

“Cold and blank and wild: it might have been snow. It was the smell of the North.”

Borealism in Philip Pullman’s novel *Northern Lights*

Ulriika Väisänen

Bachelor’s thesis

English Philology

Faculty of Humanities

University of Oulu

Spring 2020

## Abstract

This thesis examines how the North is represented in *Northern Lights* (1995), the first novel in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. In the novel, the North is viewed from a British perspective, thus possibly revealing underlying attitudes and perceptions about the real-world North. The study is conducted using literary analysis and the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial criticism and Borealism, the exotizing and Eurocentric discourse on the North derived from Edward Said's (1978) Orientalism. The findings indicate that the novel contains a strong Borealistic discourse that manifests in the form of characteristics associated with the North such as primitiveness, barbarism, naturalness and mysticism. However, at large, the novel's attitude towards the North is not negative and the North acts rather as an environment of freedom and growth for Lyra, the protagonist of the story.

Tämä opinnäytetyö tarkastelee, miten pohjoista kuvataan Philip Pullmanin romaanissa *Kultainen kompassi* (1995). *Kultainen kompassi* kuvaa pohjoista englantilaisesta näkökulmasta, minkä vuoksi se voi paljastaa todelliseen pohjoiseen kohdistuvia piileviä asenteita ja käsityksiä. Tutkimuksen perustana toimivat kirjallisuusanalyysi, jälkikoloniaalinen kirjallisuudentutkimus sekä Edward Saidin (1978) orientalismiin pohjautuva borealismi eli eksotisoiva ja eurosentriinen pohjoisuuden diskurssi. Analyysin tulokset osoittavat, että *Kultaisessa kompassissa* on läsnä vahva borealistinen diskurssi, joka ilmenee pohjoiseen liitetyissä piirteissä kuten primitiivisyys, barbaarisuus, luonnollisuus sekä mystisyys. Kaiken kaikkiaan romaani ei kuitenkaan suhtaudu pohjoiseen kielteisesti, vaan pohjoinen toimii pikemminkin vapauden ja kasvun ympäristönä Lyralle, tarinan päähenkilölle.

## Table of contents

1 Introduction .....	3
2 Research materials .....	5
3 Theoretical and methodological framework .....	7
3.1 Orientalism .....	7
3.2 Borealism .....	8
3.3 Where is “the North”? .....	9
3.4 Literary analysis.....	11
4 Analysis .....	12
4.1 On perspective .....	12
4.2 North as an environment .....	13
4.3 Humans of the North .....	15
4.4 Armoured bears .....	17
4.5 Witches .....	19
5 Discussion .....	22
6 Conclusion .....	26
List of references	

## 1 Introduction

*His Dark Materials* is an epic middle-grade fantasy trilogy written by Philip Pullman. In the 25 years since the publication of the first novel, the trilogy has acquired the status of a modern fantasy classic, but it has also been fiercely criticized for its portrayal and critique of organized religion and Christianity in particular. Due to its wide popularity, the trilogy has received several adaptations, including a theatre production, a graphic novel, a film and, most recently, an HBO series.

The story has been analyzed from a variety of perspectives. Religion is perhaps the most prominent point of view due to the controversy surrounding it. The religious representations in the novel have produced a multitude of different interpretations in academic research (e.g. Oliver, 2012; Padley & Padley, 2006). In addition to Christianity, the trilogy has also been analyzed from the perspective of gender and animal representations (Ezra, 2019) as well as environmentalism (Cantrell, 2014), among other things.

The role of geography and the representations of geographical regions in the trilogy have been less studied. One study examines the way Eastern Europe – that is, everything east of Britain – is represented in Pullman’s trilogy and other middle-grade series. According to Oziewicz (2010, p. 1), “each of those authors, in subtle and unintentional ways, perpetuates Western politico-cultural superiority in regard to Eastern Europeans”. However, at large geographical representations have not been a prominent perspective in relation to Pullman’s trilogy.

In this thesis, I will be examining the portrayal of the North in *Northern Lights* (Pullman, 1995, NL from now on), the first novel of the trilogy. The North is in a particularly prominent position in the first novel as Lyra, the protagonist of the trilogy, travels from Brytain to the North to save a group of kidnapped children. Roughly half of the novel is spent in the North and its inhabitants, particularly the witches and the armoured bears, are an integral element within the plot. My aim is to analyze how the novel portrays the Northern territories of its fictional world which in many ways parallels the real world. This will be accomplished utilizing the framework of postcolonial literary criticism.

It is important to study the geographical aspects of the novel as Philip Pullman himself is a British author writing about predominantly British main characters. Thus, the way the North is represented in the novel could reveal something about how the North is viewed in the real world and particularly in Britain. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the way the North is portrayed in fiction can have an impact on how the North is perceived. Fiction has the power to influence people’s perceptions and Anglo-American fiction is in an especially influential position due to the wide reach of Anglo-American popular culture (especially in comparison to fiction originating from the North itself).

According to Bahri (2004, p. 205), “those with the power to represent and describe others clearly control how these others will be seen”. What is more, it is perhaps even more crucial to research this topic because Pullman’s novels are mainly marketed at a younger audience:

The distinction between what is real and what is fictive is often difficult for young readers to make, so the authority with which fictive events are invested by their interaction with actual events will be intensified, and with it the authority of the ideology underlying the thematic import borne by those fictive events. (Stephenson, 1992, p. 209)

Here, Stephenson is speaking about historical fiction, but I would argue that the same mechanics can be present in children’s fiction that uses real world locations to ground its fantastical representation of a geographical region.

This thesis will begin with a brief introduction to the novel *Northern Lights* after which I will be introducing the theoretical framework of postcolonial criticism and my chosen methodology of literary analysis. In the fourth section of this thesis, I will be analyzing the novel. Each subsection will focus on a different aspect of the North portrayed in the novel: the North as an environment, the human inhabitants of the North as well as the witches and the armoured bears, both of whom have their own societies in the North.

Generally, the approach to the capitalization of words such as the North or Borealism varies in research. In this thesis, I will be spelling these and any comparable words with a capital letter. I have chosen this approach to make a distinction between the cultural entities of the North or the West, for instance, and the cardinal points of the compass. In relation to Borealism and Orientalism, I have likewise decided to emphasize the cultural influence of these discourses by spelling them with a capital letter.

## 2 Research materials

In this section, I will be giving a brief overview of the novel *Northern Lights* and particularly the world depicted in it. As my analysis concerns only the first novel in the trilogy, I will not be focusing on the plot or the worlds introduced in the later novels.

*Northern Lights* begins in Oxford where Lyra has been living in the care of Jordan College. Children have been vanishing all over Brytain and it is revealed that the missing children have been kidnapped by a subsection of the Magisterium, the church that governs Brytain and much of Europe. This subsection, the General Oblation Board, has been taking children to Bolvangar, a research station in the North, in order to experiment on them. Lyra's friend Roger is kidnapped, and Lyra ends up on a rescue expedition with a group of gyptians, a nomadic people that live and travel on their boats. The expedition travels to the North, saves the kidnapped children and along the way Lyra learns to read the alethiometer, a compass-like device that tells the truth, befriends an armoured bear called Iorek Byrnison and helps him to regain his throne as the king of the bears. At the end of the novel, Lyra's father Lord Asriel opens a portal in the North through which Lyra herself travels to another world.

Lyra's world shares a lot of similarities with the real world. In addition to Brytain, there are other geographical locations that correspond with real places. For example, Uppsala, St. Petersburg, Texas and Svalbard are all places in Lyra's world. There are also nations called Norrway (Norway) and Lapland in the North and the alethiometer includes symbols that correspond with Asia and Africa.

Being a fantasy world, Lyra's world does not fully coincide with a specific time period. However, the closest counterpart in the real world would most likely be the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, wearing trousers is not normal for women, and having servants to handle housework is a common part of the upper-class society. Indicative of the time period not being much earlier than that are the scientific and technical advancements of the world. Electricity is widely used even though electrical charges are referred to as "anbaromagnetic charges", and there are such things as cars, zeppelins and snowmobiles. Physics, or experimental theology as it is called in Lyra's world, is also relatively advanced.

The most notable difference between Lyra's world and the real world is its inhabitants. Humans form the majority of the world's sentient population but all of them have daemons, animal shaped manifestations of their souls. Lyra's world has also witches and polar bear-like creatures called armoured bears who live in their own society in Svalbard.

The North portrayed in the story corresponds roughly with the region of Fennoscandia. This is evident in the use of names that parallel the real world directly. Pullman also includes others that are only reminiscent of real names, for example “Trollesund” (NL 141) which shares a similarity with real-life geographical names in Norway, such as Trollheimen or Trolltunga. Moreover, Serafina Pekkala’s clan, the main witch clan present in *Northern Lights*, inhabits the region of Lake Enara which refers to the largest lake in Northern Finland called Lake Inari, or Lake *Anar* in the Northern Sámi language (Lehtonen, 2019).

Many of the character names also carry Nordic indications. The armoured bears have names such as Iorek Byrnison and Iofur Raknison that have a distinct Norse sound to them (Oziewicz, 2010). Furthermore, “[t]he witches have names associated with the North: Serafina Pekkala (Finnish), Kaisa (Finnish/Swedish), Lena Feldt (Swedish) and Ruta Skadi (cf. the goddess Skaði in Norse mythology)” (Lehtonen, 2019, p. 334), which indicates a strong connection to the Fennoscandian area.

In addition to their names, the witches also have a religion that corresponds with Sámi mythology. Namely, their goddess of death, Yambe-Akka, is very similar to the Sámi goddess of the Underworld, Jábmiidáhkká (Lehtonen, 2019).

### 3 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

In this thesis, I will be mainly working under the theoretical framework of postcolonial criticism, but postcolonial criticism at large cannot be narrowed down to one specific theory or methodology. It is an approach that includes a multitude of different theories and methods of analysis.

However, it is possible to identify certain central themes in postcolonial criticism. Coronil (2004) summarizes the aim of postcolonial studies to be two-fold. On the one hand, the aim is to recognize colonialism as a “fundamental process in the formation of the modern world without reducing history to colonialism as an all-encompassing process” (Coronil, 2004, p. 225). On the other hand, postcolonial criticism questions and combats modernity and the way knowledge in the modern world has a strong Eurocentric emphasis.

#### 3.1 Orientalism

In this thesis, I will mostly base my analysis on the work of Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) and other studies derived from it. Orientalism is founded on the concept of the Orient, the Western and Eurocentric representation of Asia and the East:

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’. Thus a very large mass of writers – – have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, ‘mind’, destiny and so on. (Said, 1978, p. 2)

Said (1978) states that there have been different stages of Orientalism in the West. Many of the preconceptions about the Orient were already at place during the Medieval period and Renaissance but at this stage the concept of the Orient was much narrower than later on. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the concept of the Orient began to expand to what is currently regarded to as the East, the Orient was near synonymous with the Islamic world and the focus was on how Islam differed from Christianity. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the academic form of Orientalism was established, and it retained many of the same preconceptions that had earlier concerned the Islamic world. Finally, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the academic interest turned into utilizing Orientalism in the maintenance of imperial dominance.

All of this created a tradition, a “system of knowledge” (Said, 1978, p. 177), that directed much of the research, literature and other cultural products produced on the Orient. Said (1978, p. 206) also differentiates between “latent Orientalism” and “manifest Orientalism”:



The distinction I am making is really between an almost unconscious – – positivity, which I shall call *latent* Orientalism, and the various stated views about the Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth. (Said, 1978, p. 2016)

To summarize, in the course of history, Orientalism has been a way to view and understand the Orient that enforces the Western superiority and justifies the domination of the East. Orientalism was “a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 95).

According to Said (1978), the overarching view on the Orient was to reduce it to an unchanging, uniform territory whose individual people were only examples of “Orientalness” (Said, 1978, p. 231). The Orient was viewed as passive, naïve, irrational and impressionable. However, at the same time it was also exotic, mystical and spiritual, and especially the Oriental women were viewed as sensual and promiscuous (and usually at the disposal of the Western man). Primitiveness, barbarism and danger were also associated with the Orient. Overall, the Orient was non-Western. It was inherently different and alien, everything that the West was not.

Another aspect of the Western domination of Orientalism was that it was the Westerner who was uncovering the knowledge on the Orient. “[T]he Orient is *for* the European observer – –” (Said, 1978, p. 158). It was the Westerner’s point of view that mattered, the Westerner who was interpreting the Orient. Thus, the oriental view towards the East is very one-sided.

Even though Said’s original theories are based on the Orient, as the term *Orientalism* clearly showcases, the same concepts and ideas can be applied to other regions, as well. The theory of Orientalism has become an abstraction that can be used when analyzing and discussing all kinds of imaginative spaces and constructions of otherness (Ridanpää, 2019).

### **3.2 Borealism**

While Orientalism refers to the Orient, there is a somewhat comparable term used for the North: Borealism. It is used to describe exotizing discourses on the North (Lehtonen, 2019):

Broadly understood, Borealism covers both historical and contemporary discourses about an exotic, strange, enchanting or frightening North and its inhabitants, often combining both admiration and fear for the Northern other. (Lehtonen, 2019, p. 330)

According to Lehtonen (2019), these Borealistic discourses create a simplified representation of the North that may or may not correspond with reality. Another term used for roughly the same phenomenon is “imagined North” which refers to the cultural representations and discourses that have been dominant in the West when speaking of the North (Chartier, 2016).

Traditionally in the Western culture, the North has been represented by two contradicting images. On the one hand, the North is seen as dark and evil and it is associated with death. On the other hand, it is viewed as a place for happiness and a sort of utopia for morally good people. However, there has been an overarching pattern of affiliating the North with barbarism and the South with civilization. (Schram, 2011.)

Other central aspects of the Borealistic discourse are coldness, snow, ice and general colourlessness. The North is also vast, remote and unpopulated as well as wild, natural and primitive. (Briens, 2018; Chartier, 2016). Connected to the discourse of naturalness is one that ties the indigenous people of the North to being ecological. For example, the Sámi people are often linked to an ecological lifestyle (Lehtonen, 2019). The exoticizing discourse also includes qualities of mysticism and magic: “The exotic Lapland and the mythical North inhabited by magic people have featured in various types of texts for centuries” (Lehtonen, 2019, p. 328). At least in Finnish literature, the concept of the North also includes a strong emphasis on masculine values and a type of conservatism in relation to gender roles (Ridanpää, 2019).

However, Borealism cannot be fully equated with Orientalism as, despite their similarities, there are some key differences. While Orientalism was born and finds significance in the Western imperial domination, Borealism is not necessarily determined by a discourse of oppression. The relationship and hierarchy of dominance between the North and the South has not always remained the same and, even in times of domination, the dominant position of the South (usually Central and Southern Europe) has been much more limited than that of the West in Orientalism. (Briens, 2018.)

Another difference is the geographical position of the North and the Orient. The Orient has no fixed geographical point of reference. The East can continue indefinitely depending on the position of the observer, whereas, even if there are no absolute limits to the North as will be discussed in the following section, the North does always have a fixed point of reference in the polar regions. Thus the North is more grounded in geography than the Orient. (Briens, 2018.)

### **3.3 Where is “the North”?**

The concept of “the North” is not unproblematic or easy to define. North is one of the four cardinal points of the compass but as such it is always dependent on the position of the observer. The North as a geographical region is less dependent on the observer’s position but it is nonetheless a region

with no clearly defined borders. In this section, I will give an overview of how the concept of the North is understood in this thesis.

Natural sciences have ways to define where the North begins, usually based on temperatures, the tree line or permafrost and, while they do not represent a unified understanding on the borders of the North, they do offer the more vague cultural concept of the North some credibility, a measurable base for stereotypes and romanticized or exoticized mental images (Ridanpää, 2005).

According to Briens (2018), the region of the North is a discursive creation that has a basis in geography, climate and topography. However, it is not a region with fixed borders. The North is a partially imaginary space that has acquired its perceived characteristics from the geographically fixed North pole. The image associated with the North pole has then been projected onto a much larger territory, all of which does not share the same characteristics. Briens refers to this as “deterritorialization” (2018, p. 20). Therefore, the North perceived today is less of a geographical region and rather an “element of the collective imagination” (Briens, 2018, p. 21) that cannot be defined definitively.<sup>1</sup>

Ridanpää (2005) approaches the North from the standpoint of literary geography and introduces the idea of the North being a vessel for ideas and stereotypes rather than an actual place. That is, often in literature, the North is not even meant to be a real, fixed place. Rather, it is a purposefully vague environment, only anchored to actual Northern locations and place names so that the reader will have a perception of the story taking place in the North: “[T]he narrator offers geographical realism to support the reader’s imagination with which the reader can imagine their own geographical landscape for the events of the story”<sup>2</sup> (Ridanpää, 2005, p. 106).

Chartier (2016) has a very similar view towards the perception of the North:

In many of the Western texts, the “North” thus refers to a neutral matrix on which we can situate a text without taking into account the material or phenomenological reality, as long as they respect a series of criteria and characteristics that are unique to the “North” in the imaginary. (Chartier, 2016, p. 123)

---

<sup>1</sup> My translation of the original French: “C’est la raison pour laquelle plutôt que de chercher à placer le « Nord » sur une carte, il s’agirait davantage de le comprendre comme un élément de l’imaginaire collectif, mais appropriable de manière différentielle et singulière à chaque fois.”

<sup>2</sup> My translation of the original Finnish: ”Sen sijaan kertoja tarjoaa sijainnillista realismia avuksi lukijan mielikuvitukselle, jota hyödyntämällä hän voi itse kuvitella tarinan tapahtumille oman sijainnillisen maisemansa.”

According to Chartier (2016), Western discourses also perceive the North as a *space* rather than as a *place*. A *place* is connected to human experiences. It is an environment that has been made into something by humans, whereas a *space* lacks this human significance.

### 3.4 Literary analysis

The methodological framework in this thesis will be literary analysis. The basis of my analysis is formed through a close reading of *Northern Lights*. By close reading I refer to “mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meanings” (Brummett, 2018, p. 123). The close reading of the novel will be done reflecting back on the theoretical framework of postcolonial criticism, Orientalism and Borealism.

The critical aspect of this thesis will be strengthened by resistant reading, specifically from the point of view of Borealism. In the realm of resistant reading, I will be utilizing what Said (1993, p. 66) calls “contrapuntal reading”. It means to identify diverging ideologies and discourses within a text. In the context of postcolonial criticism, this usually means that one must not only identify discourses and ideologies of imperialism and oppression but to also take into consideration the resistance of imperialism. This is achieved by not only analyzing the discourses present in the text but by also analyzing the discourses that were left out.

Said himself utilized contrapuntal reading mainly to canonized texts, but it does not only refer to “re-reading canonical texts in a new light” (Kuortti, 2007, p. 153). Contrapuntal reading is also “an analytical strategy of resistant reading” (Kuortti, 2007, p. 153) that can be used to analyze more modern and marginal works, as well.

## 4 Analysis

The analysis part of this thesis will be divided into four main sections. Each section focuses on a different aspect of the North in Pullman's novel: The North as a physical environment, the human inhabitants of the North, as well as the witches and the armoured bears. Before these sections, I will also be discussing the role perspective and focalization play in the portrayal of the North.

### 4.1 On Perspective

The entire novel is told in the third person with an external narrator. However, the novel has Lyra as an internal focalizer for the majority of the story. Internal focalization is a term first used by Gérard Genette in the field of narratology and it refers to narration in which the events of the novel are filtered through the consciousness of a character (Niederhoff, 2013). Therefore, in *Northern Lights*, the reader sees most of the events and characters from Lyra's perspective and the novel's view towards the North is also largely filtered through Lyra's mind. Consequently, the novel's perception of the North is not only influenced by its British author but also by the British perspective of its protagonist.

Lyra's perspective is not the only perspective in the novel, although it is the dominant one. There are some instances where other children act as internal focalizers and some even rarer cases where the reader receives an insight into the mind of an adult character. Throughout the novel, the narration also switches to zero focalization which is a term coined by Genette. Zero focalization is a style of narration more commonly known as omniscient narration where the narrator tells more than what the characters themselves would know (Niederhoff, 2013).

What is relative to the topic at hand is that the Northern characters do not act as internal focalizers at any point in the novel. Even though the novel does include the perspectives of multiple characters in addition to Lyra, the story is never told from the point of view of central Northern characters such as Iorek Byrnison or Serafina Pekkala. This is significant because it enforces the novel's Southern or rather British perspective on the North.

However, the Northern characters are not entirely without a voice in the novel. Both Iorek and Serafina have extensive dialogue scenes and they are permitted to convey information about themselves, their species and the North at large. Interestingly, this does not apply to the Northern humans, which situates them in a position that is different from and in some ways inferior to the bears and the witches. The Northern humans and their perception of themselves is silenced, whereas the bears and the witches are allowed to convey at least some of their perspective through dialogue.

## 4.2 North as an environment

In this section, I will be analyzing the environment of the North in *Northern Lights* and the way it corresponds with or differs from the Borealistic discourse. As discussed in section 3.2, the North is most prominently associated with snow and ice, lack of colour, cold climate, darkness and being wild and natural (Chartier, 2016; Lehtonen, 2019). The North is also viewed as an empty, unpopulated region that lacks civilization (Chartier, 2016; Briens, 2018). Other and perhaps more sinister characteristics are the danger and the evil often ascribed to the North (Schram, 2011). On a more positive, yet exotizing note nonetheless, mystical and even magical qualities are also often present in the Borealistic discourse (Lehtonen, 2019).

Many of these qualities, namely the wildness, snow, coldness and emptiness, are expressed immediately when the expedition arrives in the port of Trollesund:

The smell was of fish, but mixed with it came land-smells too: *pine-resin* and *earth* and something *animal* and *musky*, and something else that was *cold* and *blank* and *wild*: it might have been *snow*. It was the smell of the North. (NL 145, my emphasis)

The snow, ice and cold are present throughout the time spent in the North. The climate is referred to as “monstrously cold” (NL 145) and the endlessness of the color white is mentioned on several occasions. The darkness of the environment is also highlighted. The gyptian king, Lord Faa, describes the North as the “land of the dark” (NL 102) and the polar night or the arctic night is mentioned multiple times. However, the meaning of these terms is not explained, thus, giving the impression of darkness being the normal state in the North all year round.

Following the Borealistic discourse, Pullman’s North is also an empty wilderness void of civilization and people. Not only is the smell of the North described as “blank” in the paragraph above, but the quality of being empty and unpopulated is strongly present also later in the novel. For one, during the expedition, only one town is ever encountered in addition to Trollesund and the society of the armoured bears on Svalbard. In Bolvangar, a scientist also tells Lyra: “– – this is the only good place for hundreds of miles – –” (NL 208), a sentiment later repeated by Lyra herself.

Pullman’s North is also undoubtedly a dangerous environment, especially to Southerners. In Brytain, the threat to Lyra comes from the people and the Magisterium. In the North it is not only the humans who need to be feared but the environment itself. When escaping from Bolvangar, the children are threatened by the cold and the snow to the point that they are in danger of getting lost and freezing to death. What is noteworthy is that this threat is mostly present to the children dressed in clothes made by Southerners: “The trouble was that coal-silk wasn’t as warm as proper fur, no matter how much it

was padded out with hollow coal-silk fibers” (NL 249). In comparison, Lyra, dressed in fur clothes made by the Northerners, is just fine. This showcases not only the hostility of the Northern environment towards Southerners but also the value placed in the Northern naturalness. The Southern, synthetic coal-silk is no match for the cold while natural animal hides are.

The North is also (allegedly) a home to all kinds of creatures both dangerous and, some could say, evil. Among them are headless ghosts called “Nälkäinens” (NL 96) and half-dead zombie people whose lungs have been ripped out. The existence of these creatures is never verified in the novel (nor later in the trilogy). However, among these creatures described to Lyra by one of the gyptians, Tony Costa, are the very real armoured bears. Regardless of the true or fictitious nature of these creatures, their image is a part of the representation of the North in Pullman’s novel and, in addition to the danger and the threat, they also evoke the mystical aspect of the Borealistic discourse.

Spirits and ghosts are not, however, exclusively a Northern phenomenon in the novel, although the most brutal examples of such creatures are the Northern ones. It is expressed by Lyra and some rumors circulating in Brytain, that the people there do also believe in spirits: “Another rumour said she wasn’t a human child at all but a pair of spirits in the form of child and daemon” (NL 131). It is also established by the gyptian Farder Coram that spirits do, in fact, exist in this world. He tells Lyra that the clockwork creature Mrs Coulter sends to track her is of a kind he has encountered in Africa: “There’s a clockwork running in there, and pinned to the spring of it, there’s a bad spirit with a spell through its heart” (NL 135).

Nevertheless, the North is not all hostile and brutal. It is also mystical and beautiful. As indicated by the name of the novel, the northern lights are in a prominent position in the story. They are abundantly described in the novel and always as mysterious, beautiful and fascinating. Interestingly they are also compared to Heaven, Hell or angels on multiple occasions:

As if from Heaven itself, great curtains of delicate light hung and trembled. Pale green and rose-pink, and as transparent as the most fragile fabric, and at the bottom edge a profound and fiery crimson like the fires of Hell, they swung and shimmered loosely with more grace than the most skillful dancer. (NL 157–158)

The northern lights also act as a sort of window into other universes: “But in the middle of the Aurora, high above the bleak landscape, Lyra could see something solid. – – there in the sky was the unmistakable outline of a city – –” (NL 26). This aspect of the northern lights evokes the mystical and magical characteristics of the Borealistic discourse.

In addition to the Borealistic characteristics present in the novel, there are also some indications towards imperialism. First and foremost, the North is viewed as a place where one can abuse normal

moral codes without repercussions. When Lyra points out the horror of the experimentations done on the children in Bolvangar, Lord Asriel replies, “That’s why they had to hide away in the far North, in darkness and obscurity” (NL 317). This is not a notion unlike the modern concept of taking clothing production, for example, into countries where regulations are less strict or nonexistent in order to mass produce goods without worrying about what it is doing to the workers.

The North is also sought after by other nations for its natural resources: “[T]he Tartars want to move North just as much as the rest, for the coal-spirit and the fire-mines – –” (NL 95). This parallels very closely the exploitation of many countries colonized by European nations. In the novel, the North is also the target of polar explorations, much like the Orient was keenly studied by the Orientalists. Furthermore, the idea of explorations is not just present in the novel, it is romanticized: “The novel retains exploration’s lure of fame and prestige – – The romance of polar exploration – – enchants [Lyra] and, by proxy, the reader” (Sampson, 2018, p. 30). According to Sampson, this is reminiscent of the British view towards exploration that started when British colonialism was at its peak.

### **4.3 Humans of the North**

In this section, I will be focusing on the humans that live in the North, namely the Northern Tartars, the townspeople of Trollesund and some villagers encountered by Lyra and Iorek. The townspeople and the villagers are from now on collectively referred to as the Northerners.

In addition to the lack of Northern human perspective discussed in section 4.1, there is quite a clear divide between the Northern humans and the fantastical inhabitants of the North when it comes to the tone of the portrayal. Generally, both the Northern Tartars and the Northerners are depicted much more negatively, although to different degrees, than the bears or the witches.

The Northerners are mainly viewed as rather primitive and underdeveloped. First, the villagers are very superstitious. When Lyra and Iorek arrive to the village, one of the villagers thinks they are “devils” (NL 181). This, however, is not exclusively a Northern quality as is evident in the example given in the previous section of British people spreading rumors about spirits. The Northerners also do not seem to use motorized vehicles, even though snowmobiles, for instance, have clearly been invented as Mrs Coulter is shown to use one. Furthermore, the villagers appear to earn their living through very traditional means such as reindeer herding and fishing.

Other than being somewhat primitive, the Northerners are also heavily associated with greed and immorality. It is well established by Iorek Byrnison among others that many of the Northerners are



aware of the experimentations and kidnappings taking place. In Trollesund, Iorek tells Lyra, “No one will tell you about [the kidnapped children]; they pretend not to see, because the child-cutters bring money and business” (NL 156). A similar sentiment is expressed by the witch consul in Trollesund. The characteristic of immorality is strengthened by the fact that the townspeople have tricked Iorek into what Lyra compares to slavery. The greed is also present, although briefly, in one of the villagers. When Lyra takes away the child that the villagers have viewed as some sort of evil spirit, the first thing the villager does is to ask for payment for a fish taken by the child.

The portrayal of the Northern Tartars is even more negative. In fact, they are hardly portrayed as individuals:

As mercenaries, the Tartars and the Muscovites shade into one another; unlike the individualised people of Lyra’s world whose daemons come in a variety of shapes, the Muscovites and the Tartars of the two units described in the trilogy all have wolf daemons. (Oziewicz, 2010, p. 8)

Oziewicz also notes that the difference in treatment between the Northern (North-Eastern) Tartars and the witches and the bears is very stark. His conclusion is that this reflects the Eurocentric notion of “the further east you go, the fiercer the barbarity” (Oziewicz, 2010, p. 7). While I agree that there is a divide in the characterization, I think the explanation bypasses the negative portrayal of the townspeople and the villagers. Although there is most likely some prejudice towards the East present in the story, the situation is clearly more complex.

The barbaric and dangerous aspects of Borealism manifest very clearly in the Northern Tartars. Every one of the Tartars encountered in the story is a mercenary, working for the agents of the Magisterium in Bolvangar. The barbarism is even clearer in the custom of the Northern Tartars to scalp their enemies and to drill holes into their own heads. Lee Scoresby, an aeronaut from Texas who is enlisted to the rescue mission, explains to Lyra:

“They’ve been doing that for thousands of years. In the Tunguska campaign we captured five Tartars alive, and three of them had holes in their skulls. One of them had two.”  
“They do it to each other?”  
“That’s right – It’s a great privilege. They do it so the gods can talk to you”  
(NL 196)

In addition to being a custom that seems brutal and barbaric, drilling holes to one’s head is also indicative of the primitiveness and mysticism associated with the North.

#### 4.4 Armoured bears

As already mentioned, the portrayal of the armoured bears differs significantly from that of the Northern humans while also exhibiting many of the same characteristics of the Borealistic discourse. In this section, I will be analyzing the Borealistic aspects of the armoured bears.

The most notable difference between the bears and the humans is that the bears have a major character on the side of the heroes. Iorek Byrnison is recruited to the rescue expedition and in the course of the novel, he and Lyra become very close to the point that she tells Lord Asriel, her actual father, “I love Iorek Byrnison; I love an armoured bear more’n I love my father” (NL 312). Therefore, the portrayal of the bears is tinted much more positively than that of the humans.

However, many of the Borealistic characteristics ascribed to the North overall and its human inhabitants also apply to the armoured bears. On a geographical level, the bears live in Svalbard, far from humans and civilization. Lee Scoresby describes it as “the bleakest, barest most inhospitable godforsaken dead-end of nowhere” (NL 195). Later in the novel, Svalbard is also portrayed as filthy with blood and bird-droppings, painting an uncivilized and primitive image.

The bears are also undoubtedly dangerous and even barbaric in the novel. They are described as ferocious fighters and they are incredibly strong physically. The bear counterpart to the humans’ daemons is their armour – that is, their armour is described as a part of their soul, emphasizing their warrior image. According to the novel, fighting is also a normal way to solve disputes in the bear society, although fighting till death is not common. However, one such fight does take place in the novel and it fortifies the barbaric image of the bears. The language used in the novel overall is not that graphic. However, when Iorek and Iofur, the tyrannical bear king, have a duel for the throne, the writing shifts to very graphic and brutal:

It was a horrifying blow. It tore the lower part of his jaw clean off, so that it flew through the air scattering blood-drops in the snow many yards away – – There was one ritual yet to perform. Iorek sliced open the dead king’s unprotected chest, peeling the fur back to expose the narrow white and red ribs like the timbers of an upturned boat. Into the ribcage Iorek reached, and he plucked out Iofur’s heart, red and steaming, and ate it there in front of Iofur’s subjects. (NL 300)

The bears are also portrayed as an other, distancing them from humans. Naturally, the bears are different from humans. However, it is the intensity of the distancing that is notable. When Lyra first sees Iorek in Trollesund, she reacts strongly to him and his alienness:

Lyra’s heart was thumping hard, because something in the bear’s presence made her feel close to coldness, danger, brutal power, but a power controlled by intelligence; and *not a human*

*intelligence, nothing like a human*, because of course bears had no daemons. (NL 154, my emphasis)

These same sentiments of alienness, lacking a daemon and being entirely different from humans are repeated by Lyra throughout the novel. However, it is interesting that this otherness seems to be viewed as a positive quality in the bears, which is evident in the difference between the portrayal of Iorek and Iofur. Iorek is on the side of the heroes while Iofur works for Mrs Coulter and the Magisterium. Iofur is also, as already mentioned, a tyrannical ruler who tricked Iorek into exile, thus gaining the throne. The juxtaposition is clear: Iorek is the hero while Iofur is the villain.

Despite the villainy, Iofur is described as very humanlike and, therefore, not as alien as Iorek. For one, Iofur wants to become a human, he wants a daemon of his own and to model the bear society in the image of the human society. He also wants to be baptized by the Magisterium. Even his appearance and mannerisms reflect humanness, a characteristic directly contrasted with Iorek:

[Iofur's] face was much more mobile and expressive, with a kind of humanness in it which she had never seen in Iorek's. When Iofur looked at her she seemed to see a man looking out of his eyes, the sort of man she had met at Mrs Coulter's, a subtle politician used to power. (NL 285)

According to Sampson (2018, p. 38), the juxtaposition between these two bears and their treatment within the narrative “serve a structural purpose that is not entirely unlike that of the colonial native in Victorian Imperial texts”. Iorek represents the noble savage while Iofur is the native who wants to be integrated into the colonizers' society:

The [noble savage] is permitted to excel at certain things (provided they are aligned with essential, natural forces) in order to chastise and correct certain excesses of the Western world; the other is a parody of what happens when ethnic and racial hierarchies are inverted and the subaltern grotesquely puts on the mantle of the master. (Sampson, 2018, p. 38)

The parody aspect is highlighted by the fact that Iofur is not only portrayed as the villain but is also ridiculed for his aspirations to build a university for the bears. This discourse of the noble savage is understood to be a place of origin for the ecological aspect of the Borealistic discourse in which the naturalness and sustainable lifestyle of the Northern indigenous people is contrasted with the urban and modern lifestyle (Lehtonen, 2019).

The armoured bears also represent some of the Borealistic characteristics that have not been encountered in relation to the humans or the North in general, namely the virtuousness and the conservativeness. The virtues are mostly connected to Iorek. As has already been discussed, Iorek is held in high regard by Lyra and the other humans on the rescue expedition. He is strong, wise and

exceptionally trustworthy even compared to other bears. Lee Scoresby states, “All bears are true, but I’ve known Iorek for years, and nothing under the sky will make him break his word” (NL 177).

However, perhaps even more so than being virtuous, the bears are described as very conservative and traditional at least in the context of the modern times. For one, the bear society is ruled by a monarchy based on blood. The reason for why Iofur could gain the throne after Iorek’s exile is that he is a prince. The bears also interact on a hierarchy based on strength, a quality not only conservative but also primitive.

Furthermore, the bear society seems to be very patriarchal, which coincides with the masculinity and the traditional gender roles of the Northern discourse described by Ridanpää (2019). At no point is the reader introduced to a female bear by name. All the bears encountered are also referred to with male pronouns. Female bears in general are mentioned only a few times. First, Serafina Pekkala tells Lyra that Iorek was exiled for killing a bear in a fight over a female, which once again reflects the traditional idea of males fighting over females. Second, it is mentioned that Iofur keeps multiple wives, and third, in the battle between Iorek and Iofur, the female bears have their own enclosure from which they watch the duel. The maleness of the bear society is enforced with Lyra’s reaction when seeing the females in the duel: “Lyra was profoundly curious about she-bears, because she knew so little about them – –” (NL 293). Her reaction makes it clear that female bears are not only rarely discussed but also that she has not encountered female bears before in her time on Svalbard.

#### **4.5 Witches**

In this section, I will analyze how the witches are portrayed in the story. Similarly to the bears, the witches are in a more positive role than the humans. The witches are also divided to those who fight on the side of the heroes and to those who work for the Magisterium, much as the armored bears. The main focus will be on the witches of Serafina Pekkala’s clan, as those are the ones most strongly present in *Northern Lights*.

If the armoured bears are characterized as primitive, dangerous and brutal, the witches are in many ways the flipside of the same coin. In a way, the witches are also very primitive, but they lean more on the side of natural. The witches are strongly tied to nature. Farder Coram tells Lyra that the witches “live in the forests and on the tundra, not in a seaport among men and women. Their business is with the wild” (NL 142). They also use pine branches to fly and have “joys and sorrows bound up with the flowering of tiny plants up on the tundra” (NL 189).

If the bears are more on the brutal side of Borealism, the witches represent the mystical and magical aspect of the exotizing discourse. The witches can fly, as mentioned above, and they live for hundreds of years. Additionally, they can perform spells even though it is not demonstrated until later in the trilogy. The role of prophecies and fate is also prominent in the witch society. The carrying prophecy throughout the trilogy is one that predicts Lyra saving everyone. On an imperialistic note, this carries the connotation of Europeans and Brits being the saviors of their colonies.

The religion of the witches is likewise notable, especially in the context of a world ruled by the Magisterium. As discussed in section 2, the religion of the witches is modeled after Sámi mythology. According to Lehtonen (2019, p. 328), in the Borealistic discourse, “indigenous people are viewed as groups that have a living connection to their own mythologies, belief systems and traditions, including phenomena such as shamanism.” While Pullman’s witches do not explicitly practice shamanism, they do share many similarities with it, such as herbalism and performing spells by singing (Lehtonen, 2019).

Both the virtuousness and conservatism of the Borealistic discourse are embodied in the witches. When viewed from the perspective of the publication time of the novel and modern times in general, the witch society carries several characteristics that are typically viewed as admirable. These characteristics are also ones that are associated specifically with the Nordic countries.

First, the witch society is fully matriarchal. There are no male witches and human men function only as lovers and husbands or workers. Lehtonen (2019, p. 335) refers to this aspect of the society as “radical-feminist”. The perception of the Nordic countries being extremely gender equal and pioneers when it comes to women’s rights could be the source for this aspect of the story although it is taken to the extreme where patriarchy has been turned into matriarchy.

Rather similarly, the socialist democracy of the Nordic countries manifests in an extreme way in the witch society. In *Northern Lights*, Serafina Pekkala tells Lee Scoresby, “Witches own nothing, so we are not interested in preserving value or making profits” (NL 262). This kind of society is very reminiscent of the socialist utopia proposed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels (2008, p. 30) state, “– – the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property”. Thus, the witch society seems to be a type of extreme utopia when it comes to gender politics and socialism.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the witch society also includes some elements from the masculine and conservative discourses of Borealism. For one, the way the witches are described is very heteronormative and centered around the male gaze despite the active role of the witches. All

the witches encountered in the novel (and later novels) are “attractive, heterosexual women who stay young for several hundred years” (Lehtonen, 2019, p. 335). Furthermore, when Serafina talks of her past relationship with Farder Coram, her sentiment is very conservative and male-centered:

I loved him at once. I would have changed my nature, I would have forsaken the star-tingle and the music of the Aurora; I would never have flown again – I would have given all that up in a moment, without a thought, to be a gyptian boat-wife and cook for him and bear his children. (NL 267)

Therefore, the witches embody both progressive and conservative characteristics, which reflects the aspect of Borealism that views the North both as a utopia and an uncivilized, primitive territory at the same time (Schram, 2011).

## 5 Discussion

As mentioned in section 4.3, Oziwicz (2010, p. 7) offers the conclusion that the representations of the different peoples in Lyra's world follow the rule "the further east you go, the fiercer the barbarity". Therefore, the world view in *Northern Lights* (and the rest of the trilogy) would be based on prejudices directed towards the East.

However, in the same section, I note that the negative portrayals of different groups do not strictly depend on how far east one lives. When analyzing the Northern peoples of Lyra's world, the divide between positive and negative portrayals would seem to be roughly between the fantastical peoples (bears and witches) and the normal humans. While the portrayal of the witches and the bears is by no means entirely positive, the narrative does situate the main representatives of these groups on the side of Lyra and the other heroes of the story. Meanwhile, the Northern Tartars, the townspeople and the villagers are consistently portrayed as immoral and reprehensible.

I propose that this arrangement corresponds with the narrative structure already discussed in relation to Iorek and Iofur: the noble savage and the native who wants to become a Westerner. Both the witches and the armoured bears fit into the mold of the noble savage. They are indigenous groups of the North who live in harmony with nature. However, at the same time, they are still primitive and not part of the modern world, perhaps most notably demonstrated by the denial of the Magisterium to baptize Iofur and the open ridicule towards Iofur's wishes to build a university for the bears.

Furthermore, the sustainable and natural lifestyle of the noble savage is often perceived as something the modern human lacks, as something modern people should learn to prevent environmental catastrophes (Mathisen, 2004 quoted in Lehtonen, 2019). Later in the trilogy, the modern people, namely Lord Asriel, do indeed cause an environmental catastrophe by opening a massive portal to another universe, making the parallel between the witch and bear societies and the noble savage even stronger.

The Northern humans also fit into the role of the native who wants to become like their colonizers. In many ways the humans share a resemblance to the witches and the bears, namely because of their more primitive characteristics. At the same time, they are becoming more like, for example, the British people of Lyra's world. For one, they have been converted by the Magisterium which becomes clear later in the trilogy. As such, they are Northern people who are becoming more like their colonizers who in this context are the empire of the Magisterium. The Northern humans are also already significantly closer to the "civilized" people because they have daemons who act just like those of the Southerners. Moreover, just like the native who wants to become a Westerner, or Iofur

who wants to become a human, the Northern humans must also be returned to their natural, inferior position. Differing from Iofur, this does not occur on the level of the plot but rather in the overall negative view towards them promoted by the narrative.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that Oziewicz is still accurate in his conclusion. The negative image of the Northern Tartars is much more drastic than that of the townspeople of Trollesund or the villagers. What he refers to as “Western politico-cultural superiority in regard to Eastern Europeans” (Oziewicz, 2010, p. 1) is most likely also at play in Pullman’s trilogy.

Based on the noble savage discussion above and the more negative characteristics of Borealism such as brutality and primitiveness, it would be easy to assume that the North is viewed negatively in the novel. This, however, is not the case at large. Just as the discourse of Borealism is not as straightforwardly dominant and oppressive as Orientalism, the stance towards the North in the novel is similarly conflicted.

In *Northern Lights*, the Southern point of comparison for the North is Brytain and in some ways Brytain does act as the opposite to the North. First, in contrast to the uncivilized and empty North, Brytain is very grounded in human experience. Following Chartier (2016), Pullman’s Brytain is a *place* instead of a *space*. In Jordan College, this humanness is expressed in how the college has literally burrowed into the earth, forming metaphorical roots:

Like some enormous fungus whose root-system extended over acres, Jordan had begun, sometime in the Middle Age, to spread below the surface. Tunnels, shafts, vaults, cellars, staircases had so hollowed out the earth below Jordan and for several hundred yards around it that there was almost as much air below ground as above -- (NL 46)

Brytain, and especially Lyra’s experience of Brytain, is also characterized by science and scientific knowledge. The British characters discuss scientific findings repeatedly, especially in the first half of the novel that takes place in Brytain. Words such as “photons” (NL 24), “atoms” (NL 75) and “elementary particles” (NL 75) are frequently present either in dialogue or the narration. This ends abruptly when Lyra travels to the North only resurfacing when she speaks with her British father. This juxtaposition enforces the divide, already established with the primitiveness of the North, between the scientific Brytain and the uneducated North.

Yet, on the level of the narrative and especially in relation to Lyra, the North represents freedom. Despite the scientific valor of Brytain, Lyra’s experience of it is rather restrictive and getting more so as she is growing up. For one, Brytain has quite a narrow view towards being a woman. Jordan College is almost fully a male environment as is the rest of the scientific community: “[Lyra] had lived most of her life in the College, but had never seen the Retiring Room before: only Scholars and



their guests were allowed in there, and never females” (NL 10). At the beginning of the novel, Lyra has already internalized this attitude and views female scholars with disdain.

The conservative view towards women is also present outside the academic world. Lord Asriel explains to Lyra: “You see, your mother’s always been ambitious for power. At first she tried to get it the normal way, through marriage –” (NL 316). Even among the gyptians, who are in many ways freer in their daily life, the society is still very much patriarchal. Female gyptians are referred to as “boat-mothers” (NL 93) or “boat-wives” (NL 267), thus defining them always in relation to someone else. Serafina Pekkala reaffirms this in the passage discussed at the end of section 4.5 where she talks of giving up everything to marry Farder Coram, settling for taking care of the home and having his children. Even if Lyra could be happy and achieve a freer existence among the gyptians, Ma Costa reminds her: “You en’t gyptian, Lyra. You might pass for gyptian with practice, but there’s more to us than gyptian language” (NL 100).

Lyra is also faced with the strict class division of Brytain. As a child, she has befriended lower class people and children, such as the gyptians and servants, but as she is growing up, class expectations are beginning to weigh on her. The Master of Jordan College questions her only having working class friends and he also makes a point out of saying: “You’re not a servant’s child either; we couldn’t put you out to be fostered by a town family. They might have cared for you in some ways, but your needs are different” (NL 64). Eventually, Lyra herself states her dislike for her life as an upper-class girl in Brytain, expressing that it is suffocating her.

Therefore, going to the North represents freedom to Lyra. It is a place, where she does not need to comply with the British rules of gender and class – rules that she has already began breaking by smoking and drinking. In the North, she gets to experience an adventure and to have agency as someone important. She not only frees the kidnapped children and helps Iorek regain his throne but also meets a society where class and gender are not an issue, as the witches are, in essence, a radical feminist and socialist society.

In addition, Lyra’s affinity with the North is conveyed through two specific words. Early in the novel, Lyra is described as a barbarian and a savage: “In many ways Lyra was a barbarian” (NL 35). “She was a coarse and greedy little savage, for the most part” (NL 36). Both are words that coincide with the Borealistic discourse of the North as primitive and brutal. Linking these words and qualities early on to Lyra, the protagonist of the story, softens the negative connotation of these qualities in the novel.

All in all, in *Northern Lights*, the attitude towards the North is conflicted, much as the Borealistic discourse itself. On the one hand, the North is described as somewhat of a primitive relic. On the other hand, it is a place of freedom and agency for Lyra.

## 6 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have analyzed the first novel in Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials* from the perspective of postcolonial criticism and more specifically Borealism. The aim has been to answer the question: how is the North represented within the novel?

The analysis of the novel indicates that in many ways *Northern Lights* fits into the continuum of exotizing discourses on the North, also referred to as Borealism. The central features of Borealism – primitiveness, naturalness, danger and mysticism as well as physical characteristics such as coldness, snow and ice – are all present in the novel's depiction of the physical region of the North and its inhabitants. The novel also showcases how deeply ingrained some harmful discourses, such as that of the noble savage, are in the Western culture.

However, the image conveyed in the novel is not one that consciously aims to degrade or oppress the North. From the perspective of the narrative, the North can be viewed as a place of freedom, specifically from the more stifling aspects of civilization. For Lyra, an upper-class girl in Brytain, the British society is presented as a scientific pioneer but at the same time it suffocates her with expectations relating to gender and class. In the novel, the North is a place where Lyra can escape those expectations and have agency in her life.

Thus, the portrayal of the North in Pullman's *Northern Lights* reflects the broader discourse of Borealism in its contradictions. As opposed to the discourse of Orientalism where the power hierarchy is clear and used for oppression, in Borealism those divisions have never been as straightforward. The North is both primitive and ecologically superior. It is both dangerous and fascinating. *Northern Lights* reflects this with its depiction of the North both as a region more primitive than its British counterpart yet also as a symbol of freedom for the protagonist of the novel.

## List of references

### *Primary source*

Pullman, P. (1995). Northern Lights [=NL]. In P. Pullman, *His Dark Materials* (pp. 7–337). London: Everyman's Library.

### *Secondary sources*

Bahri, D. (2004). Feminism in/and postcolonialism. In N. Lazarus (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies* (pp. 199–220). Cambridge University Press.

Briens, S. (2018). Boréalisme. Pour un atlas sensible du Nord [Borealism. For a sensitive atlas of the North]. *Etudes Germaniques*, 290(2), 151–176. <https://hal.sorbonne-universite.fr/hal-02179801/document>

Brummett, B. (2018). *Techniques of Close Reading* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://dx-doi-org.pc124152.oulu.fi:9443/10.4135/9781071802595>

Cantrell, S. K. (2014). Letting Specters In: Environmental Catastrophe and the Limits of Space in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 39(2), 234–251. [doi:10.1353/chq.2014.0029](https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.2014.0029)

Chartier, D. (2016). Qu'est-ce que l'imaginaire du Nord? [What is "the Imagined North"?] (Christina Kannenberg, Transl.). *Etudes Germaniques*, 71(2), 189–200. [doi:10.3917/eger.282.0189](https://doi.org/10.3917/eger.282.0189)

Coronil, F. (2004). Latin American postcolonial studies and global decolonization. In N. Lazarus (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies* (pp. 221–240). Cambridge University Press.

- Ezra, E. (2019). Becoming Familiar: Witches and Companion Animals in Harry Potter and His Dark Materials. *Children's Literature*, 47, 175–196. <http://doi.org/10.1353/chl.2019.0009>
- Lehtonen, S. (2019). Touring the magical North: borealism and the indigenous Sámi in contemporary English-language children's fantasy literature. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22(3), 325–344. <https://doi-org.pc124152.oulu.fi:9443/10.1177%2F1367549417722091>
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2008). *The Communist Manifesto*. Waiheke Island: The Floating Press.
- Mathisen S. R. (2004) Hegemonic representations of Sámi culture: From narratives of noble savages to discourse on ecological Sámi. In A. L. Siikala, B. Klein & S. R. Mathisen (Eds.), *Creating Diversities: Folklore, Religion and the Politics of Heritage* (pp. 17–30). Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society.
- Niederhoff, B. (2013) Focalization. In *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Retrieved from <https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/18.html>
- Oliver, C. (2012). Mocking God and Celebrating Satan: Parodies and Profanities in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials. *Children's Literature in Education*, 43(4), 293–302. [doi:10.1007/s10583-012-9165-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-012-9165-4).
- Oziewicz, M. (2010). Representations of Eastern Europe in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials, Jonathan Stroud's The Bartimaeus Trilogy, and J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series. *International Research in Children's Literature*, 3(1), 1–14. [doi:10.3366/ircl.2010.0002](https://doi.org/10.3366/ircl.2010.0002).
- Padley, J., & Padley, K. (2006). 'A Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven: *His Dark Materials*', Inverted Theology, and the End of Philip Pullman's Authority. *Children's Literature in Education*, 37(4), 325–334. [doi:10.1007/s10583-006-9022-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-006-9022-4).

- Ridanpää, J. (2019). Postcolonial critique and the North in geographical imaginations. In M. Mäkikalli, Y. Holt & T. Hautala-Hirvioja (Eds.), *North as a Meaning in Design and Art* (pp. 123–137). Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press. <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi-fe202001162321>
- Ridanpää, J. (2005). *Kuvitteellinen pohjoinen: maantiede, kirjallisuus ja postkoloniaalinen kritiikki* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Oulu). Nordia Geographical Publications, 34(2).
- Said, E. W. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Sampson, C. (2018). Pullman and Imperialism: Navigating the Geographic Imagination in The Golden Compass. In A. Hudson (Ed.), *Children's Literature and Imaginative Geography* (pp. 25–44). Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Schram, K. H. M. (2011). *Borealism: folkloristic perspectives on transnational performances and the exoticism of the North* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Edinburgh). <http://hdl.handle.net/1842/5976>
- Stephenson, J. (1992) Contemplating otherness: Ideology and historical fiction. *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*. (pp. 202–240). London: Longman.