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# "A living fire to enlighten the darkness": allegorical interpretations of Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

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**“A living fire to enlighten the darkness”: allegorical interpretations of Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* and J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone***

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* is the first book in a four-part series concerning an unhappy girl, Meg Murry, who must journey on a quest to find and free her father, and in the process defeat an evil presence trying to conquer the universe. J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the first volume in a seven-part series, begins with an unhappy boy, Harry Potter, who learns he is a wizard and journeys on a quest to discover and protect the Sorcerer's stone and in the process defeat an evil wizard attempting to reinstate his presence in the wizarding world. Both narratives focus on the trials and tribulations of young protagonists battling larger, evil forces at work in their worlds. In addition to some similarities in plot, these novels share deep allegorical nuances and interpretations that invite young readers to see the choices they must make between good and evil and the change that occurs as a result, leading them to understand the interconnectedness of their lives to the greater whole. *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* can be read allegorically as narratives of psychomachia, interconnectedness, or the overarching power of love.

It is primarily to adults that I argue the merits of L'Engle and Rowling's texts as allegory. Their immense popularity with young readers throughout the world speaks directly to their value as children's literature. When young readers enjoy a particular novel, they will comprehend it more fully and be more likely to reread the novel and recommend it to friends. The natural promotion of child-friendly novels in this way ensures that the surface message gets passed along no matter what. However, the underlying allegorical meanings may remain hidden if scholars, parents, and educators do not promote discussion of the subtextual implications of the works.

As an educator, I see as my duty not instilling knowledge into the waiting heads of my pupils – they are not *tabulae rasae* as John Locke suggests – but rather bringing out information that is already there. The term *education* is derived from the Latin prefix *e* or *ex* meaning “out” and the Latin word *ducare* meaning “to lead”; thus education, like allegory, is a bringing out of something which was already intrinsic to either the pupil or the text. It is *not* the role of adults to mandate what hidden messages should and shouldn’t be brought out of a particular text, nor is it the teacher’s role; it *is*, however, the role of adults to provide young readers with the opportunity to read and thus discover these hidden messages for themselves.

Once led to the works of L’Engle and Rowling, young readers will read the two novels as allegory and recognize their own inherent abilities and capabilities. Many children can identify with the feeling of being too small, too weak, too unimportant to make a difference in their own lives, let alone the larger world. The extensive conflicts within the adult sphere often overwhelm even the most accomplished adults, and so entirely inundate the children whom they also affect. Since these children struggle simply to survive in a complex and crushing world, they may lose all hope for a positive resolution. In so doing, they also lose the capacity to see their own abilities and capabilities for change. I believe *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, in fact all books in both series, are wonderful means of demonstrating allegorically young people’s inherent capacity for change.

Perhaps my biggest hope is that children will use these allegories to see the interconnectedness in their own lives and strive to make good decisions in the larger world beyond the intangible realm of fiction and fantasy. In a world that grows ever smaller and

more integrated due to technology, media, and literacy, it is increasingly important for all of us to think of the impact we and our decisions have on the global realm. As our environment suffers, our economies stagnate, and our populace engages in acts of war, a decision made by one young child may influence the futures of many. By advocating and nurturing positive decisions now, we have the ability to direct the course of humanity. These novels, *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, minister to this need to nurture and afford adults the ability to advocate for good decision-making. There is a clear need for modern literature that guides young readers morally, intellectually, and emotionally. Contrary to some religious criticism, these are faith “full” stories which lead young people to, not away from, a greater understanding of themselves, their world, and their place within it.

### **Powers of Allegory, Fantasy and Science Fiction**

According to Mary Warner’s “Teaching the Madeleine L’Engle Tetralogy,” allegory, like fantasy and science fiction, “allows for humans...to deal with aspects of life we least like to handle” (1). Though she focuses on children’s and adolescent literature, Warner’s argument, that “allegory and fantasy provide the channel to filter the pain” (1) in order to deal with life’s most arduous journeys, could just as readily be applied to adult literature. Indeed, the ability of allegory and fantasy to serve as “escapist art in troubled times” (Brottman B16), as well as to appeal to readers of all ages, gives these genres unprecedented power to teach, heal, and endure. L’Engle acknowledges this when she admits that “story helped me learn to live” (Hettinga 1).

Story and allegory not only help us live, but also provide us with a means to grow and develop. In order to achieve the “imaginary development” (Gates, Steffel, and Molson 116)

needed to instigate any form of personal growth or change as often promoted by allegorical literature, one must “dare [to] disturb the universe.” L’Engle herself was an avid proponent of this theme, frequently quoting this line from T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” In an address to the Library of Congress entitled “Dare to be Creative,” L’Engle asserts that “good questions are more important than answers, and the best children’s books ask questions, and make the reader ask questions. Every new question is going to disturb someone’s universe” (23). She is also quoted by Marek Oziewicz in *One Earth, One People* as arguing that:

those who dare disturb the universe have many things in common. They refuse to submit to bullies. They will not tolerate phoniness and sham and pretense. They will not settle for the easy answer. They keep on asking questions – of themselves, of the world, of the universe – long after it is clear that people want answers, not questions; bread and circuses, not justice. (171)

With these allegorical elements in mind, L’Engle asserts in “Dare to be Creative” that children’s authors have a heavy responsibility (13). She argues that since “children’s minds are tender” and “far more tough than many people realize...they have an openness and an ability to grapple with difficult concepts which many adults have lost” (13-14). It is precisely this openness and ability, L’Engle argues, which not only allow children to comprehend allegory, but also make it the perfect genre for adolescent and fantasy literature.

In addition, for L’Engle, Rowling and other allegorists and fantasists, the story, or book, is “the only place in which you can examine a fragile thought without breaking it, or explore an explosive idea without fear it will go off in your face...It is one of the few havens remaining where a [person’s] mind can get both provocation and privacy” (“Dare” 20). Noel Perrin echoes this sentiment in his article “Science Fiction: Imaginary Worlds and Real-life Problems.” Perrin states that allegory, fantasy, and especially science fiction are “where you

go in literature if you want to hear people openly and seriously talking about meaning” (in Lenz 246). Herein lies the ultimate power of allegory, fantasy, and science fiction - the power to create and uncover new meanings where we saw none before. L’Engle acknowledged this when she stated in her Newbery Medal Award acceptance speech, “The Expanding Universe”: “Even the most straightforward tales say far more than they seem to mean on the surface...how much more there is in them than we realize at a first reading” (245). Whether it is the first, second, or one-hundredth reading, new meanings unfold before the inquisitive and careful reader. Whether peeling back layers of meaning in allegory, uncovering hidden presagements in fantasy, or creating a new “wholeness of vision” (Lenz 246) in science fiction, authors and readers alike take away more from the text than with traditional allegory. The didactic nature of traditional allegory repels modern readers who do not wish to be preached to, but rather wish to seek their own knowledge and meaning. It is for this reason that traditional allegory in the style of *Piers Plowman*, *Everyman*, and *Pilgrim’s Progress* has lost much of its appeal for readers today. Contemporary young adult readers still pursue the polysemous subtleties of traditional allegory, but explore now with fantasy and science fiction, which provide the *au courant* trends and visual literacy they crave. For these reasons, I argue that allegorical fantasy, as shown through the initial novels in both L’Engle’s *Kairos* series and Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, is an irreplaceable means of instructing young readers in the allegorical implications inherent in these texts.



## DEFINITION OF GENRES

### Definition of Allegory

Since biblical times, writers have tried to define the nebulous nature of allegory. In Galatians 4:24, Paul proposes the term “allegory” to compare the story of Isaac and Ishmael to two covenants God made with the Israelites. Since Paul, critics and literary scholars have struggled to define allegory and its place in the literary canon. Perhaps, therefore, in order to come to a comprehensive and communal definition of allegory, we must first consider its etymological genesis. The term “allegory” comes from the Greek roots *allos* meaning “other” and *agoreuein* meaning “public speaking” or “to speak openly in the marketplace” (Fletcher 2). Angus Fletcher also identifies a later meaning, *allegoria* or “inversion,” meaning “one thing in words but another in meaning” (2). William Flint Thrall et al. define allegory in the 1960 edition of *A Handbook to Literature* as:

a form of extended metaphor in which objects and persons in a narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself; allegory represents one thing in the guise of another – an abstraction in that of a concrete image...Allegory attempts to evoke a dual interest – one in the events, characters, and settings presented, and the other in the ideas they intended to convey. (7-8)

This shotgun approach to defining a complex term serves the basic need of shared comprehension, but we need a more multifaceted delineation of the complicated issues surrounding the issue of allegory. For the purposes of this thesis, I understand allegory not just as a “technique of aligning imaginative constructs, mythological or poetic, with conceptual or moral models” (as Northrop Frye, Sheridan Baker, and George Perkins do in the second edition of the *Harper Handbook to Literature*), but rather, to see the multidimensionality of allegory; to take into consideration how it “patterns the fictional world in order to suggest meanings to the reader” (Timmerman 6), and then to create sense

out of those patterns and meanings. As suggested by the plurality used in the previous statement, I believe that allegory's two-, three-, four-fold or more meanings are key to its complexity and versatility. Dante Aleghieri explains the four-fold nature of allegory in a letter to the patron of the *Divine Comedy*, Lord Can Grande della Scala. According to Dante, the first level of the text is the literal story - what happens in the plot; the second level is the moral implication - what ethically the reader should do or believe. The third level is the allegoric level - the metaphoric symbolism of textual elements; the fourth level is the anagogic level - the higher, broader meaning, usually religious, which connects the text to other texts and cultures throughout time and space. L'Engle believes that "the anagogical level is nothing that a writer or an artist of any kind can do deliberately" ("Believing" 265); it simply happens.

This polysemous nature, the essence of allegory, is implicated in several theoretical discussions about the nature of its place in the literary canon as well. The idea of allegory was long seen as old-fashioned, primarily because of Samuel Coleridge's attacks on allegory as an "arbitrariness of meaning that belongs to textuality" and his championing of symbolism as "a redemptive, organic figure" (Madsen 122). Charles Feidelson, however, gives us ample cause to remain with allegory when he explains:

It is in the nature of allegory, as opposed to symbolism, to beg the question of absolute reality. The allegorist avails himself of a formal correspondence between "ideas" and "things," both of which he assumes as given; he need not inquire whether either sphere is "real" or whether, in the final analysis, reality consists in their interaction. (8)

The inherent duality of allegory creates a dichotomy between the "things" of reality and the "ideas" of intangibility. However, as Feidelson suggests, this dichotomy need not completely separate the two spheres, for allegory bridges the gap between the literal reality

of things and the fictitious intangibility of ideas. The dichotomy between the surface story's literal meaning and the deeper theoretical meanings reveals the multi-layered quality of allegory.

Deborah Madsen explains in her work *Rereading Allegory* that classical tradition defined allegory as “a style of interpretation that imported to a text some external and extrinsic meaning; the text was assumed to operate as a kind of code, concealing a systematic analogy with some external discourse, often philosophical” (2-3). Thus, there was a hidden language of signs and codes which only the knowledgeable reader could discover and decipher. Once this was done, the reader could unlock the deeper philosophical message concealed within the text. In a different strain, early Christian Biblical scholars defined allegory not as a method of understanding, but rather a “distinct aspect of the text itself” (3). Madsen claims that early Christians used the term allegory to name “those passages of the Scripture that represent Christ's fulfillment of Old Testament [messianic] prophecy” (3). This shift in definition inverts the original usage of allegory from an external code brought to the text by the reader to an internal message “embedded in the text by God and perceptible to divinely inspired readers” (3).

Perhaps this shift in definition also gave rise to the differentiation between allegory and allegoresis. For my purposes, *allegory* refers to allegorical writing and *allegoresis* to allegorical reading. Some allegorists hold dim views of allegoresis, contending that allegorical reading destroys the inherent polysemous nature of allegory. They argue that, paradoxically, once we pin down a piece of allegorical writing with one specific allegorical reading, we eliminate the very pluridimensionality characteristic of allegory. However, Sayre Greenfield addresses the necessity of allegoresis in some texts based on the “details of

the text *and* the cultural circumstances of the reader” (49). Some texts naturally lend themselves to allegorical reading, even if they were not inherently written as allegories. This does not negate or diminish the power of the underlying meaning; it simply creates another venue for the reader to access that meaning.

In this way, the anagogic level of allegory is somewhat like allegoresis. If, as L’Engle suggested, no writer can ever intentionally write an anagogical meaning into a text, perhaps it is this highest level of allegory that readers reach or discover by means of allegoresis. L’Engle contends that the anagogic level of allegory is what “makes a book available in more than one culture...[so that] it can be called enduring” (“Believing” 265). In an article in *Ways of Reading Harry Potter: Multiple Stories for Multiple Reader Identities*, Kathleen Malu describes reader-response literary theory in terms which could just as easily be applied to allegoresis. Just as with allegoresis, in reader-response theory, readers “create their own meaning from the written word” and a (presumably new) “meaning is constructed each time readers read” (77). Malu further points out that reader-response perspectives are “dynamic, fluid, and interdependent” (77). Like allegory, reader-response readings, and by proxy allegoresis, can be ever-changing, malleable, and intertwined with the more traditional allegorical writing interpretations discussed above. The supple nature of allegory creates a “disjunction between word and meaning” (Hunter 159), which in turn, can create a valuable space for the reader to place him or herself into the text, thus making it and its message – inherently allegorical or not – more immediate and influential.

## Definition of Fantasy

Fantasy, though a seemingly simpler term, may prove as difficult to pin down as allegory. Also originating from the Greek, fantasy derives from φανταζειν or “fantazien” which ultimately itself derives from φανειν or “fainein” meaning “make visible” (Hunter 40). Lynnette Hunter points out that both epiphany (επιφαινειν) and fantasy (φανταζειν) have their roots in the Greek φανειν, the primary distinction being that epiphany “makes visible by something else” (40) whereas fantasy more directly shows the otherwise unseen. The Greek etymology of fantasy strengthens its connection to allegory by emphasizing the basis of fantasy to reveal the otherwise unseen. In their 1960 revision of *A Handbook to Literature*, Thrall, et al. define fantasy as: “a conscious breaking free from experienced reality [as seen in] work which takes place in a non-existent and unreal world...or concerns incredible and unreal characters...or employs physical and scientific principles not yet discovered or contrary to present experience” (198-199). While this definition seems to take into consideration all possible factors in a very cut-and-dried manner, it ignores or leaves out what I believe is the most important facet of fantasy – that of willful imagination. Though Thrall, et al. do mention a “conscious breaking free” of reality, this definition does not acknowledge the necessity or even use of imagination. For this reason, I prefer the definition used by Pamela Gates, Susan Steffel, and Francis Molson in their introduction to *Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults*. Gates et al. define fantasy as: “imaginative fiction that can provide alternative realities, allowing us to explore issues of size, time, and space steeped in the human need to understand” (6). I believe this definition more accurately provides fantasy literature with the focus and desire it encompasses. John H. Timmerman echoes this sentiment when he defines fantasy literature as providing us with a “parallel

reality which gives us a renewed awareness of what we already know” (1). However, Nilsen and Donelson’s explanation of fantasy in *Literature for Today’s Young Adults* provides the best connection to allegory and the richest definition of fantasy’s power. Nilsen and Donelson argue that fantasy “refuses to accept the world as it is, so readers can see what could have been (and still might be), rather than merely what was or must be” (210). By refusing to accept the world as it is, fantasy demonstrates its redemptive and illuminative power, further aligning it with the dual nature allegory. Just as allegory has two faces or images, so too does fantasy provide us with another reality in which to test, grow, and expand our understanding of ourselves and our world.

Similar to allegory, fantasy has somewhat set structural elements. Gates, Steffel, and Molson identify six characteristics or qualities of fantasy which could just as easily apply to science fiction or allegory. Fantasy can be “imitative and derivative” since it “often depends on images of what once existed or still exist,” while at the same time be “original and creative” by “assembling [the images] into new forms that have never existed” (Gates, Steffel, and Molson 5). These newly formed images must create the presence of “unreal phenomena” (6). Gates et al. provide a laundry list of such “unreal phenomena” based on the animation and personification of animals, toys, and household objects used to create situations that “do not and cannot exist in the world as it is physically constituted” (6). Whether the images exist in our physical world, are based on real or imagined forms, or take place in this or an alternate reality is irrelevant, for the crux of all fantasy structure is the battle between good and evil. The protagonists of fantasy, especially for children, must ultimately make decisions between good and evil which will guide and shape not only their own lives, but all of existence.

Like allegory, fantasy literature is primarily broken into two subtypes: “high” or “heroic” fantasy and “ethic” or “ethical” fantasy. High or heroic fantasy (hereafter referred to solely as heroic fantasy) focuses on using “plot, characterization, and style” to adapt the “traditional heroic or mythic conventions and material” into a new format easily discerned by readers. In heroic fantasy, the unreal phenomena required by fantasy are rendered in the “presence of a secondary world in which non-rational causality operates” (Gates, Steffel, and Molson 113). The unreal phenomena are explained by events or causes entirely rational within the secondary world, but wholly irrational in ours. Thus, when staircases move of their own volition, golden metal balls called snitches zip through the air, and portraits talk within the *Potter* series, characters rarely notice or comment on it. The only comment Harry makes after encountering these new fantastical elements is that there is “a lot more to magic than...waving [a] wand and saying a few funny words” (*Sorcerer* 133). Thus, in order to adhere to the reality of the tradition, Rowling presents these events as completely normal as escalators, X-boxes, and television in our world.

In “ethic” or “ethical” fantasy (hereafter referred to solely as ethical fantasy), the reader is guided to consider the author’s intention, subject matter, and possible effect upon the reader. Gates et al. contend that ethical fantasy concerns itself “with the existence of good and evil and the morality of human behavior” (114), taking for granted the existence of good and evil but making the ability to discern between the two distinct entities at times difficult. Ethical fantasy plots highlight “the difficulty and, sometimes, even the necessity, of discerning right from wrong and then of acting accordingly” (114). In order to act accordingly, young people in ethical fantasy must make choices and take sides between good and evil; these choices “sometimes may have results different from what the individual

intends or foresees” (115). Thus the choices and subsequent consequences force the young protagonist(s) to mature as a result. For these reasons, ethical fantasy is not “concerned with form but with distinctive subject matter, specific intent, and purpose” (114).

Both L’Engle’s and Rowling’s texts have elements of heroic and ethical fantasy; however, because both texts explicitly focus on good defeating evil (Meg extinguishes a portion of the Black Thing in *A Wrinkle in Time* and Harry once again vanquishes Lord Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*) the bulk of their material falls within the realm of ethical fantasy. Certain patterns within ethical fantasy also align closely with both *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. Nearly all ethical fantasies have young, or seemingly young, protagonists who eventually find themselves “closely involved in some type of significant action, the culmination of which is crucial in some larger issue calling for a confrontation between good and evil” (Gates, Steffel, and Molson 117). Meg and Charles Wallace Murry and Calvin O’Keefe are called to fight It and the Black Thing to keep them from destroying Earth and all life as we know it, while Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ron Weasley are called to fight Professor Quirrell in order to prevent Voldemort from returning and destroying the wizarding world as they know it. In addition to this call to action, the young protagonists must become actively involved in the fight, make important decisions about right and wrong, good and evil for themselves, and eventually see good prevail. However, like allegory, if these “essential components” are too straightforward, happen too soon, or are too didactic, the story will fail.



### **Definition of Science Fiction**

Many critics and literary historians would classify L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* as equal parts fantasy and science fiction. Discussion throughout L'Engle's *Time* quartet focuses on detailed explanation and use of physics, cellular biology, and chemistry. While their application and outcomes are most decidedly fantastic, their mere presence imports the realm of science fiction.

Science fiction is a much more modern concept than fantasy, born from the rapid scientific development of the late industrial revolution through the nuclear age. In a purely denotative sense, science fiction is “imaginative fiction based on postulated scientific discoveries or speculative environmental changes, frequently set in the future or on other planets and involving space or time travel” (Science Fiction). The term “science-fiction” was first used in a literary sense in 1851 in William Wilson's work *A Little Earnest Book Upon a Great Old Subject* in which the author hopes more works of science fiction will be written as they would “likely fulfill a good purpose” (Wilson 138). However, the term was not used commonly until the late 1920s to early 1930s to describe the literary world's growing fascination with scientific writing and science in general. In 1952, August Derleth addressed this issue in an essay for *The English Journal* entitled “Contemporary Science-Fiction.” Derleth defined science fiction as a “development of [the] fantasy [genre]” (187), but a development that grew to encompass “all imaginative fiction which grows out of scientific concepts...whether already demonstrated or whether projected out of the writer's imagination into future time and space” (187). For Derleth, therefore, science fiction was born of the older imaginative traditions of fantasy and allegory, but due to its specific subject matter has been separated into its own genre. However, even Derleth contends that it is “not

always possible to draw a hard and fast line between science-fiction and non-science [based]-fantasy” (188). Like Derleth, John H. Timmerman equates differentiating between fantasy and science fiction to “marking the differences in identical twins” (13).

In spite of this, Timmerman finds three key differences between fantasy and science fiction in *Other Worlds: The Fantasy Genre*. The first is merely in mode of transportation; Timmerman attests that in science fiction, travel to another world or place is “*always dependent* upon a scientific or technological device,” whereas fantasy “*may* make the use of [such] a device...but it is usually a magical device” (14)<sup>1</sup>. Interestingly, both *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* use devices that are more scientific than magical in order to transport their heroine and hero to their “other worlds.” At different times in L’Engle’s text, Meg Murry and her family “tesser,” a decidedly scientific concept; however, more than once magical objects, such as Mrs. Which’s glasses, accomplish the same feat. Similarly in Rowling’s text, Harry Potter and his friends arrive at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry via a steam locomotive; while not as advanced a scientific concept as bending the space time continuum in order to tesser, the steam engine was one of the greatest scientific and technological devices of the last two hundred years. Of course, in order to reach the scientific steam locomotive, Harry must pass through a magical gate at Platform 9 3/4.

Timmerman also argues that science fiction requires readers to suspend their disbelief in order to believe that, given the scientific evidence used in the text, the situations, places, characters, and so on are real; fantasy simply asks the reader to believe it is a “probable world” (14). The final difference is that science is “futuristic,” it is “interested in the effects

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, all emphasis within quotations is as printed in original source material.

of science and technology on man in a future state” (14), whereas fantasy, on the other hand, “calls forth a wholly other world” (15) completely unconcerned with the future of humankind as we know it. Yet, I do not find this distinction applies wholly to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, because even though the magical wizarding world, fantasy’s “other world,” shuns contact with the conventional “Muggle” society, which parallels science fiction’s “futuristic mankind,” the two are still inexorably linked through shared nationalities, events, cultural traits, and citizens such as Muggle-raised Harry and Muggle-born Hermione. In this study, I will strive to see the connections among the three genres, rather than the minutiae separating them.

### **Parallels Among Genres**

Many parallels between allegory and fantasy/science fiction exist in the rhetorical attitudes and stances taken toward and employed within these genres. Lynette Hunter addresses these issues in her work *Modern Allegory and Fantasy*. Hunter explicates the similarities in rhetorical argument between allegory and fantasy by comparing the active approach of readers of both allegory and fantasy to the deeper meanings of the text. Allegory and fantasy readers must interact with the language of the text before being left to understand and “assess the implications” (181). Hunter also posits that due to their distinctive natures, neither allegory or fantasy is “limited to attitudes to[ward] perception and knowledge” (182); simply put, neither allegory nor fantasy is bound by conventional ways of seeing, thinking or knowing. Donald Hettinga quotes L’Engle defining fantasy as “a search for a deeper reality, for the truth that will make us more free” (*Presenting* 11). This definition is quite similar to my working definition of allegory. Both forms of narrative serve a “deeper reality” and

“truth that will make us more free” (11). Finally, Hunter argues that allegory and fantasy are intertwined through their intrinsic reliance on and use of a central belief or value – whether it is the battle between good and evil as many fantasy writers contend, or the quest for righteousness at the heart of many medieval allegories.

One other element central to the bond between allegory and fantasy is their similar structural elements. Indigenous to both allegory and fantasy stories is the journey, a diversion from the path, guides to aid the hero or heroes along the way, and ultimately a choice between right and wrong, good and evil. I will discuss how *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* fulfill these steps in my critical analysis; for now, I merely address the existence of each of these steps within allegory and fantasy in general in order to draw even more direct and durable parallels between the genres.

The most powerful connection between allegory and fantasy/science fiction lies in both genres’ inherent transformative natures. In both genres, literal plot and characterization are transformed into subtle and diverse meanings, and the reader is transformed by the underlying message inherent in the allegory or fantasy. Gay Clifford makes this transformation the center of her entire book *The Transformations of Allegory*, in which she asserts that allegory, like fantasy, is a “mode capable of subsuming many different genres and forms” (5). Thrall et al. describe fantasy as “the means used by the author for serious comment on reality” (199), a definition one would expect to see in a passage explicating allegory. In addition, since fantasy “can also be an effective agency for change, renewal, and liberation,” it “dare[s] to aspire to the ideal, the transcendent, the luminous” which allows it to be “subversive, ripping away facades, undermining the pillars of orthodoxy, and exposing the special pleading and self-interest often lurking behind convention and respectability”

(Gates, Steffel, and Molson 6). These aspirations and effects align fantasy even more closely with allegory and science fiction since all three share a common desire and subtext.

Given the corollaries described above, it is no surprise that both allegory and fantasy create polysemous meanings that originate within the text but extend far beyond the literal meaning. For this reason, I propose the term *allegorical fantasy* to encapsulate the combined genre of L'Engle and Rowling's novels. This term synthesizes the communal components of allegory and fantasy, ensuring that allegorical fantasy's role is "not to provide tidy morals, but to provide growth by experience" (Timmerman 31).

## LITERARY REVIEW

### Publication History

*A Wrinkle in Time* is the classic that nearly wasn't. After successfully publishing several earlier novels, L'Engle recounts that "publisher after publisher" turned down *A Wrinkle in Time* in the early 1960s. Publishers criticized the text as unpublishable because it "deal[t] overtly with the problems of evil," was "too difficult for children," and was unclear as to whether it was a children's or an adult book (Kim 21). The only reason it was published at all was that L'Engle's mother attended the same church as John Farrar of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux and approached him about the book at a dinner party (Mattson 58). Even though the company had already rejected the manuscript, Farrar read it again and decided to publish it "not because [he] expected it to be successful, but because [he] liked it" (Mattson 58).

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone's* publication history is interestingly similar to *A Wrinkle in Time*. Like L'Engle, Rowling had a rocky publication history. After sending the manuscript to several publishers and agents, Rowling finally found agent Christopher Little who spent a year sending the book to different publishers, most rejecting it as "too long" (Eccleshare 7), before Barry Cunningham of Bloomsbury Children's Books agreed to take it on. Like Farrar, Cunningham liked taking on little known writers and projects. From there, it is publication history; the *Harry Potter* series has become one of the best selling lines of children's books in history.

### **Plot Overview**

L'Engle begins with the classic "It was a dark and stormy night" line made famous by Victorian writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton, foreshadowing the trouble brewing for her protagonists. We are introduced to the Murry family. The protagonist, Margaret (Meg) Murry, huddles alone in her attic bedroom taking stock of everything wrong with her life. In quick succession we are introduced to Meg's beautiful and intelligent but lonely mother Mrs. Murry, her "nice, regular" (*Wrinkle* 13) twin brothers Sandy and Dennys, and her precocious youngest brother, Charles Wallace. In equally quick succession we are introduced to Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which, who along with neighbor and new friend Calvin O'Keefe become guides and traveling companions in Meg and Charles Wallace's ensuing adventures. After assuring Mrs. Murry that "there is such a thing as a tesseract" (27), Mrs. Whatsit and friends take Meg, Calvin, and Charles Wallace to the planet Uriel to see the "dark Thing" (82) they must fight against the rest of the novel. After stopping briefly on a planet in Orion's belt to check in on their respective families back on Earth, all five tesser to the dark planet, Camazotz. The three Mrs. Ws give each child a gift before sending them alone on a mission to free Meg and Charles Wallace's missing father.

The children are appalled by the rigid conformity of Camazotz' citizens and architecture. In CENTRAL Central Intelligence they meet the Man with the Red Eyes, who uses the power of IT to possess Charles Wallace. The now-bewitched Charles Wallace leads Meg and Calvin to the imprisoned Mr. Murry, where Meg frees her father through the power of her love and Mrs. Who's spectacles. Enraged by Meg's abilities, the still-mesmerized Charles Wallace takes Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Murry to IT – the giant disembodied brain controlling Charles Wallace and all life on Camazotz. In order to escape IT's brainwashing

abilities, Mr. Murry tesser Meg, Calvin, and himself off Camazotz – leaving Charles Wallace behind. They land and recover on Ixchel, a planet inhabited by large lovable beasts also fighting the evil of the dark Thing. During a temper tantrum, Meg realizes her destiny and travels back to Camazotz to save Charles Wallace. Returning to IT, Meg saves Charles Wallace by realizing that love is stronger than hate, and that through her love of Charles Wallace, she can love even the malevolent IT. By her love she frees Charles Wallace from IT's possession and tesser back to Earth with Charles Wallace, Calvin, and Mr. Murry. Reunited with her family, Meg embraces her changed perspectives and growth as an individual.

Like Meg's, Harry's true journey begins during a fierce storm; his story, however, begins somewhat earlier. Rowling begins *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by abandoning the orphaned Harry on his estranged aunt and uncle's doorstep. Moving forward ten years, he is a normal, downtrodden boy being raised by his negligent (bordering on abusive) relatives. There is something mysterious about Harry and his past, but his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon are not willing to engage in conversation about his family history. Harry's future looks dim until he begins to receive enigmatic letters by the hundreds, which culminate in a nocturnal visit from the mountainous groundskeeper, Rubeus Hagrid, who informs Harry "yer a wizard" (*Sorcerer* 50). Harry is told the truth about his mysterious past. His witch and wizard parents, Lily and James Potter, were killed by the dark wizard Lord Voldemort, who died or disappeared while trying to kill Harry. Due to his magical lineage Harry has been accepted into the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This sets Harry on a whirlwind journey into the magical world of Diagon Alley and Platform 9 3/4, where he begins to learn about the wizarding world from which he was hidden since



birth. Along the way he befriends fellow students, ever loyal Ron Weasley and bookish, Muggle-born Hermione Granger, and grows comfortable with the wizarding world, if not his place within it.

Shortly after arriving at Hogwarts, the students learn that a precious but unknown object is being guarded there. Harry also learns that the famous “sorcerer’s stone” was removed from its safe at Gringott’s Bank the same day Harry visited. Harry rapidly connects the two pieces and sets out to learn as much as he can about the sorcerer’s stone and its creator, Nicholas Flamel. After many misadventures with Ron and Hermione, Harry believes that the stone is hidden in Hogwarts itself and that his most despised teacher, Severus Snape, is trying to steal it. This triggers a final quest to protect the stone via countertheft. With Ron and Hermione’s help, Harry passes five tests only to be confronted with his arch-nemesis, Voldemort, living as a semi-parasite on an unsuspected Professor Quirrell. Through his desire to possess, but not use, the sorcerer’s stone, Harry thwarts Quirrell and again banishes Voldemort to near-oblivion. Through this, Harry becomes the school hero, final exams are canceled, and Harry lives up to his title of “the boy who lived” (17); he returns to the Dursleys for the summer knowing that his experiences and journeys have given him the confidence and power to survive any situation.

## TEXTUAL ALIGNMENT WITHIN ALLEGORICAL FANTASY TRADITIONS

As stated above, allegorical fantasy literature contains several common traits – journeys, diversions from the path, guides, and allegorical meanings of these traits. Aspects of these traits appear in most writing – fiction or nonfiction, genre is irrelevant. The crux of their usage does not depend on whether the element is present, but on the reasons for their use. Thus, their treatment within the text is key to differentiating between allegorical fantasy tradition and straightforward fiction writing.

While it is true that nearly, if not all, fiction forces the protagonist on some sort of journey – physical, mental, or emotional – throughout the work, if the protagonist goes on the journey solely in order to further plot or allow specific plot elements to occur, then the text is likely not allegorical or fantasy-based. If, however, the journey is essential to understanding the final message and decisive choice between right and wrong, good and evil, then the text is allegorical or fantasy-based. Likewise, nearly all texts have secondary characters that serve the protagonist in some way. In order for the secondary characters to be considered allegorical, they must themselves serve as allegories or personifications which aid the protagonist in finding their way, not just as amusing side notes or supplementary companions to the protagonist. Finally, most protagonists are presented with an ethical or moral dilemma at some point. Again, the centrality of that ethical or moral dilemma to the overarching message presented by the author is what separates allegory and fantasy writing from traditional fiction. In the passages below, I will examine instances in which both L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* fall within these allegorical and fantasy traditions in English to support my allegorical readings of both texts in the subsequent section.

## Journeys

American poet and novelist Don Williams, Jr. wrote, “The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination” (Williams). This is certainly true of allegory and, with open interpretation, nearly every other piece of fiction; it is certainly true of L’Engle’s time-travel series including *A Wrinkle in Time* and Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. Throughout the texts, L’Engle’s and Rowling’s characters journey not only through physical space and mental development, but in L’Engle’s case, through time as well. Gates, Steffel, and Molson argue that “empathic insight,” as quoted by D.W. Harding, “allows the spectator to view ways of life beyond his normal range...he can achieve an imaginary development of human potentialities that have been rudimentary in himself” (116). L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* and Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* exemplify Harding’s insight. Just as all the main characters, Meg Murry, Charles Wallace Murry, and Calvin O’Keefe in *Wrinkle* and Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Neville Longbottom in *Sorcerer’s Stone*, undergo individual transformative quests and changes, so too does the reader allow him or herself to undergo his or her personal quests and changes.

In order to rescue their missing father, Meg and Charles Wallace, accompanied by friend Calvin O’Keefe, must travel through space and time via the “fifth dimension” (*Wrinkle* 88). Using simple analogies (and even helpful drawings), Charles Wallace explains that the fifth dimension is created by geometric principles by which you would “square the square” of the fourth dimension creating a “tesseract” (88). This fifth dimension allows Meg, Charles Wallace, Calvin, and the three Mrs. W’s to travel first to Uriel where they first encounter the Black Thing, then to a two-dimensional planet on which the children cannot survive, and

later to the foggy domain of the Happy Medium, the dystopia of Camazotz, the comparative utopia of Ixchel, and finally back to the vegetable garden from which they began their journey. These physical journeys provide opportunities for allegorical and physical growth.

Like L'Engle's characters, Rowling's characters travel through physical space to new, fantastic worlds; unlike L'Engle's characters, Harry Potter does not need time or space travel to do so. In order to avoid an onslaught of mysterious letters, Harry's Uncle Vernon whisks the family away to hide in a hut on a "large rock way out at sea" (*Sorcerer* 43) where they are discovered by Hagrid, and where in turn Harry learns of his wizarding heritage. From there Harry journeys to the magical shopping mecca of Diagon Alley, the befuddling Platform 9 3/4, and finally to the wondrous Hogwarts. Throughout the school year, Harry undertakes several more adventures, as well as an equal amount of misadventure, before returning at the end of the school year to the drudgery of the Dursleys. However, Harry's physical journeys serve as vehicles for his, and his closest friends', emotional, mental, and psychological growth.

The two primary protagonists in *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg and Charles Wallace undertake, in addition to the physical journey, a mental, emotional, and spiritual journey concurrent with their physical travels throughout the universe. Prior to her journey, Meg describes herself as "full of bad feeling" (*Wrinkle* 17), a biological mistake (61), and definitely *not* patient (71). However, after being left with only her so-called faults (112) to help her, Meg realizes that ultimately it is these faults – "anger, impatience, stubbornness" (176) – that help her escape from IT. This process of maturation also leads Meg to the final leg of her spiritual journey, in which she alone must rescue Charles Wallace from IT. Throughout most of the narrative all Meg wants is a "quick fix" for her "problematic reality"

(Hettinga 25) of accepting who she is, “both the good and the bad” (26), and what she is able to accomplish. In the midst of a childish tantrum, Meg suddenly feels “tired and unexpectedly peaceful” (*Wrinkle* 215) at the realization that she alone knows and loves Charles Wallace enough to combat IT on his behalf. This epiphany leads to the end of the spiritual journey for Meg, allowing her to become “someone who no longer sees the world as she did at the outset of the narrative” (Hettinga 25).

Conversely to Meg’s spiritual journey to self-acceptance and self-esteem, Charles Wallace must undergo a journey to become less prideful and self-reliant. Like Meg, the beginning of the novel illustrates Charles Wallace’s precocity and the ego which surrounds it. At the age of five, Charles Wallace uses words such as “exclusive” (*Wrinkle* 16), “therefore” (18), and “inadvertently” (36), knowing all the while that it is “impressive, isn’t it” (16). After landing on the planet where their father is imprisoned, Charles Wallace declares that he alone can take care of Meg since he always has (114). His self-assurance leads Mrs. Whatsit to caution Charles Wallace against “pride and arrogance” as “they may betray you” since the “danger here is greatest for you” (114). Despite these warnings, Charles Wallace acts with too much self-assurance, continually talking back to adults and making flippant comments. After nearly succumbing to a previous hypnotic trance induced by the Man with the Red Eyes, Charles Wallace’s ego leads him to believe that at five years of age he will be able to “hold back” and “keep part of [himself] out” (145) of a second, stronger trance. Obviously, Charles Wallace cannot withhold himself from the stronger forces of IT and becomes ensnared not only by the evil of IT, but also by his own hubris.

Nevertheless, Charles Wallace doesn’t seem to learn his lesson as he remains in this state throughout the rest of the novel and into the next novels in the series as well. In *A*

*Swiftly Tilting Planet*, Charles Wallace once again falls victim to pride and self-assurance. Even after being blown into a “projection,” Charles Wallace insists on instructing the wind on his next destination, despite his companion Gaudior’s comment, “Is that all you remember?” (*Swiftly* 150). When this mission too goes horribly wrong, Charles Wallace finally admits that he has “learned that every time I’ve tried to control things, we’ve had trouble” (160). Thus, not until after nearly killing himself and his unicorn companion Gaudior by insisting on his own way does Charles Wallace complete the spiritual journey begun in *A Wrinkle in Time*.

Like Meg and Charles, Rowling’s characters undergo immense emotional, mental and psychological journeys throughout their narratives. Though a seemingly minor character, Neville Longbottom undergoes perhaps the most crucial emotional journey among the young protagonists. When the reader first sees Neville, he is figuratively lost, and in a way literally lost. An orphan whose parents were “lost” in the battle with Voldemort, he is forever losing his pet frog Trevor. In spite of his wizarding pedigree, Neville seems to have no magical ability, and his greatest fear was that he “might not be magic enough” (*Sorcerer* 125). Throughout the year, Neville is bullied by students and teachers alike as he fails at potions, flying, and getting back into the Gryffindor common room. After being accepted by Harry, Ron, and Hermione, Neville slowly begins to gain confidence in himself and his abilities. He stands up to Draco Malfoy, telling the bully that “I’m worth twelve of you” (223). He continues to evolve by trying to warn Harry and Hermione that Malfoy is out to get them, only to end up punished himself. As Harry, Ron, and Hermione leave to steal the sorcerer’s stone, Neville attempts to block their way, stating that he “won’t let them do it” (272). This proves to be Neville’s final breakthrough. At the end-of-the-year feast, Dumbledore awards

Neville the final ten points needed to win Gryffindor the house cup because, as Dumbledore says, “There are all kinds of courage...It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends” (306). Thus, from being lost, Neville becomes the new-found hero of his entire house.

Similarly, both Ron and Hermione grow from static, one-dimensional characters into fully developed young adults throughout the course of the novel. When Harry first meets Ron, like Calvin O’Keefe, is described in terms of his family as the “last and youngest” (*Sorcerer* 93). Caught in the midst of a large “old wizarding family” (99), Ron has been overshadowed by his five older brothers all his life, stating that “everyone expects me to do as well as the others, but if I do, it’s no big deal, because they did it first” (99-100). Ron finds comfort and acceptance in Harry’s friendship, and even though he begins to grow more as an individual apart from his family name, when he looks in the Mirror of Erised, all he sees is himself “standing alone, the best of them all” (213). Ron proves his worth by commanding the winning game of chess in which he sacrifices himself in order for Harry and Hermione to move on. Ron’s self-sacrifice leads Dumbledore to award Ron fifty points for “the best-played game of chess Hogwarts has seen in many years,” at which older brother Percy, a school prefect, brags “my brother, you know! My youngest brother” (305).

Likewise, Hermione begins the novel with a “bossy sort of voice” (*Sorcerer* 105) and personality to match. She hopes that learning “all [their] coursebooks by heart,” as she has done, “will be enough” (105-106). Throughout the first few months her character serves solely as a bratty know-it-all who acts as the mouthpiece of caution and “proper” behavior. However, after Harry and Ron save her from a mountain troll, she lies to a teacher to protect them. After this, she still serves as a voice of reason and counsel when Ron and Harry

proceed with their misadventures; however, now she accompanies them as a friend and compatriot. Hermione comes into her own upon completing the penultimate task in their quest for the sorcerer's stone; after receiving a compliment from Harry, Hermione remonstrates "Me! Books! And cleverness! There are more important things – friendship and bravery" (287). Thus, from a socially stunted braggart, Hermione has come full circle into a humble confidant because of the emotional, mental, and psychological journey she has undertaken.

By far, the most profound transformation occurs within Harry. The aforementioned journeys and their subsequent transformations could not have occurred had Harry not maintained an intrinsic personal journey. Hidden from his true magical heritage, Harry unwittingly releases a boa constrictor bred in captivity on his cousin Dudley, hearing the creature hiss on its way out, "Brazil, here I come...Thanksss, amigo" (*Sorcerer* 28). Rowling uses this comical scene to foreshadow Harry's journey to seek his own equally unknown heritage. From the outset, Harry is everyone's "favorite punching bag" (20), whether literally with Dudley and his friends, or figuratively with Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon. He does not see his own worth or place in the world and does not yet know that he is "famous – a legend" (13). Harry expresses these concerns to Hagrid when he bemoans that "Everyone thinks I'm special...but I don't know anything about magic at all. How can they expect great things? I'm famous and I can't even remember what I'm famous for" (86). Nevertheless, Harry gradually learns that even though he doesn't possess the wizarding background of Neville, the family of Ron, or the intelligence of Hermione, he does possess a steadfastness and bravery, which help him create a new persona separate from the Dursleys and from his fame within the wizarding world. He gains and loses as many points for Gryffindor as the



rest of the house combined. However in the end, Harry admits he knows his own worth when he implies that he will be able to stand up to Dudley's bullying and "have a lot of fun with Dudley this summer" (*Sorcerer* 309) with the threat of magic on his side. Just like Meg, Harry "no longer sees the world as [he] did at the outset of the narrative" (*Presenting* 25).

### **Journey Stops as Allegories**

In L'Engle's narrative, even the names of the journey stops are allegorical. The first planet, Uriel, is a reference to the fourth archangel acknowledged by Judaism and gnostic Christianity as a messenger of warnings. In the Book of Enoch, Uriel is sent to Noah to warn him of the impending flood; similarly while on the planet Uriel, Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin are warned of the impending danger of the "shadow that was so terrible that...there never had been before or ever would be again, anything that would chill...with a fear that was beyond shuddering, beyond crying or screaming, beyond the possibility of comfort" (*Wrinkle* 81-82). The dystopic Camazotz is, again, a reference to another divinity; this divinity, the horrific bat god of the Mayan Indians, is associated with death and sacrifice which is appropriate since the planet's population has been symbolically sacrificed to IT. As with many allegories, there are additional meanings to this name; since Camazotz is a seemingly perfect society, perhaps L'Engle is mocking the concept of Camelot so popular in the early 1960s. The final planet the travelers visit is Ixchel, the home of Aunt Beast. Ixchel also refers to an ancient deity. Ixchel was an ancient Mayan goddess of fertility and nurturing; it makes sense then that at the critical moment of need, Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Murry land on a planet named after and inhabited by beings which provide the "prompt and special care" (197) needed to combat the cold evil of the Black Thing. Thus, through

L'Engle's careful naming, the physical stops along a journey become allegories in themselves.

While certainly not to the extent of *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* does employ some allegorical place names. The Dursley's house on Privet Drive connotes the privacy with which the Dursley's guard against "their greatest fear" (*Sorcerer* 1), Harry's secret past. Rowling, like L'Engle, may also be mocking the seemingly perfect suburbia of the Dursley's world by selecting for their residence a connotative cousin to *privy* or outhouse. Likewise, Rowling uses literal and symbolic wordplay when naming Diagon Alley since the commercial hub of the magical world runs *diagonally* to its more mundane nonmagical surroundings. It is physically a part of both the magical and nonmagical worlds existing within the physical confines of London and the metaphysical confines of the wizarding realm, thus not a completely separate parallel, nor a completely conjunctive perpendicular, but something in between. Rowling emphasizes Diagon Alley's nebulous connection to the Muggle world by locating the physical barrier between the two worlds in a "famous place" (68), the Leaky Cauldron. Aptly named, the Leaky Cauldron leaks magic into the nonmagic world by forcing witches and wizards to enter between a "big book shop on one side and a record shop on the other" (68). On the other side of the barrier, nonmagic leaks into the magical world by forcing real world conversations about frugality, snobbery, and conformity into the guises of goblins, bat's livers, and wands. Likewise, Platform 9 3/4 exists as a gateway between two divergent realms lying within the physical confines of the dividing barrier between platforms nine and ten at King's Cross Station. As its name suggests, if Harry can figure out how to get onto Platform 9 3/4, he is three-quarters of the way to the fully magical world of Hogwarts. While Hogwarts itself seems singularly

non-allegorical, the Forbidden Forest provides a few simple allegories for Harry and the students at Hogwarts. The Forbidden Forest isn't just forbidden to students due to something "bad loose in [the] forest" (252), but itself contains forbidden knowledge and power. Centaurs Ronan and Bane speak of dark prophecies, vowing not to "set [them]selves against the heavens" (257). A wraith-like Professor Quirrell drinks unicorn blood to keep Voldemort alive, though as another centaur Firenze points out it is a "half-life, a cursed life" (258). This forbidden power enables Voldemort to continue his quest to return to full human form. Also while in the Forbidden Forest, Harry receives the final piece of forbidden knowledge he, Ron, and Hermione have been investigating all year – that the Sorcerer's Stone is indeed hidden within Hogwart's Castle and that Voldemort is seeking it.

### **Diversions from the path**

Williams' quote above states that while the "road of life twists and turns," more importantly, "no two directions are ever the same." The fact that the "road of life" provides the traveler with myriad options leads the protagonist, and thus the reader, on diversions from the path. These diversions can be beneficial, showing the protagonist the error of previous thinking, or detrimental, leading the protagonist to make errors in judgment. Whatever the outcome, the diversion irrevocably changes the protagonist and triggers essential plot and character growth.

A primary example of a diversion from the path leading to a positive outcome occurs when Calvin breaks from his normal routine and follows his "feeling that I must come over to the haunted house" since it is later revealed that he is supposed to meet Meg and Charles Wallace in order to begin their journey (*Wrinkle* 40). Similarly, Mr. Murry had purely

beneficent intentions while studying space, time, and tesseracts as he explains that “going to Camazotz was a complete accident. I never intended to leave our own solar system. I was heading for Mars” (182). Although Mr. Murry’s intent was benign, his diversion led to much heartache and danger. Whatever their potential, it is obvious that these diversions frequently have negative consequences. While on Camazotz, Charles Wallace’s overconfidence leads him to stray from the group’s mission of rescuing Mr. Murry and from Mrs. Which’s command to “go together” and “not let them separate you” (113). This diversion on the part of one leads to the endangerment of all when the hypnotized Charles Wallace takes Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Murry to be reprogrammed by IT. Like Charles Wallace, Meg does not physically stray from the path, but spiritually strays when she allows her faults to take hold on Ixchel. After an angry and petulant outburst, Meg realizes that she is “being measured and found wanting” (209). This emotional diversion from the previous progress she had made prevents her from immediately being able to aid Charles Wallace. Yet, as with most diversions, Meg comes away from this side path a wiser young woman. Hettinga argues that L’Engle “brings Meg to Ixchel to force her to look within herself, to recognize in her selfishness a taint of the same evil that animates IT and the Black Thing” (*Presenting* 29).

Rowling begins Harry’s journey with a diversion. After his witch and wizard parents are killed by Voldemort, Harry is rescued by Hagrid and delivered to the Dursleys to be raised away from a world where everyone “will know his name,” a place in which he would be “Famous before he could walk and talk! Famous for something he won’t even remember” (*Sorcerer* 15). This seemingly disastrous diversion does lead to a positive outcome, however; since Harry was raised in a non-magic, Muggle society and is unaware of his abilities, he is much more humble and forthright in his interactions with his fellow

classmates. Throughout his quest to solve the mystery at Hogwarts, Harry and friends pursue many diversions large and small. A few of Harry's notable diversions include rescuing Hermione from a mountain troll, learning to play and becoming very good at Quidditch, discovering the Mirror of Erised, and helping Hagrid to get rid of a rapidly growing Norwegian Ridgeback dragon.

Along the way, Harry also diverges from his predetermined path as hero. Within his first week at Hogwarts, Harry loses two house points for talking back to Professor Snape. He fears he will be sent home after illegally flying to catch Neville's Remembrall. He risks his, Ron's, Hermione's, and Neville's lives and positions at Hogwarts by venturing out on a sham midnight duel. He loses fifty house points by being out of bed after hours to hand off Norbert to Charlie Weasley. However, all these diversions produce positive results. Because Professor McGonagall sees Harry's spectacular flying, she finds him a place on the house Quidditch team. Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Neville discover the cerberus Fluffy and the trapdoor he is guarding, giving them a starting point for their quest, only while running from Filch. The detention Harry and Hermione receive for the incident with Norbert provides them with crucial information which subsequently leads them on the last leg of their quest.

While Harry learns important information or lessons on these diversions, the primary diversion he encounters is more complex. From the onset of his quest, Harry suspects Professor Snape of also seeking the sorcerer's stone. While asking for a confiscated book back, Harry happens to see that Professor Snape has been bitten by Fluffy and suspects that Professor Snape "let [the] troll in, to make a diversion" (*Sorcerer* 183). This suspicion thickens during Harry's first Quidditch match when Professor Snape "had his eyes fixed on Harry and was muttering nonstop under his breath" (190), and Ron and Hermione suspect

him of cursing Harry's misbehaving broom. Under these suspicions, Harry begins following Professor Snape and hears him confront a quivering Professor Quirrell about "get[ting] past that beast of Hagrid's" (226). Various adults and adult figures try to guide Harry back to the correct path. Hagrid tries to reassure Harry that Professor Snape "helped *protect* the stone" (232), and centaur Firenze warns Harry that "the forest is not safe at this time – especially for you" (257). Nevertheless, all these red herrings lead Harry, Ron, and Hermione to venture upon their quest to find and save the sorcerer's stone from Snape's grasp. Unfortunately, these red herrings also blind Harry to his true opponent – the ostensibly frail and tremulous Professor Quirrell. Harry loses valuable time due to sheer shock at finding Quirrell, not Snape, at the end of the journey to the sorcerer's stone. Even Professor Quirrell agrees that Harry's suspicions of Snape could be well founded, agreeing that "Severus does seem the type, doesn't he? ...Next to him, who would suspect p-p-poor, st-stuttering, P-Professor Quirrell?" (288). Harry has one final diversion – taking the stone from the Mirror of Erised right in front of Quirrell without his even knowing it. In this way, Harry's primary diversion does provide a final positive outcome; Quirrell is killed, Voldemort temporarily vanquished, and the stone safe and sound until it is destroyed.

## **Guides**

Along the paths of allegory and fantasy, the protagonist finds guides who provide assistance and support to aid the protagonist in his or her journey, get them back on the correct path, and come to the correct decision. These guides allow the author to subtly engineer the thought and decision-making processes of the protagonist, and thus of the reader as well. Hettinga describes the guides as "a sort of spiritual being, that one critic terms a

‘psychopomp, a role generally played by an angel in Christian thought’” (*Presenting* 23).

This analogy may work for some texts, especially L’Engle’s; however, it is not necessary to think of all guides as guardian angels, but rather, sign posts leading the way.

L’Engle does play on the psychopomp theme when Calvin describes the three Mrs. W’s as “Angels!...Guardian angels!...Messengers!...Messengers of God!” (*Wrinkle* 210). L’Engle employs Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which to serve as guides for Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin. They also “aid the hero[es] in identifying the purpose of the quest, transport the hero[es] to particular otherworldly sites, or offer general advice about how to proceed in a particular adventure along the quest” (*Presenting* 23). The three Mrs. W’s certainly do fulfill this role since the rescue of Mr. Murry is “one of the reasons” they are there, but “only one” (*Wrinkle* 71) and that “far more” is at stake than just the life of Mr. Murry (69). They are also the primary means of tessering throughout the narrative and provide “little talisman[s]” (112) and “gifts” (222) prior to any major conflict in order to aid the children on their adventures.

Hettinga’s criteria for allegorical guides also apply to several of the characters in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. Having primacy among these is Hagrid, the gamekeeper at Hogwarts, possibly due to his intimate connection with Harry from Harry’s infancy. Hagrid rescues the infant Harry from the wreckage of his home and delivers him to Professor Dumbledore and the Dursleys; ten years later, Hagrid again re-rescues Harry from the Dursleys and delivers him back to the magic world of Hogwarts. In this way Hagrid serves to “transport the hero to particular otherworldly sites” (*Presenting* 23). Hagrid also serves as Harry’s guide within the new magical world of Diagon Alley, explaining to him the intricacies of wizard money, “seventeen silver Sickles to a Galleon and twenty-nine Knuts to

a Sickle” (*Sorcerer* 75), prohibiting him from extreme and extravagant acts, like cursing Dudley and buying a “solid gold cauldron” (80), and extolling the virtues of Quidditch and the various Hogwarts houses. In addition, Hagrid shepherds all the first year students to and from Hogwarts castle via the Hogwarts Express. While not as prominent a guide as Hagrid is in *Sorcerer’s Stone*, Professor Dumbledore proves the ultimate guide throughout the entire *Harry Potter* series. After Harry loses his invisibility cloak to Argus Filch, Dumbledore returns it to Harry “Just in case” (*Sorcerer* 261). Dumbledore also serves as a guide to Harry’s past and future. While recovering from his defeat of Voldemort, Harry asks Professor Dumbledore a series of very influential and poignant questions which scour the heart of Harry’s past and the heart of the narrative’s allegory. In answering Harry’s questions about his past and the narrative’s events, Dumbledore offers general advice to Harry about how to proceed after his particular adventure, and also about how to proceed for the remainder of his time at Hogwarts. Dumbledore’s guidance influences many characters in all seven books in Rowling’s series. The reader learns in the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, that Dumbledore has guided Severus Snape’s involvement with Harry, Voldemort, and the school since the murder of Lily and James Potter, telling him “your way forward is clear” (678). In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Dumbledore suggests Harry and Hermione use Hermione’s Ministry of Magic approved Time-Turner in order to “save more than one innocent life tonight” (393). In the sixth book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Dumbledore takes Harry along on a series of quests in search of lost Horcruxes, and in the final book, a ghostly Dumbledore explains to Harry how Voldemort’s killing curse failed to kill Harry once again. More importantly, however, Dumbledore guides Harry, and the reader, through the history and search for the Deathly Hallows and Horcruxes,



and to Harry's final decision to return and "ensure that fewer souls are maimed, fewer families are torn apart" (*Deathly* 722). Thus, Professor Dumbledore proves to be a truly influential guide.

Ron and Hermione also serve as guides in Harry's quest to find the mystery at Hogwarts Castle and "aid the hero in identifying the purpose of the quest" (*Presenting* 23). They, with inadvertent help from Hagrid, ascertain the necessary clues to aid Harry in discovering the purpose of his quest to protect the sorcerer's stone. Perhaps the most numerous guides are those who "offer general advice about how to proceed in a particular adventure along the quest" (*Presenting* 23). Hermione, through her overbearing "suggestions," most frequently offers advice to Harry and Ron on how to act, "you *mustn't* go wandering around the school at night, think of all the points you'll lose for Gryffindor if you're caught" (*Sorcerer* 154). She also gives suggestions on how to perform magic, "It's Wing-gar-dium Levi-o-sa, make the 'gar' nice and long" (171), and succeed academically, "She would never let them copy (How will you learn?)" (183).

Like the planets in *A Wrinkle in Time*, and as is typical in allegory, the three Mrs. Ws names also hold significant meaning. When the Murrays first see Mrs. Whatsit they cannot tell who or *what* she is. For Meg, Mrs. Whatsit's "age or sex was impossible to tell," with a voice "like an unopened gate" (21-22) and a tramp's clothing. Mrs. Who is constantly quoting famous historical figures. Mrs. Which rarely materializes but when she does, she is "a figure in a black robe and a black peaked hat, beady eyes, a beaked nose, and long grey hair; one bony claw clutch[ing] a broomstick" (68), and all this description occurs barely a paragraph after a direct quotation from one of the three witches in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Clearly, L'Engle had fun creating her three guides as metaphors or personifications for their functions and appearances within the story.

Other secondary characters serve as more direct personifications of the values and beliefs which they demonstrate. The Happy Medium and the Man with Red Eyes appear one chapter after the other, and their names have both literal surface (i.e. appearance) meanings as well as deeper allegorical meanings. The Happy Medium is just that – a fortune teller who “star[ed] into the crystal ball...and she laughed and laughed at whatever it was that she was seeing” (*Wrinkle* 96). However earlier foreshadowing reveals a deeper meaning for this seemingly innocuous character; in the first chapter, Mrs. Murry muses that, after receiving a nasty bruise in a fight, Meg doesn't know the “meaning of moderation” and wonders if “a happy medium is something...you'll [Meg] ever learn” (17). Similarly the Man with Red Eyes is just that – a man on a dais whose “eyes were bright and had a reddish glow” (134). Even as this character is an obvious personification, the allegorical interpretations of his true nature are far more open, and deep, than those of the Happy Medium. At first reading, children will readily see that he is the personification of evil; however, upon further reading, adolescents and young adults may see deeper implications that will be discussed later in this paper. The final personification is that of the goodly Aunt Beast. While representing literally the “beast” fables of previous tradition, Aunt Beast is in actuality an allegory for wonders the human race could become if it follows the correct path. Thus, the outer surface appearances lead to deeper intrinsic meanings.

Many of the names used in the *Harry Potter* series, however, are not strictly allegorical, but merely surface level puns closer to the personifications present in *A Wrinkle in Time*. Dudley Dursley is a dud. Rowling has particular fun with the authors of Harry's

school books. His transfiguration text is written by Emeric Switch, his herbology text by Phyllida Spore. The author of his potions textbook, Arsenius Jigger, is a clear personification of the elements of his trade, as is Newt Scamander, author of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Harry's teachers also sport many tongue-in-cheek names. Professor Sprout teaches herbology, and the highly gifted teacher of transfiguration is named Minerva after the Roman goddess of wisdom and, coincidentally, magic. A less obvious personification is the flying teacher, Madame Hooch, who has "yellow eyes like a hawk" (*Sorcerer* 146). In later volumes, Rowling reveals that Hooch frequently drinks with Hagrid, bringing the word play full circle. While some of these characters serve as surface level guides for Harry's magical education, most exist merely as testament to Rowling's capability as a writer of entertaining allegory.

### **Guides as Allegories**

Yet, despite their manifold differences, all six personified characters in *A Wrinkle in Time* are allegories for wisdom in one aspect or another. The three Mrs. W's represent different stages or aspects of intellectual wisdom. Mrs. Who alludes to this when she quotes A. Perez "*Un asno viejo sabe más que un potro*" meaning, "An old ass knows more than a young colt" (63). The Happy Medium and Aunt Beast represent different forms of wisdom – wisdom of that which is without and wisdom of that which is within. In contrast, however, the Man with Red Eyes, and IT which controls him, represent the abuse of wisdom for personal gain. The Man with the Red Eyes uses his superior knowledge and wisdom to taunt Charles Wallace by providing a nourishing and succulent meal for Meg and Calvin, but only the taste of sand for Charles Wallace. It does not take a great leap of intellect to clearly see

the connections between the actual abuse of intellect and the allegorical abuse of wisdom. Mary Warner points out that through these examples of the correct and incorrect use of wisdom, L'Engle teaches the reader that “we too can transform [ourselves and our world] through love” (10).

In many traditional allegories, as well as L'Engle's text, the characters have more direct allegorical meanings as well as a unified allegorical theme; however, Rowling's characters do not share this unity. Oona Einstadt addresses this issue in an article about the appeal and influence of Rowling and the *Potter* series for millions. Einstadt argues, “Rather than offering a one-to-one allegory which would shove a theology down the throats of her child readers, Rowling's role doublings, her one-to-twos, are an invitation to them, and to us all, to think” (Paulson 3). It is this “role doubling” and “one-to-twoing” that presents a deeper, more modern and thoughtful allegory to its audience. Rather than have an important character directly represent his or her ideology, Rowling chooses to have each character serve as an allegory for a deeper connection or concept.

Due to this indirection, it is more difficult to identify the allegorical meanings behind Rowling's characters and personifications. Unlike L'Engle's *Wrinkle in Time*, many of Rowling's character names do not have surface level meanings, only hidden meanings which are revealed only through research into linguistics. Headmaster Dumbledore's given name, Albus, is Latin for white, indicating his status as a good or “white” wizard. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, “Ron” was the name of King Arthur's trusty spear; thus, it makes sense that Rowling would choose to name Harry's most loyal friend in *Sorcerer's Stone* after it. Likewise, Harry himself is presumably named after King Harold, whose name in turn originates from the Old English *Hereweald* meaning “leader of the army.” Rowling

explained in an interview with Stephanie Loer with *The Boston Globe* that Hagrid's name comes from an Old English word *hagridden* meaning "having a nightmarish night" (Loer C7), possibly an allusion to Hagrid's tendency to get drunk or indicating the troubled life he has led. Rowling also disclosed that she manipulated another Old English word, *mug*, meaning easily fooled, to make the term for non-magic humans – Muggles – also alluding to the fact that the magical wizarding world lives directly under the unsuspecting non-magical world's nose (C7).

Old English also provides the provenance for Professor Snape's surname. According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online, *snape* has both a noun and verb form meaning "snub or rebuke" with secondary meanings of "to be hard upon" or "to check growth" ("Snape"). Given Professor Snape's first name, Severus, it is clear that Rowling is personifying Snape's personality traits with his name; to be sure, Severus Snape is certainly severe with his snubs and rebukes of Harry in his attempt to check Harry's growth as an individual. It is interesting that Snape's personality traits apply not only to his treatment of Harry, but also the treatment Snape himself has received throughout his life. He is rejected by a young Petunia Evans, Harry's Aunt Petunia, for living at a poor address "down Spinner's End by the river" (*Deathly* 665). While in school, Snape is mercilessly taunted and tortured by James Potter and Sirius Black, and ultimately rejected by Lily Evans, Harry's mother, for calling her a Mudblood (*Phoenix* 648). Prior to the siege and battle of Hogwarts in *Deathly Hallows*, Professors McGonagall, Flitwick, and Sprout turn on now Headmaster Snape and run him out of the castle. Even those whom Snape serves rebuke him. Dumbledore continually uses Snape's remorseful agreement to protect Harry to force Snape into uncomfortable situations, ultimately leading to the revelation in *Deathly Hallows* that Harry

must die, prompting Snape to accuse, “You have used me” (687). Snape’s death at the hands of Voldemort demonstrates Snape’s final rebuke, for, even though he has been a “good and faithful servant” (656) to Voldemort, Snape’s death is a meaningless milestone in Voldemort’s acquisition of the Elder Wand.

Both Draco Malfoy and Voldemort’s surnames are derived from French. Draco is Latin for dragon, perhaps indicating his tendency for battle and treachery. Malfoy translates literally as “bad” (*mal*) “faith” (*foi*); while Voldemort translates to “flight” (*vol*) “from” (*de*) “death” (*mort*). Voldemort’s name is certainly allegorical given his desire to use the sorcerer’s stone to stave off death, and both these names prove to be deeply allegorical in later volumes of the *Potter* series. On the surface Professor Quirrell’s name does not appear to personify anything in particular; however, his given name, Quirinus, is an appellation for Janus, the Roman god of “gates and doors (*ianua* [meaning doors]), beginnings and ends,” who is depicted as a “double-faced head, each looking in opposite directions” (“Janus”). Perhaps Rowling is indicating the role Voldemort, as Professor Quirrell’s other face, will play in Harry’s life as the beginning and end of Harry’s epic seven volume quest for identity, vengeance, and amity. Interestingly, Janus is also the patron of “beginnings of important events in a person’s life” as well as the maturation of young people (“Janus”). It is possible, then, that Rowling is also alluding to Harry’s final growth from an incognizant child to a knowing young adult and providing an omen of what is to come.

## ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Up to this point, I have said little about the allegorical meaning of the texts as a whole in order to build a solid foundation on which to build theories about their multi-layered meanings. Marek Oziewicz quotes psychologist Ken Wilber in comparing the mind to the universe: “the psyche – like the cosmos at large – is many-layered (‘pluridimensional’), composed of successively higher-order wholes and unities and interactions” (194). This “pluridimensionality” applies to allegory as well. It certainly applies to *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* as their messages grow with age and reading. In the subsequent section I will propose three allegorical readings of the novels culminating in an overall argument about the role allegory plays in these texts and in the lives of their readers.

### Choosing Between Good and Evil

The first allegory is, of course, the most obvious even to young readers; it is a staple of children’s and adolescent literature – the battle between good and evil. These battles are both physically real, taking place in actual time and space, and mentally intangible, a psychomachia or the interior battle between good and evil. The reader sees evidence of this simultaneity when L’Engle’s children first encounter the Dark Thing swathing their home planet. The Dark Thing is readily identified as “Evil” and “the Powers of Darkness,” and all in attendance vow to “continue to fight...stand[ing] straighter, throwing back their shoulders with determination” (*Wrinkle* 88). This physical fight leads to a psychological battle as well. This psychological battle in turn leads the children to realize that they are not alone in their fight, being joined by historical and religious figures such as Jesus, Leonardo Da Vinci,

Shakespeare, Bach, Einstein, Schweitzer, Gandhi, Buddha, Rembrandt, St. Francis, Euclid and others (89). The physical fight does not stop at this point however, for as the children continue to watch, a star battles the Dark Thing and wins, but at a high cost. Once again this physical outward battle manifests itself intrinsically as well. Mrs. Whatsit reveals that she too had once been a star and had sacrificed her own life in fighting the Dark Thing. Her inner conflict is revealed by her admission that, “I didn’t mean ever to let you know. But, oh, my dears, I did so love being a star!” (93).

The battle between good and evil in *Harry Potter* is more subtle than in L’Engle’s text. Many of the overt physical clashes occur as verbal and sometimes physical scuffs between Harry and his allies and the decidedly antagonistic Draco Malfoy and Professor Snape. The most obvious example of the struggle between good and evil is in Harry’s final battle with the dual Quirrell/Voldemort. Quirrell/Voldemort tells Harry that “there is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it” (*Sorcerer* 291); Harry, it should be noted, does not believe this. While Harry does fight a final climactic physical battle with the evil Voldemort, the preponderance of the struggle takes place in Harry’s psyche. Many of these struggles take the form of decisions Harry must make, which demonstrate a moral choice between good and evil, right and wrong. While being fitted for his school robes, Harry has a chance to create a new identity for himself at Hogwarts. Another student also being fitted makes disparaging remarks about Hagrid, who is waiting outside. Harry has the choice to tacitly agree and fit in, or stand by his morals and tell the student that Harry “think[s] he’s brilliant” (78). Later on the Hogwart’s Express Harry again snubs the student, who he discovers is Draco Malfoy, when Draco warns him that Harry doesn’t want to befriend “the wrong sort” (108), to which Harry replies, “I think I can tell the



wrong sort for myself, thanks” (109). Some of Harry’s other choices are more intrinsic, such as when he tells the Sorting Hat “*Not Slytherin, not Slytherin*” (121) rejecting the darker Slytherin house in favor of the upstanding Gryffindor. Harry’s final choice proves to be the crucial factor in the final battle between good and evil. While standing before the Mirror of Erised, Harry is able to retrieve the sorcerer’s stone from within the mirror because he only “wanted to *find* the stone – find it, but not use it” (300). Dumbledore points out that since Harry is pure of heart, he was able to achieve his heart’s desire of saving and protecting the stone. All these examples demonstrate the lesson at the heart of Rowling’s text. Although Professor Dumbledore does concede that “humans do have a knack of choosing precisely those things that are worst for them” (*Sorcerer* 297), at the end of the second novel, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, he tells Harry, “It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are” (333). This gives the reader hope and inspiration that choosing correctly between good and evil is possible even in a fragmented and damaged world.

The battle between good and evil demonstrates itself in more subtle ways as well. When Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Murry land on Ixchel the landscape is barren and its monstrous inhabitants are foreboding to say the least. In classic fantasy/science fiction, when characters land in an unknown and potentially hostile environment, there must be an equally unknown and potentially hostile “monster” to greet them. The inhabitants of Ixchel certainly fit this bill, having “four arms and far more than five fingers to each hand, and... fingers [which] were not fingers, but long waving tentacles... Where features normally would be there were several indentations, and in place of ears and hair were more tentacles” (*Wrinkle* 173-174). These fearsome descriptions would lead a young or unwary reader to believe the creatures to be purely evil. However, as the creatures’ actions and words quickly demonstrate, they are

not evil, but rather one of the best representations of good throughout the entire novel. While the creatures on Uriel only sing about goodness, quoting Isaiah 42:10, the creatures on Ixchel provide physical and psychological aid to Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Murry. In addition Meg uses traits traditionally associated with evil (anger, stubbornness, and impatience) in order to combat and gain independence from IT, proving once again that what on the surface can appear evil may have a kernel of good. Thus, as Hettinga states, “the evil that L’Engle portrays here is not a simplistic external evil” (*Presenting* 29), but rather a much more dense and complex tangle.

In Harry’s magical world at Hogwarts, during his first year at least, Rowling does not create physically evil monsters or landscapes, but instead shows the reader the good within the sometimes evil outer appearance of its inhabitants. Hagrid is first described as “a giant of a man” with “a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard” under which Harry can just make out pair of eyes “glinting like black beetles” (*Sorcerer* 46). This fearsome exterior covers a genuinely warm and loving interior. In a slightly different way, Professor Snape’s dogged disdain for Harry covers a need to protect him. After realizing that Professor Quirrell was trying to jinx Harry’s broom during a Quidditch match, Professor Snape begins “muttering a countercurse, trying to save” Harry (289). To ensure that no further harm could come to Harry during a Quidditch game, Professor Snape insists on refereeing the next game in order to more closely watch both Harry and Professor Quirrell, whom Snape “already suspected” (289) of being false. In addition, instead of trying to steal the sorcerer’s stone during the Halloween troll attack as Harry suspected, Snape “went straight to the third floor to head [Professor Quirrell] off” (289), thus protecting the stone and the entire wizarding

world. Hence, in spite of Professor Snape's outer appearance of evil, he has truly good intentions at heart, even though the outer world rarely recognizes them.

However, if we grant that what seems evil can sometimes be good, we must also acknowledge that what seems good can in truth sometimes be evil. This is the case with the planet Camazotz; while everything appears as "any housing development at home" (*Wrinkle* 103), the unearthly regularity of all objects, people, and actions betrays its true nature. Occurring ironically or purposefully within a chapter entitled "The Happy Medium," the reader sees that there can be no happy medium because there are no extremes, or put otherwise, everything is medium because there is no other choice. The element of choice is essential to allegorical children's and adolescent literature, for without it, characters do not possess the ability to change themselves or the world around them.

Likewise the Dursleys' "perfectly normal" (*Sorcerer* 1) life hides a dreary and dysfunctional family in which abuse, neglect, and enabling are commonplace. Rowling provides a lighter, slightly more humorous example in Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans, which on the outside resemble the thoroughly traditional jelly bean, while on the interior lurk normal yet unappealing flavors like "spinach and liver and tripe" (104) and even mentally and physically repulsive flavors of vomit (300) and ear wax (301). Further, the supposedly "pure" blood of the Malfoy family proves as much of a sham and cover as Privet Drive. While the family may indeed have a purer genetic heritage than Hermione's, this purity shallowly covers a lack of morals, tact, and humility. Upon first meeting Harry, Draco's façade portrays a conventional well-bred youth; however, Draco speaks of bullying his father into buying him an illegal broom and "smuggl[ing] it [into Hogwarts] somehow" (77), and

disparaging Hufflepuffs and Muggle-born witches and wizards (78). Thus, from early on, Rowling's readers see that a pretense of goodness frequently hides the corruption underneath.

### **Decisions, Change, and Interconnectedness**

In an article entitled "Subject to Change without Notice" for the journal *Theory into Practice*, L'Engle states that, "No child is too small or powerless to make a difference. And the differences we make change us, and change those around us" (334). This theme is predominant in both L'Engle's and Rowling's works as seen in the previous section on characters' emotional and psychological journeys. However, while previously I discussed these changes only as examples of the journey element of an allegory, now, I will explore them as allegories unto themselves.

Throughout Rowling's novel, the decisions made by Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Neville directly make a difference not only in their own and each others' lives, but also in the larger wizarding world. Harry rejects Draco Malfoy's attempts to indoctrinate him, deciding instead to maintain his new-found friendship with Ron Weasley; this gives Ron the confidence to begin to overcome his fear of being overshadowed by his older brothers, and ultimately gives him the confidence to win the final game of chess. In addition, Harry's decision to be kind to both Neville and Hermione changes Ron's attitude as well. It is Ron, not Harry, who decides to save Hermione from the troll and first tells Neville that he must stand up to Draco (*Sorcerer* 218), thus setting into motion Neville's transformation and the decisions it carries with it. Neville's decisions prove the interdependence of all involved; since the balance of the whole story depends on perhaps the least prominent character, I believe Rowling uses Neville to forward L'Engle's philosophy that, "No child is too small or

powerless to make a difference. And the differences we make change us, and change those around us” (*Subject 334*).

It is no surprise, given this philosophy, that L’Engle’s characters also support it. Calvin’s decision to follow his “compulsion” (*Wrinkle 39*) leads directly to his involvement with Meg and Charles Wallace and he almost immediately becomes entangled in their mission. This involvement proves crucial to Meg and Charles Wallace’s success not only in rescuing Mr. Murry, but also in growing as individuals. Charles Wallace’s weakness leads to his decision to try to mentally tackle the Man with the Red Eyes, which in turns causes Meg to confront her own weakness in order to ultimately transform from a sullen child into a confident adult. Meg’s own, sometimes impulsive decisions drive the plot, again ultimately transforming an entire world when she defeats IT and saves Charles Wallace. In L’Engle’s narrative, it is not the least prominent character who manifests himself as the lynchpin of interdependence. Rather, L’Engle’s story is more about cosmic interdependence. The fate of worlds depends upon the choices made by a single, small child; however, these choices are never made entirely on his or her own.

In both *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, the primary protagonists, Meg and Harry, cannot accomplish their quests on their own. While the terminal battles are theirs, they require assistance from companions in order to reach this final stage. This interdependence demonstrates L’Engle’s philosophy that “We are all part of something far greater than we can begin to comprehend” (*Subject 334*).

At the end of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, it takes effort from all three students, Harry, Ron, and Hermione, to escape the Devil’s Snare. Hermione knows what it is since she “pay[s] attention in Herbology,” but it requires Harry to not “lose his head in a

crisis” (he suggests lighting a fire to counteract the plant’s proclivity for the dark and damp) and Ron’s quick thinking (he yells at Hermione, “ARE YOU A WITCH OR NOT?”) (*Sorcerer* 278) to overcome the deadly plant. Similarly, all three students face separate tests which utilize their best skills before moving on. Harry must catch the necessary winged key to pass through a locked door, Ron must win a live-action game of chess, sacrificing himself in the process, and Hermione must decipher a riddle using logic, which “a lot of the greatest wizards haven’t got an ounce of” (285). In Harry’s test, he must depend on Ron and Hermione to help pin the key down. In Ron’s test, Ron must depend on Harry and Hermione to follow his directions in order to win, and in Hermione’s test, Hermione must trust Harry on his own and Harry must trust that Hermione’s logic is sound. Harry’s defeat of Voldemort ensures that the wizarding world is safe for now. Without knowing it, the broader world of magic depends upon a child to save it from destruction at the hands of the malevolent Voldemort. Even after defeating Voldemort, Harry’s survival depends on Hermione and Ron reaching Professor Dumbledore in time, thus cementing their interdependence with Harry and the wider realm of magical existence. Without Harry’s moral and emotional support, Neville would not have won the house cup; without Ron and Hermione, Harry would not have saved the Sorcerer’s Stone; and without Harry, the wizarding world would not have defeated Voldemort for a second time.

In Rowling’s final novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, all manner of magic creatures must band together to fight the combined onslaught of Voldemort’s evil army laying siege to Hogwarts. In addition, the reader sees that ultimately Harry is not able to defeat Voldemort on his own. In order to kill Voldemort, Harry must destroy the remaining Horcruxes containing pieces of Voldemort’s soul. Harry destroys only one of the seven

Horcruxes himself, leaving Dumbledore, Ron, Hermione, Neville, and even enemies Vincent Crabbe and Voldemort to dispatch the rest.

As stated above, L'Engle's interdependence is not an intricate social interdependence between a few primary characters, but rather an intergalactic alliance of supreme importance. Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin as human children (granted, above-average human children) must rely on the supernatural Mrs. Ws to guide them in their quest to find Mr. Murry; in turn, the supernatural Mrs. Ws must rely on Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin to defeat IT and by proxy the Dark Thing. When visiting the Happy Medium, Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin witness a demonstration of the intergalactic battle at hand and its possible outcomes. They see Earth shrouded by the "smoky haze" of the "Dark Thing" which causes the planet to "be such a troubled one" (*Wrinkle* 98-99). However, to give the children hope, the Happy Medium shows them a star destroying patches of the Dark Thing to demonstrate that "it can be overcome! It is being overcome all the time!" (103). Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin are then recruited to "go," to "do something" (108), thus becoming part of the intergalactic battle just witnessed. In the final battle against IT and the Dark Thing, Meg must use aid from all involved in order to discover "what it is [she has] got that IT hasn't got" (*Wrinkle* 227). In a gesture of divine intervention, Meg realizes she has everyone's love, as well as her love for them, to sustain and animate her. In this way, Meg depends upon the love of those close to her, just as they depend upon her to realize it.

L'Engle continues to convey this message of interdependence both in "Subject to Change without Notice" and in her novels, that changes made here in our insular lives "may make a difference in a solar system in a galaxy half way [sic] across the universe...We change each other by simply observing each other. We are all part of something far greater

than we can begin to comprehend. What we do makes a difference” (*Subject 334*). All of the books in L’Engle’s tetralogy, as well as Rowling’s seven-part *Potter* series, stress the interdependence of living and inanimate objects throughout time and the universe. L’Engle creates a fictional reality which “suggests to young readers that their actions and choices, whether large or small, matter in their lives and in the lives of others and sometime may even have widespread consequences” (Gates 121). L’Engle states this outright in the third book in the time tetralogy, *A Wind in the Door*, and bases the entire plot of *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* around it. In *A Wind in the Door*, L’Engle states, “It is a pattern throughout Creation. One child, one man, can swing the balance of the universe” (179). It is left to the reader of *A Wrinkle in Time* to decipher this concept for him or herself based on reading the allegory within the text. The only allusion L’Engle provides within *A Wrinkle in Time* is in an analogy to the poetic form of the sonnet – “You’re given the form, but you have to write the sonnet yourself. What you say is completely up to you” (199) implying that what each person says (or does) creates the reality of the sonnet and all creation. Thus, much of L’Engle’s interdependence relies not on actual physical assistance from one or more characters, but within the substantive framework of the ideology inherent in the plot.

Rowling also tackles this hypothesis throughout her novels. In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Rowling also takes Harry and Hermione back in time three hours to save Sirius Black and the Hippogriff Buckbeak. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry must decide that he isn’t like the evil Voldemort, thus permanently aligning himself on the side of good and setting up the epic ultimate display of interconnectedness in the last novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.



### **Omniscient and Omnipotent Love**

One final allegory, perhaps more subtle and tertiary to the previous two, threads its way throughout Rowling's and L'Engle's texts, that of an omnipotent, panoptic love which surrounds and guides our lives. In this way, both *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* can be read as allegories of a higher power's love for all. These allegorical readings offer substantial defense and vindication to critics who find both texts satanic. These readings also provide a tie or bond between the previous two readings since the overarching message of love encompasses the struggle between good and evil as well as the interconnectedness of all life.

At the outset of *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg feels unlovable due to her awkwardness and social dysfunction. She compares herself to her mother's beauty, the twins' affability, and Charles Wallace's intelligence and finds herself wanting on all counts. Yet, despite her supposed shortcomings, Calvin appears to like her physically, socially, and mentally. Likewise, even though he doesn't exhibit the same social dysfunction Meg does, Calvin feels out of place and unloved in his own family. Yet, Calvin "love[s] them all, [even though] they don't give a hoot about [him]" (*Wrinkle* 47). Although these initially seem to be non-examples, they prove the existence of love in seemingly unlovable places. L'Engle builds on this theme of love permeating all creation by constructing a place as close to the Garden of Eden as the reader can imagine on the planet Uriel. L'Engle even alludes to this when she has Calvin read Genesis for Charles Wallace as a bedtime story. While listening to magical centaur-like creatures literally sing praises to God, Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin feel a "pulse of joy such as [they] had never known before" with "joy flow[ing] through them, back and forth between them, around them and about them and inside them" (77). In the end,

however, it is love pure and simple which transcends the bounds of evil itself to break Charles Wallace's bond with IT. Meg realizes that she possesses "Mrs. Whatsit's love, and her father's, and her mother's, and the real Charles Wallace's love, and the twins', and Aunt Beast's" as well as "her love for them" (228), and although she cannot love IT, she can love Charles Wallace. It is this all-encompassing love which finally defeats IT and the Black Thing.

Similarly, in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the crux of Harry's survival hangs on love. Love, as the reader eventually learns, protects the infant Harry from the killing curse Avada Kedavra. When the reader is introduced to Harry, he is literally unloved by everyone he knows, but almost universally loved and adored by the magical community of which he knows nothing. In Harry's final physical battle with the dual Quirrell/Voldemort, Quirrell cannot physically stand Harry's touch. In a moment of literary brilliance, Dumbledore explains to Harry why this happens and in doing so foreshadows all six remaining novels:

Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize the love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign...to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever. It is in your very skin. Quirrell, full of hatred, greed, and ambition, sharing his soul with Voldemort, could not touch you for this reason. It is agony to touch a person marked by something so good. (*Sorcerer* 299)

Thus, it is an omnipotent love which delivers Harry from the hands of evil.

I have presented three primary allegorical readings of these two texts; yet, it is not in the nature of allegory to be tied to a single, or even multiple persistent, meanings. Elements of these readings may carry more truth for some readers than others. The omnipotent, omniscient nature of the love displayed in the texts is certainly not exclusive to Christianity,

nor even monotheism. Nor is the idea of one, small person changing the universe the sole property of L'Engle. Not even the seemingly universal battle between good and evil is as truly universal as it seems. Above all, these stories are about unity, whether through the presence of a higher power uniting all forces through the bonds of love, the interdependence of all creatures upon the choices of a few, or the sometimes cataclysmic or sometimes mundane struggles between good and evil. No matter what allegorical reading we choose, ultimately both L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* convey messages of moral empowerment – even children can make the correct moral choice and transform the universe through growth, change, and love.

## IMPLICATIONS

### Critical Reception

Because a portion of my allegorical interpretation focuses on the religious morality in both texts, it is necessary to address the moral and ethical concerns about these texts asserted by many religious organizations and individuals. These critics most directly attack my assertions that both *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* are allegories of personal moral empowerment, that even seemingly powerless children can make the correct moral choice and in doing so change all of existence.

With the publication of *A Wrinkle in Time* in 1962, L'Engle began receiving criticism from both the religious right and left. Critics on the left felt that her use of angels, spirits, and biblical references, as well as the core belief of love overcoming all, made her work too "mystical" (Hearne 31). Critics on the right, however, objected to nearly the same things, citing her use of the witch figures in *A Wrinkle in Time* and the nephilim in *Many Waters* as "demonology" (31). Thus, her writing was deemed either "too worldly" by conservative Christians or "too dogmatically Christian" by secular audiences ("A Wrinkle in Faith"). Since L'Engle's stories use elements from the realm of science fiction and New World native rites, Christian literalists condemn her writing as "new age and neo-orthodox" (Ruiz Scaperlanda). A great deal of religious criticism stems from L'Engle's extensive use of science to reinforce her themes. Later, in the same interview with Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, L'Engle attests that pitting science against religion "has never made sense to me." L'Engle contends that "anything science can uncover simply gives us a wider view of the universe and of the Maker" (Hearne 31). In addition, L'Engle populates her fiction with characters who are "technically not religious, not believers, but people who simply live their faith"

(Ruiz Scaperlanda). These nonbelievers trigger friction with religious purists looking for an open-and-shut morality tale.

Most objections came from the religious community, alleging that references to the Happy Medium advocated divination and fortune telling. In addition, Mrs. Which was read as a witch when in fact L'Engle intended she be taken as "a wise old woman" (Henneberger 2). As late as 1985 and 1990, long after its acceptance in canonical children's literature, *A Wrinkle in Time* was still being challenged in elementary, middle, and high schools across the country. In 1985, a parent in Polk City, Florida challenged the book's place in the local elementary school library because the parent thought the story promoted "witchcraft, crystal balls, and demons" ("A Wrinkle in Time"). However the most commonly cited challenge to *A Wrinkle in Time*, as was the case in 1990 in Anniston, Alabama, concerns a passage in which the children, Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin, draw parallels between Jesus and noted scientists, artists, musicians, activists, and writers as "lights for us to see by" (*Wrinkle* 100). Most of the strenuous criticism comes from the comparison of Jesus to Gandhi and Buddha, who, as nonchristians, are seen to undermine the divinity of Christ. For these reasons, *A Wrinkle in Time* was listed among the American Library Association's the Top 100 Banned Books in 1990-2000 ("100 Most Frequently").

Since her career is longer than Rowling's, L'Engle has had numerous opportunities to address her critics' claims in interviews. In an interview with Melinda Henneberger for *Newsweek Online*, L'Engle criticized "Fundalets" (some fundamentalist Christians) for wanting a "closed system" (2). In the same interview, L'Engle rails against the "narrow-mindedness" of "people taking the Bible absolutely literally" (3). L'Engle explains that she believes the Bible to be a story because "faith is best expressed in story" and that while the

Bible may not be factual, it is a truth that “expands beyond the facts” (3) just like allegory. Not surprisingly, the same conservative Christian critics who once attacked L’Engle now attack Rowling.

Much, if not all, criticism of Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, and indeed the entire series, is directed at the glorification of witchcraft, teaching that it “is fun and lur[es] children into the occult” (“Religious Right”). Most critics cite passages in Ephesians and Deuteronomy which admonish Christians to disavow the “fruitless deeds of darkness” (Eph 5:11) and shun anyone who “practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritualist or who consults the dead” (Deut 18: 10-11).

Others argue that the “soft” form of paganism presented in the *Harry Potter* series is perilous to Christian faith because it “brings a spiritually dangerous worldview into good families under the guise of promoting ‘values’ and enthusiasm for reading” (Grace 37). In an article titled “In Defense of Harry” for the *English Journal*, writer Perry Glanzer defines *worldview* as a “spiritual framework by which people make sense of their experience” (58). These worldviews are “more than particular moral, theological, or philosophical positions” (58), defining who we are as people, communities, and society as a whole. It is within certain worldviews, then, that the *Harry Potter* series is viewed as leading our youth astray. Russell W. Dalton, an assistant professor of Christian education at Brite Divinity School in Texas, addresses these worldviews in an article by Michael Paulson for *The Boston Globe*. Dalton states, “When stories become as popular as the Harry Potter stories, they no longer simply reflect the religious views of the author, but become artifacts of the culture, and they say something about the culture that has embraced them” (Paulson 2). Instead of viewing

controversial novels as negative artifacts of a culture, Glanzer argues that we should instead consider whether or not a work “explicitly presents a strong case” for or “singles out [for] attack” a particular worldview. Rowling’s series does neither of these. Normal occult practices, such as crystal ball gazing and astrology, “receive a fair share of humorous critique” (60). Thus, by neither endorsing nor negating one worldview or another, Rowling walks a fine line in which she “does not argue for Wiccan religious practice or witchcraft in general, nor does she attack various forms of traditional religious belief” (60). Rowling affirms Glanzer’s arguments by attesting that she doesn’t “believe in magic as it occurs in my books -- the wand-waving and spell-casting type of magic” (Loer) and that she has “never met anyone who has come up to me and said they want to be a witch now” (Elliott). Even though some contend that Rowling's novels confront and conflict with conservative worldviews, it is important to recognize Rowling's treatment of the controversial text, as well as her own beliefs.

Despite the sometimes harsh criticism, many conservative Christian critics acknowledge that children’s literature, even Christian children’s literature, has a strong basis in fantasy. Many religious leaders support and even promote the works as positive examples of morality and friendship in the religiously allegoric *Chronicles of Narnia*. Kjos points out that writings such as C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* saga elucidate the “spiritual warfare...a struggle between good and evil” present in those novels. Francis Bridger, principal of Trinity College, defends the *Harry Potter* series, stating:

far from amounting to a denial of the Gospel, the Potter series – through its morality, implicit theology, and metaphysics – opens a way to encourage children and adults alike to move beyond the literary creation of Potterworld to ask questions about truth and reality in a way that would have been taboo a generation ago. If this is not an opening of the door to the Gospels, I don’t know what is. (Grace 37)

## Response

Despite the criticism religious activists have leveled at Rowling and L'Engle's work, both are now established icons in the literary canon, and each falls soundly within two literary traditions. These literary traditions, while deserving in their own right, work together to forward a final allegory in both texts and cancel the initial blunt critical reaction.

I believe that both Meg and Harry fit into the hero archetype established by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell identifies the hero as “ventur[ing] forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (23). Meg ventures from her warm, familiar family home into the supernatural wonder of tessering encountering the “fabulous force” of the Dark Thing and overcoming it by freeing her father and Charles Wallace from its hold. Harry leaves his humdrum nonmagical life and enters a region of supernatural magic encountering dark and fabulous forces before ultimately winning a victory against Voldemort and returning to the Dursleys.

Both Meg and Harry go through many of the seventeen stages in Campbell's hierarchy, and examples of Christian symbolism are apparent in both texts. Harry is “marked from birth...and destined for greatness,” as well as being “Christ-like...since he ‘saved’ the wizarding world” (Byam 9). It is also revealed in later books that Harry's life and ordeals were, like Christ's, prophesied. While *A Wrinkle in Time* does not have as much overt Christ symbolism, Meg does reject her calling like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane before ultimately agreeing to a form of self-sacrifice to save the soul of humanity (at least metaphorically). Both Harry and Meg perform miracles in order to prove their own worth



and greatness. Harry defeats the exponentially more powerful Voldemort twice by what is interpreted as a miracle. The true miracle at work is Lily Potter's love; however, Harry's use of it allows him to ascend to greatness within the wizarding community. Likewise, by performing the miraculous feat of rescuing her father and Charles Wallace, Meg is able to ascend to greatness within her own psyche.

Like Jane Eyre and Charles Dickens' Pip, Harry is an orphan in the Bildungsroman tradition. As with all Bildungsromans, the *Harry Potter* series, as well as the *Time* quartet series, see the protagonists, Harry and Meg, grow and mature within a given society in order to find their "own way in the world" (Byam 10) and prepare them to "re-enter society in a more adjusted way" (12). Also like these classic protagonists, Harry has a "family connection to [his] lodgings" (the Dursley house on Privet Drive) and is "often deprived of food" (after the snake incident in *Sorcerer's Stone* Harry is denied food). In addition, Harry "enclosed literally and psychologically" by family both in a cupboard under the stairs and in expectations (Byam 12). While Meg is not an orphan, she does miss her father and receives much grief from the local townspeople because of this. In order to overcome their besieged beginnings, protagonists of Bildungsromans need an external agent to force change in their dreary existences. In the middle of a late summer storm, Mrs. Whatsit arrives to begin Meg's journey. Harry's aunt and uncle go to extreme measures to ignore the flood of mystical letters deluging their house and inviting Harry to Hogwarts. Often the forced, though welcomed, change involves the protagonists' remove to an educational institution by means of a "fairy tale rescue...[in which] all their norms are stripped away and they must learn to survive by their innate abilities" (12). Hagrid arrives in the middle of a raging storm like a modern day, boy's version of a fairy godmother/father to spirit Harry away from the

Dursleys. Through this new education, Bildungsroman heroes must also accept new religious or philosophical beliefs. Harry must come to terms with his new and growing magical abilities, as well as the new magical rules by which he must live. Meg must accept new, and sometimes horrifying, truths about herself and her world. In addition, the hero must unravel a mystery, such as the sorcerer's stone or how to save Charles Wallace, in order to accept these new beliefs.

Both the hero archetype and the Bildungsroman traditions forward an allegory of empowerment. In both traditions, the surface story and structure are merely vehicles for the final overall transformation of the protagonist. Within each tradition, choices must be made, evil must be overcome, and the decisions and actions of one can have auspicious or adverse outcomes for all. By situating both *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* within these traditions, I am also situating them within the traditional English allegorical framework.

## CONCLUSION

What should readers make of these analogies and comparisons? Whatever they would wish – that is the nature of allegory. I have three primary hopes for the use of my work within this thesis. First, that adults will see the power and value of the texts as instruments of allegory and as such promote them to young readers. Second, that upon reading the texts as allegories children, or any reader, will see the abilities and capabilities they themselves possess to shape and redefine their place in the world. Third, that children, or again any reader, will see the interconnected relationships in their own lives and strive to make good, moral decisions. While each of these hopes in and of themselves is an immense challenge, it is within their own interconnectedness that the strength and body of my argument lies. Adults may see a particular text as beneficial, but if young readers do not see the salutary effects, the texts will fall under the auspices of dead allegory. Likewise, if the young readers are ever to discover the true depth of these texts, caring adults must act as guides along the young readers' allegorical journeys.

It is fortuitous that we will never know the true allegorical nature of L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* or Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, for if we did, we would destroy all future allegorical interpretations yet to come. However, given the "pluridimensionality" of allegory, it is no wonder that, as L'Engle and Rowling often attest, they do not write "down to [children]" (Killinger 13), but for "people...people read books" (*Presenting* 9); thus, ultimately it is people who read and interpret allegory. Each interpretation creates a new question, each question a multitude of answers. However, "just because we don't understand doesn't mean the answer doesn't exist" (*Wrinkle* 53); the answer exists in our own ability to read between, beneath, and beyond the surface of the text

- to create a new allegorical meaning within ourselves. Allegorical fantasy allows the reader “to become greater than we are, greater than we could hope to be” (Nilsen 211). L’Engle’s books have been read, interpreted, and enjoyed for over forty years by generations of readers, and given the cultural sensation they have become, it is equally safe to assume that Rowling’s books will as well. The allegory remains fresh; whether it is an allegory of psychomachia, interconnectedness, or the overarching power of love, the themes and elements are the same. There will always be journeys that must be taken, diversions that will be taken, and guides that should be obeyed. These elements unite even broader genres of literature, tying fantasy and science fiction to adolescent and adult literature via the bonds of the realities created through their interaction in allegory. Donald Hettinga affirms that fantasy becomes a “literary vehicle for apprehending the mysteries of God in the universe” (*Presenting* 11-12). If allegorical fantasy does serve as a mode for connecting with a greater power, it is because it lies in “a truth that cuts across barriers of time and space” (“Expanding” 245).

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