Fantastical Geographies of Displacement in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Northern Lights*

Walid M. Rihane
Lebanese International University | Universitat Rovira i Virgili
Beirut, Lebanon
walid.rihane@liu.edu.lb

Dr. Andrea Roxana Bellot
Universitat Rovira i Virgili
Tarragona, Catalunya, Spain
andrearoxana.bellot@urv.cat

Abstract

This article investigates how children's fantasy fiction functions as a medium for investigating themes of migration, exile, and diaspora in the modern globalized world. This study compares how C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* employ fantastical geographies that metaphorically represent experiences of displacement and identity transformation. Through the use of a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that draws from postcolonial theory, cultural identity studies, and spatial theory, this research focuses on concepts such as imaginative geography, the unhomely, cultural hybridity, chronotopes, heterotopias, and global cultures to uncover how the protagonists' journeys through alternate worlds reflect patterns of cultural dislocation and renegotiation of self. This research's findings suggest that while Lewis reshapes the trauma of wartime evacuation into a restorative narrative of homecoming and belonging, Pullman presents a more radical and ongoing experience of exile. Both texts emphasize the agency of child protagonists and their capacity to build new communities across cultural lines, yet they diverge in their narrative resolutions and ideological foundations. Lewis sustains a conservative vision of return while Pullman endorses continual displacement as a trajectory to ethical awakening. The article concludes that the genre of children's fantasy fiction not only reflects but also reimagines the emotional and sociopolitical layers of migration in a way that resonates with young readers. Both works provide frameworks through which contemporary issues of diaspora, cultural hybridity, and identity can be safely explored. Additionally, both works hold pedagogical and educational value for fostering empathy and intercultural understanding in educational contexts. This study affirms the relevance of fantasy literature in addressing global concerns and highlights its role in guiding readers' understanding of displacement and belonging in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords

Children's literature; fantasy; migration; exile; diaspora; postcolonial theory; imaginative geography; spatial theory; identity; intercultural education

Introduction

The genre of children's fantasy literature does more than entertain. In fact, as a genre, fantasy mirrors real-world experiences of displacement. In a globalized world, themes of migration, exile, and diaspora have found their way into children's literature, and specifically into fantasy novels. Through magical portals and parallel worlds, fantasy narratives provide a creative subject for exploring what it means to leave home, straddle cultures, and forge identity amidst change. To show how fantastical settings and spatial transitions metaphorically represent displacement, cultural fragmentation, and identity negotiation, this article examines two canonical children's fantasy novels, C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) and Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* (1995) as both works feature young protagonists who traverse boundaries between worlds to reflect experiences of exile and diaspora in a postcolonial, intercultural context.

The analysis of both works focuses on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that draws on postcolonial studies, human geography, and cultural theory. To examine how these fantasy novels construct "other" spaces and hybrid identities, this article will utilize Edward Said's concept of *imaginative geography* and reflections on exile, Homi Bhabha's concept of the *unhomely* (the uncanny "un-home" feeling), and Stuart Hall's theories on cultural identity and diaspora. In addition, this article refers to Henry Lefebvre's idea of social space, Mikhail Bakhtin's *chronotope,* Michel Foucault's *heterotopia* (spaces of otherness), Sara Ahmed's orientation/disorientation, and Arjun Appadurai's perspective on global cultural flows. Through the synthesis of these theorist, the article illustrates that Lewis and Pullman leverage fantasy conventions, such as magical portals, alternate worlds, and imaginative geographies, to contend socio-political realities of displacement and belonging.

This inquiry connects literary analysis with contemporary realities of migration. In the 21st century, many people, including children, are fleeing wars, persecution, and economic hardships, leading to new diasporic identities. In this sense, fantasy literature, away from escapism, can serve as a mean for young readers to process such complex issues at a safe imaginative remove. As Hope (2017) has noted, fiction provides a "conduit" for refugee and immigrant experiences through helping readers empathize with those who feel uprooted or "out of place." Through Narnia's enchanted winter-bound land and Pullman's multiple worlds, children readers can explore what it means to be a stranger in a strange land, to negotiate cultural difference, and to seek home in unfamiliar places. Thus, this article argues that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Northern Lights* construct fantastical geographies of displacement that resonate with contemporary postcolonial and diasporic experiences. Both fantasy novels depict the child protagonist as an exile or migrant figure who find themselves obliged to negotiate identity across borders. By comparing these works, we see how children's fantasy literature imaginatively deflects real issues of displacement, positioning literature as a space for exploring trauma and hope of global diaspora.

Research Aim

This study aims to investigate how children's fantasy literature explores and reimagines the experiences of migration, exile, and diaspora in a globalized, postcolonial context. By analyzing two seminal texts—C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) and Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* (1995)—this article examines how fantasy narratives symbolically represent displacement, cultural hybridity, and the renegotiation of identity across borders.

This study draws on spatial theory to frame the geographies within each narrative. For example, Lefebvre's notion of the social production of space informs the analysis of Narnia as a space shaped by ideological restoration, while Foucault's heterotopia and Bakhtin's chronotope highlight the complex, layered spatiality in Pullman's Oxford and beyond. These frameworks are used to understand how both texts construct movement through space as both symbolic and materially grounded in power, identity, and exile.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Fantasy literature employs metaphor and allegory to engage with real social concerns. Conkan (2016) notes that portal fantasies (stories of crossing from a primary world into a secondary one)

tend to encode experiences of displacement and cultural encounter. In such narratives, a character's journey through a portal becomes "symbolic migration" from a familiar real world into an unknown one, enabling exploration of otherness and reconstruction of identity (Conkan, 2016). In this sense, these fantastical migrations relocate real-world conflicts into imaginative settings, or what Edward Said (1978) would call an *imaginative geography* that dramatizes the distance between "home" and "away."

Edward Said's and Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theories can help understand how the fantasy settings of these novels function. First, Said observes that narratives often intensify the self/Other binary by portraying distant lands as radically different, which is evident when the Pevensie children or Lyra step into worlds that sharply contrast with their own. Also, Bhabha's concept of the *unhomely* (1992) captures the "uncanny" feeling when private homes open onto the wider world—mirrored by a wardrobe leading to a foreign land or a familiar college being infiltrated by sinister forces. In both novels, the ordinary domestic sphere becomes "unhomely" once it is connected to a much larger conflict-ridden space that reflects the psychological dislocation of exile.

Stuart Hall's concept of "cultural identity" as fluid and in process (1990) is crucial for understanding the protagonist development. In both works, the children undergo identity metamorphosis in their new environments. In fact, Hall argues that diaspora identities are formed through transformation and "rupture" rather than being fixed essences. Hence, the Pevensies become not just English evacuees but also royals of Narnia, blending two identities. Lyra, however, adapts from an Oxford girl to a member of a nomadic resistance community. Therefore, their experiences reshape their senses of self in these other worlds, reflecting clear examples of Hall's concept that identity is always negotiated in new contexts and settings.

In addition, Spatial theory and narrative theory deepen this article's framework. Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is a social production that is saturated with ideology. The world of Narnia under the White Witch's rule (a frozen, unchanging landscape) and the regions under the Magisterium's authority (strict, secretive facilities, such as Bolvangar) are then spaces that reflect oppressive and authoritarian power structure. In contrast, as the children's influence grows, these spaces change, suggesting the possibility of reclaiming or transforming space. In narrative theory, Michel Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* (1986) describes "other" places that exist outside space while representing it in inverted ways. From this perspective, the magical worlds in both novels are heterotopic: hidden zones where the usual rules are suspended and deeper truths about the primary world's values are laid bare. Similarly, Mikhail Bkahtin's concept of the *chronotope* (1981) helps examining the portal and quest motifs in these fantasies as *chronotopes of the threshold* —liminal time-spaces where ordinary time and social order are upended (for example, the Pevensies spend years in Narnia while no time passes in England) and characters undergo fundamental transformations.

Finally, Sara Ahmed's and Arjun Appadurai's insights seem to link these fantastic journeys to real-world movement. First, Ahmed (2006) argues that displacement leads to disorientation; however, "being lost" can become familiar as one adapts. For example, both Lucy and Lyra gradually find their footing in new worlds and learn to feel at home again through adapting to new routines in guides. In addition to Ahmed, Appadurai's (1996) concept of *ethnospaces* that focuses

on shifting landscapes of people on the move also resonates: the Pevensies start as evacuees and Lyra ends up traversing into entirely new worlds. Both novels reflect a deterritorialized imagination of culture and identity that are consistent with global diaspora experiences (Appadurai, 1996). Also, it can be argued that these insights align with broader analyses of migrant narratives in children's literature (Naidoo & Dahlen, 2016; Savsar, 2018). Hence, collectively, these theoretical perspectives reveal that Lewis' and Pullman's fantasy novels grapple with the realities of displacement and exile instead of only functioning as simple escapism.

The spatiotemporal journeys of the protagonists reflect differing narrative chronotopes that shape their experiences of displacement and belonging. Figure 1 visualizes the key narrative stages of the Pevensie children and Lyra Belacqua, illustrating how each protagonist's movement across space and time frames the respective novel's structure of exile and transformation.

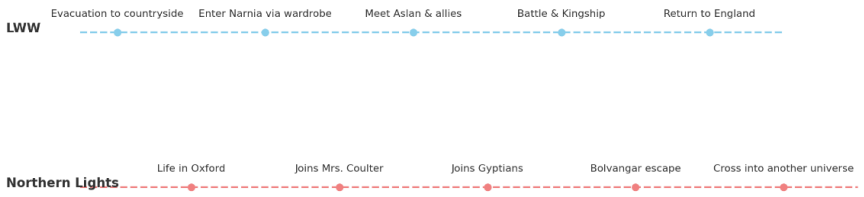

Figure 1
Chronotopic progression of the protagonists in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and Northern Lights

Fantastical Spaces and Symbolic Displacement in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (LWW) is not just a Christian allegory and a classic battle between good and evil. In fact, it also a story of displacement and homecoming that is shaped by the experiences of children living through World War II. The novel opens with the Pevensie children (Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy) being evacuated from London to the countryside to escape the Blitz. This actual historical escape of children was itself a major dislocation, an internal diaspora uprooting young people from their homes. Therefore, Lewis taps into this collective experience of displacement by opening his fantasy novel with children already "out of place" in a stranger's peaceful rural mansion, away from the war and the city. According to Norris (2012), *LWW* provides a means to symbolically process the trauma of war and displacement. The magical twist comes only when Lucy discovers that a simple wardrobe in this rural house is a portal to another world. Thus, in addition to the first case of displacement, the narrative introduces another layer of displacement on top of the first—transporting the children not just from London to unfamiliar English terrain, but from our world entirely into the magical world of *Narnia*. The wardrobe then becomes a literal threshold between worlds, a device that transforms the war trauma of separation into a grand fantastical adventure.

The experience of entering Narnia carries rich symbolic connotation. When Lucy enters the wardrobe and moves through the coats and feels snow under her feet, a piece of the familiar home environment yields to an alien landscape. This vividly illustrates Bhabha's *unhomely* moment: an old cosy domestic wardrobe turns into the passage into a vast, unfamiliar world. The Pevensie children's first steps into Narnia seem to be similar to the experience of refugees or migrants crossing a border into foreign territory; they pass through a liminal zone and find themselves in a new environment where ordinary rules that they were used to do not apply and where they themselves are outsiders. In Narnia, under the rule of the White Witch's magic, it is "always winter and never Christmas." This everlasting winter can then be interpreted as a landscape of exile and suppression. It feels as if the land's true life of spring and renewal has been halted, just as the Narnian's freedom and cultural vitality are frozen by the White Witch's oppressive rule.

Immediately, the Pevensie children's identity is marked as *other* in Narnia. For Narnians. They are labeled "Sons of Adam" and "Daughters of Eve" who come from another world. Initially, this status puts them in danger as the Witch has ordered for the arrest of any human. Nevertheless, this also positions them as figures of prophecy destined to end the Witch's authoritarian reign. By coincidence, the Pevensie children become accidental heroes in exile. They arrive as strangers, yet they find that Narnia has been *awaiting* their arrival to restore justice. Here, this situation presents a noteworthy paradox. On one hand, the Pevensie siblings are foreigners to this magical world. On another hand, the fate of Narnia becomes tied to them and their existence. Hence, this scenario carries problematic colonial layers. Effectively, British children assume leadership over a magical land of talking animals and mythic creatures, a trope that can be analyzed as a "white savior" fantasy (Skeva, 2023; Cecire, 2019). However, within the narrative, Lewis frames it as the fulfillment of an ancient local prophecy which legitimates the children's integration into Narnia's fate.

While in Narnia, the Pevensies experience moments that can be symbolically parallel to those of diasporic or exiled individuals who are integrating into a host culture. First, they must learn the "host" land's customs and history. For instance, Lucy befriends a faun and hears of the Witch's secret police. Also, the siblings dine with talking beavers and gradually believe in the true king whom they have never heard of in England, Aslan. More interestingly, as they grow into their roles as monarchs, the adapt linguistically and behaviorally as the narration depicts them speaking in a more archaic and courtly register, as if they have become native Narnians. Their transformation progresses that as adults in Narnia, they nearly forget their English origin as Narnia becomes their "home." This is depicted while hunting the magical stag where the grown Pevensies rediscover the lamp-post in the woods and feel as a strange familiarity, "as if it was a dream" they once had without remembering why it seems important to them (Lewis, 1950). Here, this moment shows how fully one can assimilate into a new world: their life during war in England has almost faded from their minds.

During the peak of their integration as mature rulers in Narnia, the siblings almost forget life in England. When they return to England through the wardrobe, they become children again in Professor Kirke's house, with not time having passed in our real world. However, the come back irrevocably changed by their long stay in Narnia. These years of experience that is compressed

into a short instant back home captures the diasporic reality that life in exile permanently reshapes a person's identity, even if the homeland remains unchanged (Bromley, 2016).

In this sense, it can be argued that *LWW* uses its fantastical geography to reimagine the experience of displacement as a hero's journey. Through the enchanted landscape of Narnia that is entered through a wardrobe portal, Lewis defamiliarizes the real trauma of evacuation and exile as he recasts it as a mythic adventure which affirms growth and belonging. The children's experience suggests that dislocation, even if frightening, can lead to unexpected community and purpose as they form friendships across species and cultures, help liberate an oppressive regime, and gain maturity and confidence along the way. Although the novel offers a return to the original homeland in the end, the children return with a broadened perspective and an inner strength forged abroad; they carry a part of Narnia home with them. Additionally, when the professor reassures that they will return to Narnia someday shows that their identity now straddles two worlds. Therefore, while *LWW* ends with a comforting return, it also allegorically shows that having once been exiles and kings in a far-off land, the children are no longer the same as the moment they left. It can be argued then that exile has changed them and that Lewis communicates to his young readers that such change can be positive and heroic.

Embodied Geography and Resistance in *Northern Lights*

A more radical and contemporary exploration of exile and displacement in an authoritarian universe is found in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* (1995). Where Lewis' narrative begins with children being displaced by war into a rural and then a magical refuge, Pullman's novel begins in a familiar setting (an alternate Oxford) and sets its heroine, Lyra, into progressively stranger territories, leaving her original world behind entirely. In doing so, *Northern Lights* aligns the fantasy quest with a political and existential journey of self-discovery that resonates the late-20th century concerns about autonomy, oppression, and cultural hybridity.

Lyra Belacqua grows up an orphan in the secluded environment of Jordan College, Oxford where human souls manifest externally as animal companions called "dæmons." At the beginning of the story, Lyra's life is defined by a certain privileged insularity as she runs relatively wild among a group of scholars and servants not aware of the wider conflicts in her world. The twist in the novel is presented when her uncle Asriel reveals a mysterious substance called Dust and the disappearance of her close friend Roger who is abducted by "Gobblers." This abduction shatters Lyra's sheltered existence as children start to become snatched from their families, echoing historical atrocities, from wartime evacuations to colonial abductions of indigenous youth. Her uncle's revelations and Roger's abduction become the two instances that push Lyra onto the path of exile as she decides to leave Oxford in the company of the glamorous Mrs. Coutler, only to discover betrayal and danger. When Lyra discovers that Mrs. Coulter is the leader of the Gobblers, she is forced to flee. In one night, Lyra transforms from a privileged and sheltered Oxford girl into a fugitive with no home to return to, marking the true beginning of her displacement.

After she flees, Lyra soon finds refuge of a sort among nomadic people in her world, the "gyptians," whose name itself reflects "Egyptian," a historical term for Gypsies. By joining the gyptians on their boat while they are on a quest to rescue the stolen children, Lyra allies with a diaspora-like community. She leaves the comfort and safety of land-based Jordan College for life

on the water, representing a vital shift. Her identity then broadens as she is adopted, socially and biologically, into a marginalized nomadic group. Through this immersion, her perspective changes as she hears the gyptians' stories, participates in their customs, and earns their trust. From a postcolonial perspective, Lyra then becomes a cultural hybrid of an Oxford girl and an honorary gyptian. Pullman's portrayal is therefore a positive one, for the gyptians are compassionate and communal, providing Lyra with a sense of family and purpose she lacked. Therefore, this reflects a modern valorization of *hybridity* and *solidarity among the displaced*.

The narrative emphasizes the *embodied* nature of this journey, especially as the gyptians travel north toward the Arctic to find the Gobblers. Unlike the instantaneous travel to Narnia, Lyra's displacement is experienced through hard travel that features sailing through stormy seas, trekking over snow and ice, and suffering cold and hunger. Lyra's world is not separated from her body's reality, and she and her dæmon Pantalaimon shiver, stumble, and adapt to harsh landscape. This physical sensation coincides with Sara Ahmed's point that migration is felt on the body in hostile new environments. Lyra's experience is then a bodily one as she has to learn to ride on the back of an armored bear or consult her moral compass (the alethiometer) for guidance. Also, the landscape itself, through the wide tundras and the eerie Northern Lights in the sky, becomes a characters that shapes her resolve. Unlike the idyllic interlude at the Professor's house in *LWW*, *Northern Lights* presents the journey as difficult and perilous at ever step, aligning the fantasy quest more closely with real refugee journeys where each mile is earned through bodily endurance.

When she arrives at the Magisterium's remote research station, Bolvangar, Lyra discovered how the Gobblers are surgically severing abducted children from their dæmons to preven the onset of Dust that they associate with original sin. Here, Pullman introduces an imaginative rendition of an extremely cruel cultural and spiritual displacement that involves cutting a person off from their soul and identity "for their own good." The resonance with historical episodes (such as residential schools or other forced separations of children) is unmistakable. Like a boarding school, Bolvangar is clean and efficient, but it conceals unspeakable cruelty. Lyra's reaction then becomes a one of resistance as she communicates secretly with the other imprisoned children to lead their escape plan through the snow. With the help from her allies (gyptians, witches, and the armored bear Iorek), she frees the children and destroys the facility. However, instead of returning to Jordan College after this ordeal, Lyra decides to follow her uncle who later turns out to be her father, Lord Asriel, through the portal he opens to a new universe. By stepping into the unknown rather than going home, Lyra signals that her exile and quest are not ending. Pullman thus eschews a tidy homecoming; displacement becomes a continuing journey toward knowledge and freedom in *Northern Lights*.

Through his novel, Pullman offers a vision of displacement that is dynamic and unbounded. Unlike the circular structure of *LWW* (home-exile-home), Lyra's story is an open trajectory as her crossing leads to further horizons. When the novel ends and she and Pantalaimon walk into the sky toward another world, the narrative here underscores a distinctive approach that Pullman offers. Exile is not something to "get over" but rather a state in which a person might find meaning and even liberation. There is no traditional happy reunion; instead, Lyra's closest friend dies, her parents are beyond reach, and her home is left behind. However, hope is found through her determination as she decides to "be awake" to prevent future harm. This complex ending suggests a postmodern and postcolonial sensibility that eschews near closure. In Pullman's hands, exile is as much about

choosing a new path that defies the authority of the world and loss. Pullman's reimagining of the Eden myth in Lyra's journey is discussed by Lenz (2005) who argues that the "fortunate fall" is not a tragedy but a necessary step toward wisdom and freedom. In this sense, *Northern Lights* suggests that only by leaving one's original harsh world can a person grow. Therefore, the novel portrays a more radical exile narrative where the exile does not seek return, but instead seeks to transform and the world a person encounters.

Comparative Discussion

While both *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Northern Lights* depict child protagonists experiencing forms of exile, they diverge in structure, tone, and thematic resolution. Table 1 outlines key thematic contrasts between the two texts, particularly in how they portray exile, return, power, spatial metaphors, and identity formation.

Table 2
Thematic Comparison of Migration and Exile across the Two Novels

Element	*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*	*Northern Lights*
Type of Exile	Wartime evacuation	Spiritual and institutional exile
Return	Yes, cyclical return to home	No — displacement continues
Power Structure	Restoration of rightful rule	Rebellion against institutional oppression
Spatial Imagery	Winter as symbolic stasis	Arctic as hostile frontier
Identity Shift	English children become Narnian monarchs	Oxford girl becomes culturally hybrid rebel

When comparing *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Northern Lights*, it can be argued that these two fantasy novels that are written half a century apart engage with migration and exile, yet they do so in markedly different ways. Each work uses the portal or journey to thrust children into unknown realms; however, the tone and implications of these adventures reflect their distinct historical contexts and authorial intentions.

The first key difference lies in the mechanism and immediacy of displacement in each novel. In Lewis' *LWW*, displacement is abrupt and magical where the Pevensies are instantaneously transported into a fully formed another world through a single step in a wardrobe. The children have virtually no transition period where one moment they are playing hide-and-seek, and the next they are in a snowy magical forest under an alien sky. This suddenness minimizes the physical hardships of travel as they are not forced to traverse any distance to arrive at Narnia while maximizing the culture shock and *spatial rupture*. However, in Pullman's *Northern Lights*, displacement is gradual and arduous. Lyra does not travel instantaneously. In fact, she travels in stages, and each stage of her travel immerses her in new challenges and hardships. The reader then experiences the *process* of exile: the fatigue, the adaptation, and the long unfamiliar vistas. This

makes her journey more realistic and hard-earned than the Pevensies. Metaphorically, Lewis' portal suggests a *singular* traumatic break of suddenly becoming a refugee while Pullman's odyssey suggests a *continuous* process of migration and adaptation.

Despite the aforementioned differences, both *LWW* and *Northern Lights* explore *the child's agency* in navigating displacement. This can be seen in Lucy and Lyra who are both proactive and resilient protagonists. Lucy is the first among her siblings to discover the wardrobe and insists on the truth of Narnia even when disbelieved. She forms alliances with several mythical characters, such as Mr. Tumnus and the Beavers, and plays a crucial role in Edmund's redemption. Similarly, Lyra leads her story at every turn by tricking the bear kind to help Iorek by using the alethiometer to guide decisions and by leading the children's escape from Bolvangar. Neither story presents the child simply as a victim of exile. Instead, the state of being uprooted allows these characters to exhibit courage, ingenuity, and leadership. Therefore, this suggests that children's fantasy tends to empower young protagonists even amid harsh scenarios or war and oppressive regimes where children are often seen helpless. Both works offer a hopeful message that traverse fiction: even those who experience displacement can also be active agents of change instead of sufferers of fate.

However, another key difference between both novels lies in how they treat *home and return*. *LWW* ends with a restoration of the initial status quo where Pevensies return to the professor's house as children, and the door to Narnia is closed, signaling a comforting and euphoric return like waking up from a dream. This reflects a mid-20th-century worldview that after the disruptions of war, a person could or should return to normalcy as many evacuee children did return back home after WWII. On the other hand, *Northern Lights* ends with a breach rather than a closure where Lyra steps into a more uncertain exile instead of returning back to her childhood in Oxford. These contrasting returns can be connected to each author's philosophies. Lewis, who wrote in the aftermath of WWII and deeply Christian, embeds in his novel faith in providence and cyclical renewal while Pullman, who is a humanist and skeptic, reflects a world where endings are chaotic and answers and not always given. His protagonist moves into uncharted territory to continue the battle against authoritarianism. Hence, Lewis "re-homes" his exiles whereas Pullman lets his exile *create a new home*.

Another key difference is how each novel engages with *power and authority* in the context of displacement. In Narnia, the children's presence is there to fulfill an old prophecy and challenge the illegitimate reign of the White Witch. However, once Aslan is resurrected and the Witch defeated, the children themselves become the new authority and "benevolent monarchs." In Pullman's novel, the authority of the Magisterium is systematically questioned and undermined by a child from outside its ranks. Unlike Narnia where the Pevensies children replace the powers, Lyra overturns them, sparking liberation before she moves on. This reflects a more subversive stance towards her power. *Northern Lights* aligns more with postcolonial narratives of rebellion whereas *LWW* aligns with a restoration narrative. Both are in their own ways political where Lewis' is conservative and redemptive as suffering leads to rightful rule while Pullman's is progression and open-ended as suffering leads to questioning and ongoing struggle.

Despite these differences, both novels share thematic foundation in highlighting *friendships across cultural lines* and the formation of *new communities*. In both books, the displaced children rely on unlikely allies. In Narnia, the Pevensies collaborate with talking animals, mythic creatures, and the

"Other" to achieve common goals. In the same sense, Lyra's success depends on her alliance with the gyptians, bears, and with clans who are different from her in culture and nature. Both works suggest that the state of being-out-of-place can lead to expanding one's understanding of community, signaling that *bridge-building* speaks to diasporic and globalized experiences. This models an ideal intercultural solidarity for young readers. Even as the protagonists eventually leave, they carry these friendships with them.

These differing approaches can show how children's fantasy literature has evolved to address complex issues related to displacement. However, neither approach can be considered simply right or wrong. *LWW* and *Northern Lights* reflect different experiences of displacement. Taken together, they can show a bigger picture where exile is sometimes temporary and one can return home, and sometimes it is permanent or chosen, leading to a new identity.

Educational Implications

In addition to their thematic implications, these novels offer valuable teaching insights. *LWW* and *Northern Lights* can be used by educators to promote empathy and global awareness among students. Discussing these stories can help children talk about cultural differences through a safe metaphorical lens. For example, these books can help students step into another's shoes. Teachers might use these stories to invite children to compare Lucy's or Lyra's feelings in strange worlds to times when they felt new or lost, such as the first day at a new school. Such activities can help students build empathy for newcomers and refugees as they begin to imaging what it is like to be uprooted and extend kindness to peers who might be adjusting to new circumstances.

Also, *LWW* can be used pedagogically to introduce historical lessons about war evacuees and refugees. By using fantasy as a bridge to real-world discussion on migration and its hardships, students might compare the Pevensies' evacuation from London with contemporary families fleeing conflict. Moreover, by drawing parallels between Lyra's fight against the rule of the Magisterium and instances in history or current event where people stand up to unjust powers or regimes, *Northern Lights* can be used to prompt conversations about questioning authority and valuing diversity.

In particular, the journey through the wardrobe can then be interpreted through Lefebvre's triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space. The forested threshold space between the wardrobe and Narnia can be seen as a liminal heterotopia — one that reflects both the psychological dislocation of wartime Britain and the ideological longing for prelapsarian order. Furthermore, the final restoration of Cair Paravel suggests a return not only to power, but to an imperial spatial logic that reflects the dominant values of Lewis's time.

Both books can also be used to model positive coping strategies as in *LWW* the children rely on teamwork and courage while in *Northern Lights* Lyra's critical thinking and moral courage inspires readers to ask questions and stand up for justice. As Pullman (2017) observes, fantasy stories let readers safely "rehearse" moral choices and confront fears in imagination.

In a context that captures students' imagination, such literary works create a safe space for students to engage with big abstract ideas, such as fairness, loyalty, and courage. By utilizing these fantasies

in the classroom, educators can help children connect the characters' journey to their own lives and to the broader real-world in order to build empathy, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding.

Conclusion

This comparative approach invites further exploration into how children's literature can mediate complex feelings of dislocation, especially in light of contemporary migration crises—from the Syrian and Palestinian diasporas to broader global displacement. By framing fantastical geographies as reflections of real-world exile and hybrid identities, this study affirms the genre's potential to cultivate empathy and critical reflection.

The key takeaway of this study shows that children's fantasy literature – as exemplified by Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and Pullman's *Northern Lights* – provides a medium for examining migration, exile, and diaspora in a globalized world. The use of imaginative geographies to mirror the emotional and social realities of displacement is evident in both works. The Pevensie siblings' journey transforms wartime evacuation into a mythic adventure of loss and return while Lyra Belacqua's trek northward and beyond reimagines the quest for identity and freedom as an ever-expanding one. Although they present different experiences, each text shows how leaving home can serve as a catalyst for growth and understanding.

By utilizing a range of theoretical approaches, it was discussed how these fantasies resonate with concepts of exile and hybridity. Edward Said's focus on imaginative narratives and how they dramatize the distance between "home" and "away" is evident in the sharp divides both Lewis and Pullman draw between the protagonists' familiar worlds and the fantastic realms they enter. Bhabha's *unhomely* captures the uncanny intersection of home and world as a piece of furniture at an old house becomes a portal to a new world, or when Oxford becomes invaded by the Magisterium's machinations. Hall's notion of diaspora identity as "becoming" rather than being is reflected in how versatile the characters are in taking on new roles and forms of belonging in both works. Identities, therefore, are not static. In fact, they are disrupted, expanded, and reassembled.

Foucault's and Lefebvre's ideas about space and power assisted in observing that Narnia and Lyra's North are not just backdrops but rather *politicized spaces.* Narnia's endless winter and Bolvangar's antiseptic halls become then a manifestation of tyranny, while the warm long-waited spring and the destruction of the station signal liberation. Bakhtin's chronotope concept highlighted how these novels configure time and space to enable transformation. This transformation can be through the enchanted time lapse in Narnia or the arduous journey time in *Northern Lights* which reinforce themes of personal change through exile.

Both novels suggest that children's literature can seriously engage with displacement in ways that align with young readers' sense of curiosity and justice. *LWW* emerged in a world scarred by a global war and perhaps offered a hopeful metaphor for restoration and order amidst world chaos. *Northern Lights* came at a time of questioning institutions and embracing diversity in the early 21st century. Both approaches are valuable where each way validates the experiences of those who find themselves between homes or cultures.

Both stories prove that fantasy written for children can offer more than just an escape. It can be a means of understanding reality, for they invite readers to empathize with characters who feel lost or othered, fostering empathy for real people in such situations. *LWW* and *Northern Lights* position literature as a safe space to explore fear, courage, loss, and hope as they provide what Said called "imaginary homelands" where the pain and possibilities of displacement can be worked through and even reimagined as adventures.

In today's heavily globalized world of mass migrations and intercultural encounters, these fantastical geographies of displacement feel more relevant than ever. The two novels remind the reader that even when people cross borders and build new homes, story telling and imagination are essential tools for making sense of "dislocation." *LWW* and *Northern Lights* prove that whether one leaves their world by necessity or choice, dislocation can lead to self-discovery and new forms of community. The exiled child heroes of these stories find not only the way to survive, but ways to *belong*. This is achieved through courage, empathy, and open-mindedness. Therefore, as readers, we come to believe that even in unfamiliar magical landscapes, we can create meaning and forge connections, and that venturing into the unknown becomes the first step toward finding a truer sense of home.

References

Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). University of Texas Press.

Bhabha, H. K. (1992). The world and the home. *Social Text, 31/32*, 141–153.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.

Bromley, R. (2016). *Narratives of Exile and Return*. London: Routledge.

Cecire, M. S. (2019). *Re-Enchanted: The Rise of Children's Fantasy Literature in the Twentieth Century*. University of Minnesota Press.

Conkan, M. (2016). Heterotopias: Making and remaking imaginary spaces. *Caietele Echinox, 30*, 249–257.

Foucault, M. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics, 16*(1), 22–27. (Original work published 1984).

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (pp. 222–237). London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Hope, J. (2017). *Children's Literature about Refugees: A Catalyst in the Classroom*. Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell. (Original work published 1974).

Lenz, M. (2005). *His Dark Materials Illuminated: Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Lewis, C. S. (1950). *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. London: Geoffrey Bles.

Naidoo, J., & Dahlen, S. P. (2016). *Diversity in Youth Literature: Opening Doors Through Reading*. Chicago: ALA Editions.

Norris, N. (2012). War and the liminal space: situating *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in the twentieth-century narrative of trauma and survival. In M. A. Abate & L. C. Nguyen (Eds.), *C.S. Lewis: The Chronicles of Narnia* (pp. 37–50). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pullman, P. (1995). *Northern Lights*. London: Scholastic.

Pullman, P. (2017). *Daemon Voices: Essays on Storytelling*. Oxford University Press.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

Said, E. W. (2000). Reflections on exile. In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (pp. 173–186). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Savsar, L. (2018). *Outside the Nation, Inside the Melancholic State(s) of Mind: Re-thinking the Rhetoric of Displacement and Re-membering the Immigrant Experience in Transnational Literature* (Doctoral dissertation). Binghamton University, SUNY.

Skeva, S. (2023). *Imperialist fantasies of home in C. S. Lewis' "The Chronicles of Narnia"* (Master's thesis). Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.