Abstract

J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia* reveal numerous truths about the human condition, and although fantasy fiction is often overlooked, exploring it helps readers grasp reality and increase their understanding of the world. Amongst the central ideas found in both series are hope, voluntary sacrifice, and resilience in the face of evil, all of which are virtues espoused in the Bible. Furthermore, both authors contrast “reality” and the “secondary world.” Protagonists travel from the “primary world” to the “secondary world” where they become empowered, finding within themselves previously unrealized potential and agency; for although imperfect, the “secondary world,” offers solutions and consolations. Moreover, the similarities between repressive regimes in our world and the political and social turmoil found in the stories can enable readers to gain insight into what it is like to live under an authoritarian government. Additionally, through symbols like the serpent and prophecies involving infant boys, the two stories clearly allude to the Bible, particularly to the story of Jesus. Characters in both narratives exhibit Christocentric attributes such as pacifism and a Christ-like sacrificial nature. Notably, Harry and Aslan embody the Christian Messiah through death and resurrection, whilst the main antagonists flesh out the figure of Satan in creative ways. Unlike Lewis’ clear picture of Jesus in Aslan, Rowling’s “Christ”—i.e., Harry—represents flawed humanity through the mix of good intentions and egocentric actions. However, Rowling’s villain, Voldemort, derives directly from notions of evil in the Bible, making him flat and archetypical. Lewis’ theological beliefs are plain, especially regarding evil, as he frequently incorporates common Biblical motifs in his stories. One of the most important motifs in *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* is mortality: the main villains seek to become immortal and the heroes become victorious by acknowledging, and ultimately, accepting death.
# Table of Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1
1. Prophecies and Their Correlation to the Biblical Narrative .......................................................... 2
2. Examples of Symbolism .................................................................................................................. 6
3. Secondary Worlds .......................................................................................................................... 8
4. Absolute Villainy and Unequivocal Heroism? .............................................................................. 11
5. Home and Problematic Parental Figures ...................................................................................... 14
6. Oppressive Governments and War .................................................................................................. 16
7. Death and the Search for Immortality ........................................................................................... 20
Conclusion .......................................................................................................................................... 23
Works Cited ......................................................................................................................................... 25
Introduction

Two of the most widely read and beloved children’s stories to date, C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia* and J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, immerse the reader in fantastical worlds of magic, and as such, belong in the fantasy genre. Regrettably, fantasy literature is often dismissed as being “rather frivolous or foolish” in academia, and when mixed with children’s fiction, it is sadly even more likely to be overlooked and disregarded, much like the intended audience often is (R. Jackson 5). Fortunately, there are scholars who see fantasy as a way of showing what is present and true, though often unseen, it does not distort our vision but rather sharpens it; the “secondary world” enables the reader to see the world clearly and envision new possibilities. As Dickerson and O’Hara claim, “fantasy encourages escape into realms of possibility; possibility engenders hope. Fantasy, then, is essentially hopeful literature. But the hope is real, and for hope to be real, there must be real danger as well. So fantasy is perilous” (53). This is true of *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles*: peril and dangerous situations are familiar to inhabitants of these worlds but hope, along with the willingness to do the right thing in spite of threats of harm to the self or others, prevails throughout both series.

Even though these stories are generally intended for children, one should not underestimate their significance, or the importance of the subjects addressed therein: children’s literature should not be viewed as “immature” literature. Some of the topics touched upon in these works are death, the afterlife, war and violence, and oppressive governments or authority figures. Notably, these stories portray children who possess great agency and independence in harrowing situations where they solve problems, generally without assistance from adults. Absent, distant, or dead parents are prevalent in both stories, along with feelings of displacement and non-belonging, and then finding a home or a place of belonging. In addition to these issues, one can argue that Lewis intended his stories to be read with the Biblical Christ and Christianity in mind while Rowling did not. There are, however, elements in the *Harry Potter* series that are conceivably Christocentric in nature, which is interesting as the series was written, and well received, in a largely post-Christian society. A few of the central ideologies which appear and are highlighted in both series—and which, incidentally, are motifs found in the Bible—are voluntary sacrifice for other people and creatures, resurrection, and a constant hope that evil will be overcome.
Not only are Rowling and Lewis influenced by the Biblical narrative and its beliefs and symbolism, but they also incorporate familiar elements from fairy tales like witches on brooms and borrow creatures from different mythologies like the Greek centaur or the Germanic dwarf. By using ancient motifs, these writers keep them in circulation and transmit aspects of these tales or mythologies to a new generation.

It is important to consider the origin of fantasy and the influences which have shaped the genre. Modern fantasy is grounded in ancient myth, mysticism, folklore, fairytales, and romance stories (R. Jackson 4). The etymology of words like myth (or muthos) and fantasy (or phantasia) originally meant “accurate representations or accounts of real things” (Dickerson and O’Hara 50). It is not until the modern era that these words began to lose their ring of truth; this is perhaps because of an “impoverished sense of the worth of stories, or an inflated sense of the ability of modern science to help us know the world accurately, or both,” and thus, myths became inaccurate, fictional, or false (Dickerson and O’Hara 50-51). To writers like Lewis, myth is anything but false: in his opinion, “God works through human myths as well as through His own true myth, the historical story of Jesus Christ” (Ward 28). Myths are not false: they contain eternal truth, the kind that can, perhaps, only be told in story.

It is undeniable that the Biblical narrative has had a significant impact on modern fantasy literature, as great wars between good and evil are in virtually every fantasy story of modernity (Dickerson and O’Hara 80). The Bible can be seen as not merely a religious creed, or a theological and philosophical system, but as a story: “the great biblical Story embodies ideas that have been key in informing nearly all the myth and fantasy of the West. These ideas include … the use of parallel worlds to gain insight into this world [and] the notion that there is an invisible moral battle in which the visible world participates” (Dickerson and O’Hara 67). This is evident in Harry Potter and The Chronicle, as their fictional worlds provide the reader with a greater understanding and an increased awareness of reality.

1. Prophecies and Their Correlation to the Biblical Narrative
Although there are multiple ways to interpret the Bible, the similar threads running through these narratives of fantasy fiction and references to the Bible are compelling. One critical point of connection is the use of prophecy: in The Chronicles of Narnia and
Harry Potter, prophecies play a fundamental role in the development of the plot. Prophecies about children, particularly infant boys who are destined to become saviors of a nation or of humanity are central to both stories. These prophecies bring to mind the Biblical story of Jesus. A number of prophets throughout the Old Testament foretold of a Messianic savior, who was, to the Hebrews, the expected deliverer of their nation, and in Christianity, the savior of humanity. For example, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed the virgin birth: “And he said, ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (English Standard Version, Isaiah 7:13-14), and the prophet Micah declared, “‘O Bethlehem Ephrathah, / who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, / from you shall come forth for me / one who is to be ruler in Israel, / whose coming forth is from of old, / from ancient days’” (Micah 5:2), claiming that the Messianic king will come from Bethlehem. Christians interpret these prophecies as reference to the baby boy called Jesus Christ, the savior anticipated throughout the Biblical narrative.

Incidentally, Harry and Aslan are clear examples of Christ-like figures, as both take on the role of “sacrificial lamb,” and both do so willingly. The notion of the “sacrificial lamb” is an essential element in the Biblical story. In ancient Israel, a lamb is sacrificed on a regular basis to reconcile the people with God, and in the New Testament, the death of Jesus is seen as a sacrifice for humanity for the purpose of reconciliation. For instance, in Leviticus 4:34-35, a lamb serves as an atonement for sins committed and in John 1:29, Jesus is called “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,” and he who “put[s] away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9: 26) in order to sanctify people before God (Heb. 10:10). Comparatively, in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Aslan steps in as a substitute for Edmund, a traitor who “‘belongs to me [the White Witch] as my lawful prey’” (155) and thus is killed in Edmund’s place.

Likewise, in Harry Potter, this motif of sacrifice is apparent. Lily Potter, Harry’s mother, gave her life to save her son, leaving him with a “‘lingering protection [Voldemort] never expected, a protection that flows in your veins to this day.’” This protection in Harry immobilizes Voldemort: he cannot hurt the boy. Dumbledore goes on to explain, “‘I put my trust, therefore, in your mother’s blood’” (Rowling, Phoenix
736), a statement which brings to mind the Christian notion of the blood of Jesus, which the Bible claims cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7), giving people “redemption through his blood” (Eph. 1:7). This is similar to Rowling’s story: Harry is saved because of his mother’s death and is protected because of her blood. Moreover, when Harry gives his life willingly to stop Voldemort, much like his mother did for him, Harry provides his friends with the same protection. As Voldemort attempts to do more harm, Harry states, “[h]aven’t you noticed how none of the spells you put on them are binding? You can’t torture them. You can’t touch them” (Rowling, Hallows 591); Voldemort’s curses do not last anymore; the people are at last free from his reign of terror. This is reminiscent of the New Testament ideology regarding Jesus: “death no longer has dominion over him” (Rom. 6:9). Both Harry and Christ are ultimately victorious.

Other examples of prophecy in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe include the four Pevensies who live out a prophecy that had been circling around for decades before they arrived in Narnia. Mr. Beaver tells them how “down at Cair Paravel … there are four thrones and it’s a saying in Narnia time out of mind that when two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve sit in those four thrones, then it will be the end not only of the White Witch’s reign but of her life” (Lewis, Wardrobe 89). Furthermore, the Beavers tell the children about Aslan: “‘he’ll put all to rights as it says in an old rhyme in these parts: Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight, / At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more’” (Lewis, Wardrobe 85). Similarly, another main character in The Chronicles, a young boy named Shasta, whose real name is Cor, turns out to be a son of a King in Archenland. It was foretold that Shasta would save the country one day: “‘Corin and I were twins. And about a week after we were born, apparently, they took us to a wise old Centaur in Narnia to be blessed … [when] he saw Corin and me, it seems this Centaur looked at me and said, ‘A day will come when that boy will save Archenland from the deadliest danger in which she ever lay’” (Lewis, Horse 220-221). This prophecy about an infant boy can be seen as a nod to the story of Christ in the Bible.

In addition, prophecies are crucial in Rowling’s story. One of the teachers at Hogwarts, Professor Trelawney, made a prophecy that sent Voldemort on the hunt for Harry when he was only a baby, which resulted in the murder of Harry’s parents and the start of the quest to defeat Voldemort. Professor Trelawney’s prediction can be seen as a
reflection of the Herod story in the New Testament, where King Herod hears of the birth of “the King of the Jews,” a man who was believed to be destined to free the Jewish people from its harsh rulers. King Herod decides to eliminate this potential threat to his rule and commands his legions to murder any male child under the age of two (Matt. 2:7-18). However, Jesus’ family managed to escape, and he survived. In a similar way, Harry’s parents decide to go into hiding and conceal their child when they hear that Voldemort is hunting them. Voldemort is highly aware that a challenger might come forth at any moment, and when he hears the prophecy about “the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord,” he intends to kill the child before it can grow up as a threat to his reign. Even though he manages to kill Harry’s parents, the boy escapes and becomes the one who gives his life for others, and in doing so, he defeats evil, embodied by Lord Voldemort, once and for all.

Dumbledore later claims that Harry has a power that the Dark Lord, Voldemort, cannot understand, and therefore detests. It is a “force that is at once more wonderful and more terrible than death, than human intelligence, than the forces of nature … it was your heart that saved you” (Rowling, Phoenix 743). In the sixth book, The Half-Blood Prince, Dumbledore explains that this mysterious power Voldemort does not knows is love: “‘Yes, Harry, you can love, … which, given everything that has happened to you, is a great and remarkable thing’” (Rowling, Prince 476). He goes on to tell Harry that the way his heart remains pure despite all the suffering and temptation he has gone through in his short life is what enables him to fight Voldemort, who “was in such a hurry to mutilate his own soul, he never paused to understand the incomparable power of a soul that is untarnished and whole” (Rowling, Prince 477-478). As Harry realizes that he will have to face Lord Voldemort in the end, determination and persistence, not fear and anxiety, take over his mind: “it was, he thought, the difference between being dragged into the arena to face a battle to the death and walking into the arena with your head held high” (Rowling, Prince 479). Here, Harry shows Christocentric qualities as this attitude is in line with Christ’s pacifist nature, especially regarding violence towards his own person.

Not only is the nature of these characters’ deaths similar, but so is their resurrection: firstly, Harry goes to meet his prophesied destiny, with the intention of letting Voldemort kill him and returns to life with the goal of defeating the villain for
good; secondly, Aslan goes to the White Witch and her gang of creatures and lets them tie him up without defending himself in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and returns to life at dawn. Similarly, Jesus does not resist the Roman soldiers who capture him, and later, torture and crucify him; he too defeats death by resurrection.

2. Examples of Symbolism
Similarities are not only found in the underlying themes of The Chronicles, Harry Potter, and the Bible, but also in the use of symbolism. An example of this is the serpent, which is one of the oldest and most widespread symbols across the world. It is found in the Egyptian pantheon, in Inca worship, and in Norse mythology. In Western contemporary culture, it still carries significant meaning, as a destructive and corrupting force (Cirlot 285-287). It is cause for speculation as to why the serpent has prevailed throughout the centuries and across diverse cultures as a well-known symbol, but its significance in Western culture and in the literary tradition can arguably be attributed to the Bible. Moreover, the serpent is one of the most noticeable characters in the Biblical genesis story, as evil manifests in a serpent. This talking animal tempts humanity to disobey God. Interestingly, even though Lewis makes clear the connections between his plot in The Chronicles and the Bible, he only uses this widely known figure of a serpent in a relatively small way: in the sixth book, The Silver Chair, the main villain, The Lady of the Green Kirtle, is a shapeshifting witch who turns into a terrifying green serpent with venomous teeth (192). However, in Harry Potter, the serpent is a key figure connected to malevolence in general, to Voldemort in particular.

From an early age, Tom Riddle, or Voldemort, knows that he is able to talk to serpents and that he has a certain control over them; he even has a “pet” snake, Nagini, whom he talks to (and occasionally uses to murder people). Dumbledore states that this snake “underlines [his] Slytherin connection” (Rowling, Prince 473). Not only is Voldemort connected to a serpent through his Hogwarts house and as a descendent of Salazar Slytherin, a famous Parselmouth (someone who can talk to serpents), but his appearance is also linked to a serpent with his physicality frequently being described as resembling that of snake. In his youth, Tom Riddle, who later changes his name to Lord Voldemort, is described as attractive and charismatic (Rowling, Prince 406). However, his face changes as he delves deeper into dark magic, and he becomes unrecognizable;
the once handsome man is transformed into a “hairless, snake-like [man], with slits for nostrils and gleaming red eyes whose pupils were vertical” (Rowling, *Hallows* 10). This depiction is similar to conventional portrayals of Satan: for example, in *Paradise Lost*, the serpent has “carbuncle,” that is, deep red, eyes and a “verdant,” or green, visage (Milton 9:500-501), highlighting his wickedness and connecting Voldemort to the figure of the Biblical Satan.

To expand on this point, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry has four houses that each student who attends the school is sorted into; these houses are named after the founders of the school, and each house is represented by an animal: Hufflepuff’s symbol is the badger; Ravenclaw’s is the eagle; Gryffindor’s is the lion; and Slytherin is symbolized by the serpent (Rowling, *Stone* 94). These houses serve as “families” within Hogwarts, and students in the same house attend classes together and share dormitories and common rooms. This is relevant because Harry is sorted into Gryffindor, which is symbolized by the lion, a renowned symbol in Christianity for Christ (see Rev. 5:5), and Voldemort is sorted into Slytherin, whose symbol is the serpent. Furthermore, the founder of Slytherin house, Salazar, “wished to be more selective about the students admitted to Hogwarts. He believed that magical learning should be kept within all-magic families. He disliked taking students of Muggle parentage, believing them to be untrustworthy” (Rowling, *Secrets* 115). Slytherin, the prejudiced founder of the school, was rumored to have built a secret chamber and placed a beast within to be used to “purge the school of all who were unworthy to study magic” (Rowling, *Secrets* 115). In the Chamber of Secrets lies an enormous serpent, an ancient Basilisk, or “the king of Serpents” (Rowling, *Secrets* 220), which kills with its glare and venomous fangs. The major plotline in the second book, *The Chamber of Secrets*, reaches its climax as a representative of the red lion, Harry, fights and kills Slytherin’s giant serpent monster with the sword of Gryffindor; this imagery reflects the Biblical prophecy about Christ defeating the serpent, i.e., evil.

Additionally, the Biblical tempter, or the serpent, is cursed by God, and a prophecy is proclaimed: “So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, ... I will put enmity / between you and the woman, / and between your / offspring and hers; / he will crush your head, / and you will strike his heel’” (Gen. 3:14-15). The prophecy refers to the Messiah; later, Christians would recognize this figure as
Jesus Christ. The Messiah, or Christ-figure, in Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia* is Aslan. However, even though the lion is the clearest example of the Messiah figure in *The Chronicles*, he is not the only one. Shasta, one of the protagonists in the third book, *The Horse and His Boy*, is arguably another, less overt, manifestation of the savior figure. The storyline of a prophecy about an infant boy who will save his world, can be seen as a small-scale Messianic plot. Similarly, but on an extensively larger scale, *Harry Potter* begins with and ends with Harry living out and fulfilling a prophecy made about him and Voldemort when Harry was still a child.

### 3. Secondary Worlds

A typical feature of a fantasy fiction is the structure of the world(s) in which the story takes place. Literary critic Maria Nikolajeva states that fantasy can be defined as “a narrative combining the presence of the “primary” and the “secondary” world, that is, our own real world and some other magical or fantastic imagined world” (54). As she explains, it is common to begin a story in an ordinary world, and then have the protagonist(s) be transported to another world where he, she, or they, experience adventures and perform tasks, only to be “in most cases transported back into the real world” (Nikolajeva 54). “Secondary world” is a term created by J.R.R. Tolkien in “On Fairy-Stories” to “describe the kind of location in which fairy tales generally take place [...] the imaginative entry … which … involves the process of enchantment … [T]he means by which the secondary worlds can be linked to the primary world are many and various” (Stableford 364). Both *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles* show this kind of “secondary world,” although in distinctly different ways.

For instance, the protagonists in *The Chronicles* are taken to a completely new world where fantastical things happen and animals can speak: this is perhaps one of the clearest ways of expressing the “secondary world” element of fantasy fiction, as on occasion they cross very physical boundaries, such as the picture frame in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* or the tree gate from *Prince Caspian*. Moreover, Aslan claims that there were, once upon a time, many gateways between worlds: “But it was one of the magical places in that world, one of the chinks or chasms between that world and this. There were many chinks or chasms between worlds in old times, but they have grown
rarer” (Lewis, Caspian 232), indicating that these magical gates between our world and other worlds are transient.

In contrast, Harry Potter’s story happens in “reality,” but there is always an emphasis on “our world” versus “their world,” that is, the Wizarding or magical world versus the Muggle or non-magical world. Harry leaves the normal world, and even though these two worlds inhabit the same earth, he enters another world where magic is allowed, accepted, and expected. Rowling constructs Harry’s story into seven individual journeys within the larger story, as each book follows a similar pattern or structure of “separation-initiation-return” (Dickerson and O’Hara 7). Harry separates from the Muggle (non-wizarding) world, encounters trials and tribulations, and returns back to the Dursleys’ house at the end of the school year. Numerous “gates” from the Muggle world into the Wizarding one are identifiable in the text: Platform 9¾ in Kings Cross is one such threshold; the Leaky Cauldron, a pub with a magical wall which allows wizards to enter the shopping street Diagon Alley, is another gateway; and Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which is hidden to Muggles, as only magical people can see and enter it, is yet another portal.

Furthermore, an additional aspect of “secondary worlds” is the “in-between” worlds present in both stories. For example, Kings Cross Station becomes a place that blurs the lines between reality and the afterlife in The Deathly Hallows. When Harry accepts his destiny and goes to meet Voldemort as the fulfillment of the prophecy, he is “killed” by his nemesis. At once, he is transported to Kings Cross, where Harry has a conversation with Dumbledore, his guide and mentor. Dumbledore has passed away at this point, but he tells Harry, “of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean it is not real?” (Rowling, Halows 579). In Lewis’ The Chronicles, the protagonists of The Magician’s Nephew, Polly and Diggory, are physically transported to a peculiar place Diggory later named “The Wood Between the Worlds” (39). This Wood is not quite a “secondary world” in and of itself: although it is a highly magical place, not much happens there except trees grow and a few guinea pigs eat grass. It is an entryway into other worlds, a place of gateways.

Interestingly, it is possible to relate this topic of the “secondary world” to the Biblical narrative, as one can interpret the Garden of Eden as either a “primary” or “secondary world,” depending on how one chooses to view it. In the story of the Old
Testament, God places Adam and Eve in Eden and tells them “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen. 1:28), but they disobey God and consequently are cast out from their home and must go into the unknown outside world. Even though the boundaries in the Biblical narrative are blurrier than those in The Chronicles or Harry Potter, Adam and Eve do cross a border; a clear distinction is made between Eden and “the outside,” or this world. The outcasts are prohibited from returning to their place of belonging, and the borders are guarded by “the cherubim and a flaming sword” (Gen. 3:24), ensuring that the crossing is everlasting. In spite of this, the New Testament invokes a hope for “a return to Eden,” a return to how the world and life on earth was meant to be and a belief in a homecoming to a renewed world without defects (Comer 241). In Revelation, John depicts his vision of “the new heaven and the new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Rev. 21:1). This can be seen as a manifestation of the “primary” or “secondary” world; conceivably, this is what Lewis sees as the authentic world people truly belong to.

In fact, Lewis pictures it in The Last Battle: by the end of the book, the heroes have crossed from “reality” into “Narnia,” and from there into “the true Narnia.” After he enters “the real Narnia,” Jewell the Unicorn proclaims, “‘This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this’” (Lewis, Battle 213). This expression of belonging is a key point as characters seem to find a greater sense of belonging and security in the magical, or the secondary, world.

By comparison, Harry’s story is a clear example. He is unwelcome and unwanted in the “primary world,” or the Dursley’s household: Harry’s aunt and uncle favor his cousin Dudley and ignore Harry’s birthdays. This is contrasted with the warm reception Harry receives in the “secondary world” where he is unofficially adopted into the Weasley family. In the first few chapters of each book of the Harry Potter stories, there is usually some form of a birthday taking place. At the beginning of The Philosopher’s Stone, it is Dudley’s eleventh birthday: “Aunt Petunia was awake and it was her shrill voice which made the first noise of the day. ‘Up! Get up! Now!’” (Rowling 15). As soon as Harry wakes up in the cupboard under the stairs, which is where he sleeps, he is expected to go into the kitchen and cook breakfast for the other
family members while Dudley comes in and inspects his gifts. Dudley gets thirty-seven presents and loudly complains that he got more last year, which results in his mother Petunia saying he will get two more when they go out (Rowling, *Stone* 17). On the other hand, when it is Harry’s birthday in the second book, the Dursleys “hadn’t even remembered that today happened to be Harry’s twelfth birthday. Of course his hopes hadn’t been high: they’d never given him a proper present, let alone a cake” (Rowling, *Secrets* 4). Then, after Harry teases his cousin Dudley, his Aunt Petunia punishes him by making him clean the house with the threat that he will “not eat again until he’d finish” (Rowling, *Secrets* 7). Furthermore, on his birthday, Harry is to stay in his room and pretend he does not exist because the Dursley family is having a dinner party. These examples show the dismal conditions and abusive circumstance of the “primary world” Harry grows up in.

This treatment of Harry is contrasted with his experience in the “secondary world” of wizards, that is, with the Weasley family: “life at the Burrow [the Weasleys home] was as different as possible from life in Privet Drive … What Harry found most unusual about life at Ron’s, however, wasn’t the talking mirror or the clanking ghoul: it was the fact that everybody there seemed to like him” (Rowling, *Secrets* 35). Even when Harry is not staying with the Weasleys, they still care for him. For example, during Harry’s first Christmas at Hogwarts, he exclaims on Christmas morning, “Will you look at this? I’ve got some presents!” (Rowling, *Stone* 164), as if he did not expect any gifts, which was more than likely the case when he spent Christmas at the Dursley’s house. Molly Weasley, Harry’s best friend’s mother, sends Harry Christmas gifts throughout the story, and they are no different than the gifts she sends her children at Hogwarts. Spending time with the Weasley family is the closest Harry gets to experiencing “ordinary” family dynamics— if a family of nine wizards can be considered ordinary.

4. Absolute Villainy and Unequivocal Heroism?

It is not unusual for villains, particularly in children’s entertainment and fiction, to be starkly contrasted with the hero; the dichotomy between good and evil is often plain and simple (Cronn-Mills and Samens 36). This is perhaps one of the bigger distinctions which separate a mature reader from an immature one; the former realizes that good and
bad can and usually do coexist within the same person and that this makes for more interesting and complex characters, while the latter is content with an archetypical “good” or “evil” character. Whilst both *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles* employ multitudes of characters, Lewis’ characterization is arguably simpler, and most characters can be typed as mainly good or evil. There are several instances where character development takes place, for example, Edmund’s change from a “poisonous little beast” (Lewis, *Wardrobe* 62) to “King Edmund the Just” (201), but most of the characters remain static. Notably, Rowling’s characters are usually complex and have elements of moral ambiguity; their personalities, motives, actions, and goals are not always pure or “good” or “evil.” Harry, for instance, is a good character and not evil, but his choices are tainted with egotistical and self-serving motives. He does many good things, but he also lies, steals, and fights—sometimes for the greater good and sometimes for his own selfish reasons.

Another example is the character development of Ron Weasley’s brother, Percy. He comes across as a stickler for rules and doing the right thing, but as the story goes on, he is influenced by the opposite side and essentially works for Harry’s enemies, but in Percy’s perception, he is still “on the good side.” Later on, Percy realizes his mistakes and returns to his family and to the fight against corruption and oppression: “‘I was a fool! Percy roared … I was an idiot, I was a pompous prat’ … ‘Ministry-loving, family-disowning, power-hungry moron’ said Fred … ‘Yes, I was!’” (Rowling, *Hallows* 487). Even Harry’s arch-nemesis at school, Draco Malfoy, a boy perhaps best described as an unrelenting, entitled, xenophobic bully, is redeemed by the end of the story. These three examples, and most of Rowling’s other characters, are portrayed in a realistic manner and, therefore, they are relatable and human to the reader.

Additionally, the main villains in *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles* are often archetypical: they tend to lack moral depth and dimension, and while both The White Witch and Voldemort have stories about their origins, and Voldemort’s is quite detailed, neither one ever gives the impression of having the capacity to change their mind or evil ways. When they have the chance, they prove to be completely evil without the ability to repent: they are beyond human evil in their villainy and can therefore be seen as embodiment of satanic evil found in the Bible.
Because of Lewis’ theological standing, his antagonists tend to correlate plainly with the figure of Satan. The villain in the first book, The Magician’s Nephew, the White Witch, is described as “a force of evil [that] has already entered [Narnia]; waked and brought hither by this son of Adam” (Lewis 161). Much like in the Bible, it is because of a human that evil is given a place in the world. Another example of how the White Witch functions as a satanic figure is by deceiving and planting doubt in Digory’s mind: “‘If you do not stop and listen to me now, you will miss some knowledge that would have made you happy all your life,’” tempting him to take “the fruit of life” for himself (Lewis, Nephew 191). This is similar to the serpent’s enticement in Genesis, when it tempts Adam and Eve to take “the fruit of knowledge,” which will, according to the serpent, enable them to discern between good and evil for themselves (Gen. 3: 5-6). Just like the serpent is a mysterious figure in Genesis, not much is known about the White Witch’s past, except that she annihilated her own world, Charn, and every living creature in it, in order to keep her sister from taking over the kingdom. Now that she has entered Narnia, its fate is compromised. As a witch, she is a non-human character (this is not the case in Harry Potter, where witches are indeed human), and her malevolent nature is understandable. Voldemort, on the other hand, is a human whose “his soul [is] mutilated beyond the realms of what we might call usual evil” (Rowling, Prince 469), making him more problematic and sinister.

As anyone who has read the Harry Potter series will know, J.K. Rowling can skillfully compose relatable characters, which at times, waver between the heroic and antagonistic: the reader can happily invest in such characters. Because of the wide variety of multilayered, morally dubious people in the Harry Potter series, Voldemort’s character is singled out as different; he never displays this sort of dualistic nature and is not in any way a sympathetic character. Tragic things happened before he was born, like the death of his mother, which might have made him sympathetic, but Voldemort is always set towards domination and the control of others; his inner self or disposition is evil. As Voldemort’s past is explored in The Half-Blood Prince, he is seen as an overly dominating and cruel boy: his nature is already conspicuous in early childhood. Dumbledore explains to Harry how by age eleven, “‘[Voldemort] was already using magic against other people, to frighten, to punish, to control. The little stories of the strangled rabbit and the young boy and girl he lured into a cave were most suggestive
… *I can make them hurt if I want to*” (Rowling, *Prince* 259). As a child, Voldemort showed “obvious instinct for cruelty, secrecy and domination” (259), and Dumbledore uncovers that as a teenager, he has committed multiple murders, including that of his own father and paternal grandparents (Rowling, *Prince* 402). Whether this is due to socio-economic situation and his upbringing, or simply a result of his genetic structure, Voldemort intentionally isolates himself, and there is never any hint of his humanity in the story; even his physical appearance gradually changes and becomes “less human” (Rowling, *Prince* 469). He is psychopathic at best, and at worst, the embodiment of evil. This characterization is unsatisfactory to the mature reader as this stark dichotomy leaves little room for speculation: Voldemort is simply diabolical.

5. Home and Problematic Parental Figures
Family and school are the two-major social structures a child experiences and are therefore usually key topics in children’s fiction, and in both *The Chronicles* and *Harry Potter*, healthy and supportive family (and school) environments are rarely the norm. Nikolajeva comments that “children are dependent on their parents, physically and emotionally, and part of growing up involves liberation from parental protection” (74-75). Removal of parents is common in children’s literature because it initiates “physical, emotional, and spiritual growth in the character” (Nikolajeva 75). This can be a permanent situation, i.e., death, or a temporary one, i.e., the physical or emotional absence of the parents. Whilst parents or parental figures are the most important people in a child’s life, they are hardly ever significant in the child character’s development. Even though such figures are critical to a character’s progression, they are generally negative and dismissive, denying the child’s need for physical and spiritual freedom and preventing his or her independence and growth. Nikolajeva shows how “the use of a parent substitute may make the liberation process less offensive,” referring to how inserting a wicked stepmother is less offensive than a wicked mother (74-75). This is evident in *Harry Potter*, as Harry’s real parents are permanently removed by death, and he is left in the care of very wicked adoptive parents.

However, as he enters the “secondary world” of magic, Harry does experience the influence of positive parental figures. Harry certainly has a harder time living with his terrible adoptive family than most of the characters in *The Chronicles*, but it is
notable that the protagonists from “our world” are all children whose parents typically do not appear in the stories, and the adults who are a part of the plot are mostly negative figures (for example, Uncle Andrew in The Magician’s Nephew or Uncle Miraz in Prince Caspian). Furthermore, absent parents and wicked parental figures are common in both Harry Potter (where even the main antagonist grows up separated from his parents) and The Chronicles and are conceivably central to the development of both stories. This leaves the child character, to a large degree, without adult supervision or guidance; therefore, they must engage and enlarge their agency and become their own heroes or villains.

In both The Chronicles and Harry Potter, healthy and supportive family environments are rarely the norm. In The Horse and His Boy, the protagonist, Shasta, is made to work like a slave by his fisherman “father” who regularly beats him (Lewis 2) and attempts to sell his “son” to a wealthy aristocrat. The stranger who wants to buy the boy claims that the fisherman has “had ten times the worth of his daily bread out of him in labor, as anyone can see” (Lewis, Horse 7), indicating that Shasta is in poor condition. Similarly, Harry’s physical state is indeed poor, as he is described as small and thin for his age, and although Harry’s aunt and uncle never consider selling the boy, they talk about sending him to an orphanage (Rowling, Stone 15). Harry’s Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon Dursley are unbelievably horrid to their orphaned nephew. When the reader meets Harry in the first book, he is made to sleep under the stairs in a cupboard, and later, when he is moved to an actual bedroom, Uncle Vernon paid a man to put bars on Harry’s window, to keep him in his room, and fitted a “cat-flap in the bedroom door, so that small amounts of food could be pushed inside three times a day. They let Harry out to use the bathroom morning and evening. Otherwise, he was locked in his room around the clock” (Rowling, Secrets 17). Harry’s and Shasta’s experiences do enable them to empathize more easily with other unfortunate creatures they meet on their adventures, an important part of growing into and becoming a kind person.

Surprisingly, Harry grows up to be a fairly normal boy, all things considered. His Aunt Marge persistently talks about his parents in a derogatory manner, for example, “It all comes down to blood, as I was saying the other day. Bad blood will out. Now, I’m saying nothing against your family, Petunia … but your sister was a bad egg. They turn up in the best families. Then she ran off with a wastrel and here’s the result
right in front of us” (Rowling, Azkaban 21). This xenophobic attitude resembles that of some in the Wizarding world, where “non-magic blood” is seen as impure and dirty; the Dursleys, however, think the opposite, i.e., that magical blood is “bad blood.” Growing up in this environment is hard as Harry is constantly being singled out as different and abnormal.

This is why Harry feels such a sense of belonging in the “secondary world,” particularly at Hogwarts School: “They reached their familiar, circular dormitory with its five four-poster beds and Harry, looking around, felt he was home at last” (Rowling, Azkaban 71). Few children would feel so at home at their school. One critic points out that “the boarding school of Hogwarts, despite being haunted not only by the mostly benign school ghosts but also by Voldemort, the embodiment of evil, is home in a way that suburban life for him can never be home” (A. Jackson 157). It is one of few places where Harry can be true to his magical self, and therefore, complete.

6. Oppressive Governments and War

Both stories have characters fighting against oppressive governments, resulting, on a number of occasions in civil wars. This is noticeable in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe when Lucy first visits Narnia. The whole country is under siege, and the creatures do not know whom they can trust, and who is a traitor and an agent of the White Witch. Lucy’s friend, Mr. Tumnus, is terrified of the Witch’s rage: “‘we must go as quietly as we can,’ said Mr. Tumnus. ‘The whole wood is full of her spies’” (Lewis, Wardrobe 22). The White Witch is the absolute ruler in Narnia, and anyone who dares defy her is muted; she is a dictator who forcibly shuts down anyone she does not like or who dares to oppose her: “‘there’s not many taken in there [into the witch’s castle] that ever come out again. Statues. All full of statues they say it is – in the courtyard and up the stairs and in the hall. People she’s turned … into stone’” (Lewis, Wardrobe 84). Not only does the Witch turn her “subjects” into stone, but she also threatens brutal violence against her opposers: “‘she’ll have my tail cut off, and my horns sawn off, and my beard plucked out’” (Lewis, Wardrobe 21); her ruthlessness is evident in her order of killing without reliable evidence of betrayal. She orders a wolf agent to “‘take with you the swiftest of your wolves and go at once to the house of the Beavers,’ said the Witch, ‘and
kill whatever you find there’’’ (Lewis, *Wardrobe* 123): there is no such thing as a fair trial under the White Witch’s reign.

Additionally, the storyline of *Prince Caspian* revolves around a ruthless, usurping uncle, King Miraz, and his nephew, Prince Caspian, who is the true king of Narnia fighting for his rightful place. This heirless king was willing to raise his nephew and allow him to inherit the kingdom of Narnia, but when his wife gives birth to a baby boy, everything changes, and Prince Caspian became a target of the crown. Furthermore, King Miraz forcibly silences any mention of “the old Narnia,” or the Narnia that was richly inhabited by talking animals, dryads, centaurs, giants, and other fantastical creatures; freedom of speech is a foreign concept in these parts. It also appears to be illegal to be one of those creatures, as they are usually killed upon discovery. As the four children from “our world” arrive in Narnia, they come across what is supposed to be a drowning of a dwarf by the order of the established ruler, King Miraz. These creatures, who are the original inhabitants of this country, can be seen as a political threat to the monarchy and a danger to the status quo. Trumpkin the Dwarf explains the situation to the newly arrived Pevensies: “I’m a messenger of King Caspian’s.’ ‘Who’s he?’ asked four voices all at once. ‘Caspian the Tenth’ … answered the Dwarf … he is only King of us Old Narnians’ ‘What do you mean by old Narnians, please?’ asked Lucy. ‘Why, that’s us,’ said the Dwarf. ‘We’re a kind of rebellion’” (Lewis, *Caspian* 39). The Dwarf then goes on and tells the story of Prince Caspian and his usurping uncle Miraz. By the time Caspian is a teenager, any mention of the “Old Narnia” is forbidden, and those, like Caspian’s Nurse, who tell stories of the creatures who used to live in Narnia are sent away or thought to have had their heads cut off (Lewis, *Caspian* 48). King Miraz is a dictator who rules his land with a vicious hand.

This political and social atmosphere has several similarities to *Harry Potter*, especially in the last book, where Harry, too, leads a rebellion. As Voldemort gains power and control over the Ministry of Magic, it becomes almost impossible to know whom to trust. Much like the White Witch is a dictator who essentially mutes anyone who dares to oppose her, Voldemort has similar tactics. He generally sends his followers to deal with any opposition, torturing people into insanity or simply killing them. One of the reasons why he goes after Harry as a baby is to put a stop to any potential rival, to quench the opposition before it poses a threat to his hostile takeover.
During Harry’s final years at Hogwarts, Voldemort returns to power as he manages to insert his followers into the Ministry of Magic. For much of the final book of the series, Harry and his friends are hunted by the government, which is, unknowingly to the public, under direct control of Voldemort. Prejudice based on birth and “pure-blood” and “dirty blood” is a strong theme in *Harry Potter*. This parallels racial and xenophobic prejudice in the real world. One of Voldemort’s goals is to “purify” the wizarding race, and therefore, he initiates a governmental regulation and monitoring of “Muggle-born” wizards, of those who come from non-magic families, separating them from the “pure-bloods” and “half-bloods” in society.

The wizards who make a distinction between “pure-blood” and “Muggle-blood” wizards seek to segregate the population based on birth origin, claiming that Muggle-born wizards should not be a part of the wizarding community. Voldemort talks of “pruning” family trees, that his followers must “cut away those parts that threaten the health of the rest” (Rowling, *Hallows* 17), commanding his people to murder any non-pure bloods. Exceptionalism follows in the wake of these wizards, and the belief that “pure-bloods,” that is, those not mixed with “Muggle-blood,” are superior and entitled is a fundamental ideology of Voldemort and his Death Eaters: they want and actively work towards separatism and mass-extermination of “Mud-bloods,” those wizards born to Muggle families. In *The Deathly Hallows*, as the government is infiltrated and seized by Voldemort’s forces, anti-Muggle propaganda and anti-Muggle teachings come to Hogwarts, and a government program is established to regulate Muggle-born people, a scheme which later escalates into imprisoning and torturing Muggle-born wizards.

Again, it is possible to relate this to reality as Voldemort is easily compared with a historical figure like Adolf Hitler; a dictator whose ideology persuaded likeminded people to commit appalling acts. The terror of Voldemort’s regime does not explicitly depict mass extermination, but many are killed. It recalls the Nazi regime in early 20th century Germany, and most notably, the similarities of antisemitism and extermination of Jewish people, and the anti-Muggle attitudes of Voldemort and his followers. As the Nazi party gained political control, their influence over any media became absolute: they controlled radio broadcasting and the film industry and enforced strict editorial laws on publications such as newspapers and periodicals, pushing their propaganda into each media type. Regulation ruled out “any possibility of editorial independence; the
right to express a personal view of the government was entirely denied” to German journalists and other media outlets; there was no need for censorship, as the laws ensured “complete uniformity of the press” (Zeman 45). Elements of this are evident in the latter part of *Harry Potter*, where the media is restricted to printing anti-Muggle and anti-Harry material. If a publishing house refuses, or prints pro-Harry materials, family members are kidnapped and kept in musty cellars (Rowling, *Hallows* 376). An example of anti-Muggle propaganda commissioned by the magical government, the Ministry of Magic is seen in the following newspaper article:

*Recent research undertaken by the Department of Mysteries* [a government department] *reveals that magic can only be passed from person to person when wizards reproduce. Where no proven wizarding ancestry exists, therefore, the so-called Muggle-born is likely to have obtained magical by theft or force. The Ministry is determined to root out such usurpers of magical power, and to this end has issued an invitation to every so-called Muggle-born to present themselves for interview by the newly appointed Muggle-born registration Commission.* (Rowling, *Hallows* 172)

By this point, Voldemort’s people have taken over the Ministry of Magic by assassinating the Minister for Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour, and the government has publicly stated that Muggle-born people obtained their magical powers illegally from “pure-blood” people and must therefore be punished. This initiates a nation-wide alarm, and paranoia and instability sweep the country.

Furthermore, Voldemort’s ministry suggests that Harry Potter may have caused Dumbledore’s death, and thereby, Harry, who would have become a widespread symbol of resistance against Voldemort, is criminalized: “by suggesting that you had a hand in the old hero’s death, Voldemort has not only set a price on your head, but sown doubts and fear amongst many who would have defended you” (Rowling, *Hallows* 172). These are blatant lies, or what can be called “alternative facts,” being published in formerly trustworthy newspapers—something that is currently happening in Western society.

*The Chronicles of Narnia* does not show this in the same way, as Narnia does not have media outlets such as newspapers. However, at certain points, the inhabitants’ freedom is severely restricted. This happens most notably during the White Witch’s reign and in *Prince Caspian*. The people and creatures are forbidden to speak about
Aslan and “the Old Narnia,” and those who dare to do so face dreadful consequences. In *Prince Caspian*, the king, Uncle Miraz, attempts to exterminate the fantastical talking creatures, exhibiting a xenophobic attitude. Incidentally, this can be tied to Rome’s persecution and martyrdom of early Christians.

In the final part of the Narnian series, *The Final Battle*, the ape Shift makes use of certain “alternative facts,” as he proclaims to be the spokesperson for Aslan in order to get all the beasts to do his bidding. Moreover, he claims to be a man, when, in fact, he is an ape: “‘I hear some of you are saying I’m an Ape. Well, I’m not. I’m a man. If I look like an Ape, that’s because I’m so very old: hundreds and hundreds of years old. And it’s because I’m so old that I’m so wise. And it’s because I’m so wise that I’m the only one Aslan is ever going to speak to’” (Lewis, *Battle* 37). This shameless lying enables him to manipulate his fellow beasts for his own selfish interest, and later, it brings about the apocalypse of Narnia.

Despite being largely intended for a young audience, both *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* deal with mature subjects, such as war and corrupt government, in a realistic manner. The portrayal of social turmoil, political uncertainty, the discrimination, and the attempted extermination of a people group all paint a familiar picture, and even though these incidents take place in fantasy realms, living through them and identifying with beloved characters can impact readers and increase their understanding of real events. It may even help children, and other readers, realize their courage, voice, and agency in similarly difficult situations.

### 7. Death and the Search for Immortality

Even though these novels fall under the category of fantasy fiction, their discussion of life and of how harsh and unforgiving it can be reflects conditions in the real world. Both *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* deal with difficult subject matters such as good and evil, mortality, and the notion of the afterlife. These issues have been broached in children’s fiction probably for as long as there has been literature for children. Nikolajeva comments on how death has long prevailed as a subject in children’s literature, stating that before the 20th century, death was common in children’s books, and that “a book could depict the main character’s death as well as that of parents, grandparents, siblings, or close friends” (82). This is due to high child
mortality rates and infant deaths in the past, and how most families shared their homes with multiple generations (Nikolajeva 82). Consequently, seeing relatives pass away was a regular part of a child’s life. Stories from 19th century and earlier are strikingly more severe and brutal than contemporary children’s literature, especially in their discussion of certain themes and subject matters. Only in the last hundred years or so have adults started seeing childhood as “a time of innocence and make-believe, when children ought to be sheltered from harsh realities,” but not that long ago, war, torture, death, disease, and deformities were ordinary subjects in children’s books (Avery 7). Even though Rowling and Lewis’ series were published in the last 70 years, these authors do not hesitate from discussing the harsh realities of life; on the contrary, such subjects are central in their stories.

Moreover, Nikolajeva discusses the way that death as a motif in literature for children has undergone considerable change in the last two hundred years. After the Second World War, economic growth and higher standards of living made death and illness something that most Western children are not familiar with in their everyday lives (Nikolajeva 82). She explains how, in public opinion, death becomes an inappropriate subject in children’s books, and when it eventually returns as a subject in Western literature for children in the ’60s and ’70s, this formerly common motif is now deemed negative and threatening. Her own view, however, is that an awareness of death is necessary for a young person in order to advance in life and reach adulthood (Nikolajeva 82-83). The authors of *The Chronicles* and *Harry Potter* arguably hold the same view, as death, including the possibility of dying at a young age, is prevalent in their children’s fiction. Death does perhaps not drive the plot in *The Chronicles* as much as it does in *Harry Potter*, but it is a main element.

Arguably, the White Witch’s reign can be seen as a kind of death in and of itself. It lasts for about a century, and during that time, nothing grows, develops, or expands; the Witch puts a stop to the continuation of life with her enchanted (and seemingly) everlasting winter and oppressively controls the creatures in Narnia with the threat of turning them into stone. The Witch’s power to petrify any living thing is a symbol of cultural and social stagnation, and ultimately, it signifies the death of the civilization in Narnia. Aslan brings about spring, figuratively and literally, as the Witch is removed.
from power and the seasons begin moving once more, and those who were petrified are, literally, breathed back to life (Lewis, *Wardrobe* 184).

Furthermore, death is tangible in each book of *The Chronicles* in several ways. For example, the children from “reality” come and go from Narnia, hundreds of years pass by, and various friends made on adventures in the magical realm usually pass away during their absences from Narnia. However, death does not only occur during their absence, as on occasion, the children kill other creatures (like Peter killing a talking wolf in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*), and Lucy, Susan, and the reader witness the slaughter of Aslan. In Lewis’ last book about Narnia, *The Last Battle*, the protagonists of the story pass away in a railway accident, but their lives continue in “the real Narnia,” or as Aslan tells them, “‘your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to say in the Shadowlands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning’” (Lewis, *Battle* 228). This quote reflects the Christian notion of resurrection and the perpetual hope that something will continue after physical death.

Correspondingly, death is an essential motif that drives the central plotline in *Harry Potter*. The story would not have sprung into action if the main villain, Voldemort, did not pursue the goal of conquering death. Voldemort claims, “‘I, who have gone further than anybody along the part that leads to immortality. You know my goal—to conquer death’” (Rowling, *Fire* 566). As a young child, Tom Riddle (or Voldemort) lives in a Muggle orphanage and becomes obsessed with his parentage. When he learns about his magical abilities, he concludes that his mother “can’t have been magic, or she wouldn’t have died” (Rowling, *Prince* 257), which is, of course, a misconception: Wizarding folk die, just like Muggles (though they are able to remain on earth as ghosts). When Tom Riddle enters the “secondary world” of magic, and starts his education at Hogwarts, his trajectory is clear; he begins a quest for immortality. Voldemort succeeds, to a degree, as his spirit becomes imperishable, but during the process, he loses his humanity. When he attacks Harry as a baby, his curse, although meant to kill Harry, rebounds, and rips Voldemort from his body. He becomes “less than the meanest ghost” (Rowling, *Goblet* 566), but he does not die. Then, in *The Goblet of Fire*, Voldemort’s body is restored in a bloody, perverted, twisted sort of resurrection, underscoring the character’s wickedness and status as a satanic figure.
In the end, Voldemort’s effort is highly ironic, as despite his quest for immortality, he is killed around the age of 70 (not an unusual age to pass away), and some of his old schoolteachers, such as Professor Slughorn, outlive him (without destroying their soul and humanity). Before Voldemort is defeated, Hermione discovers that Voldemort could return to his humanity, but “‘it would be excruciatingly painful’” because it requires remorse: “‘you’ve got to really feel what you’ve done’” (Rowling, _Hallows_ 89). This is reminiscent of the Biblical notion of repentance, i.e., the act of confessing and atoning for former sins. Harry tells Voldemort, before their final battle, to “‘try for some remorse, Riddle … it’s all you’ve got left … be a man’” (Rowling, _Hallows_ 594), a chance Voldemort refuses, resulting in his demise.

Indeed, a similar attitude towards death is found in _The Chronicles_ and _Harry Potter_. These stories contain tragedy and the deaths of beloved characters, but even as the remaining characters (and the reader) experience great sorrow at the death of loved ones, the authors of these stories do not emphasize the finality and catastrophe of death but hope in what comes after. Professor Albus Dumbledore puts it this way, “after all, to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure” (Rowling, _Stone_ 237). Arguably, Voldemort is unable to do the one thing he most desires, to defeat death, because he cannot come to terms with the inevitability of it. On the other hand, Harry’s parents, Lily and James, Professor Dumbledore, and notably, Harry himself, find triumph in death; not because they evade it, but because they do not see it as finite. They know that giving one’s life for someone or something is the greatest sacrifice, and that death is not the end.

**Conclusion**

All things considered, _Harry Potter_ and _The Chronicles of Narnia_ serve as testimonies of the hopeful nature of fantasy literature; frivolous and outlandish as it may be at times, these stories maintain that even in the darkest and most dismal hours, hope is unrelenting. Both Lewis and Rowling successfully construct their stories for the enjoyment of readers, regardless of age or maturity, enhancing the latter’s perception of reality and enchanted them in the process.

Furthermore, both the Wizarding world and Narnia contain greater meaning than is perceptible at first glance, and in these “secondary worlds,” the authors find new and
creative ways of employing ancient symbols from our “primary world,” and thus old but exciting narrative plots are rejuvenated and passed on to the next generation. In addition to traditional and universal themes, negative aspects of our reality are often reflected in both series; for example, racism and xenophobia are evident and criticized in the work of both writers. Indeed, the stories are tied together by numerous similar motifs such as the archaic notion of good versus evil, the empowering of the child-character, and the presence of prophecies, resulting in interesting comparisons. It is very plausible that both series are born out of a Biblical worldview, or at least, highly influenced by the Biblical narrative. Lewis clearly means Aslan to portray the Christ-figure in The Chronicles, and even though Rowling’s Harry Potter is not necessarily meant to mirror the Christocentric narrative, the similarities are undeniable: the good in people will ultimately prevail and triumph over evil. Additionally, even though difficult issues like death (more often than not, by murder) are essential elements in both series, it is evident that the authors do not see mortality as negative, or indeed, as an absolute end. Rowling and Lewis manage to communicate transcendent truths that can, arguably, only be disclosed through stories such as these.
Works Cited


