

## Elements of Fantasy - Leanne Adams 7ENG7- 818 Words

The fantasy genre is made up of unrealistic, magical and otherworldly conventions which force you to forget about the laws of reality. 'A Wrinkle in Time' by Madeleine L'Engle (1962), 'Sabriel' by Garth Nix, 'The Hobbit' by J.R.R Tolkien (1937), and 'The Northern Lights' by Philip Pullman (1995) all display conventions of fantasy. Their unbelievable settings, unworldly characters, journey-based plots and magical themes all prove that they are texts of the fantasy genre.

The book 'A Wrinkle in Time' is set across a multitude of worlds and planets including earth. L'Engle's resplendent creative worlds contain plants, landforms and creatures of a variety of supernatural forms. On the planet Uriel, the mountains are unnaturally huge, the views are breathtaking, and everything is alive and moving. The plants have fantastical life-saving qualities, which are shown through the quote, "hold your flowers to your face and breathe through them... they will give you enough oxygen". L'Engle has personified the flowers into living things who are capable of giving oxygen to other creatures. This poses the idea that the flowers can respond to humans; supplying oxygen and letting the humans breathe through them. On Earth, flowers cannot do this, which informs the reader that these flowers are magical, and the setting is in a fantasy land. By using the personified plants that create an unnatural circumstance that could never happen on Earth, 'A Wrinkle in Time', can be clearly proven to be an example of fantasy text.

'Sabriel' utilises fantasy conventions through its adventurous plot based upon a quest to save all of humanity. It follows the story of a young girl named Sabriel destined to be at constant war with creatures returned from the dead. Throughout the story Sabriel frequently crosses the border between life and death, bridging the gap between her medieval world and the river that leads to no return. This is demonstrated through the quote, "Only a moment's hesitation before she let herself slip over the border into Death". Garth Nix uses euphemism in this quote to soften the extremity of this situation, by stating that Sabriel simply crosses a boarder into death like ordinary people would into another country. Death is simply another world into which she can visit and save others from. She can travel to this place at her own will and does so on a regular basis. Journeying to unrealistic worlds and passing in and out of death are impossible on Earth and are examples of fantasy plot, proving that Sabriel is a text of fantasy genre.

In 'The Hobbit' Tolkien has involved magical characters such as dwarves, dragons, hobbits and elves that all meet the requirements of fantasy characters. One prominent example in the story is Gandalf, who is a mysterious wizard that comes and goes, showing up in times of need then disappearing before anyone can thank him. Gandalf carries a staff and is esteemed for his magic and wisdom. An example of this is when Gandalf tells his friend "I was not grabbed. I killed a goblin or two with a flash-and slipped inside the crack before it closed". Tolkien uses understatement to subtly extend the power of Gandalf. This quote tells us that Gandalf killed numerous

goblins with a simple flash of light, something which is not possible on Earth. Yet when he is recollecting the fight, he speaks casually and modestly, as though this kind of thing happens every day. Because of Tolkien's obvious understatement when describing Gandalf's powers, this text is an example of fantasy.

Throughout 'The Northern Lights' conventions of fantasy become obvious, particularly in its themes of friendship and human potential. Lyra and Roger are close friends who spend their days creating trouble. When Roger is kidnapped by the 'Gobblers', Lyra stubbornly risks her life to save him. Lyra persistently tells everyone who would listen, "And before that, even, I meant to rescue my friend Roger". Pullman utilises high modality in this quote to display the strength of Lyra and Roger's friendship. Ever since Roger was captured, Lyra has always meant to go and find him. Lyra never gives up on her friend, never assumes that he's dead, not until she sees him murdered in front of her eyes. Even then, she continues her mission to avenge him. Her human potential is revealed as she shows strength, bravery and intelligence far beyond her years. Friendship and human potential are both fantasy themes, and because they are apparent in 'The Northern Lights', it is an example of fantasy text.

A Wrinkle in Time, Sabriel, The Hobbit and The Northern Lights, are all excellent examples of fantasy texts. The authors have used a variety of language devices, visual imagery and fantasy conventions to expand the reader's imagination and transport them to places where the laws of reality are ignored. Through their use of settings, plots, characters and themes, all four novels are without doubt examples of fantasy text.