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# Fantasy and Faith in Developing Children's Personalities: Exploring *Skellig*, *Coraline*, and *The Devil's Arithmetic*

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***Abstract**: The paper examines how fantasy and faith contribute to the development of children's personalities through a textual analysis of three notable works of children's literature: Skellig, Coraline, and The Devil's Arithmetic. The study focuses on the fantasy elements of these stories, along with the underlying faith that sustains children's imaginative worlds, highlighting their importance in children's psychological and emotional growth. By exploring the characters, narrative structures, and thematic content of these novels, the research uncovers the mechanism through which faith in fantasy elements facilitates self-discovery and personal development of children. While doing so, the paper sheds light on the transformative power of fantasy in guiding children through their journey from childhood to adulthood. Additionally, the study discusses the enduring appeal and pedagogical potential of the fantasy genre.*

**Keywords**: fantasy, faith, childhood, development, adulthood

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## Introduction

Fantasy in literature "deals with the impossible and the inexplicable" (Lynn, 1983, p.ix) and pushes the boundaries of imagination without being limited by any established human conventions. The range of fantasy has expanded in every conceivable direction, "backward into the mythical past, forward into science fiction, and sideways into all parallel worlds" (Stableford, 2009, p. ix). According to Peter Hunt (2005), fantasy "tries to link the world of fiction with the world of reality" (p. 7), and this function affirms that fantasy literature incorporates elements from both realms, rather than solely relying on the supernatural. Children's innate fascination with magical events and their ability to suspend disbelief make them more receptive to fantasy stories compared to adult readers. This compels writers to utilize fantasy as a symbolic tool to present complex topics in a way that is easily comprehensible to young readers.

In the past, fantasy stories for children were mainly based on folk and fairy tales. However, over time, authors began to incorporate "materials related to education, religion, political and various concepts related to liberation by using fantasy as a means to free the mind of the child from social boundaries" (Hunt, 2005, pp. 4-5). The juxtaposition of fantasy and reality occurs in various ways and in different degrees, depending on the intentions of the writers. Gates, Steffel, & Molson (2003) termed them as "Mixed Fantasy", which also includes some common subtypes such as journeys (time travel), transformation, talking animals and toys, and magic (p. 49). Considering the narrative strategies of some significant subgenres of "Mixed Fantasy", this essay will examine three remarkable children's books, David Almond's *Skellig* (1998), Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002), and Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988). The study will explore the sophisticated blending of fantasy and reality in these texts to demonstrate how children negotiate their transition from childhood to adulthood having all the domestic, social, cultural, and religious institutions encrypted within it. By integrating the real and the unreal, these narratives allow young readers to explore fear, hope, identity, and moral growth within safe imaginative spaces. Each narrative demonstrates that fantasy is not merely an escape from reality but a bridge that helps children confront real-life challenges, strengthen inner resilience, and discover a sense of purpose and self-understanding. Additionally, since children's literature has a deep and personal connection with young readers, it helps them engage with abstract and challenging ideas in tangible and emotionally meaningful ways (Cignarella, 2015, p. 1). Through this lens, this paper highlights fantasy literature as a powerful medium for personal growth and self-discovery for young readers.

## Review of the Literature

Children's literature allows young readers to connect their real-life experiences with the imaginative worlds. The fantasy elements in these books provide children with a safe platform to explore their emotions and figure out various complex issues of the real world. In this safe space, they can discover bravery while encountering fears and understand the difference between right and wrong in a natural and meaningful way.

Over the years, the authors of children's book have used multifaceted fantasy elements in their stories that are not only entertaining but also help them convey moral, emotional,

and social lessons to their young readers. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) written by Lewis Carroll, the young protagonist Alice's bewilderment and inquisitiveness reflect a child's quest for self-identity and existence. Likewise, in *The Hobbit* (1937), the author J.R.R. Tolkien teaches perseverance and courage through Bilbo Baggins's transformation from a fearful hobbit into a brave hero. It illustrates how the fantasy stories can foster self-confidence and ethical knowledge in young readers.

Apart from the moral and self-understanding, fantasy narratives also play a vital role in developing faith and belief in young people. The British writer C.S. Lewis blends his magical storytelling with Christian symbolism in his most acclaimed book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (1950)*. Aslan's sacrifice and resurrection exhibit themes of faith, bravery, and redemption. This tradition also continues in modern fantasy where authors connect imagination with emotional and moral growth.

Modern fantasy continues this tradition by connecting magic with emotional and moral growth. *J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series* (1997–2007) shows how friendship, love, and moral choices are stronger than fear or the power of dominance, highlighting the fact that believing in love can change many things. In *The Golden Compass* (1995), Philip Pullman questions authority and encourages children to think critically about truth and conscience. The young protagonist Bod in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2008) gains valour while staying among ghosts, reminding the readers that faith in oneself is vital for development.

Despite having a wide variety of children's literature available over the last few centuries, most of the authors and conversations focus on how fantasy elements stimulate children's imagination and help them learn moral lessons. But the combined role of fantasy and faith and their influence on young people's emotional maturity has not been discussed that much.

This study addresses this gap by exploring how fantasy and faith work together to develop children's understanding of real life. The paper examines three remarkable works of children's literature David Almond's *Skellig* (1998), Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002), and Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988) and highlights the fact that fantasy is not a mere imagination but a journey of belief, empathy, and transformation towards adulthood. In this way, this research broadens the understanding of children's literature, presenting fantasy both as a creative and a spiritual voyage that provides young readers with a safe space to develop their emotional strength, moral awareness, and confidence in themselves and the world around them.

## Theoretical Framework

This research combines fantasy theory, magical realism, and developmental approaches to children's literature to explain how fantasy and faith function behind the psychological and moral growth of children. As Lynn (1983) and Hunt (2005) argue Fantasy literature provides children with a space that enables the negotiation between reality and imagination and allow young readers to confront complex emotional and existential concerns within a comfort zone. Opposite to escapism, fantasy narratives

work as symbolic arrangement in which children explore fear, identity, and ethical responsibility.

The integration of magical realism and fantastical elements have been analyzed through *Wendy B. Faris's (2004)* and *Chanady's (1985)* frameworks of magical realism. Both highlight the coexistence of the real and the unreal as a mean to destabilize conventional perceptions of truth, urging readers to embrace uncertainty as part of learning. This narrative strategy helps to sustain a child's faith in the "inexplicable" and encourages to accept the ambiguity and uncertainty of human life as a part of maturation (Bullen & Parsons, 2007). Such uncertainty fosters emotional resilience and moral judgement in *Skellig* and *Coraline*, while the time-travel narrative of *The Devil's Arithmetic* enables historical empathy and cultural memory (Lassner & Cohen, 2014). Thus, the study examines how fantasy and faith together function as transformative tools in order to guide children toward adulthood by shaping their identity, empathy, and ethical understanding.

**Analysis and Findings**

In *Skellig* (1998), the author David Almond remarkably blurs the boundary between the real and the imaginary, and the child characters of the book, Michael and Mina, "learn to navigate via their sense of the mystical and creative rather than the rational and knowable" (Dairymple, 2010, p. 4). Almond has created a mysterious character, 'Skellig', and put it inside a substantial number of real occurrences. Don Latham (2006) examines the entire novel relating to the five characteristics of the Magical Realist Narrative Method proposed by Professor Wendy B. Faris (2004) and claims that the story involves all of those features. The author sketches the experiences of Michael, a ten-year-old boy whose family has shifted to an old house on Falconer Road. Michael's life abruptly changes when he discovers an unusual 'creature' in their garage. Michael initially observes the unusual characteristics of 'Skellig'; he notices wings on his shoulder and what appears to be 'thin arms, folded up'. Springy and flexible" (Almond, 2013, p.36). After that, the entire story is developed through the narrative components of the undecidability of Skellig's origin and the question of what knowledge to draw upon to explain his wings. Another day, when they (Skellig's wings) are released, Michael notices they are "wider than his shoulders, higher than his head" (p. 106). Furthermore, it's not just Michel who confirms the presence of this supernatural creature in the real world; the author again confirms it through Mina. Her response to Skellig's identity also indicates a magical factor, as she whispers to Michael, "Extraordinary, extraordinary being" (p. 96). Later, Skellig defines himself enigmatically as "something like a beast, something like a bird, something like an angel" (p. 167). But, by not providing a concrete definition of Skellig, Almond leaves it to the readers to imagine what exactly Skellig is. Therefore, the true source of the fictional being known as 'Skellig' remains unknown; he can embody any or all of these characteristics combined into one enigmatic creature, and "there is no single knowledge system that can categorically define him" (Bullen and Parsons, 2007, p. 127).

In *Coraline* (2002), Neil Gaiman paints a picture of a supernatural world replete with inexplicable elements. The book begins by borrowing an epigraph from G.K. Chesterton: "Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten" (Gaiman, 2013, p.vii), encouraging

the readers to accept the story as a real account. Like Michael, the child protagonist, Coraline, moves into a new flat in a large old building with her parents. Subsequently, she discovers a secret magical door to a parallel world of her "other parents" adjoined to their apartment, which is indistinguishable from the actuality of her existence. The physical description of Coraline's "Other mother" also evokes a magical atmosphere in the story, similar to Michael's strange being "Skellig". Coraline says her "other mother" looks "a little like her mother.....only her skin was white as paper. Only she was taller and thinner. Only her fingers were too long...and her dark-red fingernails were curved and sharp... Her eyes were big black buttons" (p. 34). Besides, some clear evidence is present in the text that testifies to the interaction of the magical and the real world and compels the audience to accept the fusion of these two contrasting realms. One possible rationale is that Coraline's fictional world is a dichotomous reality with a two-lane highway; not only does she carry ordinary items to the other world, but she also brings other-worldly objects to her real home (Hosseinpour, 2016). For example, she uses the magic stone, which Miss Forcible and Miss Spink give her, to search for the souls of the children imprisoned in "the grey glass marble[s]" (p. 115). At this point, some questions arise such as: Where do these Misses get the stone? How does she know Coraline will be in "terrible danger" (p. 23)? Gaiman provides no answer to such questions, leaving the audience in doubt. Further, while trying to find the captives in Beldam's flat, Coraline injures her knee and feels "blood trickling down her ripped pyjama leg" (p. 146). When she returns to her flat in the real world, she still has "cuts and scrapes" on her knee (p. 168). In fact, Beldam's cut hand secretly pursues her, and both Coraline and Miss Spink see that "spectacle", which "looks almost like a hand" (p. 181). So, it is not only Coraline who transgresses the boundary, "but the real black feline, the mice, and the other mother also constantly interact with both worlds" (Hosseinpour, 2016, p. 96). The secret door, thus, can be regarded as a junction of the magical (the Beldam's flat) and the realistic (Coraline's apartment). Therefore, it is evident that the inexplicable factors offered in *Coraline* are well integrated into the real world, hardly producing any clarification by the author or the protagonist.

In *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988), Jane Yolen brings a magic transport to send Hannah, a teenage girl, to a Polish shtetl the time before Nazi enforced deportation in 1942. The protagonist, Hannah, is utterly oblivious to the gravity of the Holocaust throughout the novel. She has little empathy for her Jewish heritage and finds her relatives' fixation with Holocaust commemoration irritating. Hannah does not like the Passover Seder dinner with her parents and considers it to be tolerated rather than celebrated. This apathy is intensely mirrored when Hannah says, "I'm not hungry. I ate a big dinner at Rosemary's" (Yolen, 1988, p.12). Rosemary is not Jewish, and Yolen indicates that Hannah deliberately avoids anyone of a similar background to her own. Yolen resolves this conflict by transporting Hannah back to the past in a fantasy vehicle. Inexplicably, she passes through her grandparents' apartment door, unlocking a magical agent that allows her to participate in her family's traumatic history. Hannah learns more about her family tree and meets younger relatives while living in the past as Chaya. In order to really understand the horrors of the Holocaust, Yolen even had her imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. To help young readers understand the horrific and unfathomable horrors of the Holocaust, the author uses fantastical elements to portray historical events (Lassner and Cohen, 2014). This approach is unquestionably effective in holding the curiosity of modern-day young readers about history. About the efficacy

of his narrative strategy, Yolen himself proclaims that "making history come alive is certainly one of the things that a time travel book can do" (Yolen, 1989, p. 247).

Interestingly, each of these narratives interweaves fantasy ingredients to family troubles that bring maturity in the protagonists. This development takes place in various transitional spaces, such as the boundary between childhood and adulthood, the realms of the natural and the supernatural, the line between life and death, and the intersection of the past and the present (Latham, 2006). The book *Skellig* describes Michael's intellectual journey to a newfound ability to comprehend the complexities of the real world. Initially, he has been in a stressful condition because of his family circumstances. Staying in a new house is already irritating him, as he wants "to get back to (his) old house again" (Almond, 2013, p. 2). This anxiety is reinforced when his baby sister is born. As the baby is ill with a weak heart, his parents become unable to provide sufficient attention to him. He even has to stop going to school as his parents have been busy with the baby in the hospital. So, overall, the situation has been frustrating for him. Hence, Michael has to adapt to a new reality in which his parents' concentration is split. Amid this new situation, his interactions with the fragile and helpless magical being 'Skellig' enables him to grow compassion, empathy, and patience. By playing the role of an adult, having fed Skellig, bringing him "Aspirin", and caring for him when he appears to be sick, the ultimate lesson learned by Michael is love and kindness (Latham, 2006). Thus, Michael finally becomes mature enough to extend his heart fully to welcome his baby sister, and he develops rationality by understanding the changing nature of his life and his relationship with his parents.

Similarly, in *Coraline*, fantasy serves as 'a catalyst' for the growth of the protagonist's character. Gaiman "deploys the trope of the evil, powerful 'other' mother as a vehicle through which the protagonists resolve questions of identity, one's place in the world, and the kinds of interpersonal relationships that are culturally endorsed" (Parsons, Sawers and McInally, 2008, p. 371). The problems of loneliness and parents' lack of attention are also predominant here. Coraline seems dissatisfied with her parents since both are busy with "their own study" (Gaiman 2013: 8) and unable to provide enough time that she desires. After "exploring the garden and the grounds" (Gaiman, 2013, p. 6) for two weeks, Coraline has to stay inside because of the rain; hence she frequently asks her mother, "What should I do?" (p. 6). She also tries to keep herself busy by watching television, playing with her toys, visiting the neighbouring flats etc. However, everything fails to entertain her. Being alone without any playmates in a new environment, Coraline is highly vulnerable to the gentle neglect of her parents and this discontentment implicitly carries Coraline toward the fantasy world of her 'other' parents that initially satisfies Coraline's wishes that she has been deprived of in her actual home. She first enters the magical house with her "self-advertised social identity" (Gooding, 2008, p. 396) as "an explorer" (Gaiman, 2013, p. 15). Although her mother already warns her to stay away from the door in the drawing-room, Coraline seizes the opportunity of her mother's absence and unlocks the door once more, even though she knows she is "doing something wrong" (p. 27). It is undeniably an act of typical defiance from children against adult embargoes; more specifically, a child's victorious transgressions against adult authority (Gooding, 2008).

But after a few days, Coraline feels "a tiny doubt inside her" (Gaiman, 2013, p. 63) about the deception of that magical world. Besides, the talking cat alerts her, saying

that “the other mother wants to love.....but may also need “something to eat” (p. 65). The spirits of the captured children again confirm her doubt; they say that the other mother “fed on us, until now we’ve nothing left of ourselves” (p. 85). Consequently, when her ‘other mother’ offers her so many attractive things that Coraline wishes before saying, “If you stay here, you can have whatever you want” (p. 143), she replies, “You really don’t understand ... I don’t want whatever I want. Nobody does. Not really. What kind of fun would it be if I just got everything I ever wanted?” (p. 143). This statement proves that Coraline’s “exploring game” of the secret world becomes a trial of her capacity to negotiate “numerous spaces and identities in her quest for parental attention and affection” (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2013, p. 38). Her maturity is about understanding that she has been unduly demanding of her parents and neighbors and discovers an inner potency to fight evil.

In *The Devil’s Arithmetic*, Hannah initially finds herself in a similar circumstance with her family, being annoyed and impulsive because of the continuous persistence of her parents to hold the memory of her Jewish ancestors. In fact, the book begins with this vexation as she says to her mother, “I’m tired of remembering” (Yolen, 1988, p. 11), and “I don’t want to go to the Sedar” (p. 12). Devotion to the traditions is like a constraint for her rather than a proud badge of one’s identity. Yolen resolves the cultural divide by sending Hannah to the obscure past by a magical transport, so assisting her in overcoming her existential problem. Her existence was never more threatened than when the Nazis forcibly cut all women's hair in the camp, causing Hannah to lose not only her hair but also her sense of herself. She experienced a complete inability to recollect any past events when she spoke the words, "I cannot remember" (p. 126). Hannah continues to grow more mature with the experiences of her past identity to comprehend many in-depth aspects of human psychology. She vows to keep her knowledge of the Holocaust a secret from everyone in the village, despite her past anger at the people for their quiet acceptance of the Nazis' brutal actions. Just before the women are taken to the showers in the camp, she counsels herself, “I will be brave. I am the only one who knows about the ovens, but I will be brave. I will not take away their hope, which is all they have (p. 124).

Afterwards, Hannah forms a strong bond with Gitl and the other girls in the Nazi camp, and her sense of "family" also broadens, leading to her development into a more culturally aware individual. The characters Shifre, Rachel, and Esther symbolise the broader human family, who are currently engaged in a battle against evil. This heightened awareness compels her to make the ultimate sacrifice, giving up her own life to safeguard her friend Rivka. Upon gaining awareness of her surroundings, Hannah also feels a sudden desire to go back to the life she has previously seen as monotonous and unstimulating. As Chaya, she has gained a profound understanding of the importance of self-identity and ancestral origins. She now eagerly longs to be reunited with her family during the Seder supper, which she previously despised. The mingling of fantasy and reality is again deepened when Hannah ultimately returns home, and this fantasy experience of Hannah becomes more credible when she clearly explains the number written in Aunt Eva’s hand; “*J* is for Jew. And *1* because you were alone, alone of the *8* who had been in your family, though *2* was the actual number of them alive.” (Yolen, 1988, p. 211). This passage seems to authenticate the function of magical transport and thus compels the readers to accept its actual existence. Further, Hannah also says, “in a voice much louder than she had intended, so loud that the entire table

hushed at its sound, 'I remember. Oh, I remember "(p. 164), which is also the central theme of the book. It is a commitment to Aunt Eva or the Holocaust victims metaphorically that Hannah will always remember what happened. In this way, by means of the mystical transportation, Hannah's ride into Jewish reconciliation and awareness is accomplished; and her dual identities, both Chaya and Hannah, negotiate the Holocaust history with the ritual performance of Jewish survival and continuity (Lassner and Cohen, 2014). Like Coraline, Hannah's relationship with her family experiences a shift from detachment to deep admiration.

Besides, a rational concern of children's books is "revealing deeper reality in the sense that it makes the young readers capable of experiencing this reality itself" (Gates, Steffel, & Molson, 2003, p. 1). Accordingly, supernatural components present in these three novels and the unwavering faith that those young protagonists have in these components enhances the understanding of child readers regarding various practical matters - philosophical, social, cultural, and even ethical - that undeniably play a significant role in the transition from childhood to adulthood. In the case of *Skellig*, Don Latham (2006) affirms that Almond has operated the magical realist narrative method to critique adult society. Like the postmodernists, Almond questions several adult institutions and "invite child readers to traverse divergent worldviews" (Bullen and Parsons, 2007, p. 129). The first thing that is addressed intensely is the effectiveness of formal education in children's lives. The story displays two kinds of schooling. The traditional one with teachers, classes, homework, worksheets, etc., that Michael avails. The other one is home-schooling that Mina does, as she and her mother believe that formal "schools inhibit the natural curiosity, creativity, and intelligence of children. The mind needs to be opened out into the world, not shuttered down inside a gloomy classroom" (Almond, 2013, p. 49). Thus, through this speech of Mina, Almond reveals some loopholes which he believes hinder children's freedom of thought. However, he praises Michael's loving and devoted teachers, creative assignments, and options to socialize with other children. On the other hand, Almond has not favored home-schooling entirely either as it does not provide children with any platform to socialize. Instead of supporting any particular view, he depicts the pros and cons of both types and keeps them unexplained for readers' consideration. The author probably tries to express that young individual should also learn independence, compassion, forbearance, and acceptance along with the subjects like anatomy and math.

Another question that the story raises is philosophical, modern people's gradual loss of faith in God and prioritizing science in every aspect of human life. For example, the enigmatic origin and the physical condition of Skellig perhaps symbolize "the decline of public displays of belief in God" (Stewart, 2009, p. 314). Moreover, Michael's baby sister's constant struggle for survival brings about an issue of life and death, which is still impenetrable to all humans. The miraculous recovery of Michael's sister is also inexplicable and the tension between life and death in the novel, to some extent, validates the inexplicable things. Thus, Almond intertwines this idea of faith and the undecidable existence of the magical being "Skellig" to covey a profound philosophical message, as Mina says: "We can't know. Sometimes we just have to accept there are things we can't know. Why is your sister ill? Why did my father die? (p. 157). This speech demonstrates that though Mina accepts the fast development of medicine and science throughout the text, she simultaneously realizes that humankind will never be able to get answers to all the grand plans. Thus, Almond asserts that a spiritual

component holds the world together through this comment, which is only accessible by imagination and faith.

Yolen also introduces the significance of faith to her young readers. The prevailing theme of faith in these three stories is a sort of decisiveness in the face of danger or fear. In the case of Hannah's story, it is an explicit analogy for the future of the Jewish people. Her family's devotion to Jewish rituals- attending Seder dinner, opening the door for prophet Elijah- exemplifies that Yolen tries to develop Hannah's sense of Jewish belongingness and forbearance. Besides, through Reb Boruch, Fayge's father and the Rabbi, Yolen advises everyone not to "tremble before mere men. It is God before whom we must tremble" (Yolen, 2013, p. 64). Further, the setting of the story on the night of the Passover Seder highlights how deliberately the author transmits this theological idea to the readers. It symbolically mirrors the message from The Torah, the foundational narrative of the Jewish people, where Passover is described as a guarded night or a night of vigil. The book thus blends religious faith with fantasy and reality.

In *Coraline*, emphasizing gothic elements, Gaiman "explores some of the existential issues that concern us all: to do with identity, sex, death, ontology, evil, desire and violence (Rudd, 2008, p. 159). The author conveys the theme of faith by relating it to the difficulty of making choices between good and evil. In spite of the initial pleasure of the other world, Coraline decides to flee this territory and protect her parents from the wicked other mother. As she gets closer and closer to capturing the captive souls successfully from the other world, her environment changes dramatically; "The house had flattened out even more. It no longer looked like a photograph, more like a drawing, a crude, charcoal scribble of a house drawn on grey paper" (Gaiman, 2013, p. 148). The metamorphosis of the other house signifies Coraline's knowledge of its evil powers. Thus, Coraline's experiences in the magical 'other house" brings back her faith in her parents and she finally learns to evaluate what is good and what is not and chooses her real parents over the deceptive ones. Through her epiphany, Gaiman is possibly delivering the message to the child readers that, like Coraline, they should broaden their perceptions and compromise with the provision of their parents' desires.

## Conclusion

Therefore, after examining the narratives of *Skellig*, *Coraline*, and *The Devil's Arithmetic*, it becomes evident that each protagonist is transformed not only by their experience with fantasy elements but also truly believing in them. Fantasy and faith play crucial roles in shaping the personalities and inner worlds of those child characters. Hannah acknowledges her errors in not accepting the past, Coraline gets rid of her dissatisfaction concerning her parents' behavior, and Michael develops inner strengths to cope with the complexities of reality. All three books offer a unique perspective on the transformative power of childhood experiences in the realm of fantasy and show how fantasy elements such as magical realism, alternate realities, and time travel serve as metaphors for real-life issues. These stories, though diverse in their settings and themes, provide young readers with opportunities to explore complex emotions, confront fears, and develop a sense of resilience and hope. *Skellig* introduces children to the power of compassion and the mysteries of life, encouraging them to find beauty and strength in the unexpected. *Coraline* emphasizes courage and the importance of self-reliance, teaching children that bravery that involves facing one's deepest fears.

*The Devil's Arithmetic* illustrates the significance of memory and faith and offers a profound lesson on the enduring human spirit even in the face of unimaginable adversity. The combination of magical aspects with profound observations about human existence also invites young readers to relate to their own life so that it remains impactful for them even long after they finish reading. Thus, the interplay of fantasy and faith in these three books highlights the importance of children's literature, demonstrating that fantasy can do more than just amuse; it can teach, shape, and transform young readers while leading them to a better understanding of themselves and the world.

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