

A Child's Truth in a Country of Lies

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Theme: [History](#), [Media Disinformation](#),
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"Man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that great gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born." - Fyodor Dostoyevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor"

It is heartening to know that there are young children still reading books. While a growing majority of parents, who aren't, have been seduced into destroying their children's imaginations by placing them in front of screens, there are still holdouts who realize that if their children are ever to become free-thinking adults, they must grow up expanding their minds in the meditative space of beautiful literature on paper pages. Only there will they find the freedom to dream, to stop and close their eyes as they travel through unknown realms of wonder.

I know young children who are doing that; my grandchildren are. They are doing a most dangerous thing: they are thinking. They are purposely cut-off from the madding crowd that is lost in the disorienting madness of electronic cyberspace.

I have seen some children reading a book that has them thinking about the meaning of freedom, what it means to be an autonomous and courageous individual in a country in which brainwashing has been refined to a fine psychological art, and normality has been proffered as a great achievement by a corporate media serving as stenographers for the power elite. They are learning a profound lesson: that the crowd is untruth and that to be a person one must of necessity stand out.

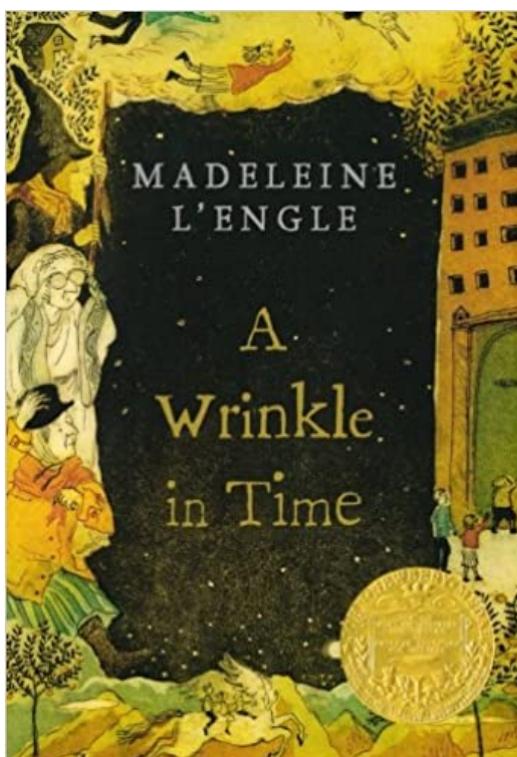
No, they are not reading Kierkegaard, Orwell, or Dostoevsky. They are reading a writer who sounds the same themes but speaks the language of 9-12 year olds, a supremely intelligent writer of beautiful prose who never condescends to write down to them. They are reading Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*.

"You should read it, Papa," my daughter said to me decades ago when she had read it. "You would really like it."

Valuing her judgment and knowing she was asking me to share an experience she felt important to us both, I did just that. And I can gladly report that it is a book of profound importance, a beautiful and exciting "children's" book for children of all ages. I found in reading and rereading it that I better understood the pressures to conform, to give up the struggle for an essential self, that my twelve-year-old daughter and other young people were subjected to. Those pressures, aided and abetted by today's nefarious high-tech social media and their promoters, have increased a hundred-fold. It is supremely ironic that the pressures to conform that L'Engle wrote about in 1962, when the book was published, have become so much more intense because those who became adults in the following years became such conformists themselves by embracing all the high-tech gadgetry they have

subsequently placed in their children's vulnerable hands. Books may help one become a Self, but freedom's just another word for most people of any era, who far prefer being part of the crowd and losing themselves in it.

From L'Engle's book I came to see anew the meaning of love and respect for people - their sacred, inviolable dignity - that means nothing to tyrants of all sorts who manipulate and abuse people to satisfy their machinations. Rather than just being obvious and crude, today these tyrants are part and parcel of a triumphant therapeutic, celebrity culture that advises: "Just relax and don't fight and it will be much easier for you. Don't stress." In other words, shrink to fit. But their guile and bad faith is so sophisticated that their conformism is advertised as freedom and self-affirmation. "Don't shrink to fit." "Be yourself." "Be Free." Every school child in the country is urged to become "a critical thinker," as they are molded to the rule of group think that dominates the nation's schools. When all have achieved the pedagogues' goal of "critical thinking," there will be no independent thinkers among them.



Since 1962, *A Wrinkle in Time* has sold over 14 million copies. In its essence it is the story of Meg Murray, a young teenager who feels dumb and ugly and very different from her schoolmates, and who, as fate decrees, must set out on a long journey in search of her true self. "I hate being an oddball," she says, "I try to pretend, but it isn't any help."

Her "problem" is that she is too straightforward and can't, unlike so many of those around her, pretend to be what she isn't, a phony actor. She values honesty over pretense, but finds this is not the way of the so-called normal world, where pretense and living lies prevail. Luckily for her, however, she has a highly precocious and independent five-year-old brother, Charles Wallace, who loves and understands her better than she does herself, and whose support is instrumental in her finally coming to accept and celebrate her own uniqueness and how it is tied to the search for truth in all things.

As the story begins, Meg is confused and hurt because someone or something has caused her father, to whom she is extremely close, to disappear. She misses and yearns for him,

but no one, including her mother, can or will tell her anything about his mysterious disappearance. Authority figures, such as the school principal, urge her to give him up for dead, something she adamantly refuses to do.

So with the help of Charles Wallace with his uncanny powers, they meet three wonderful and mysterious figures – Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which. This trinity helps them travel through space and time to the planet Camazotz where their father, a scientist, is held captive by the malign force IT, a pulsing brain that has brainwashed all the inhabitants into being identical automatons with no wills of their own. On Camazotz everyone is comatose; it is a place where everyone has given in, where everyone is alike and no differences are allowed. The brainwasher, IT, the ultimate tyrant, has convinced people to hand over their freedom and wills for a painless existence. It tells the children:

For you, as well as for all the rest of all the happy, useful people on this planet,

I, in my own strength, am willing to assume all the pain, all the responsibility,

all the burdens of thought and decision.

Although Charles Wallace, together with the planet's entire population, succumbs to IT, who "sometimes calls itself the Happiest Sadist," Meg never does. She learns to say NO, to refuse IT, who is, as her father tells her, "completely unused to being refused." She sees through IT's lies. Mrs. Who's advice to her jumps off the page:

Vitam impendere vero (to stake one's life for the truth). That is what we must do.

That is what your father is doing.

She finds that what she considers her faults – her inability to pretend, her anger, her stubbornness – serve her in good stead; rather than being taken in by IT's lies, she sees through IT and discovers the truth about herself and society.

In the end Meg discovers that she possesses great inner strength. Not only does she refuse to be manipulated, but she discovers that her anger and love and care for the truth are what she must rely on; that she must take responsibility for her own life; and that if she has courage, all things are possible.

Only a comatose adult could miss how apposite this book is to the group thinking that dominates our society today, the torrent of lies spewing forth from the pressitude media, and to the problems plaguing young people, who are engulfed by a sea of electronic garbage that is destroying their ability to think and concentrate.

"To stake one's life for the truth" has never been a popular pursuit. Truth has always been given lip service as lies have flown out of mouths apace. Today the United States has become a society of endless propaganda, and unless many Meg Murrays come along, the future is dark indeed.

Parents need to wean themselves and their children off their addiction to the electronic drugs that have destroyed their ability to think or concentrate long enough to understand that IT (Information Technology?) controls them. If not, I'm afraid the game is up. If you wait to introduce your children to the Oprah Winfrey/Disney movie version of *A Wrinkle in Time*

that is due out next spring, you will have allowed them to be swallowed by the mindless drivel of the entertainment complex that reduces everyone and everything to one-dimensionality and political correctness masquerading as freedom.

Introduce them to the book now before it is too late.

In his great essay "The Storyteller," Walter Benjamin wrote:

Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience. A rustling in the leaves drives him away. His nesting places – the activities that are intimately associated with boredom – are already extinct in the cities and are declining in the country as well. With this, the gift for listening is lost and the community of listeners disappears.

We need boredom today more than ever. Gift your children with this most creative of experiences by eliminating the electronic noise that is turning them into Camazotzians. It might lead them into a book, a place where freedom waits to be hatched, and they may take flight into a life devoted to seeking and telling truth in a country of lies.

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