "major source of inspiration."[62]

Other research studies on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings are housed within the University of Florida Libraries. The doctoral dissertation of Ambolena Robillard, Maxwell Evarts Perkins: The Author's Editor, contains original

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[60] Bigelow, Frontier, p. xiv.

[61] Samuel Bellman, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), pp. 55, 57.

[62] Ibid., Preface.

correspondence between Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Maxwell Perkins, her editor, and is catalogued in the Rare Book Room.[63] The other four manuscript studies were written as partial fulfillment of graduate degrees in the English Department of the University of Florida. The earliest study was the Master's thesis by William J. McGuire, A Study of Florida Cracker Dialect Based Chiefly on the Prose Works of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, which was published in 1939.[64] During the 1950's, two Master's theses from the English Department were published: Joseph Peck, The Fiction-Writing Art of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, 1954; Mary Louise Slagel, The Artistic Use of Nature in the Fiction of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, 1953.[65] The most current manuscript study seems to be the Master's thesis of Carl Furlow, Folklore Elements in the Florida

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[63] Ambelena H. Robillard, Maxwell Evarts Perkins: Authors' Editor, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Florida (Gainesville, 1954).

[64] William J. McGuire, A Study of Florida Cracker Dialect Based Chiefly on the Prose Works of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Master's Thesis, University of Florida (Gainesville, 1939).

[65] Joseph R. Peck, The Fiction Writing Art of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Master's Thesis, University of Florida (Gainesville, 1954).

Mary Louise Slagel, The Artistic Use of Nature in the Fiction of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Master's Thesis, University of Florida (Gainesville, 1953).

Writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, 1963.[66] Although these investigators dealt mainly with such aspects as the listings of flora and fauna, the main focus of their studies was the literary element of her writings. Beyond these, only a few other professional articles have been written that were primarily concerned with her. Margaret Figh's article in the 1947 Southern Quarterly and Lloyd Morris' article in the 1938 North American Review were the main and only literary studies until Bigelow's article on "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Wilderness" in 1965 in the Sewanee Review and Bellman's article in 1970 in the Kansas Quarterly.[67] Thus, scholarly investigation into intentional symbol manipulation for predetermined effect--or investigation even tangentially related—has not been accomplished.

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[66]Carl Furlow, Folklore Elements in the Florida Writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Master's Thesis, University of Florida (Gainesville, 1963).

[67]Margaret Gillis Figh, "Folklore and Folk Speech in the Works of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings," Southern Folklore Quarterly, 11 (September, 1947), 201-209.

Lloyd Morris, "A New Classicist," The North American Review, 246 (September, 1938), 179-184.

Bigelow, "Wilderness."

Samuel I. Bellman, "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings: A Solitary Sojourner in the Florida Backwoods," Kansas Quarterly, 2 (1970), 78-87.

Conclusion

All published works have been concerned either in a biographical sense with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings or with her works in a purely literary sense. Moreover, some of these authors, such as Bigelow and Bellman, have dealt with the themes of The Yearling as well as their sources. None have focused upon the rhetorical function of language manipulation to achieve her predetermined effect. Consequently, this investigation shall be into effects of language manipulation and not into themes and sources of the novel itself.

Because Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was a writer in response to a need or exigence, Chapter Two will investigate the limits or constraints under which she operated. Chapters Three and Four will investigate the two segments of her audience and the ways in which they responded. These chapters will establish the causal relationship, if any, between technique and effect. Finally, Chapter Five will illustrate the various language techniques in her novel, summarizing their effect upon readers and suggesting further perspectives on the novelist as rhetor. By investigation of The Yearling and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings in this way, we come to a fuller understanding of the suasory function of language in her novel as well as the particular compositional means by which she achieved her intended goal.

CHAPTER TWO

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS' THEORY OF COMPOSITION

In The Rhetoric of Fiction, Wayne Booth stated that "the author cannot choose to avoid rhetoric . . . cannot choose whether or not to affect his readers . . . can only choose whether to do it well or poorly."[1] In so doing, Booth was arguing that the achievement of effect is, in part, determined by the author's awareness of the necessity for audience adaptation. Since Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' effect-oriented theory of composition has as an integral element her awareness of the reader, her theory would be congruent likewise with the Henry James' quotation upon which the Booth book is based: "The author makes his readers, just as he makes his characters." Booth elaborates upon this quotation, adding that "every stroke [of the author's pen] will help mold the reader into the kind of person suited to appreciate such a character and the book he is writing."[2] Drawing upon the

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[1]Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 143.

[2]Ibid., p. 83.

lecture notes of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, her autobiographical articles, her correspondence, her speeches, and reported interviews, her personal theory of composition will be articulated and from it will be derived a theory of audience adaptation by which the novelist attained her rhetorical objectives.

Biographical Sketch

As an added insight into the author and her theory, it is perhaps appropriate at this point to consider briefly the background from which the novelist emerged. In 1928, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings found her Yoknapatawphaw County, her unturned stone, on 72 acres between two lakes in central Florida, in a small, isolated, Florida-style clapboard house in an orange grove at Cross Creek, Florida. Here, after thirty-two years of northern cities, journalistic professionals, and abortive literary attempts, she found the source from which her creativity was to flow and through which she was to receive international recognition.

Before her move to Florida, Ms. Rawlings had sold stories and had published other types of material; in fact, at eleven, she won a two dollar prize for a story that was published in the Washington Post. At the university of Wisconsin, she served on the editorial staff

of both the yearbook and the Lit (literary) magazine. Her playwright credits included the composition of a pantomime fantasy, "Into Nowhere," that was performed by her classmates. After graduation from the University in 1918, she sought "the best of everything" in New York City. She relates the episode wherein all her money and valuables were stolen, but ironically, the thief left her manuscripts intact. In New York City, she worked as an editor of the National Board of the YWCA until in 1919 she married Charles A. Rawlings, her college sweetheart, and moved to his home in Rochester, New York.

During the next decade, she wrote for both the Louisville Courier and Journal and the Rochester Journal American. Her daily syndicated feature, "Songs of a Housewife," promoted such joys as:

Baby Sue's Bath

I vow, Sue no more needs a bath
  Than any sweet Killarney rose!
But rub the foamy lather on
  From golden head to sea-shell toes.

She stretches out her dimpled hands
  To catch the bubbles as they rise.
Each ripple is a miracle,
  Each soap splash a gay surprise.

Yes, let Aunt Annie watch the fun
  Before we tuck Sue up in bed.
See how the sunlight blues her eyes
  And gilds her water-towsled head!

Now wrap her snugly for her nap,
In her all loveliness enmeshed.
Her bath does me more good than Sue
It always leaves me so refreshed!

June 18, 1926
Rochester Times Union

Even though she attempted to publish short fiction, she was unable to break into the literary market. At this point in 1928, she and Charles purchased the 72-acre property at Cross Creek, Florida, and here the literary chronicle of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings begins.

Less than two brief years after her move to Cross Creek, Scribner's Magazine purchased "Cracker Chidlings" and "Jacob's Ladder." Maxwell Perkins, the great editor of Scribner's and the editor of the great—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Wolfe—began a correspondence with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings that admitted her to the small circle of creative literary giants of the 1930's whom Perkins nurtured. In 1933, she won first prize in the O. Henry Memorial Awards for "Gal Young Un," and her first novel, South Moon Under, was published as a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. She was to have other novels chosen as Book-of-the-Month Club and Literary Guild selections, she was to win the O. Henry Award again ("Black Secret," 1945), and she was to publish three other novels before her death from a cerebral hemorrhage in 1953; however, 1938 through 1939 were her years of greatest literary achievement, for with the publication of The Yearling came the recognition and success she had sought for 42 years.

Awareness of Audience

Critical to the formulation of her theory of composition was Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' awareness of and concern with the reader and the process of audience adaptation. From a thorough reading of her personal documents, which are housed in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection of the University of Florida Library, it became evident that her theory was predicated upon basic assumptions pertaining to the reader as a vital part of the creative process; as she wrote, "The honest author writes to meet his own preferably severe standards, true, but he must have an audience if he is to communicate."[3] Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to adjust and modify her writing not only to her own standard, but to those of her audience as well. The importance she placed upon the audience was paramount: "Let dilletantes prate as they will of the 'ivory tower' of writing for himself, a book is not a book until it is read, just as there is not sound without an ear to hear it."[4]

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[3]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "Autobiographical Sketch." (Hereafter, unless otherwise stipulated, all references (cited with the initials M. K. R.) are from documents in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.)

[4]Ibid.

Another of the several quotations found in her papers indicating awareness of the reader as audience was the following: "Just as music is only music when it is heard, so characters in a book only come to life when the reader takes them to his heart."[5] Her awareness of the effect-oriented nature of composition was consonant with that of Francois Mauriac, upon whom Wayne Booth also relies in The Rhetoric of Fiction: "An author who assures you that he writes for himself alone, and that he does not care whether he is heard or not, is a boaster and is deceiving either himself or you."[6]

A major element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' literary focus was involvement with the readers and awareness of the rhetorical process of "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas," as defined by Bryant (see Chapter One). For example, she felt that specific revisions should be based upon reader reaction (prepublication) at Scribner's. When Maxwell Perkins, her editor, suggested eliminating some of the hunting scenes in The Yearling, she replied, "Their inclusion or elimination should be determined solely by the answer to the question: 'Does the reader recognize the beginning of another hunting

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[5]M. K. R., "Lecture Notes on Characterization."

[6]Booth, p. 88.

episode with pleasurable anticipation, or is he bored at the thought of another and impatient to be on with the narrative?'"[7] Writing, rewriting, and editing were all dependent upon their effect on the reader, for neither the book, nor the writer, nor the reader exist in isolation; each complements and completes the other.

As Majorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote to Maxwell Perkins, in May of 1938, "Readers themselves, I think, contribute to a book. They add their own imaginations and it is as though the writer only gave them something to work on and they did the rest." This mutually advantageous association of reader and author was dependent upon both's fulfilling an obligation, for the reader's duty was "to open his mind to what the author was trying to say, if it was plain that the author's intention was sincere and earnest."[8] In a 1938 letter to Norman Berg, an Atlanta editor, she expanded on this audience concept: "By that [reader's duty] I mean the obligation of the reader to give himself, mind and soul, to the honest writer so that he should be open to receive everything offered." Though referred to her as "reader's duty," she also called it

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[7] To Maxwell Evart Perkins from M. K. R., December 29, 1937.

[8] M. K. R., "Lecture Notes on Characterization."

"the reader's delight to give himself to a book, to exercise his own imagination on the unliving material."[9]

Her concern with the reader's imaginative participation was a critical element of her effect-oriented theory of composition, since achievement of effect was, in a large part, dependent upon the awareness of the audience. In The Rhetoric of Fiction, Booth quotes the author and critic, Ford Maddox Ford, as saying, "You must have your eyes forever on your Reader. That alone constitutes Technique."[10]

Communication of Beauty Through Reality

As a thorough investigation of her papers revealed, beauty was the effect Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to communicate to her audience. However, in writing of her own personal concept of beauty, she was aware that her concept might differ from that of her readers; consequently, she was concerned about the difficulty in transmitting her concept of beauty to her readers. Her lecture notes on "The Relativity of Beauty" address this concern: "I do not know what is beautiful or what is ugly, I only know what seems beautiful to me. As a writer I can only try

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Booth, p. 38.

to focus in." Nevertheless, she knew she had the ability to "focus in," to make visible the invisible, to make others see the natural Florida with the "inner eye," for she stated in her lecture, "I seem to have the gift for making others see. . . ."[11]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings may have called her ability to share what she perceived as beautiful with others a gift, but it was not by so amorphous a trait as a gift that she was able to convey beauty to her audience. Within her definition of the artist lay the means whereby she achieved the results: "No one is immune to beauty. The artist is one who tries to share, by giving it concrete expression, the particular form of beauty that has stirred him."[12]

In order for the reader to be stirred as she had been stirred, in order for the reader to see beauty as she had seen it, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings felt she must formulate a reality for those forms of beauty which have stirred her and through this reality share that beauty with the reader. Reality was no simple fidelity to actuality, however, for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to create for the reader a sense of reality into which the reader might bring the imagination to play. This, then, is not

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[11] M. K. R., "Notes for Lecture on Creative Writing."

[12] M. K. R., "Lecture Notes on Relativity of Beauty."

mere factuality, but verisimilitude. As she defined it, "the sense is only the imaginative awareness of actuality,"[13] which is both vivid and natural. Here, then, was total reader participation, for the reader brought into play the imagination which finalized and actualized the reality Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had attempted to formulate. Through this perceived sense of reality she was able to transmit to the reader the beauty evoked in her by the Florida Cracker.

Without this vividness, the communication of beauty can be difficult to achieve. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings addressed this point: "Perhaps that is the secret of fiction. When people written about move in reality before our eyes, touch us, then anything they do becomes vivid and important."[14] In her lecture, "Facts, Verses, in Fiction," she also stated, "it is difficult to be stirred by something we have never seen or that is not recreated for us with great vividness."[15] So then does she attempt to share her concept of beauty with the reader through the creation of a vivid sense of reality.

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[13]M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction."

[14]To Maxwell Evart Perkins from H. K. R., undated, approximately January, 1937.

[15]M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction."

Definition of Beauty

The predetermined effect Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings sought in her writing was the communication of beauty to her readers. In this study, beauty is defined through the perception of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. To her, the designation of the title "artist" was predicated upon the ability to communicate the effect of beauty; for the artist was one who shared with the audience as the writer was one who shared with the reader. Since, for the writer, beauty was always in terms of reader or audience perception, then the definition of the artist was consonant with her earlier assumptions that the creative product did not exist until it was received. To her, all people were susceptible to beauty; however, the true artistic impulse was in the sharing. To illustrate this sharing, this communication of beauty, she related to her lecture class the following incident.

> I took some negro boys into my orange grove to pick up the dropped fruit. One ragged dirty little darky found an orange-tree snail, no bigger than a pea. He brought it to me and said, 'Lady this here is purty. Do you want it?'[16]

Upon recitation of this anecdote, she stated, "Incidentally, that is probably an example of the true artistic impulse.

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[16]M. K. R., "Relativity of Beauty."

The artist is one who tries to share . . ." for the creative impulse does not exist in isolation, but in conjunction with an audience.[17]

The beauty which she, as an artist, attempted to communicate to the reader was more important to her than truth, for truth may not be validated aesthetically. When beauty has been communicated, the result can be authenticated, for as she stated, "beauty is more valid, more important, more trustworthy than truth, because while we cannot be sure of truth, we know with our own minds and senses when we are aesthetically or spiritually stirred and by what."[18] In a 1935 speech delivered at Florida Southern College, she expressed her feelings of inadequacy as an artist whenever she was unable to communicate the sense of beauty to her readers: "I always feel that I've failed completely as an artist when I've left anyone with a sense of ugliness."[19]

Although Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' goal as an artist was to share with the reader that in which she found beauty, she asked the following question in a

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[17] Ibid.

[18] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

[19] M. K. R., "Floridian: The Invisible Florida." Typed script of speech, 1935.

lecture: "What hope is there for any writer to pass on the particular beauty that happens to stir him?" In reply to her own query, she stated, "It is in his fierce determination to make intangible beauty tangible"; therefore, communication to the reader of the sense of beauty lies for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings in the adherence to her personal theory of composition.[20]

In dealing with the concept of beauty, usually the aesthetic and not the rhetorical dimension has been involved; however, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' concern was with the communication of beauty, and it is therefore her concept and her definition of the term that this study uses. As the author herself stated, "I do not know what is beautiful or what is ugly, I only know what seems beautiful to me. As a writer I can only try to focus in."[21] And it was through the formulation and utilization of her effect-oriented and personal theory of composition that she attempted to "focus in," and communicate to her reading audience that sense of beauty she felt was essential to art.

Responses to Beauty

The existence of beauty for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was defined not only by her own reaction, but

[20] M. K. R., "Relativity of Beauty."

[21] Ibid.

also by the reaction of her readers. Since Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings recognized "the obligation of the reader to open his mind to what the author was trying to say," then reader reaction was in part dependent on the artist's intention, which at that point was the communication of beauty.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings perceived beauty in the interaction of the Florida Cracker with the natural environment; however, in order to share this beauty, she had to communicate it to the reader. Since to her beauty existed not in isolation but in reaction, it was by this reaction that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings defined it.

> Beauty is anything that stirs an emotional reaction to an extent that we are conscious of a spiritual excitement over and above the sensory perception.[22]

Stressing once more the resultant effect, she views beauty as that which "stirs the imagination of the beholder."[23] In her 1935 speech delivered at Florida Southern College, she again addressed the resultant "spiritual excitement" to beauty that occurs in those to whom the invisible is made visible, for "beauty must be seen with spiritual as well as physical eye. It is invisible to those unfortunate folks who . . . do not have the inner eye with

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[22] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

[23] Ibid.

which to see." By these emotions, then, shall beauty be known to have been effected. When the reader has experienced or has expressed the experience so then shall the reader have seen with "the inner eye."

Basically, though, this effect is achieved through techniques that are a part of her personal theory of composition. Thus, when a reader has experienced beauty, the resultant effect will manifest itself through a stirring of the imagination as well as an emotional and spiritual excitation. And what are the sources of beauty which the author communicates? To Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings the interaction of a small group of people in a specific locale provided a wealth of such beauty.

Sources of Beauty Particularly in The Yearling

Although her avowed objective was the achievement of the effect of beauty on the reader, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings realized that beauty was a relative quality. For her personally, the beauty she sought to share was explicit within the Florida Scrub.

> I find them [the people of the Florida backwoods] beautiful because they are an integral part of their background, beautiful in their repose, their dignity, their self-respect . . . They joke about hunger and death. But they are distinctly conscious of their harmony with their surroundings. Many

> of them are definitely conscious of the natural beauty around them and of the harmony of their lives.[24]

However, her concept of beauty might be dissimilar to that of her readers. She wrote in her notes on Creative Writing, "It means that beauty is not absolute, but is distinctly relative, and, that what fails to stir me, may constitute beauty for you."[25] She was, however, quick to point out some particular benefits to the relativity of beauty as far as her personal focus was concerned.

> Perhaps it's just as well that everyone doesn't see beauty as we do, for if everyone was stirred deeply as some of us by the hammocks and the rivers and the marshes, the state would be overpopulated.[26]

Although recognizing the possibility of differing perspectives between the reader and the writer, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had three main parameters within which she, herself, found beauty; and as revealed in her papers, these areas may be designated to the following categories: (a) the simplicity of the Cracker people, (b) the natural Florida setting, and (c) the harmony of the people with this setting or background.

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[24] M. K. R., "Relativity of Beauty.

[25] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

[26] M. K. R., "Floridian."

The simplicity of the Florida Cracker was one of the main foci of beauty as perceived by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. When asked, in a radio interview in 1941, her reasons for remaining in Florida, she praised "the natural beauties and a certain simplicity of life in the rural sections."[27] Continually she both wrote and spoke about the beauty of these people: "I see the simplicity and courage and natural fight behind these people. Other writers see other things."[28] When asked why she wrote of these people, she answered, "They were a part of something that I found entirely beautiful; I wrote of the people and the background I found stirring and admirable."[29]

For all her interest in the simplicity of the Florida Cracker, she had been chastised by the Florida Commerce Department which apparently failed to see this beauty.

> When I began to write of the simpler people more and their simpler life, I was condemned for emphasizing a side of life that was not believed to be helpful to the state's development.[30]

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[27] M. K. R., "Radio Interview." Typed Script, 1941.

[28] M. K. R., "Lecture Notes on Characterization."

[29] M. K. R., "Radio Interview."

[30] Ibid.

It mattered little to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. She knew she had found beauty when she saw the people, and decided "I must write of this land and these people as I saw them, stirred by my new love."[31] According to a personal interview by Harry Evans, "The things Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wanted to write about were so simple she doubted her ability to make them interesting."[32] That this fear was ill-founded is evident in the interest-holding qualities of the following speech, in which she described the sense of beauty she found in the simplicity of the people.

> You must have seen some withered old woman in a gray and white percale dress standing in the doorway of an unpainted pine shack under a live oak or a magnolia, and felt that she was a strong and lovely part of a sturdy and admirable and a difficult life.[33]

It was of this beauty that she attempted to write and to preserve before it vanished into time.

> The true Florida Crackers are almost gone and I regret it, because they are an integral part of their background, and beautiful in their repose, their dignity, their self respect.[34]

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[31] M. K. R., "Autobiographical Sketch."

[32] Harry Evans, "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings," The Family Circle, 2 (May 14, 1943), unnumbered scrapbook copy.

[33] M. K. R., "The Floridian."

[34] Ibid.

Thus, it was in the vanishing Florida backwoods people she found a major element of her concept of beauty.

The beauty Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings saw was also within the natural setting of the Florida Scrub, for as she stated in one of her speeches, "To those of us who find the natural Florida so lovely, everything about it is beautiful, its wild life and even its few remaining backwoods inhabitants."[35] Enveloped by the beauty of the land, the flora and the fauna of her environment pervaded her literary approach. As a personal interviewer remarked, "She wanted to write about flowers, ferns, frogs, and the people who lived close to them."[36]

As cited previously, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was aware that there were some who could not see the beauty she saw: "those unfortunate folks who are blind or blunted to many forms of beauty because they do not have the inner eye with which to see."[37] It is entirely possible that her work in The Yearling reflects an attempt to make what may have been invisible beauty to some, visible to others.

To Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, beauty also existed in the harmony of the Florida Cracker with the Florida

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Evans, "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings," Family Circle.

[37] M. K. R., "The Floridian."

Scrub She stated her philosophy in a 1941 radio interview.

> I have a theory, that there is an affinity between people and places. Each of us is entitled to live in a place against a physical background that is harmonious with our own nature.[38]

This harmony of people and environment, this balance and affinity, was the beauty she saw and of which she wrote.

> I was struck at once by a harmony between the people and their background. The poorest Crackers had a sense of oneness with the country itself, the scrub, the piney woods, the hammocks, the prairies. They were a part of something I found entirely beautiful.[39]

What she saw in the people and their background she believed was shared by the people themselves, for she felt they were aware both of this beauty and of their harmony with it. To her, one aspect of beauty was this very awareness, "the feeling of these people for a natural and harmonious background."[40]

Her rendering of the closed system of The Yearling, as discussed previously in Chapter One, elaborated on her concept of beauty of the individual interacting with the environment. It is this harmony of the Florida Crackers

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[38] M. K. R., "Radio Interview."

[39] Ibid.

[40] "A Harmony Is Sung from M. K. R.," June 5, 1938.

with the Florida Scrub which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings sought to share and which is the beauty that personally "stirs an emotional reaction [and brings about] a spiritual excitement over and above the sensory perception."[41]

Theory of Composition Necessary to Achieve Effect of Beauty Through Creation of Reality

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition was the means whereby she, as an artist, was able to create a sense of actuality by which beauty was communicated to the reader. The salient facets of that theory of composition are the process of characterization, the use of facts and details, and the use of objectivity, simplicity, and dialect. To Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings these elements of language manipulation helped achieve rhetorical effectiveness by creating a reality for the reader which conveyed her concept of beauty.

Through the Process of Characterization

Concerned with a "sense of actuality," specifically reality in characterization, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings adhered to the definition of characterization proffered by Holman that characterization is "the creation of images

[41] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

by imaginary persons so credible that they exist for the reader as real within the limits of the fiction. The ability to characterize the people of his imagination successfully is one of the primary attributes of a good novelist."[42]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to achieve reality through the process of characterization. She viewed this element as of primary importance: "In the novel of people, of life and living, nothing is more important than characterization."[43] Her approach to the novel mirrored this statement. Elsewhere, she compared the characters in her novel to piano keys, for the characters were the instruments by which the story was brought forward.[44] Ultimately, "the success of the novel of ideas depends on whether the characters are sufficiently alive to carry those ideas . . . how real."[45]

Characters, to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "are like people in a long friendship or in a marriage; if the author's job is well done, they become a part of you, so that you never forget them."[46] Various lectures of

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[42]William F. Thrall, Addison Hubbard, and Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 79.

[43]M. K. R., "Characterization."

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

hers and letters were addressed to the process of characterization. It was of major concern, since by this process, she attempted to achieve the sense of reality from which came the effect of beauty. Investigation of primarily four of her lectures ("Characterization," "Facts, Verses, in Fiction," "The Mechanics of Writing," and "Creative Writing"), as well as several pieces of her correspondence, yielded three broad principles of characterization to which she adhered:

(1) The characters are "true-to-life": although the characters may have some basis in reality, it is by the infusion of the author's artistic imagination that the character achieves "a sense of actuality."

(2) The major characters function not only as particular but also as the universal, acting in ways identifiable as Every Person.

(3) The characters are used as cohesive units encompassing within their personalities the individual limits of their thoughts and actions.

True-to-life characterization

Characters may have some basis in truth, but it is through the infusion of the artist's creative imagination that the characters begin to "move in reality." Except for the doctor, the characters in The Yearling are all fictitious, more fictitious than any she had used previously, she told an interviewer; however, Jody did

have some basis in truth, for he embodied the memory of two old men, one of whom had told Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings about his youth and of the destruction of his pet deer which threatened the family's meager crop of corn; and as she stated: "I crystallized their tales into the story of a boy who might have lived that uncomplicated life in the scrub."[47] This was the basis of her story. The situation involved in the creation of characters for The Yearling was the subject of one of her lectures.

> Sometimes an idea or an emotion or a situation or a set of dramatic incidents cries out to be written about. In that case, the writer creates the characters to express the idea, the emotion, the situation or the set of dramatic incidents.[48]

Through the addition of artistic details by the author, through the infusion of the creative imagination of the author, these characters take on a reality. The reality stems, not from a journalistic-like reportage, but from an artistic rendering. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings stated, there is "more activity required in making truth artistic than starting from scratch."[49] She would begin with

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[47]Author unknown, "Author Tells of Hot Trip from Bimini," undated scrapbook copy.

Author unknown, "Today's Woman," Christian Science Monitor, September 4, 1940.

[48]M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction."

[49]M. K. R., "The Mechanics of Writing."

an idea or perhaps with the semblance of a character from reality and then create the personage her narrative required. Addressing this matter, she stated in a lecture: "What often happens is that he [the artist] adds his own thoughts, for his own purposes, to characters he has known."[50]

Out of her own imagination she then "fertilizes by the creative germ" the character she has created. The artist hopes "then in actual writing to transfuse your work with your own personality . . . a process of osmosis, to filter what you have to say through your characters."[51] The resulting character, then, is mainly fictitious—the creation of the artist, who "may begin with an actual living person, but his imagination takes him further to adapt the character to his own creative needs so that the final character, even though dozens of people claim to recognize him or her, is fiction."[52]

Though she has often denied it, many have assumed to recognize characters as being copied from life, but, in fact, none of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' characters is a "life copy," nor does she feel that other authors have copied characters. "I think no writer has ever completely

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[50] M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction."

[51] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

[52] M. K. R., "Autobiographical Sketch."

copied a true character. . . . Many of my own characters are based on people I know, but not a single one is a life copy."[53] The created character has been supplemented by the author's point of view, infused by the creative imagination, and placed in "an abode in time and space."[54] Likewise, characters are changed and adapted for coherence to the author's intention.

Universality in characterization

Another general principle of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was the portrayal of the major characters as representative of a fusion wherein the individual functions both as the particular and the universal, or as the literary term states, the concrete universal. Her definition of the role of the writer embodies the concept of universality of characterization to which she adhered.

> For the producer of literature is not a reporter but a creator. His concern is not with presenting superficial and external aspects, however engaging, of an actual people; it is with the inner revelation of mankind, thinking and moving against a backdrop of life itself with as much dramatic or pointed effect as the artistry of the writer can command.[55]

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[53] Ibid.

[54] M. K. R., "Characterization."

[55] Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "Regional Literature of the South," College English, 1 (February, 1940), 381-389.

The individual, interacting with the environment, reflects the macrocosm of total humanity, interacting with the universe. The closed system of the novel, The Yearling, detailed in Chapter One, existed as an attempt to order the chaos of life. As she stated in her address to the National Council of Teachers of English,

> The creative writer filters men and women real and fancied through his imagination as through a catalytic agent to resolve the confusion of life into an ordered pattern, the coordinated meaningful design colored with the creator's personality, keyed to his own philosophy that we call art."[56]

Characters may function on several levels either as the specific individual or as the universal. In an early lecture, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings states,

> Character can be strictly an individual or as a character can typify mankind in various situations of defeat or success, tragedy or joy, love or hate, or any aspect of human conflict within itself or in relation to other people or to life.[57]

The major characters in The Yearling function on the universal level, whereas the minor characters function more on the specific factual level. In a 1913 interview she stated specifically the universal function within the closed system of The Yearling:

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[56] Ibid.

[57] M. K. R., "Characterization,"

> . . . life (is represented by his pet, the deer), love (the real significance of his father's love and his own love of the deer), death of his father, and loneliness.[58]

Expressed through Jody is the universal premonition of maturity that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings first experienced on her father's farm long years before. The youth and adolescence of Jody function to reflect the remembered common emotion.

> At the beginning Jody is twelve years old. In the year covered by the book he experienced the thing I remembered experiencing that April day back in Brookland . . . that definite premonition of maturity . . . I referred to it a while ago as ecstacy tinged with sadness.[59]

Her youth and her father were, as she stated, the basis of her feeling of universality, for "from him I learned my love of nature . . . and a sense of kinship with men and women everywhere who live close to the soil."[60] Thus, through the generalization of the particular, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings attempted to achieve in The Yearling the universal, typifying those human emotions common to all people in all ages within a chosen character.

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[58] Evans, "Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings," Family Circle.

[59] Ibid.

[60] M. K. R., "Autobiographical Sketch."

Unity in characterization

The third aspect of characterization to which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings adhered was the functioning of the characters as cohesive units. The concept of unity of characterization in a novel is the organizing principle that the characters are integrated and have, as stated by Holman, "a necessary relationship to each other and an essential relationship to the whole of which they are parts."[61] The totality of character is achieved by the cohesiveness of action and plausibility of motivation. Credibility is resultant from coherence; in other words, the characters do nothing in contradiction of their roles, thereby achieving a reality of harmony and unity.

The Yearling was told through the perspective of a twelve-year-old boy, and in order to achieve unity, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings is constantly cautious of using too mature a vocabulary or too complex a perspective for a twelve-year-old. She felt her previous work, Golden Apples, had failed because of a disharmony and a lack of unity, for as she wrote Maxwell Perkins on July 14, 1936, "I am sure you are wrong about the reason for Golden Apples not doing better. People recognized unconsciously in it disharmony—and every one is hungry for harmony and

[61] Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman, p. 545.

unity." She worked to make sure this would not be the case with The Yearling. On July 3, 1936, when she wrote Maxwell Perkins of her plans for her new book, she stated: "It will be absolutely all told through the boy's eyes. I want it through his eyes before the age of puberty brings in any other factors to confuse the simplicity of viewpoint." Although she later considered changing her approach, she realized the possible disharmony and loss of unity that could result. "But I dare not switch the interest that way; that is, begin from the father's point of view, then take it up from the boy's; for the father continues throughout the narrative, but it must be as the boy's father, not as the chief protagonist. . . ."[62] A change could be inconsistent with the reality of the novel.

For Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings harmony and unity result from adequate reinforcement of character with details, since as she expressed it, in a novel, "character doesn't stand alone; character must be backed up."[63] Though she had the background, and basically the idea for The Yearling, she had to work hard to achieve unity. In 1935, she was aware of the hard work that would be involved.

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[62]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., October 16, 1936.

[63]M. K. R., "Characterization."

> Its success will depend, I should say, almost altogether on how real, how vivid, I am able to make individuals whose lives move along . . . [and it involves] tremendously hard work in delineating anything like a reality.[64]

Two years later, she felt the characters were not adequately created and she had not achieved unity of characterization, so she rewrote much of the novel.

> I had to discard everything of The Yearling . . . to give it cohesion. My first thoughts had been to plunge into more or less exciting events. Then I realized that they were not exciting unless the boy and his father and his surroundings were so real, so familiar that the things that happened to him took on color because it all came closer home in its very familiarity.[65]

One of the basic precepts of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' writing was the value of characterization: "In a novel you can't get away from the importance of characterization."[66] The careful delineation of character to achieve unity was a major factor in characterization, and to accomplish it, often, "infinitely apparently small details require rewriting to give a final harmony of characterization."[67] The character functions as an integral

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[64]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., undated, approximately December, 1935.

[65]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., undated, approximately January, 1947.

[66]M. K. R., "Characterization."

[67]M. K. R., "Autobiographical Sketch."

and cohesive unit, supplementing and complementing the total novel. In an autobiographical sketch, she stated, "None of my novels has satisfied me, [however] The Yearling is probably the most coordinated of my books."[68]

Through Use of Facts and Details

The use of facts and details to achieve a sense of reality by which the effect of beauty is accomplished was another major element of her theory of composition. The place of fact or scientific details in fiction was manifest throughout her papers; for example, the title of one of her lectures was "Facts, Verses, in Fiction," which, as indicated on the folder in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, she had filed originally under 'Facts vs. Fiction.' To Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings all the facts that surround the writer are source material; but those facts may be "fertilized by the creative germ" and "transfused with your own [author's] personality."[69] "Even the still-life painting is transformed with the personality of the painter."[70] These facts were a part of the adjustments made to actuality so that, as stated by Marjorie Kinnan

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[68] Ibid.

[69] M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction."
M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

[70] Ibid.

Rawlings, "it better fitted the quality of mind I wanted catch . . . yet that quality of mind is true. . . ."[71] Writers are like great teachers, who have transfused facts with their own creative personality and "have found beauty in ideas, in what pass for facts."[72]

The botanical details of the Florida Scrub, the agricultural information pertinent to farming, the data important to day-to-day existence, and the folklore that pervaded the lives of the Florida Cracker were, to the surprise of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, that which greatly interested her readers. Her surprise was in part due to the pleasure she also received from this type of factual information.

> It is only since Golden Apples that I realize what it is about my writing that people like. I don't mean that I am writing for anyone, but now I feel free to luxuriate in the simple details that interest me and that I have been so amazed to find interest other people.[73]

These botanical, agricultural, and social details were those she fully utilized to infuse her writing with a sense of reality.

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[71] M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction."

[72] M. K. R., "Relativity of Beauty."

[73] To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., July 31, 1936.

Her concern with the problems of accuracy in the details and facts continued to pervade many of her personal papers. Once when questioned on the authenticity of a dance of whooping cranes she had written about in The Yearling, she defended herself to an interviewer by stating, "she could not prove the story, but believed it because it was told her by a man whose memory she found to be unfailingly clear and accurate."[74] In her continuing desire for authenticity, she drew a geological map of the region used in The Yearling and a "month-by-month chart of events for the year that is covered in the book."[75] Much of her energies had been spent in gathering factual data; for example, living with different families for weeks in the Florida Scrub, keeping journals on folklore and pharmacopoeia and botany, informally interviewing people at the Creek. All this was part of her concern with factual information, which was most apparent in her letter to Maxwell Perkins one month after the publication of The Yearling.

> My secret fear about The Yearling has just been allayed. I was so afraid that the old-guard hunters and woodsmen would find flaws. I know you think I put too much emphasis on the importance

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[74] Author unknown, "Author Tells of Hot Trip . . ."

[75] To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., March 26, 1937.

> of fact in fiction, but it seems to me that this type of work is not valid if the nature lore behind it is not scientifically true in every detail.[76]

And finally, in one of her lectures, she replies to her own rhetorical question, "What makes characters real?" by stating simply, "Details."[77]

Methods of Expression

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' attempt to achieve a verisimilitude which could bring the reader's imagination into play encompassed the use not only of facts and details, but also of various methods of expression in her audience-oriented style. For Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, style was the adaptation of her language in order to achieve mutual understanding between the author and the reader. No effect, especially the effect of beauty, would be possible if the style were inappropriate. In a 1940 paper written for the National Council of Teachers of English, she discussed style as it related to a volume by Margaret Mitchell.

> Yet we ask of style principally that it be an effective medium of expression for the material itself, and it seems to me that no narrative, no set of characters, could carry the

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[76]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., May 14, 1937.

[77]M. K. R., "Characterization."

> excitement and the living conviction of this book unless the style were at least adequate.[78]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' style was a combination of both the idea to be expressed and the individual language manipulation necessary to achieve a close transmission of the idea. Beauty was the idea to be expressed, and certain personal methods were necessary in order to create a vivid and natural reality from which to obtain the effect of beauty in the reader. What the reader receives from the language manipulations of the author may not only be what explicitly was stated, but also what subtlely was connoted.

Evidence within her papers indicated specific facets of her concept of style to achieve a predetermined effect. These included evincing a quality of objectivity, as well as utilizing simplicity of construction, and dialect. Fully realizing that the goal of all narrative is understanding, she stressed the advantage she had received from her earlier career as a journalist: "In newspaper work, one has to write so that one is understood clearly. Only a great genius is privileged not to be understood."[79] In her lecture to a class in Creative Writing at the University of Florida, she succinctly summed up the goals of

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[78] M. K. R., "Regional Literature."

[79] M. K. R., "Writing as a Career," Book of Knowledge Annual, 1948, Typed Script.

style as follows: "The desire to write is the desire to say something, to say that something well, to make that something understood."[80]

Objectivity

Objectivity is a major quality used to create a sense of actuality with which to communicate beauty to the reader. Objectivity may be defined as that effect evinced by a literary work when that writing is understood by the readers as being independent from the emotional or personal sentiments of the author. Personal detachment was for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings an important technique that she described in her lectures as the ability of "being able to view it all from the outside."[81] This type of objectivity, once more, was gleaned from her newspaper work, for in journalism, "one learns human nature in the raw. One learns to see human beings objectively."[82]

As she wrote in a letter to Maxwell Perkins, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings aspired to sharing this aesthetic distancing with another literary figure of her day, F. Scott Fitzgerald, for she hoped to emulate his ability to

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[80] M. K. R., "Mechanics of Writing."

[81] M. K. R., "Creating Writing."

[82] M. K. R., "Writing as a Career."

"visualize people not in their immediate setting from the human point of view—but in time and space—almost you might say with divine detachment."[83] Her aesthetic distancing was in no way accidental. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins in 1936, three years before The Yearling's completion, she explicitly stated her goal of objectivity: ". . . it may sound sentimental or too symbolic to make a good story . . . I have no fear of it at all, and I shall be careful never to sentimentalize."[84]

Dialect

Another method Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings employed was that of dialect. By stressing dialectical differences in vocabulary, grammatical habits, and pronunciation, the isolation and separation of the Florida Cracker by both natural and social barriers were ever made evident. The resultant dialect used in The Yearling to convey the realistic element of the Florida Cracker emerged over a period of time, after her first attempts at dialect proved inadequate. In a letter to Norman Berg she stated her awareness that "dialect is a dangerous business. . . ."[85] Marjorie Kinnan

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[83]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., February 11, 1934.

[84]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., undated, approximately October, 1936.

[85]To Norman S. Berg from M. K. R., November 27, 1943.

Rawlings also indicated her awareness of the effect of incorrectly written dialect when, in her correspondence, she criticizes another author for giving not only the dialogue but also the narrative in dialect: "The Llewellyn book . . . was indeed sorry stuff . . . what invalidated it was the use of dialect to convey thoughts as well as speech."[86] Likewise, in a talk to the National Council of Teachers of English, she stated that too deep an involvement with dialect moves the work into a technical or National Geographic type of study: "Elizabeth Madox Roberts evinces such a scholarly preoccupation with dialect speech as to force her work into the class of technical or erudite writings. . . ."[87]

Her use of Cracker speech functions not only as part of her attempted creation of actuality, but also as a symbol. As she stated, "Cracker speech is a certain sign of the isolation of the Florida interiors. . . ."[88] The importance of the use of dialect to create the realistic sense of the Florida land and the isolation of the frontier is evinced in her statement: "The Cracker speech of long isolation is in my opinion one of the assurances

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[86] Ibid.

[87] M. K. R., "Regional Literature."

[88] M. K. R., "Cracker Florida," Early Autobiographical Writings.

of the entrenchment of this frontier. Your true frontier is resistant."[89] Within this isolation, both the Cracker people and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings find beauty.

Dialect, even though "a dangerous business," seemed to be a necessity to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings if she were to create a sense of actuality, but she was aware that dialect must be used carefully: "I have suffered over my own necessary (or so I thought) use of it [dialect] for dialogue. A writer can JUST get by on using it for dialogue . . . but to carry it further is fatal."[90] In The Yearling, dialect was used only for dialogue.

Simplicity

With her audience-centered theory of composition, simplicity of style was of major importance to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. To complicate the text with superfluous elements would result in a mockery of reality, and not the sense of actuality she wished to achieve. Syntax was determined by the goal of reality. For example, as she stated in one of her lectures, it is necessary to use "short, almost blunt sentences if I am not to lose reality."[91] However, she also stated that her natural tendency

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[89] Ibid.

[90] To Norman S. Berg from M. K. R., November 27, 1943.

[91] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

seemed to be toward a cluttering of the text and only through self-discipline was she able to accomplish the simplicity of style she desired. In a 1939 article about her winning the Pulitzer Prize, she is quoted as addressing the concern of simplicity in a letter written several years previously.

> Now I think I have discovered my weakness . . . It is a tendency to clutter the text with gaudy colors that somehow mock reality, like a Maxfield Parrish print. I must work under my own mental thumb screws, hold myself in check when I want to gallop.[92]

The various tricks of style were anathema to her simplistic approach, for she felt, "tricks of technique annoy rather than please."[93] Her admonition was against the artificial and for personal integrity and honesty in writing. Use "integrity in fiction . . . be yourself," she warned.[94]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings stressed neither the use of new words singly or in new combinations, nor the use of old words in old combinations. She admonished against the latter, saying, "The most hopeless sign in beginning writers is the use of trite phrases."[95] However, she did

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[92] Author Unknown, "Pulitzer Winner," Independent Woman, January, 1939, in scrapbook.

[93] M. K. R., "Mechanics of Writing."

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

advocate the use of old simple words in new combinations.

> The words themselves do not seem stale to us and we do not tire of them anymore than we do of water to drink; [however], certain often-used combinations of words are stale.[96]

Subsumed under the heading "Choosing a Style" in her lecture on the "Mechanics of Writing," she labels saying the obvious as "burbling." Even symbols and metaphors are to be simplistic, but not obvious: "In my stories, not the red of Chinese lacquer but the red [of a cardinal]."[97]

Underplaying was another aspect of this simplistic approach. Once again, she cites the contribution her early journalistic career made to her literary style, for the style she learned as a journalist is the style she advocates as a creative artist: "There was no place for the purple prose to which all young writers are so addicted."[98]

In the type of uncluttered, simple writing to which she often referred, "the story must be told with no waste of words and the superfluous adjectives and adverbs dropped by the wayside."[99] Understatement forces

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] M. K. R., "Autobiographical Sketch."

[99] Ibid.

the reader to bring into play the imagination, whereas overstatement leads to surfeit. Since to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings effective writing was often dependent upon this interplay of reader's imagination with artistic creation, then to her "most bad writing is overwriting; understatement in the hands of anyone who is basically a writer is always more effective than overstatement."[100] Her preference for understatement is just another facet of her continued awareness of the reader and the writer's effect upon the reader. As she told her class, the writer uses understatement "for the simple reason that you have to leave some play for the reader's own imagination. The reader himself fills the gap."[101]

The expressive technique Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings utilized to achieve a sense of reality was basically direct and simple. The process of narrative that best created a sense of reality was that which she had learned through experience, for she felt that the complex narrative used earlier had diminished the effect and so was responsible for "the fatally divided interest that we got in Golden Apples."[102] For The Yearling she did not make that mistake.

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[100] M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

[101] Ibid.

[102] To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., October 16, 1936.

With a predilection for wanting to bring the audience's imagination into play, her natural tendency, as far as narrative was concerned, was toward generalization and implicitness, leading at times to a type of vagueness; however, from Maxwell Perkins she learned that reality is gained otherwise.

> I had to learn what I learned from Maxwell Perkins, the book editor at Scribner's, is the value, no, the necessity, of direct narrative, direct, not implicit, not generalized. It is much better to make one direct incident of such intensity and let the one incident speak for all.[103]

So, then, does she attempt not to generalize in her narration in order that once more the reader can bring into play the imagination. Thus, the reader through imagination extends the explicit incident to a larger content.

Another pitfall to this type of direct, simple narrative was the episodic narrative. She wrote Maxwell Perkins of this concern on May 10, 1937: "The principal difficulty at present is in keeping a steady flow of narrative rather than falling into the disjointed abyss of mere episodes." However, the narrative method of events in their time sequence seemed to fit with the total harmony and simplicity of the novel and evolved naturally to create a sense of reality. "Once I have decided on the people

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[103]M. K. R., "Creative Writing."

who will be in the book, I think the narrative will flow naturally of its own accord," she wrote in 1936.[104]

In order to create a sense of reality from which to obtain the effect of beauty she sought expression that utilized dialect for appropriate purposes and was basically simple and objective. These stylistic and narrative goals were set long before she began writing The Yearling, for she wrote in an October, 1936, letter to Maxwell Perkins: "The style [for The Yearling] will be very simple and direct." For the next two years she sought to accomplish that goal.

Conclusion

The objective of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' personal theory of composition was to communicate beauty to her readers. Since, to her, the artist was "one who shares . . . the particular form of beauty that has stirred him," she therefore attempted to communicate to her readers that form of beauty which had stirred her and to which she had responded—the Florida Cracker interacting with the Florida Scrub.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had defined beauty as a soaring of the imagination as well as an emotional and

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[104]To Maxwell Perkins from M. K. R., July 31, 1936.

spiritual excitation, and this defined also her reaction to the Florida Cracker. Her personal definition of beauty placed the emphasis on the resultant effect on the reader and by this effect was beauty known to have been achieved. Yet, for the reader to experience beauty as she had experienced it, a sense of actuality must be formulated for that form which had stirred her. Her theory of composition was the means by which she created a sense of actuality for the reader, first through the process of characterization, specifically focusing on the use of true-to-life characters, universality, and unity. Secondly, she attempted to achieve reality through the use of scientifically accurate facts and details. And finally, she used objectivity, dialect and simplicity. As it functioned within these three broad principles, The Yearling evinced an audience adaptation to attain specific rhetorical goals, working through the reader's imagination to communicate the beauty Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings recognized around her.

CHAPTER THREE

RESPONSE FROM THE GENERAL READERSHIP

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' audience-oriented theory of composition had as its goal the accomplishment of a predetermined effect. In the preceding chapter, her personal theory of composition was articulated to isolate those characteristic language usages by which she sought to communicate the effect of beauty. In order to determine the extent of that possible effectiveness, the responses of her readers must be studied, operating from the perspective advanced by Tompkins, in his work, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," as well as the model provided by Carpenter in "Alfred Thayer Mahan's Style in Sea Power: A Paramessage Conducing to Ethos," who stated that effectiveness is "most accurately discernible in the responses of people for whom the discourse was intended."[1] Thus the methodological focus of this chapter is not on her discourse itself but rather on debriefing the readership.

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[1]Phillip Tompkins, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 55 (December, 1969), 431-439.

Ronald Carpenter, "Alfred Thayer Mahan's Style on Sea Power: A Paramessage Conducing to Ethos," Speech Monographs, 42 (August, 1975), 192.

Housed in the University of Florida Library, the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection contains within the substantial correspondence from her general readership comprehensive documentation of effects. The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection also is complemented by the papers of Phillip May, her lawyer, in which there are additional letters she had forwarded to him. In both collections, all correspondence specifically related to The Yearling was examined since the novel was currently in publication; however, the main body of correspondence utilized covered the period from 1938 until Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' death in 1953. Reactions of her general readership to the novel were the basic area of investigation for this chapter.

The Collection yielded substantial responses; though, in some respects, it may have been culled. For example, after Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' death and prior to some of the memorabilia being transported from the Cross Creek house to the University of Florida Library, one box of papers, now a valuable part of the Collection, had to be rescued from a garbage pile. Also, commenting on the relative paucity of negative comments among the response to her work, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings in the 1940's provided reason that the proportion of unfavorable letters from her general readership was:

> In infinitesimal portion, and the reason is that the person who troubles to sit down and write a letter to an author is almost invariably a kindly person. I mean that is simple human nature; people go out of their way to do a kindly thing, and very few go out of their way to be unkind.[2]

However, since the thrust of this study was focused upon responses that suggested effectiveness and the crucial point was that for some people these techniques did work, the letters in the Collection from her general readership proved adequate.

All letters from the general readership were read; however, only those comments dealing specifically with areas of composition or which indicated or implied relationship to language manipulation were utilized. These letters were then cataloged to indicate recurring patterns. Letters with vague, general or nonspecific comments were not included in this investigation; such as letters that stated the novel was "enjoyable" or "entertaining" or "interesting" but in no way suggested the reason. Nonspecific evaluations with comments of this ilk were a type of general reaction common to any novel. Thus, through analysis of those responses applicable to audience reaction, both this and the subsequent chapter attempt to establish the causal relationship between technique and effect.

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[2]Proceedings of Second Trial of Cason versus Baskin, Alachua County Florida, 1946, in Phillip May Collection, University of Florida Library, Volume III, p. 337.

Readership Response to Effect of Beauty

Study of the responses from Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' general readership revealed their focus on the effect of beauty. Perhaps one of the most explicit was from Betty Odgers who indicated her awareness of the communicated effect: "In some strange way the shared loveliness of your book was an important bond in the adjustment of my life."[3] To several of her readers the effect of beauty was intense yet inexpressible. Hamilton Holt wrote on July 29, 1947, "it is impossible to express in words," and Bea H. also wrote in her April 28, 1939 letter to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "I haven't words to describe the way I feel about your beautiful appealing book." Though a wounded young English flyer repeated the inability to express his appreciation of the beauty, he did elaborate on the effect.

> Of The Yearling I can say nothing except thank you. To try and tell you of its beauty would be useless . . . I read it while being bombed. It brought a light to that shelter that made a warm glow for us all, for I read it aloud. One little cockney boy said, 'I wish I was him, oh I wish I was.'[4]

The English flyer expressed appreciation of the effect of

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[3]To Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (hereafter cited as M. K. R.) from Betty Odgers, August 30, 1943.

[4]To M. K. R. from Perry Potter, undated.

beauty as did many other respondents, so many in fact that the letters became a type of "thank-you" note for beauty received. One typical of these comments came from a University of Wisconsin classmate of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings who gratefully wrote, "I finished The Yearling in a flood of tears . . . You've done a perfectly beautiful job . . . my thanks for so much pleasure."[5]

Publication of foreign editions brought similar response to the effect of beauty from distant lands. Sigrid Undset from Norway wrote January 19, 1942, that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' book "makes us Europeans marvel that America is so rich in natural beauties . . . the loveliness of America . . . and beautiful wilderness. . . ." From Australia in 1945 came another note of appreciation for the beauty of the book.

> I have just read your magnificent book The Yearling and feel compelled to write and tell you the joy it gave me from beginning to end . . . so very unusual it is, and so beautiful in theme and language.[6]

Thus, not only America, but also other countries, responded to the effect of beauty in her book.

One reader did, in fact, offer to share the beauty in a section of land that he possessed in return for the

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[5]To M. K. R. from Esther Forbes Hoskins, July 14, 1938.

[6]To M. K. R. from Laura Dix, May 17, 1945.

beauty Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had given to him through her book, for as he stated: "We too know the beauty, the birds, the orange trees, the ducks."[7]

Perhaps the letter written to her on August 29, 1938 by Marjorie Douglas can serve as a summation of those letters received that so intensely had felt the effect of beauty: ". . . add my voice to the chorus. It is so lovely, so finely felt. . . ." Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had defined the artist as one who shares beauty and as such so was she defined, as indicated in a copy of a letter Lafarge had written about her and that had been forwarded to her: "This book is an exquisitely beautiful thing; it seems to me a flawless work of art . . . She is a great artist."[8] In 1945, Neil Phillips was to write Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and once again define her as an artist.[9] Obviously from these responses, the effect of beauty had been communicated to her readers.

Response Based Upon Perception of Reality as Produced by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Beauty was felt because the audience perceived the reality Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had produced. As addressed

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[7]To M. K. R. from Henry Dozier, M.D., June 19, 1942.

[8]To Rudolf Weaver from Grant Lefarge, May 24, 1938, forwarded to M. K. R. and in Rawlings Collection.

[9]To M. K. R. from Neil Phillips, April 29, 1945.

earlier in Chapter II, in order for the reader to see beauty as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had seen it, she must formulate a reality for those forms of beauty which had stirred her and through this reality share that beauty with her reader. From this created sense of reality, she was then able to effect in the reader the sense of beauty. The response indicative of having perceived this creative reality was ample.

Reality was so pervasive to some of her readers that they literally sought the specific geographic location of episodes depicted in The Yearling. The President of a Florida hunting club wrote of one such attempt.

> We have tried to locate the exact spot you had in mind that 'Old Slew Foot' crossed Juniper, also the point that you had in mind where he crossed Salt Spring Run.[10]

The tendency to seek a geographic reality on the part of her readers took on such force that the Cross Creek Big Scrub became known as Yearling Country, Cracker Country, etc. One reader wrote requesting exact directions: "Would you be kind enough to tell me how, by train, I would get to the enchanting Cracker Country?"[11] Another reader located the Cross Creek area not by the characters in The Yearling, but by the animals: "To Mrs. Rawlings a

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[10] To M. K. R. from H. L. Nevin, May 26, 1938.

[11] To M. K. R. from Robert Corlis, September 30, 1944.

welcome to the land of Slewfoot which The Yearling has immortalized in our hearts."[12] One service person wrote in 1944:

> I have enjoy [sic] oh so very much your book on the Yearling Country. Most of us boys away from home feel the same. Give us more, we do appreciate them, its like a peek at the real thing.[13]

The reality perceived was sustained in part by the readers' ability to locate literally the geographic parameters. Anne Brennon in a June 14, 1941 letter commented on this geographic reality: "The story took us to Florida . . . it made us feel that we were right there with Flag and Jody and Penny Baxter." Other readers extended this reality and commented upon Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' ability "to immortalize the Florida Country."[14] These, then, were a sampling of the responses from her readers indicative of their having perceived the reality which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had created.

Other readers expressed an awareness that they had not only shared the reality as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had perceived it, but also that her perception was correct

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[12]To M. K. R. from C. L. Alderson, January 3, 1939.

[13]To M. K. R. from Errol Hunt, October 12, 1944.

[14]To M. K. R. from Eugenia Pilkington, July 13, 1942, in Phillip May Collection, file number 173.

To M. K. R. from C. L. Alderson, January 3, 1939.

according to their evaluation. A letter to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings from Betty Odgers tended to confirm this sharing even to the point that there was confusion on Ms. Odgers' part over the author and the omniscient narrator of The Yearling: "I love your right way of living. Your attention to the real and important things."[15] This letter did not indicate Ms. Odgers had knowledge of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' habits beyond having read The Yearling. Joseph Grace assumed also that his perception of reality was correct and that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings concurred with him; however, he assumed also her ability must have been attained through "some girlish great sorrow in [her] young life in order [for her] to be able to see at a glance how other folks live both internally and externally."[16] Finally, another reader in a 1946 letter praised the author's "talent for making reality translucent."[17]

These, then, were several of the letters from her readers that indicated Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had indeed formulated a reality through which beauty had been communicated.

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[15]To M. K. R. from Betty Odgers, August 30, 1943.

[16]To M. K. R. from Joseph Grace, May 21, 1944.

[17]To M. K. R. from Mrs. Eugene Meyers, July 14, 1946.

Response to Individual Elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Theory of Composition

Although the audience appeared to be responding to the created reality, it was in actuality responding to the elements which constituted that reality. Reality was the result of the individual elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition, and each element contributed to the total reality through which beauty was achieved. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition has been defined in Chapter II as the means whereby the artist was able to create a sense of actuality by which to communicate beauty to the reader. Investigation of her papers revealed a pattern of responses to the various elements of her theory of composition.

Response to the process of characterization

The process of characterization was one element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition by which she attempted to create a reality for the reader through which to convey her concept of beauty. Her readers tended to respond as though the characters were real, true-to-life people. For example, H. L. Nevin, a native of the area, attempted to display his powers of observation by identifying those individuals whom Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had supposedly copied:

> Penny Baxter can only be one person . . ., that person happens to be Mel Lang who has hunted with us these many years.[18]

Not only are the humans identified by her readers, but also the animals:

> The dog Julia, in our minds, must be 'Old Bess' who had her side torn somewhere on Juniper Creek and a patch of skin the size of one's hand was hanging loose when Mel carried her into camp.[19]

Written in the margin of this letter was a brief denial by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.

Several other readers responded to the realistic portrayal of Jody, both expressing an awareness of the difficulty in recreating a real boy and citing amazement at a woman's ability to do so. In a copy of a letter that had been forwarded to her by the recipient was the following reaction:

> It is one of the most difficult tasks that she sets herself [Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings] to take you inside the very heart of that perfectly real little boy . . .[20]

Another reader in the same vein added, "How any woman could depict a boy's mind and emotions as perfectly as you do is beyond me."[21] A January 28, 1940, letter mirrored the response of both:

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[18] To M. K. R. from H. L. Nevin, May 26, 1938.

[19] Ibid.

[20] To Rudolf Weaver from Grant Lafarge, May 24, 1938, forwarded to M. K. R. and in Rawlings Collection.

[21] To M. K. R. from Hubert Clark, October 21, 1938.

> Anyone can write about a child; few can do it with such depth and strength; few can capture the evanescent moment that you chose.[22]

If some readers did not try to explicitly name the person who had been copied for portrayal in The Yearling, they then felt Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had created a recognizable type of flesh and blood person, for as Laura Dix wrote to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings on May 17, 1945, "I feel I know each of those wonderfully drawn characters, especially the lovable splendid Penny and his equally lovable son." Other correspondents praised Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' "understanding of young people" and her ability to "live their lives with them."[23]

Several of her readers reacted to the emotion which, as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote in "Facts, Verses, in Fiction," "the writer creates the characters to express." Several viewed Ma Baxter in this light. Neil Phillips wrote:

> In The Yearling in a few unrestrained strokes you give one of literature's great examples of pathetic frustration—the mother groping to share the intimacy of the father and the boy and telling the pointless tale about refusing a dog because 'a hound dog sure will suck eggs.'[24]

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[22] To M. K. R. from Donald Peattie, January 28, 1950.

[23] To M. K. R. from Lorretta Ryhill, March 26, 1956.
To M. K. R. from Joseph Grace, May 21, 1944.

[24] To M. K. R. from Neil Phillips, April 29, 1945.

Another reader also responded to the emotion Ma Baxter represented: "Somehow so many of us are 'Ma Baxters.' We'd like to be in on the big brave things, but actually the black calico warms us just as much."[25]

And finally to some of her readers the characters were so real, so true-to-life that they reacted to them as though they were living human beings. Some wept over the death of Fodderwing and later the killing of Flag.[26] Others felt so strongly about the father and son that they wrote, "I can't decide whether I love Penny or Jody more," or "it was impossible to decide whether I liked father or son best. . . ."[27]

A second pattern within the process of characterization that emerged was the tendency on the part of the readers to respond to the function of the characters both as the particular and as the universal. For Felix Schelling, the parameters of The Yearling were extended because of this universality, ". . . for it is so much more than a story in its insight into common human nature."[28]

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[25]To M. K. R. from Perry Potter, undated, approximately 1945.

[26]To M. K. R. from Laura Dix, May 17, 1945.

[27]To M. K. R. from Bea H., April 28, 1939.
To M. K. R. from Ralph Prouty, August 9, 1944.

[28]To M. K. R. from Felix Schelling, May 27, 1938.

A letter from N. C. Wyeth suggested that the basis of The Yearling's wide appeal was the functioning of the characters as not only the individual but also the universal.

> It is happy augury, I think, that we have all as a family enjoyed your story deeply and mostly I think because the larger contours of romance so impressively transcend locality and become superbly universal in appeal.[29]

Others reacted as did Wyeth, for The Yearling through its universality had appealed to all ages. Donald Peattie wrote of the reaction of his two sons as he had read the novel to them:

> Congratulations! I was interested in the way the younger one was able to endure the death of Flag and the way the elder listened to Penny's last words to Jody. Your success was complete with all three of us.[30]

Esther Forbes commented also on the universal element in her August 13, 1938, letter: "I think one of the reasons it is so beloved is that it is one of the few recent books that appeals to the entire family."

Another respondent referred to The Yearling as "truly great literature . . . a minor American classic."[31] Agnes Holmquest categorized the novel as ". . . in the

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[29]To M. K. R. from N. C. Wyeth, January 13, 1939.

[30]To M. K. R. from Donald C. Peattie, January 28, 1940.

[31]To M. K. R. from Ralph Prouty, August 9, 1944.

grand tradition."[32] One letter carefully placed the main characters among the most famous in literature.

> I keep my own sacred 'hall of fame' of my favorite literary characters. I include Jean Valjean, Huck Finn, etc. Among my favorites are your two characters Penny and Jody Baxter.[33]

The ability to transcend time limitations, to affect and appeal to people in a later time, was the focus of a 1943 letter.

> It must make you happy to realize that all over the world, perhaps for centuries of time, you may be affecting people's lives.[34]

So, then, did readers react to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' attempt to achieve the universal through generalization of the particular by typifying those human emotions common to all people in all ages within a chosen character. A final letter from a thirteen-year-old boy who related directly to the story was indicative of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' degree of success.

> I always thought that Daddy liked the girls better than I. I suppose I didn't pay as much attention to Dad as the girls. When I began to read this book The Yearling of deep love between Penny and Jody, father and son [sic].

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[32] To M. K. R. from Agnes Holmquest, July 22, 1938.

[33] To M. K. R. from Ralph Prouty, August 9, 1944.

[34] To M. K. R. from Betty Odgers, August 30, 1943.

> He worked with his father and made over him. I think this book will start a better love between my father and I.[35]

A third pattern of responses within the process of characterization that emerged was reaction to the characters functioning as cohesive units. As explained in Chapter II, the totality of character is achieved by the cohesiveness of action and plausibility of motivation; in other words, the characters do nothing in contradiction of their roles.

Several letters addressed the unity of the novel by stressing the "perfection" they found within it. Two readers responded to the author's ability in depicting "the mind and emotions as perfectly" as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had accomplished and also to her ability in taking "you inside the very heart of that perfectly real little boy."[36] Another addressed the total harmony, for she wrote, "The whole thing seems quite perfect and I think you must be happy about it yourself."[37] Perhaps, though, the letter

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[35]To M. K. R. from Frank Kelly, January 29, 1939.

[36]To M. K. R. from Hubert Clark, October 21, 1938.

To Rudolf Weaver from Grant Lafarge, May 24, 1938, forwarded to M. K. R. and in Rawlings Collection.

To M. K. R. from Esther Forbes Hoskins, July 14, 1938.

[37]To M. K. R. from Bea H., April 28, 1939.

from Marjorie Douglas more succinctly expressed the unity she found within the novel: "It is . . . so beautifully unified and sustained."[38] This harmony and unity resulted from adequate delineation of and reinforcement of character and it was to these that Hamilton Holt addressed his letter of 1938.

> . . . moved me so . . . I have never read such art in character delineation. You have made the characters speak for themselves and have never acted the part of the Greek Chorus in explaining them. How you entered into the heart of those people whose exteriors must be alien to you is . . . evidence of your genius.[39]

Perhaps the unity and the totality of the whole was best expressed by Robert Herrick, for he perceived The Yearling as "all of a piece—people, background, animals, woods, flowers, everything" all functioning as a cohesive unit.[40] Thus did her readers respond not only to universality and true-to-life depiction, but also to unity within the process of characterization.

Response to facts and details

A second element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition to which her readers responded was

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[38]To M. K. R. from Marjorie Douglas, August 29, 1938.

[39]To M. K. R. from Hamilton Holt, May 14, 1938.

[40]To M. K. R. from Robert Herrick, May 14, 1938.

the use of facts and details to achieve a sense of reality by which the effect of beauty was accomplished. A letter from the president of a local hunt club was attested to her accuracy of detail: "I congratulate you on your splendid descriptions of not only the Juniper County but your marvelous descriptive power of bear and deer hunting."[41] Her pleasure in receiving this letter was manifest in her reply:

> I trembled in my boots for fear the old guard hunters would find too many flaws. I'd rather please the people who know that life and section than all NY Cities rolled together.[42]

Not only did the old guard respond to this accuracy, but also a zoologist from the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as well as a nationally known naturalist. Hubert Clark, the zoologist, wrote:

> As a former boy and as a zoologist I take off my hat to you . . . I am amazed at the accuracy of your natural history . . . Not once in reading The Yearling have I detected a careless or inaccurate statement. Yet your descriptions of scenery, vegetation, animal life and a boy's reactions to them are simply delightful.[43]

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[41]To M. K. R. from H. L. Nevin, May 26, 1938.

[42]To H. L. Nevin from M. K. R., May 30, 1938, copy in Rawlings Collection.

[43]To M. K. R. from Hubert Clark, October 21, 1938.

The naturalist too added his congratulations for accuracy of fact and detail:

> I might add, since it is in my line . . . few can stand up to Nature as you do. Few can look at it as it is. People play with its prettiness; they paint its colors, they read in it something that is not written there. You are a minute observer of Nature. . . .[44]

Several other readers commented on the pleasure received from "such a wealth of intimate detail" and the knowledge gained, for as one reader wrote, "I never had an idea what flowering Dogwood or Hemlock pines were like until reading The Yearling."[45]

Thus did readers respond to the botanical details of the Florida Scrub, the agricultural information pertinent to farming, the data important to the day-to-day existence, and the folklore that pervaded the lives of Florida Crackers; in other words, those facts and details Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings utilized to infuse her writing with a sense of reality.

Response to objectivity

A third element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition to which her readers responded was

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[44]To M. K. R. from Donald Peattie, January 28, 1940.

[45]To Rufolf Weaver from Grant Lafarge, May 24, 1938, forwarded to M. K. R. and in Rawlings Collection.

To M. K. R. from Sigrid Undset, January 19, 1942.

the technique of objectivity. Earlier, objectivity was defined as that quality within a literary work that may be understood as being independent from the emotional or personal sentiments of the author. Perhaps the letter Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings received in 1938 most parallels the reader reaction with the definition when it praised the author for never becoming "sappy."[46]

However, in a more literary fashion, Hamilton Holt, the President of Rollins College in Florida, complimented Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings for "the art of creating subjective characters by objective descriptions."[47] One reader wrote of her as "a conscientious reporter, understanding, wise, and brave" whom, another reader found, gave a wealth of essentials but was never "obstrusive."[48] So then did readers respond to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' attempt to achieve objectivity in order to create a sense of actuality with which to communicate beauty to the reader.

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[46]To M. K. R. from Esther Forbes Hoskins, July 14, 1938.

[47]To M. K. R. from Hamilton Holt, July 1, 1938.

[48]To M. K. R. from Donald Peattie, January 28, 1940.

To Rudolf Weaver from Grant Lafarge, May 24, 1938, forwarded to M. K. R. and in Rawlings Collection.

Response to simplicity

A fourth element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition to which her readers reacted was simplicity, for she attempted an uncluttered, simple, writing style which was determined by her goal of reality. To this simple style her readers responded, some in an explicit manner, others more subtlely. A service person in a Quebec hospital sometime during World War II addressed the simplicity of language directly in his undated letter.

> People like you who write so simply, so close to the little people mean a great deal to people like us who live so close to the edge—we never know just what's over the edge.[49]

However, others were less explicit and a pattern of language emerged in which a number of letters referred to the simple people, the simple life, the simple background. This letter from Ralph Prouty exemplified the response:

> The grand thing is they are not spectacular persons who flash across the pages of literature like a comet, but plain, simple people. Simple they may be, but they are undoubtedly great.[50]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings advocated use of short, almost blunt sentences if she were not to lose reality. On reader remarked that her language in The Yearling had

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[49]To M. K. R. from Perry Potter, undated.

[50]To M. K. R. from Ralph Prouty, August 9, 1944.

the attributes of a proverb—that is, a short pithy saying expressing a truth or fact—for, as he wrote, "many words and sentences have become proverbial in our daily conversations."[51] Such was typical of the response of her readership to the simplicity that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had utilized in her attempt to communicate reality.

Conclusion

Thus, the response of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' readers focused on the effect of beauty. However, beauty was communicated to the audience because they had perceived the reality Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had produced, and it was from this created sense of reality that she was then able to effect in the reader the sense of beauty. The audience reaction to the created reality was reaction to the individual elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition. Therefore, the response of her general readership to these individual elements of characterization, facts and details, and methodology, each contributed to the total response of the audience to the composition, that is, a response of beauty as perceived through these elements.

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[51] To M. K. R. from Hubert Lowenstein, June 1, 1944.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESPONSE FROM PROFESSIONAL READERSHIP

Another source of information about reader response was Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' professional readership. Just as the letters of individuals served as an index of effectiveness, so likewise did the reviews by professional critics, who, through their experience with the craft and their knowledge of the genre, functioned as a valuable body of receivers. Tompkins, who also found this segment of the audience vital to rhetorical analysis, argued that though this "sizable important body of receivers who debrief themselves voluntarily" are

> . . . atypical of the average man audience . . ., on the basis of the two-step flow of communication and influence, their very eminence, their atypicality, makes them even more useful in rhetorical analysis . . . They do, after all, have some effect on other receivers.[1]

Carpenter, in his study on the effectiveness of style, utilized fully the file of newspaper and periodical reaction

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[1]Phillip Tompkins, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 55 (December, 1969), 438.

in the Alfred Thayer Mahan Collection in the Library of Congress as a part of his investigation.[2] In "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," Tompkins cited several other investigations of non-oratorical art forms in which the approach of debriefing critics was both valid and fruitful.[3]

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection contains a substantial number of clippings housed in six large scrapbooks. These newspaper and periodical clippings were acquired from three sources: (1) the estate of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, (2) a compilation of clippings by Grace I. Kinnan and Wilmer Kinnan, and (3) a compilation of reviews by Pat Smith, Director of Public Information at the University of Mississippi (although the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection provided no reason for this compilation or for the forwarding of these reviews by

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[2]Ronald Carpenter, "Alfred Thayer Mahan's Style on Sea Power: A Paramessage Conducing to Ethos," Speech Monographs, 42 (August, 1975), 192.

[3]William Jordan, "A Study of Rhetorical Criticism in the Modern Novel," Debut Paper, SAA Convention, 1967.

Phillip Tompkins, "In Cold Fact," Esquire, 65 (June, 1966), 125-127, 166-171.

Patricia Weygandt, "A Rhetorical Criticism of of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." Unpublished paper, 1969, Kent State University.

Pat Smith).[4] The reviews and clippings from the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings estate are, in themselves, quite comprehensive, for Scribner's had forwarded to her from its clipping services reviews pertaining to the publication of The Yearling. A survey of other periodicals of the period revealed that the Collection contained most of the reviews which the book provoked.

All reviews and critical articles in the Collection related to The Yearling were examined; but the primary area of investigation covered the year of publication, 1938. Since few reviews extended beyond the few months following publication, and successive reviews were often merely reissues of previous ones, this period was considered most crucial. The newspaper and periodical files proved to be a generous sample of that important body of receivers who [according to Tompkins] "reveal their perceptions and value judgments of the art form under analysis."[5] In the main these responses were positive, and although Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had provided an explanation of the paucity of

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[4]Scrapbooks; two leatherbound volumes compiled by Grace I. Kinnan and Wilmer Kinnan in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Scrapbooks; four volumes compiled by Pat Smith, Director of Public Information at University of Mississippi, Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Clippings and newspaper materials, Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[5]Tompkins, "The Rhetorical Criticism," p. 438.

negative response on the part of her general readership, no such explanation was either offered or suggested for the dearth of negative criticism from her professional readers. Perhaps the prepublication announcement of a volume having been chosen the Book-of-the-Month Club selection was, in the late 1930's, a type of literary intimidation. Nevertheless, the extensiveness of the newspaper and clipping file including not only the collection of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, her publisher and relatives, but also a voluminous compilation by the information officer at the University of Mississippi argued against the possibility of the deletion of negative criticism.

Using the same criteria previously applied to the letters of the general readership, only those articles dealing specifically with areas of composition, or which indicated or implied relationship to language manipulation were utilized. Articles meeting these criteria were then catalogued to indicate recurring patterns. Thus, by analysis of the response of her professional readership through their reviews of The Yearling, as by the analysis of the response of her general readership in the preceding chapter, this chapter will attempt to establish other dimensions of the causal relationship between technique and effect.

Professional Readership Response to Effect of Beauty

In the summer of 1938, a reviewer wrote this of The Yearling: "The greatness of the book lies in its striking evocation of beauty."[6] A thorough investigation of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' papers (as accomplished in Chapter Two) had revealed that her concept of beauty was the effect she attempted to communicate to her audience. This review was just one of a number of professional articles that acknowledged that effect, thereby corroborating the responses of the general readership. Though the quality of beauty is both nebulous and subjective, the utilization of the term by this and other professional readers seemed consistent. One professional reviewer was most articulate in expressing the resultant effect of beauty. In a newspaper article entitled, "Novel is Characterized by Beauty and Reality," Carl Roberts elaborated:

> One other thing incessantly forced its way into our minds—beauty. The word as applied to this story is not a static or unexplainable thing, for you will find it wherever you go with Penny and Jody. It is alive . . . It shows itself in tranquility in Jody's favorite haunts and

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[6]Halford Luccock, "Through the Novelist's Window," Yale Divinity School, Christendom, Summer, 1938, in scrapbooks, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

> the very life of Jody's little friend . . . There is quiet beauty in Penny's philosophy, spiritual beauty . . . in Penny's prayers . . . beautiful things.[7]

This was among the first reviews, for it was written only a few days after the novel's publication date of April 1, 1938. This reviewer's involvement with the beauty communicated through Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel was by no means unique, however, for other reviewers also immediately focused on this effect.

Richard Daniel used a vocabulary similar so that by which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had defined beauty.

> It is Mrs. Rawlings' spiritual mystic insight into the unseen life in the forests and streams that lifts her book to new heights . . . She has found beauty in our backwoods and has preserved it for future generations to enjoy.[8]

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had included the spiritual heightening as a response to beauty, "an emotional reaction to an extent that we are conscious of a spiritual excitement."[9] Also focusing heavily on the spiritual quality of beauty, another reviewer in Vermont reacted to The Yearling as capturing a "spiritual quality," for,

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[7] Dayton Ohio News, April 3, 1938. (Hereafter, unless otherwise stipulated, all references are from newspaper clippings from unnumbered scrapbooks in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.)

[8] Jacksonville Florida Times Union, April 3, 1938.

[9] M. K. R., "Lecture Notes on Creative Writing," Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

> above and beyond the breathless beauty of its physical background and the stirring scenes in which the tale abounds, there is a spiritual meaning which gives the whole narrative a special quality and makes reading it a unique experience.[10]

So although they may have been using terminology with considerable potential for ambiguity, several reviewers even used some of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' own adjectives.

Eleanor Follin praised both the spiritual and dramatic qualities in her 1938 newspaper article: "In The Yearling one finds a spiritual quality which can never be forgotten, drama, conflict, tragedy, humor, and beauty."[11] Follin was not the only critic to react to the dramatic aspect of beauty. Paul Oehser granted the novel "great beauty and dramatic process"; and Govan repeated the reaction of several of the general readership, stating that it was "a picture so dramatic, so utterly beautiful and sympathetic as to move one to tears."[12] Continuing to address the dramatic quality of beauty, Wagner envisioned the book "mounting to its height of tragic beauty"; however, Hoult best expressed the dramatic quality of beauty in the April 1, 1938 review.

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[10] Burlington Vermont News, April 9, 1938.

[11] Winston Salem North Carolina Journal and Sentinel, April 10, 1938.

[12] Washington, D.C. Post, April 17, 1938.
Source unknown, April 10, 1938.

> But she has done more; she has taken us into a Florida swamp, created human beings, made the struggle of the Baxters for a bare living as dramatic as good theater and invested the whole drama with a sense of true values and beauty which is rare for drama to give.[13]

Thus did several critics react to the dramatic quality of beauty within her novel.

While citing beauty as the major effect, other professional readers liberally utilized the term throughout their reviews. Groverman Blake found the story "movingly [sic] with freshness and beauty"; whereas another found The Yearling "recaptures the beauty which marked her first story"; while others reviewed the novel as "filled with the wonder and beauty of nature."[14] Additional examples of this reaction were Gladys Solomon who wrote of the novel as "tender and beautiful" or the Atlanta Journal reviewer who claimed Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had "discovered beauty" or as several wrote quite simply, the novel was "beautiful."[15] From these responses and reactions of her

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[13] New York Mirror, April 3, 1938.
New York Sun, approximately April 1, 1938.

[14] Cincinnati Ohio Times Star, April 6, 1938.
Star Washington, D.C., April 3, 1938.
Winston-Salem North Carolina Journal and Sentinel, April 10, 1938.

[15] New Haven Connecticut Register, April 10, 1938.
Atlanta Georgia Journal, April 10, 1938.
Source unknown, April 10, 1938.
Yale Divinity School, Christendom, Summer, 1938.

professional readership, as well as those from her general readership as documented in Chapter Three, it is obvious that beauty had been communicated to these readers, for beauty, though an omnibus term, had been discussed by both sets of readers in a manner consonant with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' formulated goal.

Responses Based Upon Perception of Reality

As a reviewer in the Chicago Journal Commerce wrote, "There is a beauty of absolute truth in this fine story . . . This idyll of the wilderness is completely beautiful and real."[16] In so writing this critic had addressed that which was expressed earlier in Chapter Two, for in order that the reader see beauty as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had seen it, the author must formulate a reality for those forms of beauty which had stirred her and through this reality share that beauty with her reader. Through this created reality, she was then able to transmit to the reader a sense of beauty; i.e., beauty is the communicated effect and perception of reality a means to express it. This reality was not simple fidelity to actuality as in newspaper reporting, but verisimilitude, or as she defined it, "the sense is the imaginative

[16]Chicago Journal Commerce, April 9, 1939.

awareness of actuality."[17] Like those previously noted from the general readership, the response from critics and reviewers indicative of their having perceived this created reality was ample.

Critics reacted immediately to the "quality of verisimilitude," that is, the sense of actuality. In reviewing The Yearling as "a real piece of life,"[18] a Washington, D.C. critic's response was quite similar to the reviewer who wrote, "the problems they face are real . . . [for] The Yearling emerges as an impressively true picture of a life that is hard."[19] Others wrote with an indication of their awareness of the use of verisimilitude; Carl Robers wrote that the novel

> takes the reader to the 'Hammock' country of inland Florida. And that expression is not an idle one . . . you will actually live with them in the year of their lives which the story describes.[20]

Butcher addressed also the sense of reality for she wrote,

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[17] M. K. R., "Facts, Verses, in Fiction." Notes in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[18] New York Sun, April 1, 1938.

[19] Star Washington, D.C., April 3, 1938.
New Orleans Times Picayune, April 10, 1938.

[20] Dayton Ohio News, April 3, 1938.

"one rarely meets people as simple and real as those on the primitive pine island where its characters live their lives."[21] These critics, as did the general readership, indicated by their response an awareness of the sense of reality that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was trying to create.

Another group of critics, in a manner similar to that of the general readership, addressed not only the reality, but also the truth or honesty of her novel as a part of that reality, thereby seeming to equate and define the two conditions as one. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was defined as an "honest writer," for she "invested the whole drama with a sense of true values."[22] To others, the reality was heightened because the volume had "veracity" and "rings true at every point."[23]

Two other critics viewed the created reality as a realistic study, perhaps perceiving Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' writings almost as anthropological, like Margaret

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[21] Chicago Tribune, April 9, 1938.

[22] New York Post, June 10, 1938.
New York Sun, April 1, 1938.

[23] New York World Telegram, April 1, 1938.
Herschel Brickell, "Books on Our Table, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Fine Novel," source unknown, undated.

Mead's works on Samoa. Gladys Solomon cited the volume as "an excellent study of those people"; likewise, another critic commented that "what results is a superbly realistic study . . ."[24] Though these professional reviewers did not seek the literal geographic location of the novel as had several of the general readership, both groups were parallel in their reactions. Such opinion on the part of her reviewers that the novel was in part nonfiction attested further to her success in achieving her goal, for they had indeed responded to the reality she had created. Altogether, these responses and reactions from both the critics and the general readership indicated that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had formulated a reality through which beauty had been communicated.

Response to Individual Elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Composition

Although these professional readers appeared to be responding to the created reality, they were reacting as well to the elements of composition by which it was achieved. A thorough investigation of professional readership responses within the Collection revealed a pattern of reactions to the various elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition.

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[24] New Haven Connecticut Register, April 10, 1938. Toledo Ohio Blade, April 14, 1938.

Response to the process of characterization

The process of characterization was one element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition by which she attempted to create a reality for the reader by which beauty might be conveyed. A principle of characterization to which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings adhered was that the characters were "true-to-life." Although the characters in the novel may have some basis in observed reality, she felt that only by the infusion of the author's imagination could the characters achieve a sense of actuality, or verisimilitude, for the reader.

Just as her general readership had attempted to identify those whom Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had supposedly copied, some of her professional readers similarly decided the resultant "true-to-life" characters were "neighbors and friends she had studied with care and affection."[25] Several critics labeled the character portrayals "valid," "convincing," "accurate," or "true"; and Charles Poor's column in the New York Times best summarized the "true-to-life" effect of the characterizations:

> All the people come vigorously to life. Her sensitively written accounts of his inner life, his private forays in

[25] Record Philadelphia, April 2, 1938.

> the country, his feelings of despondency or elation when things go right or wrong are beautifully done . . . All her characters are true.[26]

Poor's final statement was reflected in a substantial number of professional responses; two of these expressed the idea that "the people are real," and especially that "his father and mother are real people."[27]

Another pattern of professional response indicated that portrayals of "true-to-life" characters stemmed from the author's insight into human nature. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was reported as an author "who sees deeply into human hearts," thereby writing "a story everyone will enjoy for its people are human. . . ."[28] In a review entitled, "Graphic Characterization of People," another critic also addressed the ability of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to describe characters with accuracy and insight:

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[26] Madison Wisconsin Journal, April 17, 1938.
San Diego Sun, April 17, 1938.
Toledo Ohio Blade, April 14, 1938.

[27] New Orleans Times Picayune, April 10, 1938.
Cold Springs New York News Recorder, April 14, 1938.

[28] New York Post, June 10, 1938.
Fairfield California Republican, April 7, 1938.

> Mrs. Rawlings has described them with the art of a great writer. She has sworn when they swore, cried when they cried, laughed and talked only as these people could.[29]

Where her general readership had reacted on a more personal level (identifying a local person, Mel Lang, as the character from whom she had copied Pa Baxter) and had established a more emotional relationship with the characters (being unable to decide whether they loved Penny or Jody more as well as weeping over the death of both Fodderwing and Flag), her professional readership had to a degree maintained a more objective response to the characters. But to both these groups of readers, the characters in The Yearling were true-to-life.

Another principle of characterization to which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings adhered was the portrayal of the major characters as representative of a fusion whereby the individual could function both as the particular and as the universal. A substantial number of her critics responded to the universality of the characters. Though all reviewers were quite explicit in their reactions, Ruth Carter was most articulate:

> When a writer succeeds in making a sectional novel so universal that the people become man and women and young folks of all time, anywhere in the world

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[29] San Diego Sun, April 17, 1938.

> yet retain the flavor of their country, she has indeed transmuted words into art. This is what Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings has accomplished in The Yearling, a novel of the backwoods Florida region.[30]

Samuel Tupper found "almost every page sounds quite another note of universal recognition as Mrs. Rawlings touches the depths that lie below ordinary things."[31]

Extension of the time dimension as an element of universality was the focus of several critics. As mentioned in Chapter One, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings saw herself as more than a regionalist writer. Halford Luccock described her novel as a "regional story . . . yet almost timeless and universal"; and affirming this critic, Herschel Brickell cited that "every line . . . lifts it out of the limitations of time and space into the higher realm of universal experience."[32] With reaction to the extension of the time parameters, "timelessness" became a common word in the reviews of The Yearling. The Toledo Blade called the novel "as timeless as the forests and

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[30] Atlanta Georgia Georgian, April 10, 1938.

[31] Atlanta Georgia Journal, April 10, 1938.

[32] Yale Divinity School, Christendom, Summer, 1938. Brickell, "Books on Our Table."

swamps it describes," whereas the New York Herald Tribune called it simply, "the old timeless story."[33]

To many of the professional critics as to many of the general readership, Jody was the generative source of universality, "for he is Everyboy and so touches in Everyman those lost portals of recall through which reality lingers but a moment and is gone forever."[34] Several cited the novel as "a delicate picture of youth finding itself," "typical of all boys . . . [in] a universal springtime"; however, not just a joyous story, but also "the old timeless and oftimes tragic story of youth grown to maturity."[35] That this was found to be the story of youth, personified through the character of Jody, was evidenced not only in the response of the general readers, but also in reviews such as the following, which advised the public to "add Jody Baxter to your gallery of immortals, for he belongs with Huck Finn and all other real boys."[36] Another critic,

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[33] Toledo Ohio Blade, April 14, 1938.
New York Herald Tribune, April 3, 1938.

[34] New York Mirror, April 3, 1938.

[35] Source unknown, April 10, 1938.
Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal, April 10, 1938.
Cincinnati Times Star, April 6, 1938.

[36] New Haven Connecticut Register, April 10, 1938.

Eleanor Follin, also invested Jody with the universal qualities usually associated with other literary immortals, writing that he would "live forever in the hearts of all, as did Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn."[37] A Connecticut critic added, "We are reminded at once of the Mark Twain boys, though the treatment is quieter and subtler at once."[38] The term, "classic," linking The Yearling with Kim, Green Mansions, Huckleberry Finn, and Tom Sawyer, was a continuous thread throughout the reviews.[39] Lois Bennett Davis' review in the Macon Georgia Telegraph summarized the reaction of the critics to the principle of universality for Jody functioned in the novel not only as a twelve-year-old Cracker boy, but also as a symbol of youth undergoing the rites of passage.

> The author has plumbed the depth of human misery and human need, but just as a Greek play leaves no place for wishful imagining so does this novel affirm the truth that life is

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[37] Winston-Salem North Carolina Journal and Register, April 10, 1938.

[38] New Haven Connecticut Journal Courier, April 7, 1938.

[39] Providence Rhode Island Journal, April 3, 1938.
New York World Telegram, April 1, 1938.
Chicago Daily Tribune, December 3, 1938.
New York Herald Tribune Books, April 3, 1938.
Book-of-the-Month Club News, March, 1938.

> irrefutable, inexorable. Far more than a picture of life in inland Florida, Jody's story touches the universal.[40]

Thus, the reactions of the general readers and professional readers confirmed that the characters in The Yearling functioned on both the particular and universal levels.

The final principles of characterization to which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings adhered was unity as achieved by the cohesiveness of action, integration of characters, relationship to background, and plausibility of motivation. Thus, the characters functioned in no way contradictory to their roles. Various critics addressed the cohesiveness of the total novel and suggested several reasons that the novel had been as one stated, "given unity."[41] For example, Samuel Tupper suggested that although "one waits intensely for the destroying false note, this note is never sounded . . . " for there is "no artificiality, nor self-conscious folklore."[42] Several critics affirmed that which her general readership had stated; for these cited unity as a function of the cohesive interaction of character with the environment, since Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings "created characters who were . . . living men and

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[40] Macon Georgia Telegraph, April 1, 1938.

[41] Charlotte North Carolina News, April 17, 1938.

[42] Atlanta Georgia Journal, April 10, 1938.

women whose relationship to their particular environment was credible and natural."[43] The Tampa Morning Tribune called this harmony "a vivid perfect picture of the people and the pine woods."[44]

Frances Woodward mirrored the response of the general readers in this review which addresses the total unity depicted in the character of Jody through cohesiveness of action and plausibility of motivation.

> Her Jody Baxter lives, a person within the boundaries of his own years and his own world . . . Even a Thoreau cannot report on the world outdoors as a child might. The naturalist sees only those things which concern his informed eye. To a child the barn and the woodshed are as much a part of the natural workable landscape as the lizard under the log. Mrs. Rawlings has done a small miracle in that she knows this . . . she never once steps out of Jody's personality . . . She has captured a child's time sense in which everything lasts forever and the change of season takes him always unaware.[45]

Another reviewer confirmed Woodward's review of the total unity and harmony in characterization, for to this critic the people, the problems they face and the background "all are naturally intertwined . . ., the denouement is

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[43] Star Washington, D.C., April 3, 1938.

[44] Tampa Morning Tribune, May 20, 1938.

[45] The Atlantic, undated.

fitting, his return is as natural as his running away. There is nothing implausible about the whole book."[46] By these patterns of response, the professional readership reflected agreement with the general readership that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had communicated not only true-to-life depiction and universality, but also unity within the process of characterization.

Response to facts and details

A second element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition was her use of facts and details within the novel to communicate a sense of reality. Like her general readership, Rawlings' professional readers also responded favorably and commented on the accuracy of her descriptive powers. To her critics, the wealth of facts and detail, though substantial, never bogged down the novel but instead was an aspect of sustaining it. As one critic put it, "Mrs. Rawlings has written a fine poignant story . . . grounded on unencyclopediac [sic] yet never merely academic knowledge of their way of life."[47] Similarly emphasizing how Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' details maintain the story, another critic wrote

[46] New Orleans Times Picayune, April 10, 1938.

[47] New Haven Connecticut Journal Courier, April 7, 1938.

that, "It gets effects without [the details seeming to become mere] documentation"; for as still another critic explained:

> . . . detail is piled upon detail and incident upon incident with such cumulative purpose, that the reader knows the feel and sound of the country and identifies his experience with that of the Baxters. . . .[48]

In his article entitled, "The Yearling is Refreshingly Pungent and Detailed," Charles Niles summarized several critics' perceptions concerning the heightened qualities accomplished by use of details:

> Nothing has escaped the author in her endlessly detailed picture, whether it be the whirring of frightened birds or the picturesque fluttermill. The same detail might seem wearisome reading at first, like tramping down tall grass to find clover, but The Yearling grows on one and the pungency . . . creates an impression that will not soon be erased from the memory.[49]

To the majority of her critics, then, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' facts and details were not merely a parade of information, but a vital aspect of the novel.

The range of both the professional and general readers' reaction to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of facts and details was similar. Like one segment of her

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[48] The Atlantic Bookshelf, undated. Macon Georgia Telegram, April 1, 1938.

[49] Hartford Connecticut Times, April 9, 1938.

general readership, several critics seemed almost surprised by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' ability to use facts and details. For example, "Mrs. Rawlings seems to know the country with amazing thoroughness," and she has "a rare gift for picturing animal life."[50] One critic referred to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' ability as "a natural gift," adding that she had knowledge of "the intimate affairs of Florida wildlife."[51] Just as within the general readership wherein both a zoologist and a naturalist reacted to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings as a skilled, scientific professional observer of her environment, so too did a segment of her professional readership. That which had been referred to by some as "feeling" was to others "skill," and that which had to some seemed "a gift" was seen by those critics as "result of keen observations."[52] Within this scientific framework the novel was praised for the "obvious accuracy of its detail" from an author who "observes meticulously" and therefore, "the background is

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[50] New York Times, April 1, 1938.
Yale Divinity School, Christendom, Summer, 1938.

[51] Source unknown, April 10, 1938.

[52] Chicago Journal Commerce, April 9, 1938.
Cincinnati Enquirer, April 7, 1938.

faithfully recreated."[53] Much of the focus on this method of observation was concerned with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' emphasis on precise detail. One critic referred to the "close observation" or "candid camera" focus on "detail"; this critic also noted the "intimate description of Pa Baxter's snakebite."[54]

Response to objectivity

A third element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition to which her professional readers responded was the technique of objectivity. In Chapter Two, objectivity had been defined as that effect evinced by a literary work when the writing is understood as being independent from the emotional or personal sentiments of the author. A large segment of her professional readers responded to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' objectivity. That her novel "never slips into sentimentality" was echoed in the comments of critic after critic, one of whom stressed that "no sentimental bathos tarnishes" the novel, or as another stated, she was neither "pretentious nor

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[53] Record Philadelphia Pennsylvania, April 2, 1938.
New York Post, June 10, 1938.
New Orleans Times Picayune, April 10, 1938.
See also Herschel Brickell.

[54] Books and Bookmen, undated.

sentimental . . . the story she tells clutches at your heart without ever playing with banal sentimentalities."[55] Several other critics extended to include that "Mrs. Rawlings brought to it . . . her sympathetic understanding," and as one critic described, "unhysterical judgment."[56] These critics reacted to the author's "unflinching sincerity" and "fine sense of detachment" for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was an author who, as one critic commented, "never moralizes in the footnotes," or, as another wrote, "never stops to interpret."[57]

Both her professional and general readership reacted similarly to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of objectivity; there was, however, a discrepancy in the percentage of reaction. A substantial number of the professional readers responded to her use of objectivity;

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[55] Brickell, "Books on Our Table."
Cincinnati Times Star, April 6, 1938.
Toledo Ohio Blade, April 14, 1938.
Los Angeles Times, April 3, 1938.

[56] Source unknown, April 10, 1938.
The Atlantic Bookshelf, undated.

[57] Atlanta Georgia Journal, April 10, 1938.
New York Herald Tribune Books, April 3, 1938.
New York Post, June 10, 1938.
The Atlantic Bookshelf, undated.

whereas the response from the general readership was less marked. Obviously, the professional readership, in their concern with the art form and their involvement in qualitative evaluation, would be more likely to examine such a technique as objectivity. However, based upon both sets of responses, to these readers, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of objectivity was noticeably effective.

Response to dialect

A fourth element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition to which her professional readers responded was the use of dialect to create a sense of actuality. Critics point out the novel was "couched in the rhythmic, homey accents of these woodland people," or quite simply stated without explanation or qualification that the novel was in dialect.[58] Some critics, however, carefully explained that the novel was "told in the racy idiom of the Florida Scrub," in, as Henry Canby added, "a racy dialect not overstressed and easy to follow," or according to Fanny Butcher, "written in dialect, a racy, uncouth speech, full of vividness."[59] Though some

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[58] New Haven Connecticut Journal Courier, April 7, 1938.
Star Washington, D.C., April 3, 1938.
Yale Divinity School, Christendom, Summer, 1938.

[59] Chicago Illinois News, April 6, 1938.
Book-of-the-Month Club News, March, 1938.

critics, as noted, provided a simple description of the characters' dialect, others waxed poetical, for to another critic, "there is far more than convincing dialect to the things they say. The dialect of the soul is there."[60]

The colloquial speech of the people of the Florida Scrub was thus an effective means for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to create a vehicle of realism. More specific were critics like Hansen, who observed that "Its people speak amusing dialect, but Mrs. Rawlings stops short of caricature."[61] Another critic added, "The dialect does not degenerate into 'local color' language."[62] Such statements may be seen as evidence that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' desire to avoid caricature in the use of dialect was accomplished.

Providing reasons for their approval of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of dialect, several commented on the facility with which they were able to read it, for previously, to many, literary dialect had been burdensome. For example, to the Chicago Journal Commerce critic, "even the dialect which is often so difficult to follow in novels made up entirely of dialect is so simple, here it becomes the only natural means of expression."[63] The

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[60] Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal, April 10, 1938.

[61] New York World Telegram, April 1, 1938.

[62] Atlanta Georgia Georgian, April 10, 1938.

[63] New York Times, April 1, 1938.

New York Times critic was in agreement and also used the term "natural" to describe the dialect.

> Although we dislike dialect novels, the dialect in The Yearling is easy to understand and has its function. It is not hurled at the reader, rather it creeps over him so that he takes it in as naturally as he does the air of the Florida swamp.[65]

Mary Sheridan affirmed that the "dialect [was] easy to follow and . . . colorful and piquant as well."[65] Edith Walton decided Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had "a marvelous ear for the flavor of some cracker dialect [for it] makes one see and smell the lonely arid scrub."[66] Charles Poore agreed, for as he observed, "the talk is well done. It begins by sounding like the stage's hillbilly dialect. And yet page after page or two it is natural."[67] Perhaps these reactions to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of dialect were best summarized by Pauline Corley who wrote, "The dialect is absolutely right."[68]

Though the professional readership responded to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of dialect, investigation of

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[65] Cold Springs New York News Recorder, April 14, 1938.

[66] Madison Wisconsin Journal, April 17, 1938.

[67] New York Herald Tribune, April 3, 1938.

[68] Miami Herald, April 24, 1938.

the general readership in the previous chapter found no response to this facet of her concept of style. However, the reviews from the professional readership may provide insight into the lack of response from the other segment of readers, for the very "naturalness," "simplicity," "facility," and "readability" upon which these critics commented and to which they reacted would offer explanation for the dearth of comment from the general readership. Apparently the dialect blended and melded so well into the perceived reality of the novel that it passed unnoticed. Although one can only speculate upon the reason for the omission of direct reaction to dialect on the part of the general readership, the reviews from the professional readership indicated that to them reality had been created in part by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings through the use of dialect.

Response to simplicity

The fourth element of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition to which her professional readers responded was her use of simplicity, for according to an interview, she felt that to complicate the text with superfluous elements would result in a mockery of reality. Several of the critics addressed the general simplicity of the novel. For example, the Tampa Tribune stated, "the novel is simply great and greatly simple," or as the

Wisconsin State Journal put it, The Yearling is "presented without artificiality."[69]

Other critics were quite explicit in their comments. Addressing specifically the simplicity of content in The Yearling, some critics focused on the background. Norah Hoult indicated the effect of the novel stemmed from the simplicity of the background for the quality and beauty of the novel came "out of the simplest and most fundamental material."[70] Similarly, Groverman Blake wrote in the Cincinnati Ohio Times that the quality of the novel was evoked from "her use of simple homey things":

> the hoeing of cow peas, the excitement of the hunt, the feel of spring in the air, a sudden never to be forgotten glimpse of cranes dancing in the forest. . . .[71]

In a review that attempted to explain the characters in the novel, Henry Canby called The Yearling "a simple story of simple, but by no means incomplex people."[72] Continuing in the area of simplicity of context, The New York News Recorder's critic reacted to "the narrative with no involved plot" which the reviewer in the Ohio Blade cited as a major reason for the simplicity of the novel, for "no formal

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[69] Tampa Morning Tribune, May 20, 1938. Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal, April 10, 1938.

[70] New York Sun, April 1, 1938.

[71] Cincinnati Times Star, April 6, 1938.

[72] Book-of-the-Month Club News, March, 1938.

plot disturbs the magnificent simplicity of this novel."[73] One reviewer stated flatly and briefly, "The plot is very simple."[74] A Chicago Journal Commerce critic responded to the simplicity of dialect (an aspect of her theory of composition addressed earlier in this chapter): "the dialect is so simple here, it becomes the only natural means of expression."[75] Thus a substantial number of her professional critics responded to the element of simplicity.

In contrast to the perceived simplicity of the plot and content, another group of professional readers focused on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' simplicity of writing technique. One critic in 1938 perceived the inherent restraint of style (of which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was later to speak to her class in her 1940 lecture), stating, "no trite cliche mars her perfect prose . . . no garish touches spoil her flawless sense of color."[76] Another review which seemed to parallel Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' intent was that of Ernest Meyer, who wrote that she was "a writer who observes meticulously, yet never weights

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[73] Cold Springs New York News Recorder, April 14, 1938.

Toledo Ohio Blade, April 14, 1938.

[74] Book-of-the-Month Club News, March, 1938.

[75] Chicago Journal Commerce, April 9, 1938.

[76] Cincinnati Ohio Times Star, April 6, 1938.

the text with wooden details."[77] Another critic wrote "The effect [of The Yearling] is achieved not so much by the plot of the book as by the author's simple but beautiful prose. . . ."[78] While Lois Bennett Davis complimented the simplicity of composition in that "the narrative unfolds so quietly and easily," other critics narrowed the narrative effect to "the utmost simplicity of style and structure" or to "the grace and clarity of the style and the simplicity of the story."[79] Specifically, in this area of technique, one reviewer responded to the sentences in a manner affirming Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' previously stated intent; for the critic observed, "It is written in deMaupassant sentences—short, simple, clear, many less than a line long."[80] As indicated in Chapter Two, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had stated in a lecture, "it is necessary to use short, almost blunt sentences if I am not to lose reality."[81] Margaret Mitchell forwarded to

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[77] New York Post, June 10, 1938.

[78] Source unknown, April 3, 1938.

[79] Macon Georgia Telegraph, April 1, 1938.
Author unknown, "Pulitzer Prize Novel to be Presented in Post," New York Post, June 1, 1938.
Cincinnati Enquirer, April 7, 1938.

[80] Jacksonville Florida Times Union, April 3, 1938.

[81] M. K. R., "Creative Writing." In Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings an undated review by Virginia Pohil Purvis, and though the origin of this newspaper clipping is not known, perhaps it best summarizes the reactions of many of the professional critics: "I think I never read a book that seemed more simple and yet indicated so much."

The reactions of her professional readership thus were in harmony with the response of her general readership, for according to the reactions of both, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had created a reality, using simplicity as one aspect of her concept of style, in order to communicate to her audience that sense of beauty she felt was the hallmark of an artistic work.

Conclusion

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' professional readership reacted to the individual elements of her theory of composition, with few exceptions, in a manner quite in accord with her general readership. Similarities between both sets of readers were found. In dealing with the elements of characterization—including true-to-life depiction, unity, and universality—as well as with the element of facts and details, her general readership tended to respond in a more personalized or subjective manner, as opposed to the more objective manner of her professional readers. With elements involved in her concept of style—

simplicity, objectivity, and dialect—the reactions of the professional readers indicated a greater involvement with the genre and the techniques of the craft, especially in the area of dialect, than her general readership.

Thus the response of the professional receivers to the elements Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings used to create a reality, as well as their positive response to the communicated beauty for which that reality was the literary vehicle, are both indicative of her success in achieving her predetermined goal. The ambiguity of such a concept as beauty notwithstanding, the debriefing of the professional readership reveals that this audience—as did the general readership—perceived the created reality in a manner colinear with the author's intent and their responses revealed that beauty corresponding to that definition set forth in Chapter One was the communicated effect.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Summary

In summary, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote The Yearling with a preset concept of effectiveness. As evinced by her personal papers, a theory of effectiveness was basic to her attempt to communicate the effect of beauty to her readers. This theory of composition, based upon the creation of a sense of reality which she believed necessary in order to communicate beauty, incorporated the process of characterization which included true-to-life depiction, universality, and unity; use of facts and details; and the use of objectivity, simplicity, and dialect.

Her general readership was apparently influenced. As they addressed the individual elements of her theory of composition, their letters indicated many responded as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had intended. For example, in seeking the geographic reality of the novel, readers wrote not only asking specific directions to the land now identified as "The Yearling Country," but also locating points within it, like, "the exact spot . . . that 'Ole

Slew Foot' crossed Juniper."[1] The specific passage to which this reader referred described the attempt of the bear to escape Jody and Penny.

> The bear moved with incredible speed. He crashed through thickets that slowed the dogs. He was like a steamboat on the river, and the dense tangle of briers and thorny vines and fallen logs was no more than a fluid current under him. Penny and Jody were sweating. Julia gave tongue with a new note of desperation. She could not gain. The swamp became so wet and so dense that they sank in muck to their boot-tops and must pull out inch by inch, with no more support perhaps than a bull-brier vine. Cypress grew here, and the sharp knees were slippery and treacherous. Jody bogged down to his hips. Penny turned back to give him a hand. Flag had made a circle to the left, seeking higher ground. Penny stopped to get his wind. He was breathing heavily.
>
> He panted, "He's like to give us the slip."
>
> When his breath came more easily, he set out again. Jody dropped behind, but across a patch of low hammock found better going and was able to catch up. The growth was of bay and ash and palmetto. Hummocks of land could be used for stepping stones. The water between was clear and brown. Ahead, Julia bayed on a high long note.
>
> "Hold him, gal! Hold him!"
>
> The growth dissolved ahead into grasses. Through the opening old Slewfoot loomed into sight. He was going like a black whirlwind. Julia flashed into sight, a yard behind him. The bright swift waters

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[1] To M. K. R. from H. L. Nevin, March 26, 1938, in the Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

> of Salt Springs Run shone beyond. The bear splashed into the current and struck out for the far bank. Penny lifted his gun and shot twice. Julia slid to a stop. She sat on her haunches and lifted her nose high in the air. She wailed dismally, in misery and frustration. Slewfoot was clambering out on the opposite shore. Penny and Jody broke through to the low wet bank. The black rounded rump was all that was visible. Penny seized Jody's muzzle-loader and fired after it. The bear gave a leap.
>
> Penny shouted, "I teched him!"[2]

From this passage, one reader was motivated to seek the specific geographic location.

Responding to true-to-life depiction, some of her readers wept over the characters as though they were human beings. One reader who cried over the death of Fodderwing was perhaps reacting to this segment from the novel:

> Fodder-wing lay with closed eyes, small and lost in the center of the great bed. He was smaller than when he had lain sleeping on his pallet. He was covered with a sheet, turned back beneath his chin. His arms were outside the sheet, folded across his chest, the palms of the hands falling outward, twisted and clumsy, as in life. Jody was frightened. Ma Forrester sat by the side of the bed. She held her apron over her head and rocked herself back and forth. She flung down the apron.
>
> She said, "I've lost my boy. My pore crookedy boy."

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[2]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, The Yearling (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 340.

> She covered herself again and swayed from side to side.
>
> She moaned, "The Lord's hard. Oh, the Lord's hard."
>
> Jody wanted to run away. The bony face on the pillow terrified him. It was Fodder-wing and it was not Fodder-wing. Buck drew him to the edge of the bed.
>
> "He'll not hear, but speak to him."
>
> Jody's throat worked. No words came. Fodder-wing seemed made of tallow, like a candle. Suddenly he was familiar.
>
> Jody whispered, "Hey."
>
> The paralysis broke, having spoken. His throat tightened as though a rope choked it. Fodder-wing's silence was intolerable. Now he understood. This was death.[3]

Other readers were aware of the universality, for they wrote that the novel was "so much more than a story for its insight into common human nature."[4] The third aspect in the process of characterization by which they were influenced was that of unity, and several comments of the general readers were to the perfection and harmony of The Yearling for the novel was "all of a piece—people, background, animals, woods, flowers, everything."[5]

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[3] Ibid., p. 203.

[4] To M. K. R. from Felix Schnelling, May 27, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[5] To M. K. R. from Robert Herrick, May 14, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

The letter citing Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings as a "minute observer of Nature" was but one sample of how her readers perceived her use of facts and details.[6] Those responses provided no indication, however, that the general readership was influenced by the element of dialect so basic to her theory of composition. One possible explanation for the silence on the part of the general readers was found in the continual reference by the professional readers to the "naturalness" of the dialect or to the facility with which it was read. Thus, in not reacting, the general readership may have overlooked this element of her theory of composition because another element was functioning even stronger; and this second element, simplicity, perhaps negated the recognition of dialect for some of her readers.

Her use of objectivity as an element of composition to create a specific effect seemed to be successful, for as one reader wrote, she was "never obtrusive."[7] And finally, dealing with her use of simplicity, this letter from a service person in a Quebec hospital was an example of her success: "People like you who write so simply, so close to the little people mean a great deal

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[6]To M. K. R. from Donald Peattie, January 28, 1940, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[7]To Rudolf Weaver from Grant Lafarge, May 24, 1938, forwarded to M. K. R. and in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

to people like us who live so close to the edge."[8] Thus, the responses from her general readership tended to confirm that for these readers, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings accomplished her predetermined goal.

Her professional readership also was influenced positively, for their reviews also responded to the various elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition as she had intended. Though the range and degree of reaction to these elements was similar to the general readership's, the professional readership was, in general, more explicit, articulate, and judgmental, perhaps reflecting their greater experience with and deeper perception of the art form under analysis. One reviewer indicated a sensitivity not only to the general effect of beauty but also to the perception of reality which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had utilized as a means of attaining that effect: "There is a beauty of absolute truth in this fine story . . . This idyll of the wilderness is completely beautiful and real."[9] Another, addressing true-to-life depiction in the process of characterization, complimented Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings as a great writer for "She has sworn when they swore, cried when they cried, laughed and

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[8]To M. K. R. from Perry Potter, undated, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[9]Chicago Journal Commerce, April 9, 1938, in Rawlings Collection.

talked only as these people could."[10] Reacting to the second aspect of characterization, universality, many critics responded as one did, labeling the novel "timeless"; or as another pointed out, more poetically, "every line . . . lifts it out of the limitations of time and space into the higher realms of universal experience."[11] Indicative of the professional leadership's awareness of unity within the novel was the reviewer who noted that the people, the world they inhabit, the problems they face, "all are naturally intertwined . . . there is nothing implausible about the whole book."[12] Another cited Jody's decision to return home as an element of unity.

> A memory stirred him. He had come here a year ago, on a bland and tender day. He had splashed in the creek water and lain, as now, among the ferns and grasses. Something had been fine and lovely. He had built himself a flutter-mill. He rose and moved with a quickening of his pulse to the location. It seemed to him that if he found it, he would discover with it all the other things that had vanished. The flutter-mill was gone. The flood had washed it away, and all its merry turning.

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[10] San Diego Sun, April 17, 1938, in Rawlings Collection.

[11] Yale Divinity School, Christendom, Summer, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Herschel Brickell, "Books on Our Table, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Fine Novel," source unknown, undated, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[12] New Orleans Times Picayune, April 10, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

He thought stubbornly, "I'll build me another."

He cut twigs for the supports, and the roller to turn across them, from the wild cherry tree. He whittled feverishly. He cut strips from a palmetto frond and made his paddles. He sunk the up-rights in the stream bed and set the paddles turning. Up, over, down. The flutter-mill was turning. The silver water dripped. But it was only palmetto strips brushing the water. There was no magic in the motion. The flutter-mill had lost its comfort.

He said, "Play-dolly——"

He kicked it apart with one foot. The broken bits floated down the creek. He threw himself on the ground and sobbed bitterly. There was no comfort anywhere.

There was Penny. A wave of homesickness washed over him so that it was suddenly intolerable not to see him. The sound of his father's voice was a necessity. He longed for the sight of his stooped shoulders as he had never, in the sharpest of his hunger, longed for food. He clambered to his feet and up the bank and began to run down the road to the clearing, crying as he ran. His father might not be there. He might be dead. With the crops ruined, and his son gone, he might have packed up in despair and moved away and he would never find him.

He sobbed, "Pa— Wait for me."[13]

The comments of this reviewer concerning unity were, in part, based upon the above passage.

Another compositional element by which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings influenced her readership was that of facts

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[13]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, The Yearling, p. 423.

and details; for as one critic noted, "Nothing has escaped the author in her endlessly detailed picture. . . ."[14] One reviewer wrote how he was influenced by the use of facts and details in the narration of Penny's snakebite.

> Penny stopped short. There was a stirring ahead. A doe-deer leaped to her feet. Penny drew a deep breath, as though breathing were for some reason easier. He lifted his shotgun and leveled it at the head. It flashed over Jody's mind that his father had gone mad. This was no moment to stop for game. Penny fired. The doe turned a somersault and dropped to the sand and kicked a little and lay still. Penny ran to the body and drew his knife from its scabbard. Now Jody knew his father was insane. Penny did not cut the throat, but flashed into the belly. He laid the carcass wide open. The pulse still throbbed in the heart. Penny slashed out the liver. Kneeling, he changed his knife to his left hand. He turned his right arm and stared against the twin punctures. They were now closed. The forearm was thick-swollen and blackening. The sweat stood out on his forehead. He cut quickly across the wound. A dark blood gushed and he pressed the warm liver against the incision.
>
> He said in a hushed voice, "I kin feel it draw——— "
>
> He pressed harder. He took the meat away and looked at it. It was a venomous green. He turned it and applied the fresh side.
>
> He said, "Cut me out a piece o' the heart."
>
> Jody jumped from his paralysis. He fumbled with the knife. He hacked away a portion.

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[14] Hartford Connecticut Times, April 9, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Penny said, "Another."

He changed the application again and again.

He said, "Hand me the knife."

He cut a higher gash in his arm where the dark swelling rose the thickest. Jody cried out.

"Pa! You'll bleed to death!"

"I'd ruther bleed to death than swell. I seed a man die——"

The sweat poured down his cheeks.

"Do it hurt bad, Pa?"

"Like a hot knife was buried to the shoulder."[15]

It was the above-cited passage to which the reviewer referred when complimenting and reacting to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of facts and details.

As previously explained, perhaps the concern of the critics with facets of style was a function of their professional involvement with the craft, for they responded incisively to her use of objectivity, dialect, and simplicity. While working on The Yearling, in 1936, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had written to her editor at Scribner's, Maxwell Evart Perkins, that though the story of the novel "may sound sentimental . . . I shall be careful never to

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[15]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, The Yearling, pp. 146-147.

sentimentalize."[16] In a later letter to Maxwell Perkins, continuing to refine her concept of objectivity, she added that she hoped to "visualize people . . . almost you might say with divine detachment."[17] The reaction of her critics to this objectivity attested to her achievement of this goal, for they addressed not only "her fine sense of detachment," but also the fact that she "never slips into sentimentality."[18]

As an example of the reaction to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' use of dialect, one critic wrote "the dialect . . . is so simple here it becomes the only natural means of expression."[19] Simplicity, the third facet of her concept of style and last element of her theory of composition, proved successful, for as one critic wrote, the quality and beauty of the novel come "out of the simplest

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[16]To Maxwell Evart Perkins from M. K. R., undated, approximately October, 1936, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[17]To Maxwell Evart Perkins from M. K. R., February 11, 1934, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[18]New York Herald Tribune Books, April 3, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Herschel Brickell, "Books on Our Table, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Fine Novel," source unknown, undated, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[19]Chicago Journal Commerce, April 9, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

and most fundamental material," or as another explicitly stated, "the hoeing of cow peas, the excitement of the hunt, the feel of spring in the air."[20] Similarly, several reactions emphasized "the utmost simplicity of style and structure," for as one critic observed, "The effect is achieved not so much by the plot of the book as by the author's simple but beautiful prose. . . ."[21] Thus did these professional critics substantiate the success of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' implementation of her theory of composition.

Precisely which passages in The Yearling did the professional and general readers have in mind when responding to the various elements of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' theory of composition? Perhaps a passage which had been referred to by some readers can be illustrative of several of these elements, especially the modes of expression: objectivity, simplicity, and dialect. In the following selection from a closing chapter of the novel, a year has passed since the boy, Jody, built his flutter-mill at the

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[20] New York Sun, approximately April 1, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Cincinnati Ohio Times Star, April 6, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

[21] New York Post, June 1, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

Untitled newspaper article. April 3, 1938, in Rawlings Collection, University of Florida Library.

spring. His pet deer, Flag, has grown to be a yearling and has, no matter what desperate measures Jody has taken to the contrary, partially destroyed the Baxters' young crop. To save the family from the threat of starvation, Ma Baxter has been forced to shoot the deer; but she has only wounded it and Jody now must complete the task.

He turned on his father.

"You went back on me. You told her to do it."

He screeched so that his throat felt torn.

"I hate you. I hope you die. I hope I never see you again."

He ran after Flag, whimpering as he ran.

Penny called, "He'p me, Ory. I cain't git up——"

Flag ran on three legs in pain and terror. Twice he fell and Jody caught up to him.

He shrieked, "Hit's me! Hit's me! Flag!"

Flag thrashed to his feet and was off again. Blood flowed in a steady stream. The yearling made the edge of the sinkhole. He wavered an instant and toppled. He rolled down the side. Jody ran after him. Flag lay beside the pool. He opened great liquid eyes and turned them on the boy with a glazed look of wonder. Jody pressed the muzzle of the gun barrel at the back of the smooth neck and pulled the trigger. Flag quivered a moment and then lay still.

Jody threw the gun aside and dropped flat on his stomach. He retched and vomited and retched again. He clawed into

> the earth with his finger-nails. He beat it with his fists. The sinkhole rocked around him. A far roaring became a thin humming. He sank into blackness as into a dark pool.[22]

This was one excerpt from The Yearling, typical of the work to which the readers responded. Thus, according to those responses investigated, both her general and professional readers corroborated that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings accomplished her purpose as intended.

Regionalism was the literary vehicle Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings chose for her novel, and in so doing, she responded rhetorically to what Bitzer would call an exigence, in accordance with the constraints of her personal theory of communication. Regionalism, at that point in history, served as a response to a crisis; that is, the untenable situation of a population in the midst of society's ills during the Depression—with the city as a symbol of those ills. Her writing had as its purpose the communication of the beauty which Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings found in the Big Scrub country and its people, and by extension, of humanity in harmony with the environment. That Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' purpose was effectively achieved has been borne out in this and previous chapters; that this purpose was rhetorical in nature is evidenced

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[22]Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, The Yearling, p. 410.

by the successful accomplishment of the author's predetermined goal.

Perspective

In achieving such effectiveness with language, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings seems to fulfill Kenneth Burke's concept of the rhetor as one who "used language in such a way," based upon her preset concept of effectiveness, "as to produce a desired impression," that being the effect of beauty, "upon the hearer or reader."[23] For as Wayne Booth argued in The Rhetoric of Fiction, a novelist, whether realizing it or not, and therefore with suasory intent or not, performs a rhetorical function.[24] Another Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings scholar addressed the merging of these two great modes of discourse, for to Bigelow, all attempts to discriminate between the literary and the rhetorical have been unsatisfactory.[25] So, too, has Barnet Baskerville, speaking to the direction of rhetorical criticism, noted that:

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[23]Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), p. 265.

[24]Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 149.

[25]Gordon Bigelow, "Distinguishing Rhetoric from Poetic Discourse," in Contemporary Rhetoric, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1972), pp. 87-88.

> This blurring of old distinctions, this extension of the terms 'rhetoric' and 'rhetorical,' has obvious implications for criticism. Where Wichelns once protested against the literary criticism of oratory, we now enthusiastically advocate the rhetorical criticism of literature.[26]

The present study into the rhetorical effectiveness of a novel, operating from the perspective advanced by Tompkins, pursued the functional as opposed to the structural approach, for it has been asking the functional question, "How do sender, message, and receiver interact in concrete, verifiable ways?"[27] With few exceptions, according to Tompkins, rhetorical studies have tended to deal with the structural school of criticism, being interested mainly in the text or message variables.[28] However, this study, though concerned with the structure, went beyond it and sought, "in addition, the impact of that structure upon receivers."[29] Only by accomplishing this can "we explicate a specific attempt to adjust ideas to people and people to

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[26]Barnet Baskerville, "Rhetorical Criticism 1971: Retrospect, Prospect, Introspect," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 37 (Winter, 1971), 115.

[27]Phillip Tompkins, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 55 (December, 1969), 438, 439.

[28]Ibid., p. 438.

[29]Ibid., p. 439.

ideas."[30] The very title of the Tompkins article, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works," was suggestive of the emerging body of research that advocated a rhetorical approach to literature. As Baskerville noted, this emerging rhetorical approach places "an emphasis upon the persuasive element in poetry [and other types of literature] and upon the part played by the 'audience.'"[31]

Earlier discussion elaborated upon the discourse of literary authors fitting the rhetorical paradigm of "a mode of altering reality," since literature often functions either as a reflection of or a reaction to a situation, thereby providing the audience with the means to escape from or modify the exigence which generated the discourse, or to accept the influence of the exigence.[32] Ernest Bormann, in "Fantasy and Rhetoric Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," provides insight into such rhetorical effectiveness of a novel.[33] Though for the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel studied, the ultimate effect the author intended to communicate to

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[30] Ibid., p. 439.

[31] Baskerville, p. 115.

[32] Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," in Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, edited by Richard Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 385-386.

[33] Ernest Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," Quarterly Journal of Speech (December, 1972), 396-407.

the audience was beauty, her theory of composition dictated that only by creation of a reality perceivable to the audience could this effect be attained. In speculating about this type of created reality, Bormann provided an account of how dramatizing communication or fantasy chains created social reality for groups of people. These fantasy chains consisted of characters—real or fictitious—playing out a dramatic situation in time and space, a situation analogous to the characters in The Yearling. So, then, according to Bormann, through the novel or fantasy "one has entered a new realm of reality—a world of heroes, villains, saints, and enemies—a drama, a work of art."[34] Whether as individual reactions to works of art, small group reaction, or larger group reaction, these dramatizations "serve to sustain the members' sense of community, to impel them strongly into action . . . and to provide them with heroes, villains, emotions, and attitudes."[35] As had been suggested, the novel to a degree provided its own reality for its audience and in so doing, a mode of altering reality, for as Bormann added, fantasy themes and rhetorical visions "help people transcend the everyday and provide meaning for an audience."[36]

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[34] Ibid., p. 398.

[35] Ibid., p. 398.

[36] Ibid., p. 402.

Unfortunately, the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection was not a place in which to find extensive evidence of the extent to which people did alter their reality. To be sure, the Collection offers some indices of how the readers projected the themes of The Yearling to their own lives. In an August 1943 letter to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Betty Odgers related how "the shared loveliness of your book was an important bond in the adjustment of my life." Ms. Odgers added this was in part due to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' having written of the "right way of living [and of her] attention to the real and important things." Another letter, undated, from one of her readers, Perry Potter, told of a young boy who, upon having the book read to him and yearning to exchange his world for that of Jody, said, "I wish I was him, oh I wish I was." Among readers who responded with emotion to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' work, Laura Dix wrote on May 17, 1945, "I wept over the passing of Jody's little Fodderwing and later Flag." One of those who found the simple way of life purported by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel admirable or worthy of emulation was Ralph Prouty who wrote August 9, 1944. His praise of her "plain simple people" included the comment, "simple they may be, but they are undoubtedly great." These examples suggest how the novel well may have provided "heroes, emotions and attitudes [which] help people transcend the everyday

and provide meaning for an audience."[37] But the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection could not be the most appropriate place to explicate Bormann's concept of the altering of reality, for that examination would have to investigate "how people who participated in this rhetorical vision related to one another," and correspondence in the Collection gave very little indication of such possible interaction.[38] Moreover, for the reviewers, the solitary nature of their craft and the time element of their having written almost immediately preceding or following the publication of the book limited the interaction between them. However, Gordon Bigelow, her biographer, did directly address the novel's effectiveness in altering reality and positing an alternate world view to the existing Depression.

> In a time of great social and economic stress, of moral confusion and uncertainty, her stories quietly reasserted a familiar American ethic . . . The pastoral vision in her books is of a world of natural beauty free from the stench and ugliness of modern cities. . . .[39]

On December 3, 1938, an article in the Chicago Daily Tribune stated that The Yearling as well as several other

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[37] Ibid., pp. 398, 402.

[38] Ibid., p. 401.

[39] Gordon E. Bigelow, Frontier Eden (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), pp. 156, 157.

novels from 1938,

> . . . have a certain staunch reality about them and at the same time have been escape literature in the sense they have lifted the reader out of his own life into scenes so exigent that they make him forget his surroundings and their demands.

Another suggested that Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings presented a more simple world, a world that we had lost, for,

> . . . by choosing this locale, the author is able to awaken the reader to the realization that American boys lost something charming and real when movies, cars, radios, and electricity replaced the crude pleasure giving contrivances of the pioneers.[40]

These were some of the responses that did offer some indication of how readers accepted the world view of The Yearling as an alternate to the reality of their own existence.

Thus, the characters in The Yearling did seem to have an impact for readers. Indeed, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings may well have typified the Henry James quotation upon which the Wayne Booth book, The Rhetoric of Fiction, was based: "The author makes his readers just as he makes his characters." Moreover, she illustrates the rhetorical function of what Edwin Black has called a "Second Persona"; for in the auditor or respondent implied

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[40] Portland Maine Express, April 2, 1938.

by a discourse such as The Yearling, there is "a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become."[41] Just as the author makes her readers, so too, according to Black, can the language of an ideology imply an auditor who might share that ideology; for "actual auditors look to the discourse they are attempting for cues that tell them how they are to view the world, even beyond the expressed concerns, the overt propositional sense of the discourse."[42] So, then, may a discourse not only alter both the reader's perception and manner of apprehending the world, it may also provide, through implication, an image or character to be imitated. This would be especially valid for a discourse with a structure determined by a preset concept of effectiveness. Thus, we have seen how this investigation into the rhetorical effectiveness of a novel fits into the context of a broader scheme of rhetorical perspective that people such as Booth, Black, Bormann, and others are speculating about today.

This study has attempted to illumine the rhetorical interaction of sender, message, and receiver, in which the author of a novel determined a method or theory of

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[41]Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (April, 1970), 113.

[42]Ibid., p. 113.

composition predicated upon the effect she wished to achieve. For purposes of this study, investigation was made into the individual theory and approach that was particular not only to this one author, but also this one work. The approach selected here will, therefore, not be universally applicable to all authors wishing to communicate beauty. But, as indicated by this study, an author can and does formulate a theory of language effectiveness dependent not upon arbitrary choice but instead designated by the particular reaction desired. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings is the epitome of such a user of language.

On February 21, 1938, after Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings had submitted the final manuscript of The Yearling to Scribner's, one month before publication date, she wrote to her friend and editor, Maxwell Evart Perkins.

> The things all of you write me about The Yearling and the Book of the Month Club choice, make me very happy and very humble. The only reason I can accept it as even remotely deserved, is that I all but sweated blood in doing it. I do not see how any writer could work in greater agony and effort than I did on it and this is strange to me, for no writer could ever have a clearer conception than I did of what I wanted to do and where I was going.

In 1939 she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Letters for a Novel and elected to the Academy of Arts and Letters.

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The voluminous Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection housed in the University of Florida Library, Gainesville, has been the principal source on which this study was based. Therefore a description of the Collection indicating the nature and type of material may be useful. The Collection was established by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings at the University where she had lectured and had received an honorary degree. The form of the Collection is in part transcripts (typewritten), photo copies (positive), and microfilm (negative). Additional material has been received since her death in 1953 from her estate, friends, and relatives; however, the bulk of the Collection covers the period from 1930-1953.

Housed in twelve archival boxes are manuscripts of her books, short stories and unpublished poems, as well as newspaper articles she authored. Her personal, unpublished papers include journal entries of her first impressions of Florida, notes concerning local customs, information for her books, lecture notes, speech manuscripts and short stories.

Her vast correspondence is stored in nine file drawers. These letters include a large number of responses from readers as well as a personal correspondence with friends and relatives. Among the letters addressed to her are forty-eight from James Branch Cabell, twenty-five from A. J. Cronin, thirty-three from Sigfrid Undset, and letters from Maxwell Perkins, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Robert Herrick, Edith Pope, Eleanor Roosevelt, John Steinbeck, Zora Neale Hurston, James Still, Hudson Stroke, Carl Van Vechton, Mrs. Ernest Hemingway, Thornton Wilder, and many others equally important. Microfilm copies of her letters to her editor, Maxwell Perkins, supplement the correspondence. Additional correspondence, records, and transcripts are to be found in the papers of her lawyer, Phillip May, also housed in

the University Library. Several other file drawers contain information Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings gathered for the purpose of writing a biography of Ellen Glasgow.

Five large scrapbooks from several sources are a part of this Collection. Though four of these scrapbooks contain mainly newspaper and periodical clippings about the author and her work, one scrapbook contains mainly family photographs and information. There are, of course, included in this large, approximately three thousand piece collection, various memorabilia as well as one large box of artifacts.

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Edna Louise Saffy was born March 8, 1935 in Jacksonville, Florida. She attended West Riverside Grammar School, John Gorrie Junior High, and Robert E. Lee Senior High. She attended the University of Florida and received her Bachelor's degree in 1967 and her Master's degree in 1968. She is married to Grady Earl Johnson, Junior, of Virden, Manitoba, Canada.

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Among the honors she has received are membership in Lambda Iota Tau, Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, and the University of Florida Hall of Fame.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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