

Forced Displacement and Death Worlds: A Study of the Problems of Refugees in Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water*

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Abstract

This paper examines how forced displacement pushes individuals into ‘death worlds’ through structural deprivation and institutional neglect, in Linda Sue Park’s *A Long Walk to Water* (2010). Set in South Sudan, the novel portrays displacement caused by the Second Sudanese Civil War and climate change. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben’s concepts of the ‘state of exception’, ‘bare life’, and *homo sacer*, the paper analyzes how those excluded from sovereign membership are reduced to biological survival. Achille Mbembe’s ‘necropolitics’ illuminates how modern power eliminates “undesirable populations” through covert violence. For climate-induced displacement, Elmond Bandaiko’s ‘necrospatial containment’ explains how informal settlements, like the makeshift camp in the novel, become landscapes of death when marginalized people are confined amid infrastructural deprivation. The paper argues that forced displacement is not merely geographical movement in search of security, but a spatial continuum, in which each subsequent space reproduces or intensifies vulnerability, rendering death an ordinary possibility.

Keywords: Forced Displacement; Refugees; Bare Life; Necropolitics, Climate Precarity; Death Worlds

Introduction

Forced displacement refers to the “involuntary or coerced movement of individuals from their region or country due to persecution, conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, or the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, or disasters” (European Commission). While some individuals ‘cross international borders’ as refugees, those who are ‘displaced within their own country’ occupy a distinct legal category called

‘internally displaced persons’(IDPs). The Second Sudanese Civil War (1980s–2000s) resulted in widespread forced displacement. It pushed millions of individuals into a condition of complete abandonment, leaving them to survive in what can only be called mechanized 'death worlds. Among the most at risk were over 20,000 young boys who later came to be known as the 'Lost Boys of Sudan'. They fled their villages in South Sudan to escape attacks from Northern forces. The Korean American author Linda Sue Park, who predominantly writes young adult fiction, recounts this experience of displacement from Southern Sudan and the resettlement of some of the refugees in New York in her novel *A Long Walk to Water* (2010). The novel records the experiences of Salva Dut, one of the Lost Boys.

Existing scholarship on Park's novel mainly focuses on its pedagogical value in promoting global empathy and creating awareness of the refugee crisis. Trauma-oriented studies investigate the psychological impact of war and displacement. Such studies examine the coping mechanisms adopted by the young protagonists to endure adversities. In general, there is much recognition of the potential of Young Adult literature to involve young people in social, political, and humanitarian matters. However, a significant critical lacuna remains in understanding how the text functions as a postcolonial and biopolitical critique. By approaching Young Adult (YA) literature with sustained critical analysis, this paper reads Park's dual narrative through a synthesis of Giorgio Agamben's concepts of *homo sacer* and 'bare life', Achille Mbembe's framework of 'necropolitics', and Elmond Bandauko's notion of 'necrospatial containment' to argue that forced displacement extends beyond mere geographic dislocation; rather, it constitutes a systemic and coercive expulsion of vulnerable bodies into 'death worlds'. The term 'death world' is not new to literary and political studies. In science fiction, a death world refers to a planet whose environment is so hostile or toxic that it threatens the survival of its inhabitants. In the work of Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe, the term refers to social and political conditions in which large populations are forced to live under oppressive and life-threatening circumstances, leaving them in a state between life and death. This paper conceptualizes death worlds as spaces that expose people to life-threatening circumstances owing to their material and political conditions. The objective of this paper is to examine how systemic factors underpinning conflict- and climate-induced displacement produce distinct spatial configurations in which death becomes an ordinary possibility. It seeks to demonstrate that forced displacement is not merely a geographical movement in search of security, but often a spatial continuum in which each subsequent space reconfigures, reproduces, or intensifies vulnerability.

Antecedents of Political Exclusion

The Addis Ababa Agreement, signed in 1972 between the Sudanese government and the southern rebel movement, ended the First Sudanese Civil War (1955–1972). The Khartoum government was comprised mostly of Arab Muslims from the north. The agreement recognized the South's cultural and religious diversity, where many people were Christians or followers of indigenous religions, unlike the predominantly Muslim North. In 1978, oil was discovered near the border between North and South Sudan. President Gaafar Nimeiry moved to bring those areas under central control and imposed Sharia law across Sudan in 1983. These actions violated the agreement and led southern leaders to form the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), under John Garang, beginning the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005), which killed about two million people. During the war, roughly twenty-six thousand boys walked about a thousand miles to neighbouring countries, enduring starvation and animal attacks. They crossed harsh deserts, forests, and long rivers. Only about half survived. Eventually, they reached refugee camps such as Itang in Ethiopia,

Kakuma in northwestern Kenya, and Ifo in eastern Kenya. Later, about four thousand were resettled in the United States in 2001. The media later labelled them the 'Lost Boys', invoking J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, in which the Lost Boys are children separated from their families and homes who live on the fictional island of Neverland. The harrowing conditions endured by the displaced Sudanese population in refugee camps and other transit centers, culminating in the deaths of many, can be understood in terms of the repercussions faced by individuals once they are excluded from political membership and the nation-state system.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), Hannah Arendt shows the crisis of the nation-state system after World War I. A nation-state combines two principles: the nation, which represents the will and identity of a particular people, and the state, which protects everyone's rights through constitutional law (Arendt 360). After the multinational empires collapsed, the principle of national self-determination tipped this balance. The will of the dominant nation overrode legal protection, leaving minorities such as Hungarians, Germans, and Jews politically excluded. The Minority Treaties, meant to protect them, revealed that only members of the dominant nation enjoyed full rights (360). Arendt argues that the plight of refugees, minorities, and stateless persons reveals that human rights were not truly universal and could be safeguarded only when individuals were protected by a nation-state. She calls stateless persons and refugees the "most symptomatic group in contemporary politics" (362), for, as she observes, "rights of Man, after all, had been defined as 'inalienable' because they were supposed to be independent of all governments; but it turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them" (381). Arendt's analysis provides a useful framework for understanding the experiences of displaced populations beyond post-war Europe, notably the refugee crisis in Sudan. Successive governments privileged the Arab-Muslim north and marginalized the African, Christian, and animist south, and prolonged civil conflict forced millions to flee. Arendt notes that since the sovereign nation-state governs a defined territory and protects its own political community, refugees, stateless persons, and some minorities fall outside the normal citizen-state relationship. Thus, the only "practical substitute for a non-existent homeland" became the "internment camp," the "only country" the world had to offer to those who fell outside the nation-state system (371-372). Such mechanisms tended to position these individuals within administrative frameworks of management and regulation, with less emphasis on their political agency and rights.

Refugee Camps, Bare Life and Necropolitical Landscape

Building on Arendt, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben examines the juridical mechanisms through which exclusion from the nation-state is managed and regulated. He specifically looks at how the camp functions as a mechanism that regulates processes of inclusion while simultaneously producing exclusion, control, and the formation of precarious political identities. Agamben embarks on his theoretical postulations by examining the concept of the 'state of exception', originally developed by Carl Schmitt, the German jurist and political theorist. The state of exception is a peculiar condition that arises when "sovereign authority assumes a position above the legal order, suspending established norms and annulling fundamental rights and freedoms in the name of emergency" (Ates 115). The distinction between Agamben and Schmitt emerges from their differing conceptualizations of the 'state of exception'. While Schmitt defines sovereignty through the proposition that "Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception," (qtd. in Agamben, "Homo Sacer" 11), viewing the exception as a temporary suspension of law necessary to preserve the state,

Agamben argues that the 'state of exception' has increasingly become a dangerous mechanism that has become the modern norm.

Refugee camps serve as an example of such a practice since, despite being set up as emergency practices, they often go past their intended temporary nature and thus prolong the period of stay of refugees. A refugee camp is a spatial manifestation of the state of exception, in which people are physically within the state's borders yet outside its normal legal and political frameworks. Managed under special rules and humanitarian management systems, refugees are strictly controlled in their mobility, employment opportunities, and political participation. Agamben contends that individuals within this state of exception occupy the condition of 'bare life'. To elucidate the concept of bare life, Agamben turns to Aristotle's distinction between *zoē* and *bios*. *Zoē* signifies "natural or biological life, the simple fact of living," including breathing and reproduction, shared by "all living beings, both human and animal," whereas *bios* refers to the "form or way of living proper to an individual or group" and denotes "politically qualified life," namely the life of the citizen within the *polis*, endowed with rights, meaning, and political voice (Agamben 1). Bare life emerges when *zoē* is separated from *bios*, leaving individuals with only the minimal fact of living while being excluded from political belonging (Downey 113). Such a life "is stripped of every right" (Agamben 183) and is thereby subjected to regulation, control, and abandonment by sovereign power.

The novel depicts the spatio-political conditions of the refugee camps at Itang (Ethiopia), Kakuma (Northwestern Kenya), and Ifo (Eastern Kenya). Itang, established in 1983, and Kakuma, in 1992, were originally created to accommodate refugees fleeing the Sudanese Civil War. Ifo, established in 1991 to shelter refugees fleeing the Somali Civil War, subsequently accommodated displaced populations relocated from refugee camps in neighbouring countries due to overcrowding. Although these camps were established as emergency humanitarian responses to political unrest in neighbouring countries and were initially conceived as temporary mechanisms for sheltering displaced populations, they evolved into protracted spaces of displacement. The Kakuma and Ifo camps are still operational, with refugees coming from East Africa. All three camps mentioned above served as shelters for The Lost Boys, and their displacement experiences were inextricably tied to these spaces. Within these spaces, the narrative indicates that the loss of the displaced people is not just the loss of a home, but also the political protection that comes from belonging to a nation-state. Having been severed from the protection of Sudan by conflict, they remain outside the political community of the states in which they seek refuge. As a result of their displacement, they find themselves physically present in sovereign states but not fully part of their politics and society. The refugee camps, such as Itang, Kakuma, and Ifo, cannot be understood only as humanitarian shelters; rather, they are also the materialization of the state of exception. In these spaces, the uprooted populations remain biologically alive but politically excluded. This suspension of political inclusion reduces refugees to bare life, a condition in which, as Agamben argues, life is preserved at the level of biological survival while remaining separate from the rights and protection that usually follow civic belonging.

Itang's representation by Park shows the manner in which these refugees have been deprived of their identities to become faceless crowds. Residents of the camp are constantly portrayed as nameless masses grouped in "lines," "masses," and "clumps" (Park 55). Such imagery of massing strips individuality away from people, turning refugees into a group to be managed and controlled. The camp offers only the bare minimum requirements for survival. The provision of only "a bowl of boiled maize" (68) depicts existence at the most basic

biological level, while broader forms of social, political, and economic participation are out of reach. This condition is made even worse by the overcrowding in the camp, where many refugees are “standing, sitting, or crouching on the ground, or lying down with their legs curled up because there was not enough room to stretch out” (70). These physical limitations highlight the way that overcrowding controls refugee bodies. The consequences of these circumstances can be seen physically by the deteriorating condition of the refugees, appearing as “emaciated,” “hurt,” or “sick” (71). The camp consequently becomes a space in which political exclusion is translated into spatial containment and material deprivation. The camp, in this way, brings into reality the difference between biological existence and political existence that is fundamental to Agamben’s concept. This reduction of life to survival becomes even more pronounced in Kakuma, which is “isolated in the middle of a dry and windy desert” and enclosed by “barbed-wire fences” (72). As Jaji and Kleibl argue, the camp operates as a “spectrum of spatial arrangements designed to contain refugees” (2203), regulating mobility and reinforcing refugees’ separation from the surrounding community. It would seem that the spatial composition of the camp, characterized by its geographical remoteness, hostile environment, and enclosed spaces, seems specifically designed to facilitate the management of a politically undesirable population.

Kakuma, which accommodates about eighty thousand people, makes refugees face the problem of scarcity, while local inhabitants living near that refugee camp usually show aggression towards the asylum seekers and enter the camp to rob refugees, leading to conflicts (Park 84). In many such instances, refugees are injured or even killed, as attacks occur with impunity due to their liminal position and the suspension of their rights (84). This condition corresponds to Agamben’s figure of *homo sacer*, a concept derived from Roman law that describes “a person banned from the political community who may be killed with impunity” but cannot be “sacrificed in a religious ritual” (Agamben 183). Agamben argues that *homo sacer* is not merely an ancient juridical figure but one that continues to be produced in modern political contexts whenever the sovereign suspends the law in order to govern certain individuals. In such circumstances, individuals are reduced to ‘bare life’, existing in a condition where they may be killed without “committing homicide” (183).

Park’s narrative illustrates this political condition by showing that violence carried out against the refugees is not merely an individual act of aggression, but rather the result of their insecure political situation. Their physical presence within the territory of a sovereign state does not automatically translate into the political protection associated with membership in that state. At one point, Salva remarks that the camp is dreadful and that it “feels almost like a prison” (Park 84). Salva and a few other boys are relocated from Kakuma to Ifo, hoping that conditions will improve. However, conditions in Ifo are similarly dire, marked by widespread hunger, illness, and inadequate medical care provided by only “few medical volunteers” to meet the needs of a large displaced population (85).

The Lost Boys are compelled to move through a succession of three refugee camps, as the camp becomes the only institutional mechanism available within the political order to contain and manage their displacement. By the time many of them reach Ifo, numerous boys have already lost their lives as a result of deprivation, hunger, disease, and the cumulative suffering endured across these spaces. Park further emphasizes this condition through the temporal dimension of camp life. In Ifo, Salva discovers that there is “no work” and “nothing to do but wait for the next meal” or for “news from the outside world” (85). The boys feel that “the days were long and empty”, stretching into “weeks, then months”, and eventually “years” (85). Refugees’ vulnerability, therefore, does not arise solely from the violence that

originally displaced them. It is reproduced through the spatial conditions in which they are subsequently required to live. Within this condition, death emerges as an ever-present possibility rather than an exceptional event, transforming the camp into a form of death world.

Modern regimes of power often expel or eliminate populations deemed undesirable through covert means. In his work, *Politiques de l'inimitié* (2016), later translated to English as *Necropolitics* in 2019, Achille Mbembe examines whether Foucault's framework of biopower is sufficient to explain contemporary forms of "subjugation of life to the power of death" (Mbembe 39). For Mbembe, sovereignty is the "power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (11), which leaves certain populations permanently exposed to violence and death. He illustrates this with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, where towns are sealed off, movement is restricted, local commanders hold discretionary authority over lethal force, and people are deprived of their livelihoods (27-28). These conditions do not necessarily involve mass killing. They produce "death-worlds," in which populations are given "the status of living dead" (40).

Park's account of the refugees' expulsion from the Ethiopian refugee camp illustrates Mbembe's claim that sovereign power works not only by administering life but by exposing populations to death. The Itang camp, though sustained by foreign aid, operated with the Ethiopian government's sanction. Once the new regime took control, the refugees were no longer a population to protect but expendable bodies to expel. Excluded from civic belonging, their disposal became politically permissible, confirming the sovereign power to dictate "who may live and who must die" (11). In the novel, soldiers fire into the air and chase the refugees from the camp toward the flooded Gilo River, whose powerful current and crocodile-infested waters pose a lethal threat (Park 77-79). The violence of this scene lies not merely in the soldiers' use of coercion but in their deliberate exposure of the refugees to conditions in which death becomes highly probable.

Park writes:

Hundreds of people lined the riverbank. The soldiers were forcing some of them into the water, prodding them with their rifle butts, shooting into the air. Other people, afraid of the soldiers and their guns, were leaping into the water on their own. They were immediately swept downstream by the powerful current (77).

By delegating the killing to the river, the state appropriates the environment as an extension of its own violence without having to execute anyone directly. In this sense, the scene exemplifies Mbembe's conception of the "generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (Mbembe14). In this case, entire populations become "collateral damage" rather than explicitly targeted groups "to be exterminated" (Allen). The narrative highlights how necropolitics constitutes a closed network of "political, economic, and military instruments" aimed at the "elimination of human groups and populations" (Pele).

Climate Precarity and Necrospatial Containment

Owing to the unprecedented impacts of climate change, large populations have been displaced, making climate migration a major global concern. Amnesty International notes climate displacement as "the movement of people related to the impacts of climate change," which may be "temporary or permanent and occur within or across borders due to sudden or slow-onset environmental disasters". Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water* depicts the

forced displacement of communities in South Sudan due to the severe drought in the early 2000s. The novel focuses on Nya, an eleven-year-old girl, and her community's forced displacement to a relatively safer space with access to water. It is evident in the novel that the displacement from a drought-affected place to another temporary space does not make them less vulnerable but instead makes their vulnerability take on a new form. This involves a geographical organization that exposes them to death and disposability. Necrospatial containment is a concept developed by Elmond Bandauko, building on Achille Mbembe's 'necropolitics' and Rob Nixon's 'slow violence', explaining how informal settlements function as zones of death and disposability (Bandauko 1). It is structured around "four interrelated pillars: (i) geographies of spatial constriction, (ii) infrastructure as deathscapes, (iii) the perpetual threat of erasure, and (iv) toxic ecologies, all of which intersect to produce spaces of prolonged disposability" (1). Bandauko illustrates how residents of informal settlement are confined in precarious conditions that "limit mobility, constrain opportunities, and normalize risk" (1). Although necropolitics has been widely used to analyze state violence, conflict zones, and carceral spaces, less attention has been given to forms of disposability that emerge without the deliberate targeting of a particular population (2). Necrospatial containment addresses this dimension by examining how infrastructural neglect, inadequate spatial planning, environmental precarity, and the persistent deprivation of essential resources produce and sustain conditions of prolonged vulnerability (1). The residents of informal settlements, in this context, are not necessarily subjected to direct or intentional violence; rather, their exposure to harm arises from the material and spatial conditions of the settlements. Although Bandauko formulates the concept of necrospatial containment through the study of urban informal settlements, its analytical emphasis on the spatial production of vulnerability can be extended to other marginalized spatial formations. In *A Long Walk to Water*, the temporary settlement inhabited by Nya's community differs from the urban informal settlements examined by Bandauko in its rural location, temporality, and conditions of formation. Nevertheless, the settlement exhibits comparable mechanisms of spatial constriction, infrastructural deprivation, and toxic ecologies. The novel, therefore, provides a productive site for examining how necrospatial conditions can emerge beyond the urban contexts in which the concept was initially formulated.

In the novel, Nya's daily struggle to obtain water represents the impact of climate precarity in everyday life. Because of the drought in her village, she has been assigned the responsibility of fetching water from a distant pond, a job which keeps her busy throughout the day because she goes to the pond early in the morning, comes back at noon, and again sets out in the afternoon. (Park 1). This routine continues for nearly seven months each year, revealing how ecological scarcity restructures daily existence around the pursuit of a resource essential for survival. But when the pond finally dries out, there is no other way for the community to do except migrate temporarily to the bigger lake area, where they make their temporary camps after three days of travel and stay there for almost five months. (26). Their migration is not an act of free will but rather an act of survival in response to the degraded environment and the lack of sustainable water resources. The community's dependence on shrinking water sources and the resulting forced mobility recalls the realities of climate-induced displacement across many parts of the Global South, particularly in the Horn of Africa. For instance, Lake Chad, shared by Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, has shrunk by roughly ninety percent since the 1960s due to climate change. This ecological crisis has apparently wrecked local livelihoods, resulting in widespread displacement and conflicts over diminishing resources in the region.

The concept of informal settlements comprises a range of “spatial formations, including slums, squatter settlements, shantytowns, spontaneous settlements, and other unplanned developments” (Bandaiko 3). The UN-Habitat broadly characterizes informal settlements by “insecure tenure, inadequate access to basic services and infrastructure, poor and overcrowded housing conditions, and habitation in areas that may be environmentally hazardous” (3). The makeshift settlement constructed by Nya’s tribe is a spontaneous one, built due to a lack of water. Even though they move to an area with access to water, inadequate infrastructure makes them vulnerable again.

The consequences of this condition become apparent in the illness of Nya’s sister, Akeer. Her diarrhoea, fever, abdominal pain, and eventual loss of speech are not simply isolated medical misfortunes, but symptoms of a larger spatial order characterized by resource deficiency and poor infrastructure. The family’s long walk from the temporary camp to the distant clinic highlights the way vulnerability is magnified due to lack of healthcare access, while the realization that Akeer’s sickness is caused by polluted water highlights the connection between ecological deprivation and bodily suffering (Park 39–45). Nya also recognizes the truth that the reason why many elderly individuals and children who are sick with the same disease end up dying is that their bodies cannot retain nourishment even when they are given food (39). Death, therefore, becomes a regular phenomenon in everyday life at the settlement. In this view, the camp is seen as a ‘deathscape’, according to Bandaiko, where lack of infrastructure produces conditions that render people vulnerable to sickness, suffering, and premature death. The impossibility of following medical advice further underscores the logic of necrospatial containment. While Akeer is told to drink boiled water, her mother knows that the little water fetched from the dried-up lakebed will be evaporated even before the water can be sufficiently boiled (45). The significance of this predicament is that survival comes to depend on impossible choices. The residents are supposed to engage in behaviours that are practically impossible in that environment, showing how structural deprivation turns fundamental needs into unattainable luxuries. Consequently, the community is relegated to what Bandaiko describes as a toxic ecology, which consists of “the intertwining effects of environmental threats and bodily vulnerability” (Bandaiko 11). Ultimately, the people in the community find themselves facing circumstances that lead to death and disposability.

According to Bandaiko, Rob Nixon’s concept of ‘slow violence’ offers the “temporal and analytical scaffolding” for comprehending the phenomenon of necrospatial containment (3). Rob Nixon, in his landmark work *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), defines slow violence as a “violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (Nixon 2), thereby foregrounding the gradual and often invisible forms of harm inflicted upon individuals. In the context of necro-spatial containment, slow violence manifests through restricted mobility, poor infrastructure, and normalized daily risks, which eventually result in the “erosion of dignity, health, and opportunities” of people residing in the informal settlement (Bandaiko2). Nya describes the state of individuals who suffer from the same disease that Akeer suffers from in the beginning, having had cramps and stomach aches and later diarrhoea, accompanied by fever sometimes (Park 39). She notes that, in most instances, adult and older children would recover sufficiently to return to work but would experience sickness periodically throughout their lives. Such instances illustrate the “incremental and accretive nature of slow violence”, the “calamitous repercussions” of which are manifested “across a range of temporal scales” (Nixon 2). They continue to exist within a necro-spatial

framework where vulnerability is constantly reproduced, harm accumulates, and premature death happens to be normal.

While climate change is a global concern, its consequences are distributed unevenly, with climate migrants from developing countries bearing a disproportionate share of its impacts. Discussing the unequal distribution of responsibility and vulnerability in the climate crisis, Peter Newell and Matthew Paterson argue:

Behind the cosy language used to describe climate change as a common threat to all humankind, it is clear that some people and countries contribute to it disproportionately, while others bear the brunt of its effects. What makes it a particularly tricky issue to address is that it is the people that will suffer most that currently contribute least to the problem, i.e. the poor in the developing world. Despite often being talked about as a scientific question, climate change is first and foremost a deeply political and moral issue. (Newell and Paterson7)

South Sudan evinces this uneven vulnerability as a country with high levels of poverty and limited infrastructural capacity, where recurrent droughts have undermined food security and intensified displacement. This is reflected in *A Long Walk to Water* through Nya and Akeer, whose lives are shaped by drought, water scarcity, and inadequate infrastructure. Their precarity is intensified by the absence of sustainable alternatives, as evident in Nya's anxious questions about the future: "What about next year at camp?" and "the year after that?" (Park 46). Such questions broaden the experience of environmental insecurity beyond an immediate crisis and show how climate insecurity leads not only to current hardships but also to doubt about the ability to have a secure future. The sisters' consumption of the polluted water as soon as they reach the pond emphasizes that it is impossible to maintain hygiene under conditions of extreme scarcity (46). The experiences of such people reveal that environmental threats do not affect people in isolation but are intensified by infrastructural deprivation and limited access to resources. In this sense, Dipesh Chakrabarty's distinction between climate change as "anthropogenic" as well as "sociogenic" (29–30) is relevant, since it highlights the social-material context of climatic vulnerability. In the novel, drought therefore becomes more than an environmental crisis, as it is transformed through spatial and infrastructural inequalities into a condition of everyday precarity, exposing already vulnerable populations to prolonged scarcity, bodily suffering, and uncertain futures.

Conclusion

By applying Giorgio Agamben's concepts of the state of exception and 'bare life', Achille Mbembe's 'necropolitics', and Elmond Bandaiko's 'necrospatial containment', this paper analyses how the process of forced displacement produces death worlds as depicted in Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water*. While Salva's displacement is caused by political conflict, Nya's results from climate change. Collectively, these trajectories indicate that the displacement is not only about relocation from dangerous places to supposedly safer ones, but also about the persistent vulnerability that comes with it, regardless of changes in space. The novel consequently challenges an understanding of displacement in which movement itself signifies escape or survival. By tracing how vulnerability persists across changing spatial configurations, it reveals displacement as a condition in which movement may alter the location of precarity without necessarily transforming its underlying structures. What emerges is not a simple opposition between a dangerous 'home' and a secure "elsewhere," but a continuum in which each successive space can reproduce or intensify the conditions that

make life increasingly precarious. Thus, the death world becomes a spatial continuum in which successive spaces reproduce the conditions that make death an ordinary possibility.

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