

Yayın Geliş Tarihi: 07.07.2020

Yayına Kabul Tarihi: 08.12.2020

Online Yayın Tarihi: 31.12.2020

http://dx.doi.org/10.16953/deusosbil.765400

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi

Cilt: 22, Sayı: 4, Yıl: 2020, Sayfa: 1465-1478

ISSN: 1302-3284 E-ISSN: 1308-0911

*Araştırma Makalesi*

## RECONSTRUCTION OF HOME IN PHILIP PULLMAN'S *HIS DARK MATERIALS*<sup>1</sup>

Mürüvvet Mira PINAR DOLAYKAYA\*

### **Abstract**

*In children's literature, representations of home lead to multifarious ideological, social, economic, and cultural inferences. Both home and its outside display dualistic nature, containing positive and negative connotations at the same time. Home as a sanctuary connotes safety and protection, yet it simultaneously comes to be a space where children's freedom is limited. Similarly, the outside of home signifies unknown hence dangerous territories, but it concurrently offers independence and an opportunity for exploration and experience for children. Taking into consideration such multi-layered associations and the dual nature of both spaces, this study inquires into the possibility of reconceptualizing and restructuring home in children's literature. In this regard, this paper reads Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000) as a radical text in terms of its unique and experimental representations of home. It suggests that Pullman deconstructs genre-based conservative and traditional representations of home in the canon of children's literature and argues that the meaning of concepts such as home and homelessness can be fluid and subjective.*

**Keywords:** Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials*, Children's Literature, Home.

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<sup>1</sup> This study is based on the doctoral dissertation titled "The Representations of Dualities in Children's Fantasy Literature: C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*."

*Bu makale için önerilen kaynak gösterimi (APA 6. Sürüm):*

Dolaykaya Pınar, M. M. (2020). Reconstruction of home in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 22 (4), 1465-1478

\* Arş. Gör. Dr. Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü ORCID: 0000-0001-8047-1504 muruvvetmirapinar@gmail.com

## PHILIP PULLMAN'IN KARANLIK CEVHER SERİSİNDE EVİN YENİDEN İNŞA EDİLMESİ<sup>2</sup>

### Öz

*Çocuk edebiyatında ev tasvirleri çeşitli ideolojik, toplumsal, ekonomik ve kültürel çıkarımlara yol açmaktadır. Çocuk edebiyatında ev ve evin dışı ikili bir doğa sergilemekle birlikte aynı anda olumlu ve olumsuz çağrışımlar barındırırlar. Mabet niteliği gösteren ev bir yandan güven ve korunma anlamına gelirken, aynı zamanda çocukların özgürlüğünün kısıtlandığı bir mekân olarak karşımıza çıkar. Benzer şekilde evin dışı bilinmez dolayısıyla tehlikeli bölgeleri temsil ederken eş zamanlı olarak çocuğa bağımsızlık, keşfetme ve deneyim sahibi olma imkânı sunar. Bu çalışma her iki mekânın da çok katmanlı ve ikili doğasını ele alarak evin çocuk edebiyatında yeniden kavramsallaştırılması ve yeniden yapılandırılmasının imkanlarını irdeler. Bu doğrultuda, bu makale Philip Pullman'ın Karanlık Cevher (1995-2000) serisini deneysel ve özgün ev temsilleri açısından radikal bir metin olarak okur. Pullman'ın çocuk edebiyatı kanonundaki janra ile ilintili olarak ortaya çıkmış genel geçer, konservatif ve geleneksel ev tasvirlerini yıktığını önererek ev ve evsizlik gibi kavramların anlamlarının değişken ve öznel olabileceğini tartışır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Philip Pullman, Karanlık Cevher, Çocuk Edebiyatı, Ev.

### INTRODUCTION

As a cultural metaphor, home is associated with family and safety. It is usually perceived and represented as a sanctuary where family members are secure from the potential dangers of the outside world. Nevertheless, home might denote an ambivalent space in literature and be depicted in different manners depending on the context and the genre. In literary texts, home might also symbolize a departure point that needs/has to be left. Leaving home opens the doors to a dangerous and unknown outside world, leading to experience, learning, and change in characters. Specifically, in children's fantasy literature, the binary relationship between home and away becomes highly important in interpreting texts as the genre inherently engages with the motifs of adventure and journey. Secondary world narratives often dwell on children's transition from their familiar surroundings to new and unfamiliar environments. Therefore, being at home, being away from home, and the motif of journey give way to other interrelated polarities such as family and stranger, inside and outside, safety and danger, familiar and unknown/unexpected, innocence and experience as well as domestic sphere and public sphere. In this respect, the binary opposition of home and away becomes an issue of power and discourse that requires to be analysed with respect to its ideological and didactic functions in children's literature.

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<sup>2</sup> Bu çalışma, "The Representations of Dualities in Children's Fantasy Literature: C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*" başlıklı doktora tezinden üretilmiştir.

Perry Nodelman considers home and away to be “an essential doubleness” representing “opposing sets of values” in children’s literature (2008, p. 59). As Nodelman argues, “[q]uestions about the meanings of home and away [...] seem to be central to cultural ideas about childhood in the time in which a specific children’s literature has existed” (2008, p. 59). The associations of home and away indeed can vary in relation to the historical and socio-economic circumstances in which a certain text is produced. In this regard, home might come to represent “safety and/or constraint”, away might signify “danger and/or freedom” depending on the social, cultural, economic, and geographical context of a text (Nodelman, 2008, p. 59). For instance, earlier forms of children’s literature such as fairy tales, nursery rhymes, folk tales, and cautionary tales usually display children’s attempts of leaving home as a sign of disobedience, which in return puts them into life-threatening situations. In such tales, home is a space that is controlled by adults and adult values, and thus they function as a powerful means of warning, discipline, and moral education.

Therefore, home becomes a site of oppression and passivation on the part of children while they painstakingly seek freedom to explore and discover the exciting world outside. Even when home is an emblem of shelter and protection, it continues to be a space where there are limiting and oppressive divisions of roles among its members. Ann Alston draws attention to the dual nature of the relationship between home and away. She suggests that the idea of home in children’s literature brings to mind “hams hanging up, beamed ceilings, log fires and Welsh dressers” (2005, p. 15). However, she adds that this is a “literary cliché” which represents a pastoral and Romantic ideal that promotes domesticity and creates a sense of cosiness and familiarity (2005, pp. 15-21). This literary cliché yet involves spaces allocated for family members, thereby designating power and control over the dynamics of the house and its inhabitants. In terms of the relationship between power and space depicted in children’s literature, Alston considers home “a complex environment essentially controlled by adults” (2005, p. 15). She suggests that

*while adults are free to roam around the house, children are often restricted to certain rooms - rarely, for example, are they allowed to play in the study. By looking at space in children’s literature it becomes apparent that the seemingly united family, while celebrated on the one hand, is simultaneously broken down and questioned. (pp. 15-16)*

The concept of home is shaped around such contradictory ideas in children’s literature. Displaying dual nature, home turns out to be an amalgamation of contrastive ideas and emotions. Specifically, in secondary world fantasies for younger readers, the representations of home become even more problematical and complicated. Home evolves into a space that should be abandoned in order for the child hero to embark on adventures or to make an entrance into an alternative world most usually to save it from various evil forces. In line with this, the outside of home connotes positive and negative ideas at the same time. It transforms into a frightening

yet desirable space. Most significantly, the outside of home provides children with the possibility of being self-sufficient and independent. At this point, the sense of unfamiliarity and danger that traditionally characterizes the outside is compensated by the very idea of journeying and exploring. In this context, for children, leaving home becomes more than a narrative implementation since it turns to be an empowering act. Taking into consideration such multi-layered functions and associations of home in children's literature, the following section looks into the possibility of reconceptualizing and restructuring home in children's literature. To this end, it analyses Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* in terms of its unique and experimental representations of home. Pullman's narrative is read as a radical text through questioning the generic and archetypal depictions of home in children's literature, and it is shown that concepts such as home, away and homelessness can be fluctuating, fluid, and subjective.

### **RESTRUCTURING HOME IN *HIS DARK MATERIALS***

“You’ll never be lost while this college is standing, Lyra.  
This is your home for as long as you need it.”  
(Pullman, 2000, p. 461)

Published between the years 1995-2000, Pullman's prize-winning and well-acclaimed trilogy *His Dark Materials* engages with the theme of journey on both literal and symbolic levels. Consisting of three consecutive novels, respectively *Northern Lights*, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*, the series chronicles Lyra Belacqua and her companions' struggle to surpass various enforcements of the Magisterium, the theocratic government which aims to separate children from their *daemons* - physical manifestation of soul. As the story unfolds, the novels depict various acts of departures from familiar places which might be called home towards places which prove to be unfamiliar and alien territories specifically for children. The characters in *His Dark Materials*, specifically Lyra and Will, are often on the move not only within their own worlds but also between different worlds throughout the narrative. In *Northern Lights*, Lyra leaves Jordan College which has become a home to her throughout her life, and she sets out on a journey which extends from the chaotic London to the wilderness of the North. In *The Subtle Knife*, Lyra travels into a parallel world called Cittàgasse and meets her new companion Will - a boy from another world which is basically a different version of Oxford. The last book of the trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass* not only introduces the reader to the *mulefa* world - another parallel universe -, but also features a journey to the land of the dead.

As part of the convention of children's literature, these journeys turn into journeys the children take into their inner worlds, and they show significant psychological and moral transformations. Nevertheless, the binary relationship

between home and away in children's literature requires a more profound examination in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* as the conventional associations of home and away undergo certain changes in the series. In Pullman's narrative, home does not mean a space standing on four walls inhabited by a family. The outside of home similarly does not always connote danger and unfamiliarity. The meaning of home and away fluctuates depending on the characters' emotive responses and individual engagements at different spaces throughout the series. In this regard, Pullman both deconstructs and reconstructs the cultural and generic associations of home and away, and such an approach puts into question archetypal spatial representations and their didactic functions in children's fantasy literature.

Pullman's transgression of the conventional associations of home and away is ensured mainly by the absence of parents or the presence of parental figures who disappoint children. For instance, abandoned by her biological parents, Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter, to the hands of the scholars in Jordan College, Lyra does not have any experience of a traditional home. Throughout the narrative, she thus associates home with spaces and people which subvert and negate conventional representations of home and family. Lyra comes to consider the premises of Jordan College as her home and sees the governesses and the authoritative male scholars as parental figures. Although she occasionally feels oppressed by the discipline and order of Jordan College, she simultaneously associates the college with safety and protection, which one can find in a family/familiar environment. Lyra's thoughts show that the idea of home can be constructed based on individual experiences and emotional bonds in/with spaces. In the first book, *The Northern Lights*, a conversation between Lyra and the Master as she is about to leave the college lays bare how differently home can be made sense of:

*"Lyra, it won't be long - a couple of years at most - before you will be a young woman, and not a child any more. A young lady. And believe me, you'll find Jordan College a far from easy place to live in then."*

*"But it's my home!"*

*"It has been your home. But now you need something else."*

*"Not school. I'm not going to school."*

*"You need female company. Female guidance."* (Pullman, 1998, pp. 70-71)

The Master's remarks promote a proper family environment as the best place for the development of a child, specifically a female-oriented one. On the contrary, Lyra's thoughts reject the traditional family structure with gender stereotypes. In this regard, as Amanda M. Greenwell points out, Lyra's liking for spaces "such as the rooftops, the streets, and the forbidden male Retiring Room [...] highlight[s] her tendency to flout the conventional restrictions of home" (2018, p. 24). Furthermore, Lyra's view of Jordan College as her home blurs the distinctions between a home and an educational institution. This arguably illustrates Pullman's attempt at

subverting the binary relationship between the concepts of home and away, domestic sphere and public sphere, inside and outside, danger and safety.

Indeed, throughout the narrative spaces tend to change their meanings for the characters. Although Lyra is reluctant to leave Oxford, the luxuries and the female presence in Mrs. Coulter's house fascinate her once she steps in there. Lyra considers the interiors of Mrs. Coulter's London house homely and comforting. She even fantasizes about Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter falling in love, getting married, adopting her, and becoming a family (Pullman, 1998, p. 86). On the one hand, Lyra's dreams foreshadow the fact that Mrs. Coulter and Lord Asriel are her actual parents. On the other hand, they reflect Lyra's first encounter with the idea of home in the traditional sense of the word. She abruptly feels the need to create a traditional family and home as a naive and innocent girl who has never had both. Nevertheless, as Lyra discovers the identity of her biological parents and their unethical pursuits, her dreams of home are shattered once again. Thus, Lyra feels discarded by both Jordan College and Mrs. Coulter. As Aine Mahon and Elizabeth O'Brien suggest:

*Lyra experiences a damaging lack of acknowledgement from significant persons around her. Consistently Lyra is dismissed and safeguarded. She does not directly belong in any of the familial or societal structures around her and yet she is clearly precious and important in some way (2018, p. 188).*

While the traditional hero/heroine leaves home mainly to embark on an adventure, Lyra's departures stem from the fact that the places she used to and wants to call home oppress and fail her. As Mahon and O'Brien indicate, Lyra "leave[s] the safety of familiar people and place, to countenance danger and uncertainty, and to strike out on a precarious path of liberation and self-discovery" (2018, p. 184). Therefore, leaving familiar places comes to mean taking a step into the unknown yet liberating territories, which might offer multiple and better possibilities for Lyra.

Pullman's subversion of the Romantic notion of home is probably best exemplified in his inscription of the Gyptians and the Gyptian boat. As Lyra suffers from homelessness in the dangerous streets of London, she finds stability, safety and love in the boat of the Gyptians. The Gyptians are thought to be a nomadic lower class and a group of wild people who live on boats. Even Lyra is initially brutal to them as she hijacks their boats and gets into fights with their children. However, as the series starts to give an insight into their life and relationships, they turn out to be a community who puts so much value on family, home, and friendship. Even though they appear to be belonging nowhere, the blend word, Gyptian, which seems to be a combination of gypsy and nation, reveals them to be a traveling and settled community at the same time. In this context, the Gyptians disrupt the conventional images of domestic home and offer a new one which contains various associations of home and away at the same time. As Greenwell suggests:

*the very mobility of their community as they travel up and down the fens and waterways indexes the ways in which Gyptian life involves encountering and experiencing the wider world, and the expanse of the nurture Lyra experiences in the Gyptian community is crucial to Pullman's remodeling of the domestic (2018, p. 26).*

The Gyptian boat harmonizes the domesticity of home and the adventurous nature of the outside world; therefore, it fulfils Lyra's expectations from a family and a home, which are trust, protection, and unhindered freedom. As Greenwell summarizes, "[p]aramount to the trilogy's theory of home is that the home should not isolate people from further experience and pursuit of knowledge, nor should it be isolated from those things" (2018, p. 32). The Gyptian boat provides Lyra the security and care she wishes for, but in the meantime, it ensures her the mobility and opportunity to learn and explore more. Even the division of labour on the Gyptian boat makes Lyra feel useful and a part of a family rather than a community. She is treated not simply as a female child who is required to be obedient and respectful, but more like an individual who is trusted and depended on:

*Helping Mrs. Coulter had been all very well, but Pantalaimon was right: she wasn't really doing any work there, she was just a pretty pet. On the gyptian boat, there was real work to do, and Ma Costa made sure she did it. She cleaned and swept, she peeled potatoes and made tea, she greased the propellor-shaft bearings, she kept the weed-trap clear over the propellor, she washed dishes, she opened lock gates, she tied the boat up at mooring-posts, and within a couple of days she was much at home with this new life as if she'd been born gyptian (Pullman, 1998, p. 111).*

Therefore, the Gyptians and their boat bridge opposites and prove to be a transgressive and an unconventional embodiment of such interrelated concepts as home, house, domesticity, and family. The Gyptian boat reshapes the conventional image of home and shows that home denotes a feeling, and better yet, it can be achieved anywhere.

In *The Subtle Knife*, a similar kind of homelessness characterizes Will's character and initiates his journey. Lyra deceives herself by thinking that Jordan College is a home to her; however, Will is already a stranger in his home. Will does not have a parental figure in his house as his mother is ill and his father is already absent; therefore, he is fully in charge of their house. As Greenwell points out, this already disrupts "the parent-child hierarchy that often characterizes constructions of home" (2018, p. 24). After the men of the Magisterium break into Will's house, his house literally loses its association with safety, and he feels alienated from the place where he was born and raised. David Levey describes Will's alienation from his house as such: "Nearing the now-empty house that he has been sharing with his mother he observes that it is silent and shabby [...], no longer a home, but ominous,

a place where the familiar has become alien” (2016, p. 23). As Will further contemplates on his position in his house, he thinks that “home was the place he kept safe for his mother, not the place others kept safe for him” (Pullman, 2007, p. 307).

Pullman complicates the binary relationship between home and away, safety and danger even more forcefully as Lyra and Will make their first entrances to the city of Cittàgazze and meet there for the first time. Like their houses, Lyra and Will’s worlds also fail to become homes to them. The men of the Magisterium aim to annihilate both Lyra and Will as they constitute danger to their plans and authority. After Lyra and Will leave their own worlds through different portals without knowing what to expect, they find themselves in Cittàgazze, which turns out to be more dangerous and life-threatening. They find out that Cittàgazze is inhabited by the Specters, soul devouring creatures who are extremely hostile to children. In this respect, as Levey indicates, neither Lyra nor Will feels themselves “completely at home in their world, or in any other” (2016, p. 22). Nevertheless, Pullman restructures ideas such as home and homelessness through Lyra and Will’s companionship, which is based on mutual trust and understanding. As Greenwell writes, “[r]efugees from their own worlds, Will and Lyra create a rudimentary ‘home’ as orphans together in Cittàgazze” no matter how much unsafe it is (2018, p. 27). Even though they visit Will’s Oxford during the day to make research on Dust, they find it very comforting to be back in Cittàgazze at night-time. Therefore, Cittàgazze becomes not only “a place to which they return consistently” but also “their safe haven from the threats that exist in their own worlds” (Greenwell, 2018, p. 27). Lyra and Will’s emotions after they return to Cittàgazze reveal that they feel at home in each other’s company:

*They felt as if they were home again. The wide warm night and the scent of flowers and the sea, and the silence, bathed them like soothing water. Lyra stretched and yawned, and Will felt a great weight lift off his shoulders. He had been carrying it all day, and he hadn’t noticed how it had nearly pressed him into the ground; but now he felt light and free and at peace (Pullman, 2007, p. 108).*

A symbolic reading of the above quotation points out that Lyra and Will create a microcosmic home and family in the midst of the dangerous Cittàgazze. Even though Lyra and Will’s “adventures evoke experiences of strangeness of the kind that children encounter when away from home”, the duo paradoxically achieves to transform unfamiliar and strange places into familiar ones (Rustin and Rustin, 2003, p. 229). As argued by Levey, “home appears to be rooted in themselves, in their burgeoning sexual and emotional love for each other” (2016, p. 23). Viewed from this perspective, Lyra and Will’s ability to create a home out of any place reinforces emotive connotations of home again. Furthermore, it shows that contrastive concepts such as familiar/unfamiliar and home/away might be embedded and fluid.

As Levey also underlines, “[g]radually Pullman’s understanding of home emerges [...] as both familiar and alien” (2016, p. 19). Lyra and Will’s alienation from their homes and family members and their construction of homely places outside of their comfort zones make Pullman’s work a radical one compared to the canonical works. *His Dark Materials* not only dismantles the cultural connotations of home, family, and homeland but it also contests the conventional and conservative texts of children’s literature where such associations are created and reinforced. In Pullman’s narrative, home and away prove to be equally protective and dangerous, familiar and unfamiliar, suppressive and liberating, and they are apt to change their meanings constantly. Even though the disruption of the conventional image of home brings out a sense of homelessness, it emancipates child characters from the power structures and restrictions within home. Lyra and Will evade parental or any other adult inflicted authority as they constantly move and construct their own homes in different places. That they feel at home when they are literally homeless thus reconstructs the concept of home, transgressing cultural and social ideas developed around home.

After Will takes possession of the subtle knife, which opens up windows into other worlds, the duo finds it very easy to travel between different worlds to evade dangers at any time. Lyra and Will use the knife so frequently and so many times that it becomes very difficult to follow which universe they are in. On the one hand, these frequent movements signify the children’s liberating homelessness as one of the central themes. On the other hand, they make it difficult to easily distinguish home from away, or tell who belongs where. In addition, these frequent transitions help both Lyra and Will take an inward journey. They change and mature both physically and psychologically while moving back and forth between different worlds. As Lyra and Will confront various dangers along the journey, they reflect on their relationships with their parents, their so-called homes, and their own worlds. Furthermore, they question their own positions in life, try to define their expectations, and discover their sexualities. As Laura Feldt writes:

*The unsettling and blurring of the distinction(s) between the everyday world and the numerous alternative worlds stimulates reflection and spiritual searching, just as it suggests that there are other realities than the everyday world, which are significant and valuable (2016, p. 559).*

Even though Lyra and Will mature and gain a certain kind of awareness along their journey, their experiences still do not kill the independent and free-spirited children within them. As Greenwell argues, Pullman “is well known among critics for his complication and inversion of the innocence/experience hierarchy” (2018, p. 21). The children do not directly transition from child-like innocence to adult-like maturation and solemnity as it is the case in many canonical works of children’s literature. Experience that is gained through their journey earns Lyra and

Will wisdom and maturation of the kind which help them acquire a better understanding of themselves, life, and their universes. As Feldt highlights:

*In the end, readers [as well as the characters] are returned to the contemporary world, but with the experiences of multiple planes of reality, and a fascination of the idea of a deeper, unknown mystical force as a focus for individualized spiritual seeking (2016, p. 561).*

At this point, while discussing the representations of home and away in children's literature, the child hero/heroine's return requires an exploration. Returning home not only gives way to inferences regarding the construction and deconstruction of power structures within home but it also brings out the dichotomy between innocence and experience to be explored with regard to children's development on the path. Such scholars of children's literature as Perry Nodelman, Christopher Clausen, and Fiona McCulloch acknowledge *home-away-home* pattern as one of the crucial criteria of children's literature. This narrative structure requires the departure of the child hero/heroine from home, it continues with a wide range of adventures and concludes with his/her returning home as a changed and expectedly a mature person. Clausen writes that even though escape is present in children's fiction as a tempting phenomenon, "home is clearly where the characters belong and where, after many vicissitudes, they return" (1982, p. 142). On a similar note, McCulloch draws attention to children's need to escape with "the reassurance that the primary world is waiting on this side of the wardrobe" (2011, p. 94).<sup>4</sup> As Nodelman similarly affirms, "children in children's stories tend to learn the value of home by losing it and then finding it again" (qtd. in Gamble & Yates, 2002, p. 43). Nodelman further writes that:

*[C]hildren's books want to say two different things at the same time: that children can and must stay as they are at home in the enclosed space of childhood that adults provide for them but also that children do and must change even in order to appreciate the value of the enclosed space. There is a fatal contradiction at their heart (2008, p. 67).*

In this regard, returning home signifies understanding the value of home that is lost, the need for familial protection, and maturation that includes internalizing adult values. Symbolically, the hero/heroine's return re-establishes the patriarchal order of the conventional idea of home, shows an acceptance of parental authority, and it hints at the child hero/heroine's abandonment of child-like innocence and completion of his maturation.

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<sup>4</sup> Fiona McCulloch gives reference to C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the first book of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

In *His Dark Materials*, even though Lyra and Will do not transform into adult figures who they once despised and left, their increasing wisdom helps them reflect on their home and homeland in retrospect. Towards the end of the series, Will expresses his wish to go back to his world since he feels himself guilty for leaving his ill mother. Lyra, however, appears to be more reluctant. Her reluctance can be read as her lack of a place that she can call home:

*“Mmm,” said Will. “D’you think we’ll ever go home?”*

*“Dunno. I don’t suppose I’ve got a home anyway. They probably couldn’t have me back at Jordan College, and I can’t live with the bears or the witches. Maybe I could live with the gyptians. I wouldn’t mind that, if they’d had me.”*

*[...]*

*“Well, I’ve got to go home,” he said. She thought he sounded unsure, though. She hoped he sounded unsure.*

*[...]*

*But there’s my mother. I’ve got to go back and look after her. I just left her with Mrs. Cooper, and it’s not fair on either of them”*

(Pullman, 2000, pp. 408-412).

As it can be inferred from Lyra and Will’s different thoughts about returning, Pullman links the idea of home to one’s assuming his/her responsibilities to his/her own family, community, and environment. Therefore, home becomes not simply a place a person needs but one where s/he is also needed. Even though Lyra and Will are able to create homely environments even in the most dangerous places, the idea of having a familiar place that waits for them contradictorily becomes desirable.

Lyra and Will’s contrastive reactions also link to the idea of belonging as valued by Pullman and occasionally emphasized by the characters. As Levey affirms, “for Pullman, home and belonging are central concepts” and human beings “are most at home, on earth, when they are exercising all their faculties of reason, will, freewill, independence and maturity” (2016, p. 21). Viewed from this perspective, for Pullman, the idea of home also includes establishing interdependent physical bonds with places where one can relate herself/himself both to the place and people in it. Stephen Thomson argues that “Lyra and Will are defined as belonging to a lineage. And while they are supposed to be in some measure independent, there is also a notion of direct, genetic inheritance; that they are, constitutionally, their father’s children” (2004, p. 153). Therefore, towards the end of the narrative, the children inwardly yearn for returning to their native lands, or rather their roots which make them who they are.

It is in this context that not only Lyra and Will but also other characters who have left their worlds and travelled into other ones are required to go back. It is revealed by the end of *The Amber Spyglass* that the windows opened with the subtle

knife between different worlds and the ongoing transitions upset the cosmic balance, leading to moral, environmental and political deterioration in all worlds. Lyra and Will further discover that human beings cannot stay physically and mentally healthy in other worlds for too long. Will comes to recognize that his father's fatigue and unhealthy appearance result from his being away from his own world for too long:

*"He said —" Lyra began, gulping, "he said that people could spend a little time in other worlds without being affected. They could."*

*[...]*

*"They can spend a little time, but not a long time," Will said. "My father had been away from his world, my world, for ten years. And he was nearly dying when I found him. Ten years, that's all" (Pullman, 2000, p. 435).*

Lyra and Will eventually need to close all the windows between different worlds even if it means separation for them. The necessity to demolish the bridges draws attention to the distinctness, and most significantly the uniqueness of every world in the sense of peoples' homes and homelands. As Thomson affirms, "at the close, everything is returned to its home because the separateness and wholeness of each world must be respected" (2004, p. 156). As such, it can be said that Pullman deals with the issue of home on both literal and metaphorical levels, endorsing it with new meanings. On literal level, Pullman problematizes the traditional idea of home, and he shows that it can be extremely oppressive and a barrier for the individualism of children. Metaphorically, it seems that Pullman values the physical and the earthly world as the actual home of people. In an interview, Pullman indeed puts emphasis on the dignity of actively participating in and contributing to the material world as one's home:

*Firstly, a sense that this world where we live is our home. Our home is not somewhere else. There is no elsewhere. This is a physical universe and we are physical beings made of material stuff. This is where we live. [...] Secondly, a sense of belonging, a sense of being part of a real and important story, a sense of being connected to other people, to people who are not here anymore, to those who have gone before us. And a sense of being connected to the universe itself (qtd. in Levey, 2016, p. 21).*

Such multi-layered representations can be interpreted as Pullman's criticism of religious and cultural discourses embedded in the conventional configurations of home in children's literature. Lyra and Will's alienation from familiar spaces and attachment to unfamiliar ones thus epitomize Pullman's subversive attempt at

reimagining new spaces for children's literature beyond literary and cultural archetypes.

Although Lyra and Will's willing homecomings comply with the *home-away-home* pattern, it still diverges from conventional representations. The series does not end with marriage, an abrupt change in the socio-economic circumstances of the characters, or a sudden restoration and reformation in the world order. The end of the journey also does not bring new titles, which prosper the homes of the children. Lyra and Will go back to their daily monotonous lives, being ready to face every obstacle that is yet to come. Levey writes that "the home reached by the characters [...] is not utopian, but starkly down-to-earth" (2016, p. 19). Dr. Malone offers Will a home as well as help for Will's mother. As to Lyra, she makes Jordan College her home again and accepts to start her education as a more responsible and knowing girl. This kind of homecoming actually makes the series a more realistic representation of life especially when compared to the medievalist children's fantasies where there are radical reversals of fortune experienced by protagonists. Therefore, as Greenwell argues:

*[K]ey to Pullman's remodeling of home is that it makes room for movement away from the innocence conventionally associated with childhood and fosters opportunities more often associated with experience. True home is not simply the protective and often limiting place to which one might return after an adventure, but a vibrant, dynamic space that functions as an integral component to thoughtful and active participation in the world (2018, p. 21).*

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, in *His Dark Materials*, the journey of the hero and heroine from home to the outside world becomes more than an archetypal implementation. It serves as a means to elaborate on various issues Pullman seems to be preoccupied with, such as parental authority over children, negligence within family, relativity of the idea of home, and the view of the universe as home. Pullman invites readers to trace the ideological implications of home and *home-away-home* pattern pertaining to children's literature. Even though the series does not devalue family pattern and values, it disrupts the sanctity of home, family and parenthood through neglecting adult characters and non-homely homes. It draws attention to the multiplicity and the relativity of meaning people associate with spaces in line with their personal experiences. In this regard, Pullman blurs clear-cut distinctions between home and away and puts into question their binary positions. He reconceptualizes home and away and shows that such spatial concepts can negate their cultural, archetypal and literary associations. Moreover, the meanings and ideas associated with them can be fluid, fluctuating, and interchangeable.

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