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Abstract

Discusses the symbolism of the various fantastic and supernatural creatures that inhabit L'Engle's books.

Additional Keywords

L'Engle, Madeleine. *Many Waters*; L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Swiftly Tilting Planet.*; L'Engle, Madeleine. *Time Quartet*; L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wind in the Door*; L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*

SERAPHIM, CHERUBIM, AND VIRTUAL UNICORNS ORDER AND BEING IN MADELEINE L'ENGLE'S TIME QUARTET

WAYNE G. HAMMOND



adeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* and its sequels, *A Wind in the Door*, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, and *Mary Waters*, follow remarkable characters on journeys across space and time, and are among the most memorable of science fiction/fantasy novels for young readers (and old). They are also insightful comments on basic philosophical issues, such as: How does one fit into the scheme of things — indeed, is there a scheme of things? And, What is reality? If Ms. L'Engle does not come to definite conclusions, it is because there can be no one answer to important questions like these, no single solution to the old riddles that still bid us defiance.¹ But she lights the way, and suggests what we must do to get there. We must be unlike the publishers who, for more than two years, rejected *A Wrinkle in Time* as “much too hard for children”; in fact, says L'Engle, “it's not too difficult for kids, it's too difficult for grown-ups,” at least for those who close themselves off from new ideas.² We must be, instead, like the artist L'Engle describes in her book *Walking on Water*, one who retains a vision “which includes angels and dragons and unicorns, and all the lovely creatures which our world would put in a box marked *Children Only*.” We must be as a child, and see the “realities moving on the other side of the everyday world.”³

This is not easy for anyone to do, not even the characters in Madeleine L'Engle's *Time* series, who, for the most part, are children. Their childhood sense of wonder is intact, but is often suppressed. Though Mr. and Mrs. Murry are “more, rather than less, open to the strange, to the mysterious, to the unexplainable,”⁴ they are not the only influence on their daughter and sons. Meg, Charles Wallace, and the twins, Sandy and Dennys, like most American children, are the product not only of their home life but also of a public education and of a society that rewards “maturity” and worships accepted fact. The Murry children think they know what Reality is. For them it is most defined by home, their old white farmhouse in rural Connecticut, and by one room in particular: familiar and warm, with cocoa steaming in a saucepan, sandwich makings in the fridge, geraniums on the windowsill, curtains that reflect cheerfulness into the room and shut out the storm. In all of the *Time* books, the Murry kitchen is the calm center of the universe.

But it is not a fortress, and those who do not seek out a larger reality may have it thrust upon them. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, it intrudes in the extraordinary form of Mrs Whatsit:

The age or sex was impossible to tell, for it was com-

pletely bundled up in clothes. Several scarves of assorted colors were tied about the head, and a man's felt hat perched atop. A shocking-pink stole was knotted about a rough overcoat, and black rubber boots covered the feet.⁵

Underneath, Mrs Whatsit appears to be a comical old woman, with grayish hair and bright eyes; but she is much more than she seems. She says that she “got caught in a downdraft and blown off course,” yet she was not in an airplane. And she suddenly announces, to Mrs. Murry's astonishment, that “there is such a thing as a tesseract” (20), the means of space/time travel on which Mr. Murry had been secretly working before he disappeared. Mrs Whatsit is clearly not ordinary, or even merely eccentric as she first appeared.⁶

With the introduction of Mrs Who, a “plump little woman” with enormous spectacles, who quotes proverbs and lines from classic literature and can appear silently out of “flickering shadows in the moonlight” (51), and especially Mrs Which, who is usually incorporeal, no more than a shimmer in a circle of silver, the story moves well outside common experience. The comfort of the farmhouse and the familiarity of its nearby fields and trees are left behind as Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin O'Keefe are whisked into space, where they learn how much more there is to Creation than they had known. Mrs Whatsit transforms before their eyes into

a creature more beautiful than any Meg had even imagined, and the beauty lay in far more than the outward description. Outwardly Mrs Whatsit was surely no longer a Mrs Whatsit. She was a marble-white body with powerful flanks, something like a horse but at the same time completely unlike a horse, for from the magnificently modeled back sprang a nobly formed torso, arms, and a head resembling a man's, but a man with a perfection of dignity and virtue, an exaltation of joy such as Meg had never before seen. . . . From the shoulders slowly a pair of wings unfolded, wings made of rainbows, of light upon water, of poetry. (61)

But even this is only another aspect of Mrs Whatsit's true nature, no more truly her than the wildly clothed old woman. How old is she? Calvin asks. “Exactly 2,379,152,497 years, 8 months, and 3 days,” she replies; and she is one of the “younger ones” (80-81). Not everything can be put into everyday terms. In fact, Mrs Whatsit was once a star⁷, who gave up her stellar life in a war between the powers of darkness and light which continues to rage throughout the universe. Now she, like Mrs Who and Mrs

Which, is an angelic power, a guardian angel, a messenger from God — to put it in biblical words, as L'Engle does. The three Mrs W are unlikely angels, playing at witches, but angels all the same. One of L'Engle's points in the *Time* series is that one must look past outward appearance to see the inner self, as Meg does after Mrs Whatsit has reverted to her earlier form:

Even though she was used to Mrs Whatsit's odd getup (and the very oddness of it was what made her seem so comforting), she realized with a fresh shock that it was not Mrs Whatsit herself that she was seeing at all. The complete, the true Mrs Whatsit, Meg realized, was beyond human understanding. What she saw was only the game Mrs Whatsit was playing; it was an amusing and charming game, a game full of both laughter and comfort, but it was only the tiniest facet of all the things Mrs Whatsit could be. (88-89)

At the last, Meg herself becomes more than she was — more than the impatient, complaining, often self-centered girl she is through most of *A Wrinkle in Time*. To save Charles Wallace from the clutches of the evil power IT, she sees beyond her self to a rudimentary pattern of life, defined by love of family and friends: Meg "had Mrs Whatsit's love, and her father's, and her mother's, and . . . Charles Wallace's love, and the twins', and Aunt Beast's. And she had her love for them" (200). Thus fortified, Meg defeats IT, and at once we are back in the farmhouse-reality, in the familiarity of a broccoli patch; but with "joy and love . . . so tangible that Meg felt that if she only knew where to reach she could touch it with her bare hands" (203) — her old and new realities become one.

Not quite halfway through the novel, Mrs Whatsit tells the children that in cosmic terms "there's very little difference in the size of the tiniest microbe and the greatest galaxy" (85). This concept is developed no further in *A Wrinkle in Time*, but is at the heart of the second *Time* book, *A Wind in the Door*. As that story opens, we are again in the Murry kitchen, and the mundane is rubbing shoulders with the incredible. Charles Wallace declares that "There are dragons in the twins' vegetable garden" (*Wind*, 3). Meg, who would rather attend to a liverwurst and cream cheese sandwich, responds like a worried mother, not (for the moment) like the sister who shared with Charles Wallace, in the previous book, a cosmic raising of consciousness. "It was not like Charles to lose touch with reality," she thinks (6); but in part, this reflects Megs fear that reality is losing touch with *her*. She is uncomfortably aware that life, "no matter how careful the planning" (33-34), is filled with uncertainty. She envies Sandy and Dennys their ability to adapt to the world — though, in fact, they often cannot make sense of it. Here, as in *A Wrinkle in Time*, the twins are (or seem to be) the "ordinary" members of the Murry family: not brilliant at math or social misfits like Meg, or prodigies like Charles Wallace, or renowned theoretical scientists like Mr. and Mrs. Murry — bright and sociable, but limited in vision. "Spending hours and hours peering into your micro-electron microscope, and listen-

ing to that micro-sonar whatsit isn't practical," Sandy complains about their parents, while Dennys adds, to their mother, "You just look at things nobody else can see, and listen to things nobody else can hear, and think about them" (35). To the twins, Charles Wallace's discovery of a "dragons' feather is something that's "not in their practical world" (36). Nor do they understand the "cosmic scream" their parents are concerned about, an unexplainable "rip in the galaxy" that is affecting the balance of matter. Sandy, who plans to go into a "real world" profession, remarks: "It's all much too complicated for me. I'm sure banking is a lot simpler" (40).

But even Charles Wallace admits difficulty with Progi-noskes, the "singular cherubim" he mistook for a "drive of dragons." "Progo" is another variety of angel in L'Engle's cosmos, "a wild, fierce being" with countless eyes and seemingly hundreds of wings "in constant motion, covering and uncovering the eyes," and with "little spurts of flame and smoke" in between (54). He seems to push the limit of creation (and the belief of those who see him): though his title is singular, he is "practically plural," like the four cherubim in Ezekiel rolled into one. Blajeny, the Teacher who accompanies Progo, is an angel-figure too, but of a still different sort, "dark as night and tall as a tree" (54-55). Through Progo and Blajeny, L'Engle further explores the nature of reality. Through Mr. Jenkins, Charles Wallace's school principal caught up in the adventure, she illustrates how adulthood can foster disbelief and fetter the imagination. Blajeny teaches that reality depends upon belief, and that one must understand with the heart as well as, or even instead of, the intellect. Imagination and intuition may be more useful than reason; "Let's Pretend" can be more than a child's game, it can be a means of seeing truth. Only in that way can a human being conceive of things on a hugely macroscopic scale, such as a galaxy, or of things so small as to be "beyond rational conceiving," such as farandolae and mitochondria, organisms that live, one inside the other, in our cells, so tiny that "a human being is a whole world" to a mitochondrion and a galaxy to a farandola (128, 23). Farandolae cannot be seen even with a powerful microscope; Mrs. Murry is convinced, in her own mind, that she has proved their existence, but cannot in turn prove it to the straightforward family doctor, who is less ready to accept the extraordinary. At the practical, human level, unseen micro-organisms — or anything else outside current knowledge — cannot begin to exist unless first believed in. Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Jenkins actually meet a farandola, but even then Calvin is horrified. "You're mad," he says to the creature. "I've studied biology. You're not possible." To which the farandola responds indignantly, "Neither are you. Nothing important is" (139). Which is to say, all things are possible.

As Mrs Whatsit implies in *A Wrinkle in Time*, the war between Good and Evil is being waged even on the sub-microscopic level. In *A Wind in the Door*, "fallen angels" (97) called Echthroï (Greek for "the enemy") are responsible both for the dramatic "rip" in the sky and for the deaths

of mitochondria, which may have caused people to die of respiratory failure or a so-called "flu." The two are linked: the "cry" of ailing mitochondria sounds like the strange "cosmic scream" detected in distant galaxies. The great and the small are one within Creation; size does not matter. And, says Blajeny, "it is not always on the great or the important that the balance of the universe depends" (142). The Echthroi are attacking Charles Wallace through his mitochondria, and "the balance of the entire universe can be altered by the outcome" (98). All things matter, all things are interdependent, L'Engle holds, as others have held before her. As she writes in *A Stone for a Pillow*, we live in "a universe where the lifting of the wings of a butterfly is felt across galaxies."⁶

But while there is unity in Creation, there is also individuality. Each star has a name, Progo says (he has had to memorize them all), and "all the galaxies, . . . all creatures, cherubic, human, farandolan, all, all, are known by Name," he says (169). And Naming — affirming existence through love — is a great power: it defines Being and makes things whole. Meg is a powerful Namer, one who knows "who people are" inside, truly, "and who they are meant to be" (97). The Echthroi, on the other hand, are "un-Namers" who preach, in Orwellian phrases, a doctrine of nothingness. "When everything is nothing," they tell Charles Wallace's farandolae, "there will be no more war, no illness, no death. There will be no more poverty, no more pain, no more slums, no more starvation" (188). Literally, nothing would be. The Echthroi would silence the song of the stars, the rhythm of Creation, which reaches even to the farae, from whom the farandolae are born.

One of Meg's tests in *A Wind in the Door* is to convince Sporos, one of Charles Wallace's farandolae, to "deepen," to literally put down roots, to "come of age." Progo tells her that "the temptation for farandolae or for man or for star is to stay an immature pleasure-seeker. When we seek our own pleasure as the ultimate good we place ourselves as the center of the universe. A fara or a man or a star has his place in the universe, but nothing created is the center" (178). Sporos, and many of the other farandolae, would rather dance than deepen; but their self-centered dance is also one of self-destruction. If they do not join with their mitochondrion, they will die, and their world — Charles Wallace — will die too. The freedom of their youth is illusory; the true, if seemingly contradictory, reality is described by Senex, Sporos's "parent": "Now that I am rooted," he says, "I am no longer limited by motion. Now I may move anywhere in the universe. I sing with the stars. I dance with the galaxies. I share in the joy — and in the grief. We farae must have our part in the rhythm of the mitochondria, or we cannot be" (190).

Ultimately it is *being* which saves Charles Wallace: the deepening of the farandolae, becoming one with their world, and especially Meg's embrace of all Creation, filling the Echthroi's "abyss of nothingness" (197) with being, fueled by love. "I hold you!" she cries.

I love you, I Name you. I Name you, Echthroi. You are not nothing. . . .
I fill you with Naming.
Be!
Be, butterfly and behemoth,
be galaxy and grasshopper,
star and sparrow,
you matter,
you are,
be! (203)

Even the doubting twins, to whom we return at the end of the book, cannot douse this flame of joy. "I don't understand any of this," Sandy says as Charles Wallace recovers suddenly from his illness. "I don't like things I don't understand" (206).

In *A Wrinkle in Time* and *A Wind in the Door*, L'Engle gives the cosmos shape, history, and purpose. In the third of the *Time* books, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, she adds still more details and reveals new beauties. One of these is the angelic unicorn Charles Wallace meets when he recites an ancient rune and calls on "all Heaven with its power":

The brilliance of the stars increased. Charles Wallace continued to gaze upward. He focused on one star which throbbled with peculiar intensity. A beam of light as strobed with a ladder but clear as water flowed between the star and Charles Wallace, and it was impossible to tell whether the light came from the piercing silver-blue of the star or the light blue eyes of the boy. The beam became stronger and firmer and then all the light resolved itself in a flash of radiance beside the boy. Slowly the radiance took on form, until it had enfeshed itself into the body of a great white beast with flowing mane and tail. From its forehead sprang a silver horn which contained the residue of the light. It was a creature of utter and absolute perfection.

For all his natural insight and intelligence, and the uncommon maturity of his now fifteen years, Charles Wallace can still be astonished — in L'Engle's philosophy, a healthy sign.

The boy put his hand against the great white flanks, which heaved as though the creature had been racing. He could feel the warm blood coursing through the veins as the light had coursed between star and boy. "Are you real?" he asked in a wondering voice.

The creature gave a silver neigh which translated itself into the boy's mind as "I am not real. And yet in a sense I am that which is the only reality." (44-45)

It is outwardly a unicorn; but Charles Wallace asks: "What are you, really?" By now we cannot be surprised that the creature (rather, Madeleine L'Engle) does not give a direct answer to that kind of question. "What are you, really?" it replies (45). In fact, its name, Gaudior, Latin for "more joyful" — "that joy in existence without which the universe will fall apart and collapse" (38) — tells us more about the unicorn than its mere form reveals.

Gaudior speaks a language he calls "the ancient harmony," and Charles Wallace understands because he be-

longs to "the Old Music" (45). The musical imagery in *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* recalls, from *A Wind in the Door*, the singing of the farandolae, and echoes the notion, at least as old as Pythagoras, that music binds the universe together.¹⁰ Gaudier refers to those few Earth people who belong to the Old Music as "still our brothers and sisters," unlike the Echthroï, who "would distort the melody and destroy the ancient harmonies" with anger and hate. But "when you are loving," he says, "that lovingness joins the music of the spheres" (46, 61). Later, Charles Wallace joins his voice to Gaudier's in

a melody he did not know, and yet the notes poured from his throat with all the assurance of long familiarity. They moved through the time-spinning reaches of a far galaxy, and he realized that the galaxy itself was part of a mighty orchestra, and each star and planet within the galaxy added its own instrument to the music of the spheres. As long as the ancient harmonies were sung, the universe would not entirely lose its joy. (72)

Charles Wallace rides Gaudier across centuries and enters other bodies and minds to avert world catastrophe in his own day. In the process, he reaffirms what L'Engle states in different words in *A Wind in the Door*: that "what happens in one time can make a difference in what happens in another time, far more than we realize," and that "nothing, no one, is too small to matter. What you do is going to make a difference" (256). This idea is extended in *Many Waters*, the fourth book in the *Time series*, also, and at last, to Sandy and Dennys. It is poetic justice that the reasonable, practical, "ordinary" twins should have their own enlightening adventure, and by placing them in an extended version of the story of Noah, drawn from Genesis and other mythology, L'Engle creates the perfect setting in which to explore different ideas of reality, order, and being separated by a culture gap millennia wide. Once again, the Murry kitchen is an important initial point of reference. When Sandy and Dennys accidentally (as it seems to them) transport themselves to the Holy Land centuries before their time, they are disoriented:

They looked around to see nothing familiar. No kitchen door. No kitchen. No fireplace with its fragrant logs. No table, with its pot of brightly blooming geraniums. No ceiling strung with rows of red peppers and white garlic. No floor with the colorful, braided rugs. They were standing on sand, burning white sand. Above them, the sun was in a sky so hot that it was no longer blue but had a bronze cast. There was nothing but sand and sky from horizon to horizon.¹¹

The land's inhabitants are much smaller than the twins, and take them to be giants. No, they say, they are boys. But "only giants are as tall as you. And the seraphim and nephilim. But you have no wings," says Noah's son Japheth (17), seeking to classify something strange in terms he can understand. Noah's daughter Yalith also is puzzled: "You do not speak like one of us. Are you sure you're not a giant?" she asks Sandy (37). Here the "ordi-

nary" twins are, by comparison, extraordinary, because of their appearance and because they are twins, which seems to be a rare or unknown condition at the antediluvian oasis. Their reality has turned inside out, but for a while they try to explain themselves as if they were still in their old Where and When: "We came home from hockey practice. We made sandwiches. We went into the lab to find the Dutch cocoa. We messed around with Dad's experiment-in-progress" (19).

Adapting to their situation is a trial for Sandy and Dennys. Besides unfamiliar people, in the desert there are "mammoth" "the size of a small dog or a large cat" (18), and manticores, ugly beasts with a man's head, a lion's body, and a scorpion's tail. Harder still for the twins to accept are unicorns with silver hooves and "horns of brilliant light" (26), who sometimes are and sometimes are not, and must be called into creation. "We've never had very willing suspensions of disbelief," Dennys admits. "We're the pragmatists of the family" (23). Nor have they "gone in" for stories; though their mother read to them "every night until too much homework got in the way" (95), from myths, tales of foreign lands, fairy tales, Bible stories, these seem not to have fired their imaginations, or at least have stayed only in fragments in their store of memory. Sandy objects to mammoths that are not huge like the one in a nature book he read, and even after meeting a manticores face to face he says that things like that "aren't supposed to be real" (36). As for unicorns, Sandy says: "If I blink often enough, we'll be back in the kitchen at home" (23). Finally he and Dennys decide that unicorns are like the theoretical "virtual particles" their mother is studying, subatomic particles that must be observed in order to be. "If Mother can believe in her way-out theories," Dennys says, "we ought to be able to believe in virtual unicorns" (25).¹² And so, out of necessity (to have a means to cross the desert quickly, and later to return home), they do believe, and the unicorns are. As they later understand, "some things have to be believed to be seen" (256).

The most sage advice they receive at the oasis comes from Grandfather Lamech: "In this time many things are real" (36). If Sandy and Dennys are to survive in the strange land they have come to, they must begin to accept the "mythical" as real: mammoths, manticores, and unicorns, and winged angels, tall and splendid — seraphim and nephilim, brothers who follow different ways. The seraphim have chosen, or have been chosen and accepted the choice, to "stay close to the Presence" (59, 171) and with the children of humankind, giving protection and advice, even at the cost of some of their powers, though not of their freedom. But the nephilim have renounced Heaven and all that the seraphim stand for. They "chose to be silent with El . . . never to hear the Voice again, never to speak with the Presence" (258). Noah reports the rumor that the nephilim "are like falling stars, that they may be falling stars, flung out of heaven" (96). They are tied now to the Earth, and claim it and its people for their own, and seduce

the daughters of men.¹³ With the birth of half-breed nephilim children, Noah says, "it is hard to know anymore who is human and who is not" (72).

Neither the seraphim nor the nephilim know why Sandy and Dennys are with Noah, at that place and significant time, just prior to the Flood. But they are sure it is not by accident, for the twins, like Charles Wallace, speak unknowingly

the Old Language, the language of creation, of the time when the stars were made, and the heavens and the waters and all creatures. It was the language which was spoken in the Garden . . . of Eden, before the story was bent. It is the language which is still, and will be, spoken by all the stars which carry the light,

the "old tongue" that lies beneath all the languages of the world and is "still in communion with the ancient harmonies" (101-2). Neither twin is as "ordinary" as they claim, or have seemed; they are ordinary only if they choose to be ordinary. Nor is Dennys, at least, as pragmatic as he likes to believe. He has had daydreams in school, and in the land and time of Noah can understand the "delicate, crystal chiming" of the stars (107) and the voice of the wind¹⁴.

He closed his eyes. Visioned stars exploding into life. Planets being birthed. . . . Violent swirlings of winds and waters. Land masses as fluid as water. Volcanoes spouting flame so high that it seems to meet the outward flaming of the sun.

The earth was still in the process of being created. The stability of rock was no more than an illusion. Earthquake, hurricane, volcano, flood, all part of the continuing creation of the cosmos, groaning in travail.

The song of the wind softened, gentled. Behind the violence of the birthing of galaxies and stars and planets came a quiet and tender melody, a gentle love song. All the raging of creation, the continuing hydrogen explosions on the countless suns, the heaving of planetary bodies, all was enfolded in a patient, waiting love. (280)

Are the twins a part of this cosmic song? Yes, say the seraphim; but even they do not fully understand it. "The pattern is not set. It is fluid, and constantly changing." Even the angels know only that, in the end, "it will be worked out in beauty" (304).

In the title of this paper I refer to the *Time Quartet*. This is only for convenience. Like all things in the cosmos L'Engle describes, her *Time* books intersect, with some of her writings outside the series (by means of shared characters) as well as with each other. Nor has she ceased to write about "angels and dragons and unicorns" and the "realities moving on the other side of the everyday world." In one of her most recent books, *An Acceptable Time*, the eldest daughter of Meg Murry and Calvin O'Keefe becomes herself involved in the war in which, still, "the bright angels and the dark angels are fighting, and the earth is caught in the battle."¹⁵ She too learns that "There is a pattern . . . There are lines drawn between the stars, and lines drawn between places, and lines drawn between

people, and lines linking all three" (127). She too discovers, or is called to, a larger reality beyond the old farmhouse, beyond the fields. She too, like Madeleine L'Engle's readers, finds wisdom.



Notes

- "Beyond the bright searchlights of science,/ Out of sight of the windows of sense,/ Old riddles still bid us defiance,/ Old questions of Why and of Whence" — William Cecil Dampier-Whetham, *The Recent Development of Physical Science* (1904), quoted in Bartlett.
- Madeleine L'Engle, introduction to *A Wrinkle in Time* recorded book (© Old Greenwich, Conn.); Listening Library, 1993) cassette 1. See also Donald R. Hettinga, *Presenting Madeleine L'Engle* (New York: Towne, 1993) 21-22; and L'Engle, "Childlike Wonder and the Truths of Science Fiction," *Children's Literature* 10 (1982): 102-10.
- Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw, 1980) 21, 18.
- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wind in the Door* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973) 69. Further references are cited in the text.
- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1962) 15. Further references are cited in the text.
- The scene with Mrs Whatsit in the kitchen recalls, as L'Engle probably intends, Hebrews 13:2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
- Scripture sometimes refers to angels as stars, e.g. Isaiah 14:12 calls Lucifer (whose name, literally translated, means "light bearer") "O Day Star, son of Dawn."
- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow* (Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw, 1986) 52. "Others" include St. Francis of Assisi, who praised the unity of Creation in his "Canticle of the Sun," and Alexander Pope, who wrote in *An Essay on Man*, epistle 1, ll. 87-90: "Who sees with equal eye, as God of all, / A hero perish, or a sparrow fall, / Atoms or systems into ruin hurled, / And now a bubble burst, and now a world."
- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1978) 44. Further references are cited in the text.
- Shakespeare's Lorenzo, in the final act of *The Merchant of Venice*, says: "There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st / But in his motion like an angel sings, / Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins; / Such harmony is in immortal souls. . . ."
- Madeleine L'Engle, *Many Waters* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986) 10-11. Further references are cited in the text.
- But after this, Dennys still struggles with belief. A unicorn he had been riding leaves a tent because it cannot stand the smell of the place. Dennys reasons that if he can think of a unicorn unable to stand a smell, it must mean that he believes in unicorns. But his next thought is: of course, there are no unicorns.
- "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them" (Genesis 6:4). "Sons of God" is sometimes interpreted to mean angels, whose intercourse with mortals produced beings intermediate between the divine and the human, introducing an element of disorder into the world that had to be checked by the special intervention of God, i.e. the Flood.
- In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Charles Wallace says that "sometimes if I concentrate very hard I can understand the wind talking with the trees" (28).
- Madeleine L'Engle, *An Acceptable Time* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989) 239. An additional reference is cited in the text.