

REWRITING THE FALL: LYRA BELACQUA IN HIS DARK MATERIALS

REWRITING THE FALL: LYRA BELACQUA'S RESISTANCE
TO ADULT IDEOLOGY IN *HIS DARK MATERIALS*

By DANIEL T. MOORE, B.A.

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

McMaster University © Copyright by Daniel T. Moore, September
2014

McMaster University MASTER OF ARTS (2014) Hamilton, Ontario (English)

TITLE: Rewriting the Fall: Lyra Belacqua's Resistance to Adult Ideology in *His Dark Materials*

AUTHOR: Daniel T. Moore, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Iris Bruce

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 100

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines resistance to adult ideology by child/adolescent characters in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. Drawing on terminology provided by Maria Nikolajeva (aetonormativity) and Roberta Trites (power within repression) this paper describes the development of Lyra Belacqua, the protagonist of *The Golden Compass*. It identifies in Pullman's text a particular emphasis on allowing children to develop into adolescents before subjecting them to religious or secular ideologies. This thesis works with the terms *Entwicklungsroman* and *Bildungsroman* in order to illuminate and complicate the subject-positions: adolescent, child and adult. This thesis demonstrates the particular attention to qualities of adolescence and childhood in Pullman's works, and the effect that reconstructing adolescence as an end-point for child characters has on child protagonists, by contrast to adulthood as a destination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my mother and father, without whom I would not have been able to pursue my degree, and who have encouraged me and supported me every step of the way. I would like to thank my brother and sister for providing hugs, and couches to crash on during the thesis-writing process. I would like to thank my grandmother for telling me stories as a child, and encouraging my desire to write and learn. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Bruce, who helped me put together a thesis which I am proud of.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
INTRODUCTION: CROSSING OVER	1
LYRA IN <i>THE GOLDEN COMPASS</i>.....	9
TRANSGRESSION.....	10
TRANSITION	19
DUST AS WISDOM	26
RESISTANCE	32
INHERITING A REBELLION: MILTON AND BLAKE’S DIABOLICAL SPIRIT IN PULLMAN’S CHARACTERS.....	44
RESISTANCE OR CONFORMITY: A THIRD PATH.....	51
EMPOWERED TO SEEK TRUTH: THE DEVICES OF HIS DARK MATERIALS.....	72
CONCLUSION: “THESE WERE THEIR SHAPES FOR LIFE: THEY WOULD WANT NO OTHER.”	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	94

Introduction: Crossing Over

The phrase ‘Crossing Over’ implies movement across a line which divides and stands separate from two distinct positions. Crossing over into adulthood is the defining aspect of the *Bildungsroman*, from which Young Adult Literature (YAL) has historically evolved, and which is used as an archetype frequently within YA theory as a premise for analysis (*Disturbing the Universe*, Trites 10). In YAL special emphasis is placed on what changes in the protagonist as he/she ages, and on developments in adolescence or childhood which are maintained or reproduced in adulthood. Despite the importance of this literary tradition, analysis of YAL based on the *Bildungsroman* archetype does not inherently address the parallel development of the protagonist’s ideological and social-hierarchical position. The *Bildungsroman* provides an archetype which assists discussion of YAL but which was never meant to address what Roberta Trites calls the relationship between “power and growth that shapes adolescent literature” (13). A *Bildungsroman* describes the movement of a protagonist from “innocence to experience” rather than the formation or use of power, and thus new modes of YA theory have sought to address the relationships and negotiations of power in YAL (Brown and St. Clair 26). Defining works as ‘*Bildungsroman*’ or more generally ‘*Entwicklungsroman*’ offers the possibility for analysis based on the protagonist’s maturity, but a parallel discussion is necessary to describe the formation of power during the maturation process. Trites claims that “the Young Adult novel may well be the specific sub-genre of the *Entwicklungsroman* – the novel of development – that has emerged from postmodern thinking” (13, 18). *Entwicklungsroman* is a term used to differentiate between novels in which “the protagonist has grown” and the *Bildungsroman* in which “the protagonist reaches adulthood by the novel’s end” (16). Trites goes on to claim that the differentiation between these two archetypes allows the theorist to “pay more attention” (13) to shifts in power

and agency: “Although the primary purpose of the adolescent novel may appear to be a depiction of growth, growth in this genre is inevitably represented as being linked to what the adolescent has learned about power” (x). The implication of this claim – as Trites discusses at length – is that rather than address moments of romanticized maturation during which a subject has clearly and significantly altered his or her subject position, the primary lens for analysis of this literature should focus on power relations between subject-positions. It is at the moment of crossing over that we can best judge the success of the protagonists’ resistance to adult normativity, and thus the extent of their empowerment within the work. The particular resistance of Lyra Belacqua, the protagonist of Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*, demonstrates the necessity of resistance to adult influence in order to forge new modes of normative thought.

If *childhood* is an individual’s current location (point A) and *adulthood* is an individual’s inevitable destination (Point B), then *adolescence* marks the space between and is either a threshold defining entrance into adulthood, or else a space through which one travels in order to reach adulthood. Whether adolescence is a line which is crossed by the protagonist or a space the protagonist occupies is of considerable concern. In *His Dark Materials*, adolescence is the final subject-position of the child protagonist. It is given symbolic value which closely parallels adulthood within a *Bildungsroman* archetype. Rather than a growth from childhood to adulthood, Pullman’s narrative expresses development from childhood into adolescence, representing a transition from innocence to experience which subverts the *Bildungsroman* archetype. Despite this close attention to adolescence as an end point, an adult/child binary persists throughout the work which contributes to the formation of *Bildungsroman* themes despite an essentially *Entwicklungsroman* narrative. This binary seems inspired by the innocence and experience dichotomy developed in William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. The

result of this lingering adult/child binary is that instead of embracing an *Entwicklungsroman* archetype, Pullman's work depicts a transition from childhood to adolescence, but does little to distinguish adolescence from early adulthood. This transition comes despite his protagonists' sometimes obvious occupation of a liminal space resembling adolescence. Adolescence is an implied identity of the works but is never fully realized in the trilogy as a whole – it is recognized only as the trilogy concludes. Though *His Dark Materials* mimics the child-to-adult transition of the *Bildungsroman*, Pullman substitutes adolescence for adulthood at the conclusion of the trilogy and thus describes an *Entwicklungsroman*-like age-as-spectrum narrative. This means that though Pullman's work functions as an *Entwicklungsroman*, demonstrating many and varied moments of increasing maturity, and though the children have only reached adolescence by the conclusion of the work, the protagonists at that point seem fully grown. The transition at the trilogy's end is testament to the futility of resisting certain elements of adult life, but also suggests the opportunity that arises when one comes to border adulthood. Pullman effectively subverts the *Bildungsroman* structure by depicting an incomplete transition (from childhood to adolescence) rather than a complete transition (from childhood to adulthood), thus leaving room in the post-narrative for additional character growth.

His Dark Materials demonstrates the manner by which ideology (a codified set of beliefs) must be altered by children. Codified social-normative 'adult' thought, is transmitted through the generations, and only a character who resists this transmission can temper those ideologies. This shift suggests that periods of resistance such as those associated with adolescence in YA theory might be experienced even after a transition to adulthood (or within childhood), but specifies that these moments of resistance become far less frequent as an individual ages, and are exceptional in younger individuals such as Lyra. Pullman's protagonists

show the potential in their adolescence to alter adult normative thought as much as they were shaped by it in their childhood. Though they enter into adolescence with a ritualized discarding of childhood power, the ability to reclaim that power (and in some ways that subject position) is maintained post-narratively. Recent Young Adult (YA) theory has focused on the relationship between three subject-positions: adulthood, childhood and adolescence. This trinity usefully complicates the child/adult relationships traditionally examined in children's literature (Walls 247). Philip Pullman's trilogy deals directly with this third subject-position by privileging it as the destination which children move towards. In so doing Philip Pullman supplants a child/adult binary with a child/adolescent binary in his works – adolescence remains ill-defined because it is not experienced by any central characters. These novels demonstrate the agency of children relative to adults, privileging resistance to adult authority as the main means of retaining agency in childhood; they examine how normative thought is negotiated by child protagonists; and they demonstrate the manner by which adolescent protagonists come to represent a new iteration of social-normative thought. In *His Dark Materials* the protagonists Will and Lyra are able to resist adult-normative ideologies, and following that resistance successfully integrate their own beliefs into normative thought, making those beliefs normative in turn. The protagonists are called to conform to their positions in adult society, but within this new position demonstrate the ability to temper adult ideological goals in order to interact (and encourage interaction) in a manner which is sensitive to the ideologies and beliefs of others. *The Golden Compass* thus demonstrates the oppressive or dogmatic qualities of ideology and valorizes resistance to and subversion of those ideologies by the child protagonists. During the first novel of the series Lyra resists ideological indoctrination, develops agency, and makes the decision to pursue wisdom. Though later books in this trilogy undermine the *Entwicklungsroman* aspects of the initial novel and reiterate a

traditional conformity of children/adolescents to adult society, they do so in a manner which subverts that norm. Though Will and Lyra cross over into adolescence instead of adulthood, many of the themes of that crossing over are reminiscent of a *Bildungsroman*. It is their ability to affect change rather than simply be assimilated which significantly differentiates the transition between subject-positions depicted in *His Dark Materials*, and subject-positions of the traditional *Bildungsroman*. Adolescence as a destination, by contrast to adulthood, promises empowerment for the child protagonists of *His Dark Materials* which extends into the post-narrative, and eschews conformity to adult influences.

The works which constitute *His Dark Materials: The Golden Compass* (originally released with the title *Northern Lights*), *The Subtle Knife*, and *The Amber Spyglass*, were the source of significant controversy when published. The anti-religious and atheistic sentiments of the works and of Pullman himself quickly came under fire. The novels are inspired by Milton's *Paradise Lost*: they describe daemons which assist children in killing God and depict such a death as inevitable and liberating. The daemons of Pullman's work are corporeal beings which take the form of animals and are spiritually linked to a specific individual such that they cannot be easily physically distanced. Daemons act as metaphors to indicate the values or temperament of a character. These beings shift during childhood and throughout adolescence but assume a permanent form as an individual enters adulthood – a daemon which has attained its final form is said to be 'settled'. The stabilizing of the protagonists' daemons is typical of a *Bildungsroman*, but demonstrates an *Entwicklungsroman* mutability wherein the position that the child protagonists convert to remains flexible (Lyra and Will are not yet adults and are thus able to reclaim the powers they wielded in childhood should they need to, and may even retain the ability to change the shape of their daemons). Trites claims "because the time span of the

Entwicklungsroman is more truncated than that of the *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist of the problem novel is rarely an adult by the end of the narrative,” and thus the *Entwicklungsroman* eschews “achieving maturity as a form of redemption” (14). The dissociation of maturity from redemption resonates with Lyra’s character in *The Golden Compass* who demonstrates the faulty logic and cruelty of adults. Rather than herself, Lyra redeems the conception of Dust, and by so doing, the concept of ideological debate (concerning subjective matters such as religion or morality) which is not harmful (symbolized by the interaction between Lyra and Will’s daemons at the close of the trilogy). Though the first novel of the trilogy depicts entrance into adulthood as a failed resistance, ultimately Pullman’s work subverts the *Bildungsroman* archetype rather than accept it: still, Lyra is not allowed to remain a child forever, and that element of Pullman’s trilogy at least adheres to the *Bildungsroman* archetype.

Though marketed to an adolescent audience, *His Dark Materials* experienced a huge popular readership which spanned child, adolescent and adult audiences and spawned a film adaptation of the first novel (Falconer 73-74). The trilogy is mature and complex. Characters deal with violence, death, and questions of faith; the novels do not have a patronizing or infantilizing narrative voice; stereotypical mentors are obscured and given limited narrative exposition; and settings are not archetypically adolescent (there is no school or home environment and the two are not traditionally contrasted). Furthermore Pullman’s work is not conventionally didactic, rather than continuing to exist or experiencing an increase in status following their entrance into adulthood, Will and Lyra affect real change to conceptions of death, to the adult status quo, and in their own conceptions of responsibility and sacrifice. Despite this the works fail to avoid didacticism entirely: characters challenge secular and religious institutions; they experience and cause violence; they disobey the adults in their lives, but within

a narrative in which secularism is clearly privileged to theological ‘faith’. Fortunately, this didactic stance is overshadowed by an emphasis on the pursuit of ‘wisdom’ or ‘knowledge’ and the application of these traits once developed. Such a pursuit is adequately distanced from the privileging of secularism to preserve the integrity of the work.

Trites in *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, privileges institutional and hierarchical power structures when defining aspects of YAL, and examining YA texts. She is particularly concerned with how children and adolescents navigate adult authority. Drawing on several theorists she attempts to explain how adolescent characters interact with sites of power, are shaped by, and shape those sites in turn:

Adolescent characters exist in a “perpetual relationship of force” (Foucault, *Power* 92) created by the institutions that constitute the social fabric constructing them. Because they are defined within perpetual forces of power, power “enacts [them] into being” (Butler, *Psychic* 13). That is, the social power that constructs them bestows upon them a power from which they generate their own sense of subjectivity. As acting subjects, they assume responsibility for their position in society (Lacan, “Science and Truth” 7), whether they engage their power to enable themselves or to repress others (French 505). Power is a force that operates within the subject and upon the subject in adolescent literature; teenagers are repressed as well as liberated by their own power and by the power of the social forces that surround them in these books. (Trites 7)

In Trites’ view YAL acts as a sort of microcosm for measuring the effects of adolescent power resulting in “much of the genre [...] depicting how potentially out-of-control adolescents can learn to exist within institutional structures” (Trites 7). Though she acknowledges the power of adolescent protagonists, Trites claims that the majority of works strive to contain that power, and thus the entirety of the YA genre might be considered didactic beyond redemption. Adolescence is a problematic subject-position for Trites because adolescent subjects have power and do not know how to use it. Rather than address simply the extent of an adolescent’s power, it is thus important to distinguish between intent and extent of that power. The extent of power

adolescents wield makes them a threat: their resistance is meaningful, able to disturb or redirect the status quo. Trites claims it is the extent of the protagonists' power which allows them to “disturb the universe,” and their intent which causes them to do so (1). The intent (motivation) of an adolescent who wields power is unpredictable until limited by institutional forces (Trites 53). It is the presence of extent, and the ambivalence of intent which typifies the literary adolescent, and which typifies Pullman’s protagonists even in their childhood. For Trites adolescence is a subject-position which cannot be maintained, and indicates power without control. Maria Nikolajeva summarizes Trites’ work: “Roberta Trites remarks repeatedly that a teenage protagonist has basically two choices when meeting with repression: to perish or to become repressive himself” (Nikolajeva 7). In either case the adolescent is asked to crossover, either from childhood into adulthood, or from life into death as a method of restricting power. Regardless of the form this power takes, whether physical intimidation, social activism or some other manifestation, it can only be safely resolved by limiting the extent or directing the intent of an adolescent’s power, or both. In *His Dark Materials* the negotiation of power contributes to the (partial or entire) conversion of the protagonist from one subject position to another, but it is the ability of the protagonists to maintain the intent of their actions during this transition which allows them to shape their new subject-position. Though adulthood is a period of shedding childish things, the adolescent is responsible also for retaining the lessons of adolescence in order to affect adulthood. Pullman’s protagonists maintain the intention of their actions during a transition of subject positions and are thus able to exercise new forms of power within their new subject-position in pursuit of shaping adult normativity. The particular devices granted to the child/adolescent in *His Dark Materials* are not simply discarded as they enter adolescence/adulthood, but rather have served their purpose of maturing the protagonists and can

be recalled if the particular agency these devices granted – the ability to pursue wisdom despite intervention by adult ideologies – should be required once more.

Lyra in *The Golden Compass*

In *Declarations of Independence* Nancy St. Clair and Joanne Brown describe a *Bildungsroman*-esque maturation process for girls in literature. This development has three stages: “*isolation*, a *trial* through encounters with danger that require some sort of self-sacrifice or symbolic death and rebirth, and *reunification* with community accompanied by increased status” (St. Clair and Brown 26, italics mine). These three stages reflect the primary subject-positions of YAL: childhood (*isolation*), adolescence (*trial*) and adulthood (*reunification*). In *His Dark Materials* these three stages closely parallel theological concepts: childhood is represented as a state of *grace*, adolescence as a time of *temptation*, and adulthood as the biblical fall from grace or entrance into *sin*. Pullman rewrites these three states to privilege *sin* instead of *grace*. Rather than childhood being spoiled by a transition to adulthood, Pullman reveals the manner by which children can ascend to adulthood without conforming to ideologies constructed by adults. Pullman claims that: “[Lyra and Will] are tempted and they (so to speak) fall. But it’s a fall into grace, towards wisdom, not something that leads to sin, death, misery, hell – and Christianity” (quoted David Colbert 70-71). Pullman depicts Lyra’s fall from *grace* as a reflection of Eve’s, but alters the outcome so that her *temptation* and subsequent transgression (in standing against adult authority) is fundamentally positive, and thus her *fall* (falling in love against the will of the church) is likewise positive. What is vilified by comparison is the forced separation of Will and Lyra and their expulsion from a world which they co-inhabit.

Transgression and transition are valorized as a means for attaining knowledge and it is Lyra’s transgressive nature which allows her to develop the capacity for resistance and pursue

adventure. By transgressing a social norm Lyra opens herself to trials – the child moves into a sphere where conflict is likely (transgresses) and thus moves from *isolation* to *trial*, or alternatively, from childhood into a pseudo-adolescence. Transgression is a precursor to transition (crossing over) because it indicates at least a modicum of power: an individual who is able to consistently ignore or effectively resist institutionalized norms must possess the extent of power required to resist social expectations, and the intent to do so. Normally such transgression leads to punishment: in the biblical case Eve's transgression of God's law by eating from the tree of knowledge is punished by Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. Instead of punishment Lyra's transgression sparks an increase in agency, which in turn allows for independence from adult influence. This movement within the world of adults begins a shift in Lyra's subject position from child to adolescent, and though this transition takes several novels to complete, Lyra resembles an adolescent throughout. In her new position as an adolescent she is required to behave in a certain manner while escaping similar expected behaviors in her old subject-position. Philip Pullman demonstrates a shift from the isolation and grace of childhood, via crisis and transgression, into the tribulation of adolescence.

Transgression

In the first scene of *The Golden Compass* Lyra Belacqua is a trespasser in the "Retiring Room" of the university of Jordan: ". . . only Scholars and their guests were allowed in here, and never females" (*Compass* 3-4). Lyra is here transgressing several norms: she is an uneducated female youth exploring an area restricted to educated adult males. By comparison to those allowed to occupy this space she seems relatively powerless and thus her negotiation of this space is described in terms of stealth and exploration. Lyra expresses a desire to "look around" and makes attempts to conceal her presence despite a clear desire to more comfortably occupy

the space: “Lyra...flicked the biggest glass gently with a fingernail. The sound rang clearly through the hall....she put her palm over the ringing crystal anyway” (3). This initial noise indicates a desire to exercise power, or to more comfortably occupy a powerful (male/adult) position. She is aware that she is trespassing but momentarily willfully ignores the danger of being found out. Her daemon Pantalaimon (Pan) intervenes: “You’re not taking this very seriously...behave yourself” (3). This is an act of policing Lyra’s intent. She is asked to conform to a previously established ‘proper’ use of her power. Here Pantalaimon is a stand-in for adult influence, and because of his particular place as Lyra’s conscience, or soul, his concern over her defiance represents the extent to which the requirements of Lyra’s subject-position are internalized. Pullman wastes little time establishing Pan’s place as Lyra’s conscience: “You’re supposed to know about conscience, aren’t you?” (*Compass* 9). Here, rather than independent or empowered, Pan – who represents Lyra’s conscience (her awareness of her own actions) – is a mimic of adult advice. Though he grows out of this mimicry his initial acts as Lyra’s conscience are almost always in line with the expectations of adults. Whether or not she would be willing to admit it Lyra has been taught not to interfere in the world of men, or of adults in general, and it is Pantalaimon who voices these internalized dogmatisms. In this scene Pan expresses a desire to return to a space appropriate for children (“can we go now?”) and unlike Lyra, attempts more carefully to conceal himself, taking the form of a “moth...so as not to show up in the darkness of the hall” (3). Though Pan and Lyra’s actions seem contradictory here, as the series continues we discover that the two are (almost literally) inseparable. The actions of Lyra and Pantalaimon cannot be easily considered individually but rather form a coherent whole. For this reason Pantalaimon often expresses Lyra’s opinions before she knows them herself. He acts as a moral guide and reveals Lyra’s engrained thoughts. In this case moments after Pantalaimon encourages

Lyra to exercise caution she becomes aware of her own transgression. She perceives the pictures of scholars (adult male authority figures) in the room to be staring “out of their frames in solemn disapproval” of her actions (4). Lyra’s consideration of her situation confirms Pantalaimon’s voice as echoing previous reprimands, and thus the reader’s suspicion that adult didacticism is at work in tempering Lyra’s actions is confirmed. Lyra is thus resisting adult authority and testing the limits of her own power via her exploration – she is willfully entering an adult sphere.

There is an immediate shift in tone when the threat of her being discovered intensifies. Rather than overt resistance and an unwillingness to concede her adventure, Lyra furtively avoids discovery when the Master and his servant enter the room: “. . . in a flash Lyra was out of the armchair and crouching behind it” (4). Here the threat of discovery alters Lyra’s comfort in the space. Before the Master enters the room Lyra seats herself in the center of the room in a chair reserved for scholars (4). At this moment she imagines what it might be like to occupy a more powerful subject-position. When the room is reclaimed by the Master of Jordan, an adult male presence, she is confined to her “not-much-of-a-hiding place” (5). While the Master remains in the room the extent of Lyra’s power is limited, but her intent (to explore, or to gain knowledge) remains the same. Likewise, it is her intent which brings her into a space where conflict is possible – while Lyra does not necessarily desire conflict she is aware that conflict is a possible outcome of her intentions. In both cases, whether acting out when an adult presence is not readily monitoring her actions, or avoiding notice by an adult presence, the adolescent is limited either in variance or magnitude of available actions. In the case that Lyra’s agency is severely limited, as it is when the Master enters the room, her intent becomes nearly irrelevant. She stops moving and exploring in order to hide and thus the qualitative aspects of her exploration are limited by the quantitative aspects. It does not matter what the adolescent would

like to do so long as he/she is unable to act on this desire. Limiting the extent of an adolescent's power allows them to escape notice, but also threatens to make them irrelevant to the narrative due to a lack of agency or presence within the narrative. By contrast the intent of an adolescent's power is less easily diminished and (at least in part) preserved across subject-positions. Intention encourages the subversion of social norms after transition from one subject-position to another. For instance, "emotional agility" is described as an attribute of childhood by Rachel Falconer, and remains "Lyra's signature key" despite being a trait "often found lacking in adult characters in the trilogy" (Falconer 84). This emotional agility is often linked to Lyra's childhood acquaintances Tony Makarios and Roger Parslow, but is maintained in Lyra's adolescent life. Her pursuit of Roger continues well into *The Amber Spyglass* where she is asked to come to terms with actions she took as a child. Lyra and Roger are introduced in *The Golden Compass*, and she is the one responsible for leading him to Lord Asriel, where he is ultimately killed by Lyra's father. In *The Amber Spyglass* Lyra demonstrates her evolving ability to cope with and approach problems when she attempts to reconcile her treatment of Roger in the afterlife. This return to a mistake made in the past demonstrates that Lyra has maintained her intention (to save Roger) across multiple novels. Similar verifications of Lyra's intentions (to pursue the acquisition of knowledge of Dust) include her persistence throughout the first novel to explore the north as Lord Asriel does. Lyra is tempted to explore the north in chapter 2 "The Idea of North." This temptation leads to a transgression into adult space. Lyra asks to accompany Lord Asriel, which culminates in Lyra's exploration of the north, and leads to her transcending the north and entering a new world altogether (*Compass*17). The Master's presence limits Lyra's agency. Due to this and the lack of a secure hiding place she becomes paralyzed within the scene; the narrative shifts to the actions of adults, detailing the attempted poisoning of Lord

Asriel (4-5). Though the extent of Lyra's agency is limited, her intent to spy and explore remains. While hidden Lyra's communication with Pan is diminished, and she momentarily becomes irrelevant to the progression of events in the novel, but because her desires have not changed she will become relevant again.

Lyra's initial hiding place (behind the chair as opposed to within the wardrobe) is that of a young child. She crouched rather obviously behind a chair and in plain sight. Her hiding place was chosen quickly, showing a lack of forethought, and had the room been occupied by more adults or for a longer time she would have been revealed and punished. In this "not-much-of-a-hiding place" Lyra lacks security and agency (5). When Lyra views the Master of Jordan University adding some white powder to Lord Asriel's wine she gains agency because she is privy to adult-relevant knowledge, and she is encouraged to act on this knowledge because of her close ties to this individual (at this point, she still considers her father, Asriel, an uncle) (5). The line prefacing Lyra's newly gained knowledge informs the reader of its significance: "What she saw next...changed things completely" (6). Lyra's place as protagonist and her agency are confirmed and Lyra is made the center of the narrative. What Lyra "saw next" (the attempted poisoning) has the ability to affect change, and thus Lyra doing the 'seeing' allows her to control whether this change takes place, or not. She would not be able to do the seeing; however, if she were not already in an adult space, and thus Lyra's entrance into adult conflict is prefaced by a willingness to ignore rules and to transgress boundaries. When Lyra saves Lord Asriel's life, she shifts from passivity and observation to direct intervention. This intervention demonstrates Lyra's ability to resist her elders, and confirms her intention to do so, foreshadowing her ultimate resistance at the close of *The Golden Compass*.

By contrast to Lyra's initial vantage point, the wardrobe she occupies for the remainder of the scene, and from which she emerges to prevent the poisoning of Lord Asriel, is an effective and flexible hiding place. The wardrobe is an area within the adult sphere which the child finds comfortable (because it conceals her presence and enables her spying), and her occupation of that space (relatively isolated from adults) indicates Lyra's position as a child, but also her growing ability to impact the adult world. The wardrobe is warm and small – wombl-like; it acts as a physical barrier between her and the adult world, and it conceals her presence. In order to view the events unfolding she must peer through the slightly ajar door of the wardrobe, and in order to participate (to save Lord Asriel's life) she must leave the wardrobe altogether. Though this space is protective because it prevents her from being punished, its protection is linked to a lack of agency. She must forego this protection in order to increase her agency, and thus Lyra exits the wardrobe and becomes visible in an adult environment. Pullman takes time in this chapter to establish several additional themes which reinforce this interpretation of Lyra's hiding place. Pantalaimon claims that "hiding and spying is for silly children" and thus it is Lyra's emergence from hiding which signifies her maturation: "...she tumbled out of the wardrobe and scrambled up to snatch the glass from his hand" (9, 13). Lyra's emergence indicates the activation of a latent desire to be viewed as an adult. Pan's adult-inspired voice criticizes childish action: his speech reveals an adolescent desire to be distanced from childhood, but also conforms to adult criticism of adolescent action. In this case Pan condemns hiding and spying as trivial because the adults in his life (pre-narratively) have likely made the same assumption. While not a necessarily adult action, hiding and spying is clearly relevant to the adults involved in the scheme to poison Lord Asriel, and thus the claim that these actions signify a lack of maturity is difficult to support. Asriel's request that Lyra spy for him contradicts Pantalaimon's assumptions

about how adults view ‘hiding and spying’. Though Pan acknowledges the childish aspects of Lyra’s actions he is unable to immediately grasp the adult aspects of the same actions. This scene thus begins to complicate Pan’s adult-given understanding of the world, and forces him to reinterpret spying as an action belonging to the realm of both adult and child. Indeed, it is Lord Asriel who asks Lyra to make herself “useful” by spying on the Master (13). This claim, that spying can be useful, indicates that the difference between childish spying and adult spying is one of intent (her spying moves from ‘innocent’ curiosity, to espionage encouraged by Asriel’s ‘experience’). The childish action of spying becomes adult in this context because it serves an adult’s purposes and affects an adult’s life. At the same time Lyra is warned by Lord Asriel: “Make a noise in there and I won’t help you. You’re on your own” (15). Lyra’s safety is linked to her occupation of the wardrobe – the space of a child – and her agency is linked to her ability to interact with an adult space from this location. Rather than being welcomed into adulthood, her momentary entrance into that sphere is a source of possible conflict and serves to disrupt a previously stable subject-position. Lyra is no longer acting within the sole realm of a child.

Reluctant to leave her hiding place Lyra initially attempts to prevent Lord Asriel from drinking the poison by whispering a warning. When this strategy fails Lyra emerges and knocks the glass containing the poison from his hand. Lord Asriel confronts her: “How dare you come in here?” and is rebuked by Lyra: “I’ve just saved your life” (13). Here a crisis motivates Lyra’s intervention in affairs deemed inappropriate for her subject-position and she is momentarily able to prove her power to an adult. Likely for the first time in her life the adult is forced to back down and acknowledge Lyra’s assistance. Lyra thus overcomes adult oppression by invoking the extent of her power. She has not finished crossing between subject positions – she is not yet an adult or an adolescent – but she is momentarily accepted because she is “useful,” and thus

demonstrates the potential to shift her subject-position (13). This action demonstrates the lengths to which an adult figure might go to control a child's power. Indeed, before Lyra demonstrates her agency by speaking of the poison, Lord Asriel threatens to break Lyra's arm if she struggles to escape him (13). Similarly she is spared punishment only because she spies for him as she is asked, thus demonstrating that her power is in many ways still dependent on an adult's request, and a lack of adult intercession (13). At the outset of this narrative Lyra's agency has not reached a magnitude that is beyond adult control (we might not expect it to), but she is already able to directly face an adult and come out of the confrontation unscathed. There are caveats to Lyra's clean escape from the retiring room, however. Her power is wielded in an adult's interest, and later by an adult's direction, and is revoked after the moment of crisis. Following this short confrontation Lyra's agency fades and she becomes once again harmless in the eyes of adults. For these reasons Lyra is still considered a child, and for the most part resembles a child narratively. Her maturation from child to adolescent spans the trilogy, but she comes to resemble an adolescent in terms of agency and willingness to exercise that agency in the next chapter of the work. What Lyra learns in this scene is not how to leverage adult power – she is not yet an adult – but rather how to negotiate adult power. Lyra occupies a space from which she may enter or remain outside of adult conflict with equal ease, and for this reason has an advantage by comparison to adults: she simultaneously exercises her agency to affect change (adult power), and benefits from her reduced visibility (child power). Despite these advantages Lyra fears discovery and acts in accordance with adult desires. Her control over her power is tenuous. The opening and closing of the wardrobe door is a means for symbolically and literally adjusting her entrance into adulthood; narrow in order to observe, or flung wide in order to interact. The agency provided by such flexibility contributes to the ambivalence of Lyra's subject-position,

characterizing Lyra's place somewhere between childhood and adulthood, which is reminiscent of adolescence.

By the conclusion of the wardrobe scene Lyra has fallen asleep and must be woken by Asriel (27). She is so comfortably positioned in this space for children that she loses her ability to observe the adult world – the intrigue of adult affairs seems to have moved beyond Lyra, and she is once again more child than adult. Proof of this return to childhood comes as Lyra is rebuked when she asks to further her participation in adult affairs. When she asks to accompany him on his expedition to the north, Lord Asriel tells Lyra:

You're not coming, child. Put it out of your head; the times are too dangerous. Do as you're told and go to bed, and if you're a good girl, I'll bring you back a walrus tusk with some Eskimo carving on it. Don't argue anymore or I shall be angry (28).

Though Lyra has recently demonstrated agency in a moment of crisis, that agency is lost when the moment of crisis passes – her ability to save Asriel and the agency it granted her are lost simultaneously. Asriel recognizes this fact and attempts to reestablish Lyra's social-hierarchical place. He excludes her from his expedition. He calls Lyra "child," and "girl" making sure to locate her via her subject-position, reinforcing the perceived limitations of her age (11) and gender. He cautions her against thoughts which are contrary to previously established acceptable norms ("put it out of your head"), and establishes danger as the cause for her exclusion, implying that her subject-position as a girl or as a child prevents her from facing danger. He calls on adult language ("do as you're told," "go to bed") in order to stifle Lyra's ambition and curiosity. He offers a gift with little worth to appease her, and failing these attempts to control her, he resorts once again to threats ("I shall be angry"). This dialogue is meant to police Lyra's natural curiosity (pursuit of knowledge, especially of the North) and orient her towards childish considerations. The dialogue demands obedience and passivity, it coerces and threatens to

achieve these ends, and because Lyra is still young, this speech is to a great extent, effective. Lyra's power is diminished and she returns to childish things: she participates in "warfare" which is a harmless game, though she treats these games quite seriously (35-37). When asked how she spends her time she replies, "I just play. Sort of around the College. Just...play, really" (35-37). The agency demonstrated in the wardrobe scene is a taste of what is to come for Lyra and she never returns entirely to childhood, resembling an adolescent in her pursuit of adult forms of agency as the narrative progresses. This crisis is the moment that Lyra is initially 'tempted' to pursue actions which require agency and respect in an adult sphere.

Transition

Maria Nikolajeva and Roberta Trites describe the period of transition between adulthood and childhood – experienced by Lyra within the wardrobe – as a 'state of carnival' (Trites 35, Nikolajeva 23-25). The Bakhtinian state of Carnival is a theoretical period between two states of consistency or resolute behavior during which normal hierarchies and expectations are suspended. In *His Dark Materials* there is a carnivalesque period between childhood and adolescence wherein Lyra's resistance is developed; the rules are suspended for her and she ceases to function as a child in the narrative becoming empowered by comparison to similarly aged children. Several theorists support this reading of adolescence in fiction. In her work on constructionism in YAL Alison Waller describes "teenagers...as constructing their own identities through absorption, rejection or 'bricolage' of the dominant ideologies and social patterns of their parents or educators" (Waller 6). Nikolajeva describes the way by which dominant ideology is interrogated or confirmed by children and adolescents (23). In *Declarations of Independence* Joanne Brown and Nancy St. Clair speak in terms of assertion and submission, their work specifically concerned with depictions of girlhood and femininity in YAL

(9). Finally, Trites describes these various resistances and conformities in terms of adolescents' desire "to test the degree of power they hold" (Trites 1). In each case the concern of the theorist is with what remains and what is altered as a new generation reaches adulthood, and whether or not that alteration is permanent.

The connection between Pantalaimon and Lyra helps to define the complex relationship of an adolescent/child to the adult world. Pan reveals elements of Lyra's temperament and acts as her conscience. He advises her repeatedly throughout the novel and his advice often informs the decisions which Lyra makes when negotiating adult power. In the retiring room (before saving Asriel) he encourages Lyra to conform; he asks her not to take action and to avoid punishment (*Compass* 2-5). Later Pantalaimon's advice shifts and he more consistently supports Lyra's resistance and independence. While his voiced opinions offer one source of insight into Lyra's character, each physical shape which he takes, and the frequency of his changes between them, provides another. There is a fundamental concern with Pan's shifting form in the narrative, and the form which he will "settle" in for the entirety of Lyra's adult life (167). Often when Lyra experiences a new influence, such as the introduction of ideologies by her mother Marisa Coulter or Lord Asriel, Pantalaimon changes shape to reflect her stance towards that ideology – for instance he demonstrates resistance by taking the form of a porcupine, or conformity by mimicking the form of individuals he admires. Upon meeting her estranged mother, Lyra Belacqua is taken with her beauty, dignity, and poise. She describes Marisa Coulter before she is aware of their relation as "beautiful" and "accomplished" (81). Marisa is linked with high society, where she is depicted as lady-like: "almost...a new sex altogether, one with dangerous powers and qualities such as elegance, charm, and grace," and is elevated by comparison to the "boat mothers or college servants" which had previously served as feminine figures in Lyra's life

(81). Lyra embraces her time with her mother, envisioning her place in the high society which Mrs. Coulter represents: “Lyra was intoxicated....What Mrs. Coulter was saying seemed to be accompanied by a scent of grownupness, something disturbing but enticing at the same time: it was the smell of glamour” (74). Pantalaimon spends time “imitating the form of Mrs. Coulter’s daemon” in these scenes (75).

Similarly, after fleeing Mrs. Coulter’s influence Lyra spends time with the Gyptians. The Gyptians are a people at home on the sea and welcome her where other adults are hostile. She quickly comes to view their lifestyle sympathetically and entertains the idea of pursuing a similar adult life: “After two days at sea, Lyra decided that this was the life for her” (165). Despite this assertion in *The Golden Compass* she is ultimately drawn back to the life of a scholar in *The Amber Spyglass*. Though the Gyptians offer Lyra adventure, freedom, and friends, it is not the life she chooses to pursue once she enters adolescence, instead opting for the reformed upbringing of a female scholar. At the conclusion of the trilogy Lyra is the guest at a dinner with the Master of Jordan College, and Dame Hannah who runs the college for women, which Lyra will attend post-narratively. The Master informs her: “We must think about your future, Lyra,” and she responds “All the time I was away...I never thought about that. All I thought about was just the time I was in, just the present” (*Spyglass* 513). This is not remotely true. Though Lyra was compelled to take action in several cases to preserve her life or accomplish her goals, this compulsion did not render her oblivious to possible outcomes. Though Lyra claims she has not had time for reflection, many scenes demonstrate her attention to possible futures for herself, and for Pan. Pantalaimon’s shape communicates to the reader that Lyra is anything but inconsiderate of her future. For instance, when Pantalaimon takes a form which reflects the Gyptian lifestyle, Lyra considers the value of a future amongst those people:

[Pantalaimon] had to stay close to the ship, of course, for he could never go far from [Lyra]; but she sensed his desire to speed as far and as fast as he could, for pure exhilaration. She shared his pleasure, but for her it wasn't simple pleasure, for there was pain and fear in it too. Suppose he loved being a dolphin more than he loved being with her on land? What would she do then? (*Compass* 166)

Here Pan's form is that of a dolphin, a shape tied to Lyra's enjoyment of the freedom ("she had the run of the ship") which she experiences with the Gyptians (165). Lyra questions how she will spend her adulthood, and her hesitation to accept Pan's dolphin shape is tied to a reconsideration of this lifestyle. Though she is enjoying herself at sea, life at sea is not a core element of her character – she desires freedom, but it is not the freedom offered by the life of a Gyptian.

Following Lyra's consideration of Pan's dolphin form she seeks additional information from a new friend, an adult sailor: "Why do daemons have to settle?" (167). She is given a rather simplistic response: "Ah, they always settled, and they always will. That's part of growing up. There'll come a time when you'll be tired of his changing about, and you'll want a settled kind of form for him" (167). Lyra is not appeased by this response and meets the assertion with defiance ("I never will!") and because of her defiance the sailor is forced to explain further:

"There's compensation for a settled form...Knowing what kind of person you are. Take old Belisaria. She's a seagull, and that means I'm a kind of seagull too. I'm not grand and splendid nor beautiful, but I'm a tough old thing and I can survive anywhere and always find a bit of food and company. That's worth knowing that is. And when your daemon settles, you'll know the sort of person you are" (167).

Here we have a case where Lyra demonstrates that she cannot be flouted simply because she is a child – and perhaps by this time in the narrative she should no longer be considered a child, but rather an adolescent in earnest. Still, despite her growing mental and physical ability, Lyra has grown accustomed to positioning herself as 'other' to adulthood. She works under the assumption that "no grownup ever [gives] reasons of their own accord," and from this viewpoint

resists answers meant to appease or redirect (63). Lyra demands notice – demonstrates the extent of her power – and receives a respectful answer in return.

At the same time the reader is given a blatant example of how daemons act as metaphors representing the characteristics and social-hierarchical position of their humans: sailors have birds or fish – animals which live near water; servants have dogs – loyal and obedient; the explorer of the north Lord Asriel has a snow leopard powerful and well-equipped for the cold; the cunning and manipulative Mrs. Coulter has a primate, with opposable thumbs to facilitate dexterous manipulations. Lyra is undecided – she does not know who she is, or who she will be, but she is certainly aware of some of the possibilities listed above. Her condition is not uncommon. Every child in Lyra's world has a daemon capable of changing shape and it is the daemon's final shape which confirms or indicates an individual's identity – subservience, pride, or confidence are each portrayed via daemons. Pantalaimon's form describes what sort of person Lyra is, and when his form stops shifting, who she will continue to be until she dies. If this is the case then the sort of person Lyra *is* changes constantly until the climax of the third novel when Pantalaimon settles as a Pine Marten. Not only this, but Lyra identifies with this fluctuating identity; the fluctuation (or state of carnival) itself is privileged. She claims "I want Pantalaimon to be able to change forever. So does he" (167). Lyra is often in a position of adjustment or fluctuation, a state that she grapples with as the work progresses. She prefers this state of indecision to a settled form.

Lyra continues her line of questioning in order to gain a full understanding of the import of daemons, and to understand the measure of control she has over her place in adult society. She asks: "But suppose your daemon settles in a shape you don't like" (167)? This question is the most worrying of the series because it implies that an individual's fate is not decided by their

action, but rather that daemons settle randomly or against their will. The final shape of a daemon may reflect the final resting place of a soul as described in the Calvinist philosophy of predestination. Where predestination is concerned with whether a soul is ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ and thus destined for heaven or hell, daemons shift through a multitude of forms providing a more varied conception of one’s ‘soul’ or conscience. By contrast to Calvinist doctrine, even if predestination is a reality in Pullman’s narrative, the destinations of a soul are more varied. Gene Veith asserts:

In Lyra’s world, there was never a reformation, so the Church is all Catholic, but with shots at Protestantism in our world as well. The pope is named John Calvin. The Vatican has moved to Geneva. Thus Pullman is able to bring together and to caricature the two church traditions he detests most: Roman Catholicism and Calvinism (Veith 170).

Lyra is asked to come to terms with the didacticisms of adult influence, and the inevitability of accepting Pantalaimon’s shape – her place in society – regardless of its desirability. She grapples with the question of whether or not she is in control of her fate. Further, since daemons indicate social status Lyra has need to be concerned with material wealth as well as spiritual or mental well-being. It is well established in the novels that daemons are linked to a field of work: an individual with a dog servant seems almost comically doomed to a life of lower-class servitude (*Compass*5); an individual who has a fish as a daemon is required to permanently live near water, and might be “never quite happy till he died and he could be buried at sea” (167). In such cases an individual’s ‘lot in life’ has some obvious and serious restrictions, and like the final shape of their soul, has an air of predestination about it. Of course the ties to Calvinism are much commented on by detractors of Pullman’s works. For instance, one article entitled “Questions and Answers about Philip Pullman’s *The Golden Compass*” was circulated for free in 2007. The work condemns the release of the movie adaptation of Pullman’s novel on religious grounds, and warns against the dangers of reading his work. In the article’s ironically titled section “Gospel

According to Pullman,” Stiegemeier and McCain take pains to explain the Calvinist influences on Pullman’s work. They describe a church which:

is a strange blending of Calvinism and Roman Catholicism. Its defining characteristic is not the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ but rather the enforcement of moral rectitude. Its prime objective is to constrain free thought. The books use terminology familiar to believers, particularly of the Church of Rome. There is a “Magisterium,” a pope, cardinals and church councils (6).

Despite the sensational nature of the article, it cuts straight to the core of Pullman’s argument.

Philip Pullman describes a church institution and a biblical mythos which “constrain free thought,” and his depiction plays on many of the realities of the church, especially the Calvinist concept of predestination. The sailor who attempts to comfort Lyra has come to terms with the possibility that his role in society has been predestined – he believes that he is beyond change, or incapable of drastically changing, and thus any effort spent pursuing such a change is wasted. He describes the necessity of coming to terms with one’s position in society even if it is undesirable:

Well then, you’re discontented, en’t you? There’s plenty folk as’d like to have a lion as a daemon and they end up with a poodle. And till they learn to be satisfied with what they are, they’re going to be fretful about it. Waste of feeling that is. (167-168).

In this moment Lyra is encouraged to conform again. She is told that her position in society, once established, is a matter to be accepted rather than resisted – that she is predestined, in some ways, to life as an adult, and to the stability of ethics or character which adulthood indicates. From her vantage point Lyra sees adulthood/adolescence as a restrictive subject-position wherein she is allowed only one personality. Lyra pushes the thought of growing old from her mind, choosing instead to enjoy her freedom while it lasts: “. . . it didn’t seem to Lyra that she would ever grow up” (168). As the narrative progresses Lyra demonstrates her ability to resist adult control, and by the end of *The Golden Compass* it seems she may have succeeded in maintaining her subject-position whilst simultaneously developing an adult identity. Ultimately Lyra is forced

to come to terms with the *possibility* that she lacks free will. She accepts that some outcomes are inevitable but in the first book of the trilogy her free will remains mostly intact. The particular appeal of *The Golden Compass* by contrast to the other novels in the trilogy is that this growing-up is delayed (in a positive manner – she stands on a precipice ready to move forward) and thus Lyra enters into adolescence, and eventually adulthood on her own terms. Lyra's empowerment comes not from her ability to avoid adulthood, but from a sort of "power within repression" which allows her to choose one form of adulthood from many, and in this way shape adulthood from within (Trites 55). Though adulthood is an inevitable destination, the shape of that destination is as incredibly varied as the forms which a daemon may take.

Dust as Wisdom

The primary adult characters in *The Golden Compass*, and throughout much of *His Dark Materials*, are the estranged parents of Lyra Belacqua, Lord Asriel and Marisa Coulter. These characters represent secularism and religiosity respectively. It is not however, the influence of these two primary ideologies which shape Lyra, but rather her negotiation of the assertions made under the influence of those ideologies. Both ideologies vilify Dust, and it is this vilification (the assumptions resulting from ideological doctrine) which Lyra resists. Lord Asriel introduces to Lyra:

"...a mysterious energy referred to as 'Dust' (original sin, in the Church's conception, and dark matter, in the scientists' view). His aim is to destroy this Dust from whence, he wrongly assumes, 'all the death, the sin, the misery, the destructiveness of the world' derives" (Falconer 75).

Each character's conception of Dust drives conflict and shapes actions, rather than the ideologies which inspired these conceptions. It is not Asriel's secularism or Marisa's religiosity which Lyra resists, but the conclusions that they come to via these ideologies.

The concept of Dust is derived from both religious and scientific sources. Genesis 3:19 mentions Dust, and this biblical verse is quoted nearly verbatim by Lord Asriel: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return into the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (373). Pullman proceeds to rewrite this quotation slightly: “...scholars have always puzzled over the translation of that verse. Some say it should read not ‘unto dust shalt thou return’ but ‘thou shalt be subject to dust’” (373). In this description Dust is a particle from which human beings are formed, and which they become again when they die – attributes which are confirmed when the spirits of dead humans are freed to once again disperse into Dust (*Spyglass* 319). The rewriting of the verse by Pullman distinguishes between human beings and Dust. Thus Dust is not necessarily the only component of a being, but one of many, allowing the inclusion of more scientific conceptions of matter including elementary particles such as: “electrons, photons, neutrinos and the rest” (*Compass* 370). Paralleling the bonds between elementary particles in atoms “the energy that links body and daemon is immensely powerful,” and as in nuclear fission, “when the cut is made [separating daemon from child], all that energy dissipates in a fraction of a second” (375). In an interview Pullman echoes the words of Asriel by describing Dust in scientific terms, in effect restructuring a biblical mythology in terms of elementary particles, molecules and atoms:

I start from the coming into being of the figure I call the Authority, whom I think of as not the creator, but as simply the first conscious being. Matter I see as being potentially conscious. Matter loves matter, that’s the starting of it. Matter loves matter, it delights to join with itself and form organised structures. At some point when the complexity of the organisation becomes sufficient, matter begins to become conscious. And when matter becomes conscious of itself and is able to be self-reflexive, then it generates Dust, you see, and so Dust comes to life. At some point early in time a being arose of Dust, and he was the first thinking creature. He was the one I call the Authority. Because matter loves matter, and loves to form molecules and come together in structures and so on, inevitably other beings of Dust arose in time. (Interview with Philip Pullman Part II, Tony Watkins)

Pullman's claim is that in *His Dark Materials* Dust is the elementary particle which, when integrated into a complex structure of other elementary particles, generates conscience or self-awareness. Pullman describes Dust as simultaneously the element which condenses to create consciousness, and a substance created *by* conscious beings. It is through Dust that he claims thinking beings are created in *His Dark Materials*, and it is through thought that Dust is created.

This description parallels an analysis of Dust given by Leonard Wheat in *His Dark Materials – A Multiple Allegory*, in which he equates Dust and “knowledge” (Wheat 177). When Asriel sets out to destroy Dust he does not grasp what Dust does or *is*. He claims that: “[Dust is] hard to measure” because it doesn't react “in any of the usual ways” (*Compass* 370). To Asriel Dust and the Daemons associated with it are something to be leveraged in scientific pursuits. He does just this when he sacrifices Roger Parslow to forge a bridge into another universe (393). Later this spiritual splitting of the atom will be utilized once more to create a bomb, the detonation of which will create the Abyss into which Asriel and Marisa will plunge (354). Both instances represent the cruelties that can emerge from misused or poorly understood technology, harkening to the development and use of the hydrogen bomb in our own world. Asriel is aware of the possible power of Dust, but unaware of its other attributes: he does not yet know that sentience results from Dust and thus assumes Dust must be sought out and destroyed. Ultimately then, Lord Asriel is declaring a war against knowledge or open-mindedness when he declares: “Somewhere out there is the origin of all the Dust, all the death, the sin, the misery, the destructiveness in the world.... And I'm going to destroy it” (377). Ignorance thus encourages ignorance – the destruction of Dust would have destroyed sentience. What Asriel ends up doing though, is not waging a war against Dust, but against the church. In parallel, being unable to refute its existence “the Magisterium decided that Dust was the physical evidence for original

sin” (371). Without research or further insight, the church of the novel links Dust to an already vilified concept (sin). In each case, through a lack of critical insight Lyra’s parents (Marisa adopts the conception of Dust put forward by the Church and spearheads research into preventing Dust from settling on children) develop an incorrect understanding of Dust (375). In this one matter Lyra’s parents – who are different in most other ways – agree.

At the close of *The Golden Compass* Lyra develops her hypothesis regarding Dust, asserting its intrinsic ‘goodness’. For the remainder of the trilogy she embarks on a quest to prove that ‘goodness.’ That quest prompts several discoveries regarding Dust. In *The Amber Spyglass* it is the natural condensation of Dust which forms angels, and all other sentient beings; it is Dust which is responsible for consciousness; it is Dust from which a human’s spirit is formed; it is Dust from which Daemons are formed; it is Dust which drives the needle of the *alethiometer*, a device which reveals information to Lyra, and thus Dust which guides Lyra (370). The conception of Dust as knowledge is supported in the narrative (“billions of particles...a little fragment of conscious thought”), but also complicated (*Spyglass* 401). For instance the Tree of Knowledge from which Eve eats is equated with the settling of Dust: when she eats of the tree her daemon settles as it does when Dust settles on a person (372). Both Dust and eating of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden cause an individual to know “the true form of one’s daemon” (372). Rather than ‘knowledge’ which implies the memorizing of a fact or figure, I prefer the term ‘wisdom’.

Mary Malone is the third primary influence on Lyra. She assists Lyra’s search for wisdom near the end of her journey. She is a scientist, but was once a nun, and “her experience reading I Ching is an indication of a broad search for wisdom extending beyond the confines of

her own cultural tradition” (Frost 71). In one scene nearing the end of *The Amber Spyglass*,

Serafina Pekkala tells Mary Malone a story:

“I was flying high,” she explained, “looking for a landfall, and I met an angel: a female angel. She was very strange; she was old and young together,” she went on, forgetting that that was how she herself appeared to Mary. “Her name was Xaphania. She told me many things... She said that all the history of Human life has been a struggle between wisdom and stupidity. She and the rebel angels, the followers of wisdom, have always tried to open minds; the authority and his churches have always tried to keep them closed.” (*Spyglass* 479)

Wisdom is here described as ‘open minded,’ an attribute which indicates the ability to entertain several possible truths, and possibly to choose between those values. It is the opposite of stupidity, or ignorance. Though the stupidity that is to be resisted in accepting Dust is linked with the church, it is stupidity and close-mindedness itself which is vilified. The same close-mindedness which is here vilified as an element of the church is likewise present in Asriel’s haste resulting in his lack of consideration for the consequences of entering another universe, or of sacrificing his daughter’s friend. In both cases (secular or religious) ignorance is to blame for destruction and death, and thus it is not death or destruction which Lyra ultimately resists, but the aetonormative assumption that Dust – knowledge – is to be feared. Lyra is ‘anti-ignorance,’ and expresses this belief via her inquisitive nature and fearlessness: “What’s Dust? And why’s everyone so afraid of it?” (370).

As *The Golden Compass* claims, Dust makes individuals aware of “good and evil” rather than imbuing sentience (372). Sentience exists in Eve before the Fall (she has a conversation with the serpent, after all), and in Lyra before Dust settles on her (372). It is not Dust then, which makes an individual able to think, but rather Dust which causes an individual to choose – or desire to choose – between several subjective options. The settling of Dust on an individual reveals the final (“true”) form of their daemon (372). Dust – wisdom – causes humans to be able

to decide the form of their Daemon – belief system, ideology or conscience – and thus enter the next stage of life. Complicating my assertion that Dust is ‘wisdom’ is the information that Dust is attracted “especially to adults,” but settles on “children too, but not nearly so much until their daemons have taken a fixed form. During the years of puberty they begin to attract Dust more strongly, and it settles on them as it settles on adults” (370). This statement, and several other scenes in which Lyra witnesses photograms of Dust, speak to the presence of Dust – at least in trace amounts – in children with Daemons which have not yet settled (377). This means that rather than a qualitative change (the presence or absence of Dust) the settled form of a daemon indicates a quantitative change: at a certain threshold of Dust an individual’s daemon settles. This returns us once again to Dust as ‘knowledge,’ which as it accumulates takes on the particular texture of ‘wisdom,’ and thus causes an individual’s daemon to settle providing physical proof “that something happen[s] when innocence change[s] into experience” (373). This is the archetypal transition of a *Bildungsroman*, and comes about in a manner traditional for adolescent narratives: the protagonist goes on a quest of self-discovery, gains wisdom, and due to that wisdom is able to be considered an adult. Such a transition is complicated in Pullman’s narrative because it is during adolescence that a child’s daemon settles. Lord Asriel explains: “the two things that happen at adolescence might be connected: the change in one’s daemon and the fact that Dust [begins] to settle” (375). Thus the transition at the close of Pullman’s narrative is from childhood to adolescence, rather than childhood to adulthood or adolescence to adulthood, despite *His Dark Materials’ Bildungsroman* trappings. Though Pullman’s novels are ostensibly Young Adult Literature, the adolescents of his work border childhood (Will and Lyra are only 11-13 years of age), and are never given the moniker ‘teenager’ or similar adolescent identifiers. Falconer claims:

Sometimes [Will's] observations are indistinguishable from an adult's, as when he first sees Lyra's mother, Mrs. Coulter: 'The woman herself was beautiful . . . Will saw that with a shock—lovely in the moonlight, her brilliant dark eyes wide with enchantment, her slender shape light and graceful'. (Subtle Knife, 213) And Lyra herself can behave either as a very young child or as an adult. (Falconer 81).

Even at the close of Pullman's works Lyra seems to be becoming a teenager, rather than an adult, and despite a clear moment of transition from one subject-position to another, the "natural continuity" from child to adult seems privileged above a particular coming of age (Falconer 83-84).

Resistance

Lyra is not yet an adult at the close of *The Golden Compass*, but it is not her refusal to grow older which marks her as an empowered protagonist, but rather her refusal to accept what growing older means in the context of the narrative. In Pullman's world childhood is privileged as a time of freedom and experimentation in contrast to adulthood. In her work *The Crossover Novel: Contemporary Children's Fiction and its Adult Readership*, a study which is closely concerned with the relationship between children and adults, Rachel Falconer claims that:

Pullman valorises the 'childlike', I mean specifically those qualities and characteristics which he attributes to childhood, above all in his characterisation of Lyra. Neither obedient nor well mannered nor truthful like C.S. Lewis's Lucy Pevensie, Pullman's iconic child is daring, wilful, independent, empathetic and devious. Lyra is physically light on her feet, and as agile as a goat, as is evident from the opening scenes of *Northern Lights*, which depict her skipping sure-footedly across the rooftops of Jordan College. Later, it will be a sign that her childhood is over when she slips and falls while crossing a narrow ledge around an abyss in the underworld. (Falconer 84)

Childhood is associated primarily with positive attributes: independence, empathy and mental agility, each of which Lyra demonstrates in her interactions with adults. The implied corollary to this depiction of childhood is that adulthood must indicate the opposite; it must appear to be a place of determined moral ideology, conformity, apathy and stoicism. Adults perpetrate the

majority of crimes in the work; adults sever children from their souls; adults wage war; adults kidnap Lyra. Lyra's mother has a hand in the death of Tony Makarios and at the conclusion of the first novel, Lyra's friend Roger Parslow is killed by her father. Adults pursue their goals without negotiation or consideration: they enact ideology rather than consider it and by comparison to children, they are villainous. The antagonists of Pullman's trilogy are adults. For this reason it takes a special type of adult to recognize the value of children or to demonstrate 'childishness,' and thus those adult characters who join Lyra are exceptional cases: Iorek Byrnison is a prince and an armored bear, Serafina Pekkala a witch, and Lee Scoresby an Aeronaut from the far-off country of Texas. Each of the three is more fantastic than realistic and it is the least exceptional (Lee Scoresby) who is slain. Adults whom Lyra values are those she sees as distinct from the majority – they are the individuals who resist what Maria Nikolajeva calls "aetonormativity" (Nikolajeva 8).

In *Power, Voice and Subjectivity* Maria Nikolajeva nuances the arguments of Roberta Trites. Nikolajeva develops a method of analysis based on queer theory which utilizes the concept of aetonormativity defined thusly:

On analogy with the central concept of queer theory, heteronormativity, I propose the concept aetonormativity (Lat. Aeto-, pertaining to age), adult normativity that governs the way children's literature has been patterned from its emergence to present day....The essence of queer theory, in this broad interpretation, is the interrogation of one single condition as a norm. Queer studies test how we can exchange an established pattern, in our case, adult normativity, for another one, and examine what happens if we instead depart from child in power as norm and the powerless child as deviation (8).

Further, Nikolajeva identifies Pullman's works as a special case: "In regard to recent fantasy fiction, Philip Pullman has approximated child normativity in *His Dark Materials*; yet the child is at the end of the trilogy already on the verge of adulthood" (204). Nikolajeva suggests that Philip Pullman comes close to replacing the privileging of adult power with the privileging of

child power in his narrative. Ultimately she concludes that this inversion must be discarded because of the proximity of Lyra and Will to adulthood at the close of the trilogy. It is too difficult to distinguish between children who have established childhood as normative, and children who have simply entered into adult normativity. Nikolajeva's critique problematizes the dual outcomes of an adolescent protagonist posited by Trites: perish or become repressive. Lyra and Will do not seem repressive (they do not have an agenda which they inflict on others); rather these protagonists leverage their power in order to subvert aetonnormativity in their world. In this way, though Lyra does not succeed in rewriting childhood as normative, and adulthood as 'other, 'she is able to alter adulthood and thus maintain or reclaim her power in adulthood rather than conform to the expectations of that subject position. In *The Golden Compass* Lyra demonstrates an understanding that she must eventually enter into adulthood and thus does not resist becoming an adult as J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan does, but rather resists the normative thought processes associated with becoming an adult. Working with the understanding that she will one day be an adult, Lyra resists the variations of adulthood which she sees as undesirable. She is the victor in numerous contests between adolescent agency and aetonnormativity as represented by specific adult figures and institutions: Marisa Coulter, Iofur Raknison, John Faa, the magisterium and the doctors and nurses of Bolvangar are each confronted and overcome.

Lyra initially demonstrates her rejection of adult ideology by fleeing Marisa Coulter, whom she views as manipulative and controlling. Lyra claims that she feels: "confined and cramped by this polite life, however luxurious it was" and that "the one thing that kept her polite and attentive to Mrs. Coulter was that tantalizing hope of going north" (85). Here Lyra's actions are kept in check by her desires. The promise that her desire will be fulfilled prevents her resisting Mrs. Coulter's charms until it becomes clear that this desire will never be satisfied.

Once again in order to resist Lyra must encounter a crisis caused by attempted violent coercion (86). This crisis, and the knowledge that children are being sacrificed, triggers Lyra's flight from Mrs. Coulter's company. This is the beginning of a progression in Lyra's resistances, each of which demonstrates more agency than the last. In the wardrobe 'hiding' was indicated agency but left Lyra in the place of a child and utterly without agency once she exited the wardrobe. The result of her exiting the wardrobe was her surrendering of agency, and she became powerless once more. In order to escape the manipulation of Mrs. Coulter, Lyra flees the situation and strikes out on her own, demonstrating independence.

This type of flight is not predicated on knowledge-as-power, but it is also not a reliable form of agency. It is only via the intervention of the Gyptians that it is successful. The Gyptians are a water-faring people lead by a patriarch named John Faa: "the lord of the western Gyptians" (114). Though there are Gyptian children Lyra's interactions are primarily with adults. When Lyra flees Mrs. Coulter, it is the Gyptians who cut the nets thrown over her, who kill her pursuers, and who secret her away (103). Though her flight from Mrs. Coulter was demonstrated agency, Lyra's agency must still be augmented by adult authority to result in successful resistance. The next step in her development comes when John Faa excludes Lyra from an expedition to the north. She voices her concerns by highlighting the bias of the exclusions John Faa is making: "you might need women to play a part – well you might need kids too" (Compass 139). Once again Lyra is rebuked, but childhood resistances no longer appeal to her: "Over the next few days, Lyra concocted a dozen plans and dismissed them impatiently; for they all boiled down to stowing away" (141). Lyra's development continues, however, and she becomes not only independent, but positions herself so that she is able to lead adults. In order to gain passage to the North Lyra proves herself valuable to the Gyptians who had sworn not to bring any

children, or any females. Here Lyra resists as a child against adult authority, and as a female against male authority, predicting the death of a spy by using her compass. Lyra changes John Faa's mind and becomes an exception to the rule: no women and no children may travel to Bolvangar, except Lyra. This moment is important because Lyra is described as a stereotypically oppressed 'other,' but her resistance is effective only on a personal scale. She does not here change the system which oppresses her, but rather momentarily gains agency through acceptance into that system – she proves her value once again to adults males, despite being a female child. John Faa concedes his stance against her: "Lyra, child, Farder Coram has told me about your reading of that instrument. ...I think we're going to have to take you with us after all, against my inclinations" (149). The word inclination is of particular note. It indicates an underlying guiding principle which is here challenged and overthrown by Lyra's actions, but once again, on the recommendation of an adult authority figure: Farder Coram. Farder Coram is a senior Gyptian, and advisor to John Faa, and though he represents traditional wisdom, he acts in service (and is a subordinate of) John Faa.

Following this moment Lyra experiences a multitude of smaller agential moments. She organizes the children in Bolvangar to escape their fate and frees the daemons trapped there. She rides Iorek to discover Tony Makarios' whereabouts, and so forth. After this interaction, however, Lyra first experiences freedom, and Pan experiments with the form of a dolphin (166). This freedom is linked to her growing ability to resist adult authority, and though she initially leads the children of Bolvangar, eventually she comes to lead adults in pursuit of her mother and father. In the scene with the Dolphin and the sailor we might consider Lyra empowered because she holds an adult responsible to answer difficult questions without relying on another adult's authority. Her agency will continue to grow. Upon once again finding herself in the presence of

Marisa Coulter (in the laboratory in Bolvangar), Lyra is able to rebuke her mother, rather than simply flee. Rachel Falconer describes the confrontation:

Meeting her mother at the laboratory where the severing is carried out, she demands to know, ‘why were they going to do that? . . . why are they so cruel?’ (283) Mrs. Coulter soothingly appeals to Lyra’s self-interest (‘They won’t ever do it to you . . . you’re safe’.), but Lyra instantly rebukes her (‘they do it to other children! Why?’). Throughout the trilogy, Lyra identifies intensely with the suffering of others (not only Tony and the other children at Bolvangar, but also Iorek, Roger et al) but she can also use her ability to read others’ emotions to her own advantage (for example, when she plays off the rival bear king Iofur’s insecurities). (Falconer 85)

This rebuke and the manipulation of Iofur which follows, serves to demonstrate that Lyra is not simply resisting, but actually subverting adult influence via her actions. Instead of gaining assistance from the Gyptians (requiring support), Lyra here lends assistance to Iorek, convincing the rival bear to accept his challenge. Though Lyra does not yet directly overcome an adult, she assists others in doing so. Lyra alters the structure of adult power: the bear king Iofur is overthrown, and Lyra’s favored adult (Iorek) is placed in a position of power (354). Here Lyra chooses new leadership for the bears and demonstrates an ability to shape the outcome of adult events in her favor. Lyra’s agency progresses from needing support, to offering support. At the close of the work, however, Lyra finds herself alone and must function without assistance, and in her own interest. Pullman writes, at the conclusion of *The Golden Compass*: “Lyra and her daemon turned away from the world they were born in, and looked toward the sun, and walked into the sky” (399). Pantalaimon and Lyra are not lead into the world of *The Subtle Knife*, nor are they accompanied, forced, or coerced. *The Golden Compass* concludes with Lyra’s empowerment, demonstrating her ability to ‘turn away from’ the controlling pressures of her world, and enter into a new world without those pressures, or wherein she can resist such pressures as were exerted on her by Mrs. Coulter or John Faa. The final moments of *The Golden Compass* solidify Lyra’s independence and establish her reason for leaving the world she was

born into. The transition from *The Golden Compass* into *The Subtle Knife* is an increase in maturity preluding an ultimate movement from childhood into adolescence. It is a moment of freedom during which Lyra and Pan “walk into the sky” (399). It is the closing pages of *The Golden Compass* which confirm resistance as a primary factor in Lyra’s empowerment, independence and maturation by demonstrating that her ability to resist adult pressures has not diminished. Her ability to negotiate adult ideologies without accepting them seems able to continue indefinitely.

The Golden Compass is an *Entwicklungsroman*. Lyra’s growth is incomplete. The culmination of her journey towards the agency and maturity of adulthood is interrupted by the space between *The Golden Compass* and *The Subtle Knife*. Lyra is never an adult, and might not even be considered an adolescent, within *The Golden Compass*. Yet when *His Dark Materials* is considered as a trilogy a *Bildungsroman* structure is obvious. In *The Amber Spyglass* her development ends; she enters adulthood; she returns to Jordan College; and her daemon settles. The difference between these two works is the privileging of alternate destinations for the protagonist. Where the *Bildungsroman* highlights adulthood as a status to be achieved, adulthood as Lyra knows it is not something to be aspired to. In this way the *Entwicklungsroman* promotes resistance more ably because it lacks a defined destination and thus allows flexibility during transition from one point to another – Lyra need only mature within that genre, not become an adult; her daemon need not settle. Despite this Lyra’s daemon *does* settle, and the structure of growth which begins in *The Golden Compass* is pursued throughout the remainder of the trilogy until *Entwicklungsroman* comes to resemble *Bildungsroman*. Thus, though *The Golden Compass* expresses the possibility of never growing older, it entertains that possibility only fleetingly – Lyra must eventually mature and her daemon must eventually settle. Lord Asriel’s changed

perception of Lyra is perhaps the first indication of such an inevitable destination. Lyra claims: “[Asriel] had never looked at her seriously before, she thought; until now he had always been like an adult indulging a child in a pretty trick. But he seemed to think she was ready” (370). Here the possibility for a coming-of-age is created, but immediately eschewed. Rather than considering Lyra an adult, Asriel cites the requirement of “physical proof” within the narrative in the form of a settled daemon (373). He explains that it is only this transition from ‘shifting’ daemon to ‘settled’ “that [proves] something happen[s] when innocence change[s] into experience” (373). This indicates that Lyra is not yet an adult, but is recognized as more than a child by Asriel – the logical description for such a liminal entity is ‘adolescent’. Lyra enters – or is recognized as having previously entered – adolescence. Though this moment is but one of many which indicate Lyra’s progressing maturity, this particular instance is followed by an awakening. Asriel explains this rite of passage using the myth of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Eden, rewritten by Pullman thusly:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to reveal the true form of one’s daemon, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they saw the true form of their daemons, and spoke with them.

...

And they saw the difference, and they knew good and evil; and they were ashamed, and they sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness.... (Compass 372)

Lyra has, is, and will reenact Eve’s fall from grace. Lyra begins in a state of absolute oppression by adult authority, in which her conscience Pantalaimon advises her to follow rules blindly, as Eve is oppressed when told “*Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die* (371-372). In this state of oppression Lyra is isolated from adult interactions as Adam and Eve are isolated from knowledge in the garden – she is treated as less than adult, as Adam and Eve are

treated as less than God. Lyra is tempted by Asriel's exploits in the north as Eve is tempted by the serpent; both acquire knowledge and increased status. Lyra comes to be seen as an adult, and Eve is tempted to 'be as god'. Lyra and Eve transgress against the rules of higher authorities due to this temptation: Lyra emerges from the wardrobe and journeys north; Eve eats of the tree. Both begin their fall due to outside encouragement. The difference between Eve and Lyra at this moment is that Lyra has not experienced her expulsion from Eden (held accountable for her resistance to authority or her pursuit of knowledge), nor has her daemon settled, and thus she cannot 'know good and evil' (judge subjectively). The final scenes of the novel demonstrate Lyra's progression towards an intimate knowledge of good and evil, and imply the changes to come for the adolescent as she ventures forth into a new world (the acquisition of wisdom by contrast to the vilification of knowledge).

It is on the peak of a mountain (reminiscent of Mt. Sinai, invoking Moses' biblical quest for wisdom in the form of the ten commandments) that Lyra reaches her epiphany concerning Dust, and it is from the peak of this mountain that Lyra chooses between the safety of childhood and the possibility of adolescence. At the close of *The Golden Compass* Lyra pursues the veracity of that epiphany into the later books of the series (388): "She turned away. Behind them lay pain and death and fear; ahead of them lay doubt, and danger, and fathomless mysteries" (399). Here what Lyra has experienced is contrasted with what Lyra will experience. It is a hopeful transition to a world which is tenuous in its promise, but preferable to the absolute negatives of remaining where she is. Lyra has experienced the death of friends in *The Golden Compass*, but her future promises (and ultimately provides) closure for Lyra, as she reconnects with Roger Parslow's ghost whose death was in part her responsibility. Again Lyra moves forward towards greater agency, the ability to reconnect with dead loved ones and see to their

care in the afterlife (*Spyglass* 36). Pullman preludes Lyra's final moment of isolation on the mountain's peak with: "Lyra was alone," an authorial aside which is both isolated in a single paragraph, and ends a chapter, highlighting the importance of Lyra's independence (388). At this moment, alone on the mountain, the child Lyra develops her first meaningful adult assertion, an assertion which will drive her forward and bring her into the middle of an adult ideological conflict spanning universes: 'Dust is good'. The only companion able to influence Lyra during this moment is Pantalaimon:

We've heard them all talk about Dust, and they're so afraid of it, and you know what? We *believed* them, even though we could see that what they were doing was wicked and evil and wrong.... We thought Dust must be bad too, because they were grown up and they said so. But what if it isn't? What if it's--"

She said breathlessly, "Yeah! What if it's really *good*...." (*Compass* 398)

Following this conversation Lyra sets out to defend a particular belief against the ideological dogmatism of adults. Instead of exploring or asking questions, Lyra now has an intention which runs contrary to that of most adult characters, especially Asriel. Laurie Frost claims: "Her conviction that Asriel must be stopped before he destroys Dust, her quest to save it from him, and her fear that Asriel will destroy its source compel her exodus out of her own world" (319). Lyra takes on traits typical of adolescence (the extent of her power is a threat to adults, and the intent with which it is wielded is in opposition to them): her intent is contrary to aetnonormative ideology and she has developed into an independent and empowered young woman. Lyra has developed a hypothesis ('Dust is good') based on her assessment of certain individuals' worth ("the Oblation Board and the Church and Bolvangar and Mrs. Coulter and all") (397-398). Her self-developed belief ("what if it's really good?") opposes their adopted ideologies (397-398). The conclusion of *The Golden Compass* is a moment of empowerment, the triumph of an adolescent over adult ideology. Lyra is able to play devil's advocate to the end, arguing for

the essential *goodness* of Dust without support from any adult source. This ability to resist adult claims is a reiteration of Lyra and Pan's interactions throughout the novel, with Mrs. Coulter, with Lord Asriel, with the general oblation board and the Gyptians.

If Lyra is testing the extent of her power, as Trites claims adolescent protagonists must, then that extent seems limitless within the context of the first novel: she neither perishes nor becomes repressive herself as Trites predicts (Nikolajeva 7). Unfortunately for Lyra this is only the first novel of three – her resistance cannot be permanent, and what constitutes resistance in this novel eventually comes to resemble a stable identity, and thus adulthood. It is not that Lyra stops resisting aetonormative thought, but that her thoughts which once demonstrated resistance are themselves aetonormative. Though Lyra's beliefs are not currently espoused by the adults in the narrative, they come to be an adult-normative concept via her espousal of them. Her beliefs eventually come to inspire martyrdom, shifts in the personal philosophies of characters like Lady Salmakia and Chevalier Tialys, and change how the afterlife functions. Tialys and Salmakia transition from serving Asriel, to aiding Lyra and journey with her into the underworld in order to free those trapped there. In so-doing they shift from a bleak outlook on death as a place where one ceases to exist, towards a more positive view of death, in which one is rejoined with the universe. When Lyra turns her back on the world and walks into the sky at the end of *The Golden Compass* she is moving into an expansive new environment, one which contrasts sharply with her ultimate return to her own world, and her loss of access to other worlds. She continues the course described by Asriel, completing her fall from grace as Eve did, but will ultimately experience a sympathetic expulsion from Eden (one which seems 'unjust' rather than 'just'). Though Lyra is ultimately unable to avoid maturing, she will demonstrate the ability to change the quality of Eve's fall from grace and subsequent banishment. When Lyra falls, she is not

expelled from the Garden of Eden forever, but may return to that Garden, and to Will whom she loves, in the afterlife. Lyra changes aeternormativity and makes adulthood a space which she feels comfortable occupying; she changes what death means; she resists normative conceptions of good and evil. She overcomes, and though the end of her story seems tragic it has a silver lining, and that silver lining is something she created despite being confined to the narrative archetype provided by the biblical Eve. The silver lining is thus Lyra's, not Eve's, and is representative both of Pullman's rewriting of Eve's myth, and of Lyra's ability to remake adolescence in her image. When Lyra pointedly opposes adult influences, and simultaneously recognizes the inevitability of her own adulthood, she becomes able to seek what Trites calls "empowerment within repression" (55). Lyra does not resist adulthood as she did during her conversation with the sailor – resistance to physical maturation is impossible even in the context of the narrative – but she resists aeternormativity. Proof of this is the blanket statement she gives in her resistance (she vilifies: "the Oblation Board and the Church and Bolvangar and Mrs. Coulter and all"), condemning not just an individual or an organization, but 'all' adults which fit into her conception of aeternormativity. She demonstrates a willingness to distance herself from the types of adults she does not wish to be, and draws closer to adults who are 'other' within adulthood: Iorek Byrnison, Serafina Pekkala and Lee Scoresby. Though Lyra ends the novel on the brink of a journey, her daemon remains unsettled, and her childhood is intact. Even when Lyra's daemon must settle he is able to project implied changes into the post-narrative, symbolized by the changed nature of her and Pantalaimon's relationship as evidenced by Pan's ability to more easily distance himself from her (*Spyglass* 516). Will and Lyra demonstrate Nikolajeva's claim that:

Children in our society are oppressed and powerless. Yet, paradoxically enough, children are allowed, in fiction written *by adults* for the enlightenment and enjoyment of children, to become strong, brave, rich, powerful and independent – *on certain conditions and for a limited time*....Children's literature has *the potential* to question the adults as a norm" (10-11).

Lyra demonstrates near-perfect resistance, and is only barely limited by the italicized caveats of Nikolajeva's claims. Lyra is written by an adult who favors secularism, but her concern in the narrative is with wisdom and love rather than atheistic or religious ideologies. Lyra develops power and independence, but shows every indication of maintaining these in adolescence rather than surrendering them after a 'limited time'. She is granted the use of a magical device (the alethiometer) which fails her when she reaches adolescence (on a 'certain condition'), but may be able to relearn the use of that device again as she matures. Finally, Lyra and *His Dark Materials* demonstrate 'the potential' to question adults as norm, and though maturity is privileged as a necessity, the options that Lyra has within that maturation process are near endless. While Lyra's destination is in some ways fixed, she shows incredible flexibility within that fixity, eschewing the ideologies of both parents.

Inheriting a Rebellion: Milton and Blake's Diabolical Spirit in Pullman's Characters

Philip Pullman's privileges a realist narrative. He has claimed – quite hypocritically – that fantasy as a genre, by contrast to strict realism, damages any message that might be conveyed by the work. The irony is found in Pullman's own fantasy trilogy. Though there are escapist elements to *His Dark Materials*, the work embraces a realist depiction of childhood:

Despite its obvious fantasy elements, Pullman provocatively insisted that *His Dark Materials* was realist, since it 'deal[s] with matters that might normally be encountered in works of realism, such as adolescence, sexuality, and so on; and they are the main subject matter of the story . . . what it means to be human, to grow up, to suffer and learn'. (Falconer 75)

Pullman uses his fantasy setting to hold a mirror to reality. He claims in the introduction to his first novel that: “*The Golden Compass* forms the first part of a story in three volumes. The first volume is set in a universe like ours, but different in many ways. The second volume is set in the universe we know. The third volume moves between universes” (*Compass*, Foreword). Primarily Pullman depicts disenfranchisement, lost (and found) love, and death. In each of these depictions he seeks to adapt the biblical archetype of Eve’s fall to tell new stories¹:

Pullman argues that, unlike many fantasy novels, his trilogy has the texture of material reality, his characters are presented as fully rounded and realistically complex individuals, and his moral and ethical concerns are characteristically realist. But this explanation does not address the fact that his pair of children come of age in multiple universes populated by talking armoured bears, witches, tiny knights mounted on dragonflies, angels and harpies (rather than, say, nineteenth-century London). (Falconer 76)

Pullman’s critique of fantasy is based in a concern that his own fantasy will be dismissed as escapist and without substance. Against this assumption Pullman highlights fantasy as a site for constructing arguments relevant to reality:

My quarrel with much (not all) fantasy is it has this marvelous toolbox and does nothing with it except construct shoot-em-up games. Why shouldn't a work of fantasy be as truthful and profound about becoming an adult human being as the work of George Eliot or Jane Austen? Well, there are a few fantasies that are. One of them is *Paradise Lost*. (Interview at Achuka Children's Books)

Pullman is especially concerned with the use and misuse of religious myths. Like Blake and Milton before him, Pullman draws attention to religious ideology in *His Dark Materials*, and more recently in *The Good Man Jesus and The Scoundrel Christ*, both of which rewrite biblical narratives in order to change the moral of those stories. *The Golden Compass* directly revises genesis:

¹ Like Lyra Pullman works within a sort of repression provided by the archetypes to which he adheres, and by which he is inspired: his works draw heavily on inter-texts and function as re-writings of Milton and of Genesis. Within this archetype Pullman presents concepts which these stories did not traditionally include, or which completely subvert/invert the meaning of the original work.

...she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat....

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they saw the true form of their daemons, and spoke with them. (Compass 372)

Pullman valorizes attaining knowledge in the face of authority, and especially highlights the importance of moral knowledge, privileging a communication with oneself or one's conscience as embodied by the daemons of the narrative. Pullman inserts fantastical elements into a quotation from genesis: 'and they saw the true form of their daemons, and spoke with them' is substituted for "and they knew that they *were* naked," (*King James Bible*, Gen. 3:7-8). The substitution of lines from genesis with the fantastical elements of Pullman's trilogy highlights the connections between Daemons and nudity. The daemons themselves are without clothing – they are not aware of their nudity as humans are – and their correlation to nudity thus links daemons with clarity (the revealing nature of nudity) and grace (in biblical myth nudity is only covered because of shame after the fall from grace). The knowledge gained by speaking with a daemon is prefaced by eating from the tree of knowledge and thus daemons are associated with communication. Though daemons are physically embodied in Lyra's world, in Will's world they take the form of "a silent voice in the mind and no more" (*Knife* 266). In either case the conscience is something that communicates with a human. Unlike humans who could ostensibly speak before eating from the tree of knowledge ("And the woman said unto the serpent"), words between humans and daemons were not exchanged until that knowledge was secured (*Compass* 371). Finally, Satan is associated with daemons; he comes to Eve in the form of a serpent, and may *be* a daemon, perhaps the conscience of the angel Satan. Satan-as-serpent is linked with Dust in the same way that daemons are – God curses the serpent: "upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3.14). The serpent's form is unchanging like that of a daemon whose human has reached maturity and become saturated with Dust, and he is

able to speak unlike the mundane animals of Pullman's mythos. By integrating fantasy elements into biblical quotations Pullman helps develop connections between his imagined daemons and traditionally religious materials, and by so doing subverts biblical readings (Satan becomes a bearer of the positive 'Dust' rather than a manipulating tempter) as much as he draws inspiration from them.

Pullman similarly rewrites realist narratives. He uses fantastical minorities in his works to shed light on issues of cultural appropriation and racism. For instance the Gyptians of Pullman's fantasy explain their culture to Lyra: "You en't Gyptian, Lyra. You might pass for Gyptian with practice, but there's more to us than Gyptian language. There's deep in us and strong currents" (112). This quotation is used to warn Lyra against appropriating Gyptian culture, urging her to appreciate the culture rather than steal it for herself. In the same scene systemic racism against Gyptians is highlighted: "If a Gyptian body floated ashore down the coast, or got snagged in a fishnet, well – it was only a Gyptian" (112). Though Gyptians do not exist extra-narratively, they stand-in for traditionally discriminated against minorities. Both cases – biblical rewriting, and themes of racism or cultural appropriation – demonstrate an attention to typically realist themes within a fantasy setting, and support Pullman's claim that his work does more than 'construct shot-em-up games,' but rather draws attention to realist concerns extra-narratively, and reimagines works from Genesis to *Paradise Lost*. The primary concern of Pullman's work, however, is the re-writing of a Christian-religious mythos. Pullman is outspokenly secular, and makes use of the 'marvelous toolbox' provided to him by fantasy to describe that ideology. In an interview with *The Telegraph* Pullman claimed "Atheism suggests a degree of certainty that I'm not quite willing to accede to. I suppose technically you'd have to put me down as an agnostic. But if there is a God and he is as the Christians describe him, then he deserves to be put down

and rebelled against” (Daily Telegraph, “*I am of the Devil’s Party*”). This quotation is important because Pullman has come under fire as a secular absolutist, but rebukes this notion with an assertion that he is uncertain – rather than stressing conformity to secularism, Pullman privileges a secular ideology alongside the pursuit of knowledge or wisdom. By doing so Pullman does not singularly condemn Christian beliefs, but leaves room for reconsidering Christianity, and targets clear injustices enacted by the church. For instance the witches of *His Dark Materials* condemn genital mutilation, not the whole of religion:

There are churches [in other universes], believe me, that cut their children too, as the people of Bolvangar did—not in the same way, but just as horribly. They cut their sexual organs, yes, both boys and girls; they cut them with knives so that they shan’t feel. That is what the church does, and every church is the same: control, destroy, obliterate every good feeling. (Subtle Knife 50)

Here the witch queen Ruta Skadi stands to rally disparate clans in aid of the protagonists.

Pullman directs his critique of the church such that it does not challenge all Christian beliefs, but only holds the church accountable for actions taken in its name. In several instances Pullman’s condemnation is concerned with ‘The Magisterium,’ a thinly veiled stand-in for the Roman Catholic Church and the primary institution associated with antagonists such as Marisa Coulter. Such a church is not a direct depiction of the Roman Catholic Church. Rather the Magisterium is an amalgamation of qualities navigated by the protagonists of *His Dark Materials*. For instance, Lyra struggles with the concept of predestination despite never being told her destiny. An element of religion associated with the Calvinist faith more readily than Catholicism, predestination is visible to Lyra, but not because she understands her fated place as Eve in the narrative. Pullman depicts predestination as restricting, but identifies the possibility of working within those restrictions (though Lyra must follow in Eve’s footsteps, she need not resemble Eve exactly). *His Dark Materials* grapples with religious concepts, but rarely condemns – in

instances where it does (genital mutilation) the condemnation seems reasonable. Pullman wields specific critiques in order to reduce the anti-religious elements of his novel. In contrast the example of the Gyptians is intended to critique *all* forms of racism, and thus makes claims which are broadly applicable to all disenfranchised racial and cultural minorities. By adjusting the scope and severity of his critiques Pullman is able to identify problematic elements of religion without lambasting all religions or all religious peoples.

Despite the specificity of most critiques, Pullman is not always able to contain such condemnations to a specific event or organization. For instance, during a prisoner interrogation, one church member claims: "...we have a thousand years of experience in this church of ours. We can draw out your suffering endlessly" (*Knife* 38). The critique of the Church's historical crime which Pullman offered earlier was clear in its target (genital mutilation), but here gives way to a broadened critique of church doctrine. The dismantling of church power is privileged and spearheaded by the heroes, and the villains are portrayed as blind devotees of a false faith. A reader can only logically take one side, and this could be considered problematic by any individual who privileges religion as a fundamental doctrine. Pullman is opinionated, but not an absolutist by any means. By contrast the critiques of his work often come from fundamentalist sources.² One such defamatory article claims: "Pullman has nothing of substance to offer when it comes to concocting an alternative to the Christian faith he detests so venomously. Which is why [his]...flowery-but-empty passages and promises...seem to echo those of a well-known serpent" (Adam Holz, *Sympathy for the Devil*). The detractors of Pullman's work at PluggedIn work for the parent company *Focus on the Family*, whose website claims: "We believe God has ordained

² It is possible that YAL is a sort of Ideological State Apparatus, as posited by Trites. If that is the case, then it is in direct conflict with religion as an alternate ISA. Thus critiques of Pullman's novels by religiously motivated groups are in reality a conflict between two ISAs, espousing disparate ideologies, attempting to reach as many possible converts as possible.

three basic institutions – the Church, the family and the government – for the benefit of all humankind” (FocusOnTheFamily.ca). Their critique is grounded in absolutist assumptions – by contrast to Pullman they seem quite decided in their beliefs. The author of this article, Adam R. Holz, compares Pullman to Satan, but more importantly, Satan-as-tempter in the Garden of Eden. Pullman’s novels treat religion as a normative ideology and depict secularism as justified because it challenges – I will claim overcomes – a religious normative structure. Within the context of the narrative the church is depicted as an institution which *is* corrupt, and based on this assertion rebellion against the church is natural in the narrative in a manner which does not necessarily translate directly to negotiation of church ideology in reality. Pullman embraces his secular identity against a host of detractors, but attempts to avoid absolutist claims: “Blake said Milton was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it. I am of the Devil's party and know it” (Helena De Bartodano, “I am of The Devil’s Party”). Here Pullman aligns himself with the fundamental thrust of his work: Satan, in his rebellion against God, was an oppressed individual resisting the status quo. The hypothesis of his work is not ‘religion is evil,’ but rather ‘wisdom and freedom are good’. Pullman considers Satan the ultimate ‘other’ capable of resisting an established structure, and he identifies this resistance as ‘good’ whether it is ‘correct’ or not. Rather than espousing a personal ideology, *His Dark Materials* simply valorizes questioning other ideologies. Pullman attributes his primary inspiration in this questioning of authority to John Milton, and William Blake who writes “*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*” in the footsteps of Milton. Far from avoiding the controversy of his works, Pullman has embraced it; jumping into the realm of religion vs. secularism he posits that the latter is the obvious choice should the former be identified as corrupt.

Resistance or Conformity: A Third Path

In the foreword to *The Golden Compass*, Pullman quotes directly from Book II of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

Into this wild abyss,
 The womb of nature and perhaps her grave,
 Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
 Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
 Unless the almighty maker them ordain
 His dark materials to create more worlds,
 Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
 Stood on the brink of hell and looked a while,
 Pondering his voyage... (*Paradise Lost*, 910-919; quoted in *Compass* Foreword)

There are a few important changes made by Pullman to Milton's text. First, Milton's spelling is updated to a modern spelling in three cases: "wilde," "mixt," and "warie" (*Paradise Lost Book II*, 910, 914, 917). This is likely a change for clarity, but it is fitting that Pullman is here literally re-writing – and modernizing – Milton. Further, contractions such as "mixt" and "Confus'dly" are eliminated, skewing the syllable count of Milton's original (*Paradise Lost Book II*, 913-914). Pullman is concerned with clarity of content rather than the poetry of the work. In this passage from *Paradise Lost* Milton describes the wild abyss which is at once the 'womb' and 'grave' of nature, the realm of possibility (life) and that of silenced possibility (death). The abyss is not neutral or decided, but rather 'wild' and associated with many things. Fundamentally, Milton does not describe the abyss as 'evil' but rather invokes the maternal ('pregnant') and the contemplative ('confusedly' and 'pondering'), linking the abyss to the 'birth' of possibilities.

Pullman is concerned specifically with the contrasting notions of flexibility and stability which confront Satan in this scene, and attempts to depict protagonists who are simultaneously inflexible (in their pursuit of wisdom; in their resistance) and flexible when confronted with an impossibility (defying maturation; the continued union of Lyra and Will). The ultimate inflexible ideologue, Satan is doomed in Milton's work because he is essentially *wrong*, but also because he persists in pursuing an ideology without deviation – he is doomed because he does not repent or conform. Though he is strong and his resistance admirable, his blindness to the privileged ideology of the work prevents his success. Milton's Satan requires flexibility in his interpretation of success in order to succeed, and demonstrates that flexibility in the famous lines: "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (*Paradise Lost* Book I 254-255). Here Satan rationalizes his position in the narrative in order to feel empowered, claiming his seat in hell as a form of privilege, rather than punishment:

What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
 To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n. (*Paradise Lost* Book I 256-263)

Satan's resistance is predicated on a 'choice.' Via that choice, though he is condemned to hell, Satan is able to reign. He claims this outcome is better than servitude regardless of the quality of that servitude, and by way of lateral thinking speaks to the empowerment of his position below God. Despite his claim that it is better to reign in Hell than serve in heaven, Satan ultimately fails not in his resistance, but in achieving the goals which his resistance was in pursuit of. Milton's Satan compromises his original intentions (the desire to overthrow God is replaced with the

desire to tempt Eve) to accentuate the extent of his agency. John Knott claims in *Milton's*

Heaven:

Heaven is the theological if not the dramatic center of the poem, the image of the true city and the true paradise toward which the action of the human drama moves....One of the lessons of the poem is that we should fix our vision on heaven and not on the illusory power and splendor of the world or, with a nostalgic backward glance, on the lost bliss of Eden. (Knott 495)

Satan's resistance is admirable, but futile. Heaven is preferable to hell and Milton's readers are encouraged to fix their vision on heaven by contrast to Satan's attempted reimagining of hell. For this reason, at the conclusion of *Paradise Lost*, though Satan's resistance continues, his intentions are compromised. Rather than enact a noble rebellion which successfully overthrows God, Satan resorts to the tempting of Eve by way of spite. God remains in power, and despite his best attempts there is no shift in the religious-normative hierarchy of the work by Satan. Lyra by contrast to Satan is successful in changing the normative hierarchy of her world. Her resistance reflects Milton's Satan, but her intentions are not compromised during that resistance allowing her to affect real change, in line with her core beliefs, which continue into the post-narrative.

In *His Dark Materials* Pullman's adults resemble Milton's Satan more frequently because they often fail to consider the repercussions of their ideology, or view those repercussions as worthwhile. Within Pullman's mythos the resistance of Milton's Satan is privileged, and thus those who cannot resist authority, or who pursue actions which are not fully considered, are depicted as pathetic. Lord Asriel most clearly reflects Milton's Satan: he is devoted to his cause, and that cause is the destruction of the Kingdom of Heaven; he is a leader and rallies armies against that kingdom; and he pursues his goals even after he comes to understand he cannot accomplish them. Asriel is not pathetic because he resists the status quo; nor can he be the antagonist because Pullman is 'of the devil's party,' and Asriel *is* that devil.

By contrast, Father Gomez functions as an ironic depiction of Milton's Satan. He represents the futility of enacting ideology without consideration and demonstrates the possible fallibility of the church's ideology (the normative ideology of Pullman's work) by contrast to the infallible nature of heaven in *Paradise Lost* (the normative ideology of Milton's work). Gomez is blind to purposes outside of his given quest and lacks the capacity to be forward-thinking before the culmination of his ideological goal. Though he plays the role of Satan in this work, he lacks the savvy to understand his failure, or the courage to face it which Milton's Satan possessed. He is thus an unsympathetic antagonist, rather than an anti-hero. Father Gomez believes his work to be predestined to success. Rather than facing insurmountable odds, Father Gomez believes his victory to be inevitable and ordained by God. He has been granted preemptive absolution for the sin of killing Lyra Belacqua, and has performed preemptive penance "every day of [his] adult life" (71). He is thus the embodiment of a fully formed ideology – an adult whose subject-position and goals are resolute, and whose trajectory within the narrative has been set for some time. He experiences no relevant character development. He still fails, and does so without seriously considering an alternative course of action ". . . he was so close to success now that *for the first time* he found himself speculating on what he would do afterward" (*The Amber Spyglass* 464, italics mine). Eventually he is undone by this lack of foresight (*Spyglass* 469). Father Gomez was indoctrinated at a young age (71). He is described as the youngest member of the Consistorial Court and is Pullman's reflection of an Arch-bishop or similar church authority (71). There is little narrative purpose for the character. He does not meaningfully motivate the plot: he is not feared by Will and Lyra and he never achieves his single purpose of slaying Lyra or intervening in her destiny to become the second Eve. Indeed the children are never made aware of him. Likewise, he lacks agency relative to other characters in the novel. Rather, he is a mortal

man with a gun, moving mostly by foot. He is evidence of the potential for ideological motivations to cause violence without proper reflection: though he claims “he had a horror of harming an innocent person,” he does not adequately examine what qualifies an individual as innocent and thus accepts Lyra’s guilt *before* she has fallen into temptation (463). He characterizes the veracity of the church’s ideology as uncertain and he demonstrates the manner by which ideologies espoused to children go unexamined in adulthood. Since Father Gomez has been a member of the church for his entire life, his chance for resistance is already over by the time we encounter him in the narrative, and all he can do is stay the course which was set for him. This is akin to Satan’s rebellion which begins in failure in *Paradise Lost*, but which he sees through to its end.

The conflict between Balthamos and Father Gomez brings two ideologies into violent confrontation:

He hurled himself so hard at the faint form of the angel, and he expected so much more resistance than he met, that he couldn’t keep his balance. His foot slipped; his momentum carried him down toward the stream; and Balthamos, thinking of what Baruch would have done, kicked aside the priest’s hand as he flung it out for support.

Father Gomez fell hard. His head cracked against a stone, and he fell stunned with his face in the water. The cold shock woke him at once, but as he choked and feebly tried to rise, Balthamos, desperate, ignored the daemon stinging his face and his eyes and his mouth, and used all the little weight he had to hold the man’s head down in the water, and he kept it there, and kept it there, and kept it there. (*Spyglass* 469)

This scene is a criticism of both organized religion and devotion to a secularist ideology. While the angel is not hostile to Lyra and Will, he serves the ideology of Asriel’s rebels and is as potent a servant of that ideological cause as Gomez is of the Magisterium’s. Balthamos asks Will to give Asriel the subtle knife in order that Asriel can slay the authority. More importantly Balthamos symbolizes secularism by calling into question the Authority’s primacy as ‘God’:

Balthamos' companion Baruch is unusual among angels; he was once a man and was saved from the world of the dead when Balthamos transfigured him as an angel. So too was Metatron, who as a man was known as Enoch before being made an angel by the Authority. On earth, Enoch and Baruch were brothers. If the Authority, who claimed to create the angels, can make a man an angel, and if Balthamos, a much lower order of angel can do so as well, then this power which initially may seem to confer special status to the Authority (i.e. making of a man an angel) is not evidence that the Authority is unique or unlike (other) angels. (Frost 12-13)

Frost's analysis here points to the role of Balthamos as a foil to the Authority as Gomez is a foil of Milton's Satan, such that each ideology within the narrative is given equal footing. Likewise it is not simply Father Gomez who dies for his ideology, but later the angel Balthamos (who confronts him) as well. Though Balthamos repeatedly asks to "stop and talk" before the physical confrontation Father Gomez considers no such thing (468). Balthamos' espousal of a secular ideology is described in terms of communication rather than violence. Though Gomez' violence is highlighted Balthamos is not innocent. The angel slowly smothers Gomez and then fades as if he had never been. Similarly Gomez' death is suitably visceral by comparison and Gomez is corporeal while Balthamos is translucent. Father Gomez is both more visible and more violent than Balthamos. Where Father Gomez' ideology is his only identity, and he considers nothing else, Balthamos is alternately defined by his relationship to Baruch. Balthamos takes action based on the dual influences of Baruch's love, and a secular ideology, and thus is willing to compromise his ideology when it conflicts with the preservation of life or love. Balthamos' ideology is not his only defining characteristic as is the case with Father Gomez. Though each individual here adheres to a different ideology, the text clearly favors Balthamos because he is able to act in a manner which discourages conflict.

Following the killing of Gomez Pullman draws the reader's attention to Balthamos' grief for his lost partner, Baruch (469). The angel's motivation is represented as morally superior and in the service of the protagonists, as well as a single facet of the character by comparison to the

one-dimensional Father Gomez. In this example peaceful ideological coercion is privileged to violent coercion. The work obviously privileges one ideology (secularism) above the other (religion), but does not claim that either justifies murder. Pullman links the actions of ‘positive’ ideologies with the adolescent protagonists, while distancing ‘negative’ ideologies from them. In this case the secularism of Balthamos is linked to Lyra and Will’s safety; another example is Tialys and Salmakia’s resistance to the concept of an afterlife, and their eventual friendship with Will and Lyra (242). Still, *His Dark Materials* does not ignore the unknown aspects of the privileged ideology (what happens if God is dead? Why can Will and Lyra not have their happy ending?), but rather redirects attention from those dark aspects, towards the deeper darkness of the opposing ideology (a church responsible for zombifying children; causing the death of Lyra’s parents; murdering innocents). Pullman draws on an ironic depiction of Milton’s Satan to vilify the church, and though secularism is not vilified to the same extent it is likewise damaging if pursued via violence.

Father Gomez is uncompromising, as Milton’s Satan is, but not a sympathetic or powerful character. Where Satan sets out to fell God, Gomez is tasked with killing a thirteen year old girl; where Satan challenges the status quo, Father Gomez seeks to reinforce and implement the status quo. Father Gomez adopts from Satan only his conviction in pursuing a single ideology, and his place in the narrative as antagonist and ideologue. Lyra, by contrast to Father Gomez, adopts the positive attributes of Milton’s Satan. She resists adults who seek to shape her life or keep her from “danger,” and in so doing resists a force which it should not be possible to resist: aetonnormativity (*Compass* 28). This resistance is an inherited trait, passed down to Lyra by her parents. Like Satan in *Paradise Lost* Marisa Coulter and Lord Asriel are: ultimately undone by their failure to compromise ideological standpoints; plunged into the abyss; cunning,

powerful, and at the absolute close of the narrative, sympathetic. Despite their commonalities, Asriel and Coulter differ from Milton's Satan in some key ways, as demonstrated during their confrontation of Metatron, preceding their deaths.

Metatron is an angel to whom much of the Authority's (God's) power has been imparted, and as such is the embodiment of religious power: he is regent to the throne of the "Kingdom of Heaven," and is described as inhumanly strong; he is eventually felled by Asriel and Coulter using the strength of the first and cunning of the latter; the manner by which Coulter and Asriel slay Metatron condemns all three to the abyss (406-409). Asriel explains the reason for their sacrifice: "We came here to give Lyra time to find her daemon, and then time to live and grow up. If we take Metatron to extinction Marisa, she'll have that time, and if we go with him, it doesn't matter" he goes on: "Lyra will be safe, and the Kingdom [of Heaven] will be powerless against her" (405-406). Though Asriel is here in part pursuing his ideology to his death, he is also acknowledging in a way he had not previously, his love for his daughter. Coulter is a convert to Lyra's cause, and sides with him on her behalf. Marisa claims that "Dust is beautiful...I never knew," by way of affirming her transition to Lyra's conception of Dust, and then goes on: "I love Lyra. Where did this love come from? I don't know; it came to me like a thief in the night, and now I love her so much my heart is bursting with it" (405). Both parents speak of the love they have for Lyra in direct contrast to a previous conversation between them. Lyra is now considered in addition to Asriel's desired Republic of Heaven (tempering that ideology), and Marisa Coulter's ideology seems discarded. Though both ideologies are affected by Lyra, the destruction of religion is more complete in Marisa, whereas Asriel simply concedes that ideology should not be pursued to the exclusion of love. Asriel and Marisa compromise their personal ideologies in

favor of their love of Lyra, in direct contrast to previous scenes. Asriel spoke with Marisa espousing different sentiments in an earlier chapter:

[Lyra] *is* unique. To have tamed and softened you – that’s no everyday feat. She’s drawn your poison, Marisa. She’s taken your teeth out...Who would have thought it? The pitiless agent of the Church, the fanatical persecutor of children, the inventor of hideous machines to slice them apart and look in their terrified little beings for any evidence of sin – and along comes a foul-mouthed, ignorant little brat with dirty fingernails, and you cluck and settle your feathers over her like a hen. (*Spyglass* 200)

This scene begins dissociating Marisa from the biblical serpent: her poison has been drawn and her teeth have been removed. Even if she is yet a snake, she is no longer dangerous. When Coulter and Asriel enter the abyss however, Mrs. Coulter is a manipulator (a serpent) no longer: she lacks anyone to manipulate within the abyss or in death. Additionally, this scene reveals Asriel’s earlier distaste for Lyra, adding foul-mouthed and ignorant to previous claims that Lyra is “not intellectual; impulsive, dishonest,” and “greedy” (199). He remarks sardonically that Lyra is unique only in her ability to change Marisa claiming that she is “a perfectly ordinary child, distinguished by nothing” (200). Though Asriel is continuing his resistance and being condemned to the abyss for it, in parallel to Marissa he has revised his beliefs to include the love he has for Lyra. Though Asriel made the claim sarcastically, Lyra *is* unique in her ability to temper the ideologies of her parents. Coulter converts to Lyra’s cause in this scene, and sacrifices herself in the name of love, forsaking at the same time the religious ideology which she has held for the majority of the trilogy³. Alternatively, Marisa Coulter could be considered a convert to Lyra’s cause, come too late for redemption. In either case, both Coulter and Asriel commit all of their resources to resist Metatron (the angelic embodiment of an oppressive church), and spend their own lives killing him. Though admirable, it is Asriel’s unwillingness to

³Sacrifice for love is a theme which carries across the novels in Lee Scoresby’s sacrifice, and eventually in Will and Lyra’s sacrifice of their love for one-another.

bend to the Authority which causes his death. By contrast it is Coulter's pursuit of a false ideology (religion) which causes her to need the redemption of this sacrifice. The deaths of Asriel and Coulter help to redeem these characters, but there is a difference in the texture of this redemption which is based in their ideologies – Asriel must temper his ideology and include the capacity for love, whereas Coulter must surrender her ideology entirely. Lyra's influence allows each parent to become more flexible regarding their ideological viewpoints, and thus Marisa and Asriel ultimately typify Pullman's association of childhood with transition and adulthood with inflexibility, demonstrating how Lyra brings the flexibility of childhood into adult's lives:

Pullman connotes that adults are—or should be—settled into stable, unchanging identities. In an interview, Pullman has spelled out this view explicitly. When asked 'what would happen if humans changed dramatically in later life? . . . Would their daemons change also?' Pullman replied: 'do people change dramatically in later life? I think their basic stance towards the world is pretty constant.

...

Although he sees childhood and adulthood as distinct states, Pullman insists there is and should be a natural continuity between them. (Falconer 83-84)

The natural continuity which Pullman identifies in his own work is a concession on his part which identifies the possibility for entities which exist outside of an adult/child binary. Adults in *His Dark Materials* are often ideologues whose beliefs lead them and others to death. The machinations of Marisa Coulter cause the death of Tony Makarios, who is separated from his daemon in one of her experiments. Roger Parslow is slain by Asriel in a similar manner. Lyra is able to circumvent this outcome because she shares an emotional connection with the adults which are in power. Lyra and Will resist in a way that other children do not and are to my mind clearly adolescent, almost never childish, and uniquely forward-looking. Rather than innocent or experienced in a manner reminiscent of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of*

Experience, Lyra and Will are in transition between these states, becoming ‘experienced’ or ‘wise’ at the trilogy’s close. Though Pullman has not been reserved in his acknowledgement of Blake as an inspiration, and though that influence permeates *The Amber Spyglass* especially, these influences are eschewed in the US version of the text. Where in the UK version of the text many chapters were preceded with epigraphs of Blake or Milton (and others including John Ruskin and John Webster) those epigraphs have been dropped from the American version of the text. Despite this change, Jason Whittaker a professor of Blake studies at University College Falmouth, claims that:

It is worth noting that while...Milton provide[s] a central text that influences Pullman, with Blake it is the complete corpus. Nor should this be restricted to the poetry, as he encountered Blake’s paintings shortly after leaving Oxford University, which were to affect him greatly. (Whittaker, *Zoamorphosis*)

Blake’s influences in the work are made clear in the form of chapter titles, and within the epigraphs of the UK version, but permeate the novel in what Whittaker calls the “infernal spirit of Blake’s classic text,” *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*(Whittaker). Whittaker cites the inspiration for Lyra’s name – Lyca – in the *Songs of Experience* poems “The Little Girl Lost” and “The Little Girl Found,” as well as noting that Dust was likely partially inspired by Blake’s lines: “and shew you all alive / This world, where every particle of Dust breathes forth its joy,” from *Europe a Prophecy*. This line emphasizes what Whittaker calls “the bodily nature of Blake, who considered the separation of body and soul as the grounding error of the Church which had allowed it to create so effectively the mind-forg’d manacles of mystery”(Whittaker). The severing of a human from their daemon echoes the concerns of Blake that the church may separate body from mind. Such a crime is perpetrated by the Magisterium in *His Dark Materials* as a means of rejecting original sin and thus maintaining a permanent state of innocence or grace. This severing

takes place in childhood and is practiced on disenfranchised children, the likes of which were the inspiration for *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. In addition to these elements of *His Dark Materials* Whittaker explains that:

[Pullman's] assault on religious dogma throughout the novels – which has drawn considerable criticism in the United States in particular – is clearly a diabolical re-reading of the role of churches in human oppression that echoes the infernal spirit of Blake's classic text. At the end of *The Amber Spyglass*, the transcendental system that sustains the church of mystery is imploded when the rebel angel, Baruch, is revealed to have once been a man and the Authority, known as Yahweh, El and the Almighty, is shown as a frail old man who was himself created and cannot survive eternally – yet whose death brings him peace. At the end of the trilogy, the Kingdom of Heaven is reconstituted as a Republic (drawing also on the ideas of the seventeenth century Digger, Gerard Winstanley), giving emphasis to another of Pullman's guiding principles that has its origins in Blake, the notion that "I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans" (Whittaker)

Whittaker describes the backlash caused by the novels when they were published, and the spirit that he feels guides Pullman's writing. Likewise, he defines the pivotal moment of the final work during which God is revealed as a falsity. The Authority is no more than a man made grandiose by the myths surrounding him, and ultimately slain by two children, by accident. He notes that at the end of the trilogy the task is given to the protagonists to reconstitute the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather than wither under the ideologically-normative religion of their world, the protagonists are able to rebel successfully, not simply because their own agency allows it, but because they inherit the rebellion of an adult (Lord Asriel). This means that Lyra and Will walk a middle road between the adolescent who must be repressed for the greater good of society, or for the adolescent's own safety, and Milton's Satan who is sympathetic because he perseveres in the face of great adversity, with little chance of success. Lyra and Will each persevere in the face of adversity, but they are not met with an insurmountable task, rather the insurmountable portion of their task falls to their parents. They are able to experience the success of seeing Lord Asriel's

rebellion through to the finish. Though the inheritance of such an ideological battle draws agency away from the protagonists, because the battle is fought in their best interest, that agency is returned to them. Ultimately it is Lyra and Will who succeed in slaying the Authority, not their parents, and thus their rebellion is the more successful of the two.

Similarly empowering is the post-narrative assumption that Will and Lyra will turn the *Kingdom of Heaven* into a *Republic*. It is between the agencies of Marisa Coulter, Lord Asriel, Lyra and Will that the Kingdom of Heaven is destroyed, but it is the particular place of the young to rebuild that Kingdom into something new – to ‘create a system’ rather than ‘be enslav’d by another man’s’. The terms Pullman uses to describe the old and new systems indicate a fundamental difference in the availability of alternative belief systems. In a Kingdom there is a single ruler, the monarch, and thus his/her rule is law; opposition to his rule is treason. In a republic a council of elected leaders govern, and thus the single voice and single belief system of a monarch is discarded. In its place as system of several belief systems and multiple ideological voices is to be created. The language which Pullman uses seems inspired by Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, wherein governance is linked to oppression and must be remade in order to better serve the oppressed:

Those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.
And being restrain’d it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.
The history of this is written in Paradise Lost. & the Governor or Reason is calld Messiah.

And the original Archangel or possessor of the command of the heavenly host, is calld the Devil or Satan and his children are calld Sin & Death
But in the Book of Job Milton’s Messiah is calld Satan.
For this history has been adopted by both parties
It indeed appeard to Reason as if Desire was cast out. but the Devils account is, that the Messiah fell. & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss...
(Blake *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*)

Blake's lines here encourage boldness in the face of oppression by stating that one must be 'weak enough to be restrained,' but they also describe a 'Mesiah' figure in *Paradise Lost* who is the 'governor' of reason, and is 'call'd Satan'. In Blake's conception Milton's Satan is the keeper of reason, but also a governor, an individual willing to reconstruct the system for his own purposes and thus escape the oppression of what Pullman might term the 'Kingdom of Heaven'. Though Blake identifies Satan's ability to create a 'heaven of what he stole from the Abyss,' in *Paradise Lost* this creation is imperfect. Though Milton's Satan may be the messiah of free thought as Blake claims, he is not able within *Paradise Lost* to establish a system in which he is the ruler – once again, that system only exists within his mind:

A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.(*Paradise Lost* Book 1, 253-255)

Here Satan attempts resistance by leveraging his mental ability to reconsider his surroundings. In his mind he creates the changes which he cannot make outside of that place, and demonstrates his opposition to *Truth*; he refuses to believe the reality of his situation and by so refusing asserts that the reality itself has changed. Milton's Satan demonstrates resistance via this action, but it is not of the same texture that Lyra and Will's resistance. Satan is a 'false messiah' by comparison to Lyra and Will – his agency is employed against narrative realities such as God's absolute power, instead of parallel with narrative truth. Rather than pursuing an intrinsically false ideology, the ideology which Lyra and Will choose to pursue ('Dust *is* good') is at least subjective, and possibly objective *Truth*. The narrative focus of Pullman is not on an anti-heroic Satan, but rather on the more traditionally heroic Lyra and Will. Lord Asriel is a homage to anti-heroes such as Milton's Satan, but ultimately Lyra and Will resist individuals and institutions

that *are vilified*. By contrast Satan's resistance in *Paradise Lost* could be considered folly because he resists God's love which is *not vilified*.

Pullman's expresses his message in an innovative manner. He replaces religious-normativity with secular-normativity. By shifting what is considered normative Pullman presents a new possibility to his adolescent readers, and that possibility is distinctly a-religious. Pullman's narrative is thus a second voice which privileges an alternative belief system by comparison to Milton, but is ultimately an imperfect inversion of that work. *Paradise Lost*, despite Satan's resistance, presents the love of God as *Truth*. In Pullman's work secularism is *Truth*. If Pullman were to follow rigidly in Milton's footsteps, and if Lyra and Will were indeed Miltonic anti-heroes, they would need to resist the *Truth* entirely, and thus ultimately eschew secularism in the work. Pullman's narrative seems capable of either outcome posited by Trites. His adolescents may "perish or...become repressive" (Nikolajeva 7). If Lyra and Will pursue their resistance against intra-narrative *Truth*, they must fail, and as Trites claims they must die (or be plunged into the abyss following Satan's example); or they must succumb to the *Truth* and ultimately fail in their resistance (the equivalent of Satan repenting at the end of *Paradise Lost*, which I am sure Pullman would not support).

The third option chosen by Pullman allows Lyra and Will to demonstrate their resistance, while still pursuing intra-narrative *Truth*. Lyra creates a new mode of thought, in part inherited from her parents and in part inspired by resistance to her parents' influence. Lyra is not forced to resist intra-narrative *Truth*, because it is Lyra who first describes that *Truth* to the reader at the close of *The Golden Compass*. She is never in direct opposition to narrative *Truth* as Satan is, but she is likewise non-conformist: she does not bend to the systems which exist within her world.

She neither adopts wholly Asriel's secularist anti-authoritarianism or Marisa Coulter's religiosity. Lyra succeeds where Satan failed: she 'Creates a System' rather than 'be enslav'd by another man's,' and she does so with the assertion 'Dust is good' – Dust which is akin to original sin, or dark matter, but which represents conscience, knowledge, wisdom or *Truth*. Lyra is not confined by the ideologies of her parents because the pursuit of wisdom and her defiance of established systems such as secularism and religion liberate her.

Facilitating her liberation (freedom from inherited ideology) is the distance that Lyra enjoys from parental influence generated by the lack of awareness she has of her parentage. She is not given her parents' names and does not know that Marisa Coulter and Lord Asriel are her parents until told by John Faa (121-124). Naming conventions are entirely obscured and give no indication of which way Lyra leans in favoring her parents. 'Asriel' might be a first or last name: the character is almost always identified as 'Lord Asriel,' and in common parlance this would indicate it is a surname. However, because he is so frequently called Asriel throughout the novel, it feels like a first name. In either case we are given no information regarding Lyra's last name, Belacqua. If Asriel's last name is Belacqua this is not indicated, and if 'Asriel' is a last name then Lyra does not inherit it. The obvious parallel to this is Mrs. Coulter's naming schema. Coulter is the last name of Marisa's deceased husband. Again, if 'Asriel' is a last name then Marisa does not take his name. Marisa's maiden name, which may have been Belacqua, is never mentioned. In either case it seems Lyra is named for herself, and any inheritance – as far as naming is concerned – is eschewed. This is proved by Lyra's earned name "Silvertongue" and her first and last names which seemingly have no intra-narrative origin. Though Lyra is asked to choose between the traits of her parents, her choice of ideology is dictated by the reality that Dust is not evil: thus Eve eating from the tree of knowledge was not a sin. Thus Satan tempting

her was not malicious, and so on. The resistance of Lyra is somewhat spoiled by the realization that she is espousing narrative *Truth*, rather than resisting narrative *Truth* as Satan does in *Paradise Lost* – her resistance is not doomed to failure. The veracity of Lyra's beliefs will be confirmed in death, and it is her reshaping of death which redeems Lyra's resistance and once more demonstrates her empowerment within the narrative. Finally, it is Lyra's quest to discover *Truth* which constitutes the body of the narrative and demonstrates the necessity of maturation in quests of self-discovery.

Lyra's self-discovery conforms to the archetype offered in genesis: her 'grace,' is followed by 'temptation,' and then a 'fall' into a state of sin. These three states represent the distinct phases of childhood, adolescence and adulthood respectively in *His Dark Materials*. Lyra begins in a state of grace, with no chosen ideology; her views on the subject of Dust, for instance, are driven by curiosity rather than an attempt to utilize or interpret. This is not to say she is not oriented towards a certain ideology, but rather that she has not yet deeply considered or challenged her initial ideological outlook. This initial outlook is in most part shaped by her father, but is influenced after this initial shaping. She is placed into an environment where the preferred ideology of Lord Asriel will be fostered – Jordan College. This represents one of several possible starting locations for Lyra, by which she may have been orientated differently, and thus developed differently. John Faa explains to her:

If things had fallen out different, Lyra, you might have been brought up a Gyptian, because the nurse [a Gyptian who helped raise Lyra] begged the court to let her have you; but we Gyptians got little standing in the law. The court decided you was to be placed in a priory, and so you were, with the Sisters of Obedience at Watlington. You won't remember.

But Lord Asriel wouldn't stand for that. He had a hatred of priors and monks and nuns, and being a high-handed man he just rode in one day and carried you off. Not to look

after himself, nor to give to the Gyptians; he took you to Jordan College, and dared the law to undo it. (*Compass*123)

Each of the possibilities addressed above are indicated as safe for a child growing up: each would have provided for the physical, emotional and mental well-being of the child. Lyra was watched over by the Gyptians and thus protected in case of emergency, but Lord Asriel was unaware of this (124). This concession perhaps indicates the opportunity for a secondarily privileged ideological predisposition. If not the secular haunts of Jordan College, then perhaps the loving family of the Gyptians would have inspired Lyra's ability to grasp *Truth*. Similarly, Mrs. Coulter – who represents religion – is distanced from Lyra, both via Lyra's extraction from the priory and because she would not have been able to affect Lyra's ideology if Lord Asriel was present: “. . . she wouldn't have dared to defy him, and you'd still be at Jordan, not knowing a thing” (124). Thus Lyra's upbringing is explained via the relative ideologies of those environments, and the one which she experiences is directly opposed to intervention by Mrs. Coulter or religion. The subtle ‘not knowing a thing’ added by Pullman serves to distract from the fundamentally ideological nature of Lyra's life at Jordan College, and speaks to her lack of ideological awareness. It is Mrs. Coulter who makes Lyra ideologically aware by attempting to convert her and giving her ‘knowledge’ of her body (124). The relative advantages of school as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) are greater than the priory (church), and the Gyptian life-style (culture), as well as the high-society haunts of Marisa Coulter. Jordan College is meant to provide Lyra with an ideological grounding in science, observation, and exploration, while simultaneously appearing non-ideological to the reader. This quotation draws attention to the alternate possibilities available to Lyra as a starting point. The priory might have offered Lyra devotion and obedience and the Gyptians might have fostered work-ethic and community. Despite these alternatives, Lyra is a character predisposed to a secular viewpoint, and her

placement at Jordan is but the first example of this pre-disposition. Lyra's first adult influence is Lord Asriel, followed later by Marisa Coulter. Lord Asriel inspires (tempts) Lyra to explore the North, and to explore the underground of Jordan college, and Marisa Coulter takes her away from this place, and in one scene attempts to reorientate Lyra such that she considers her new high society locale 'home': "It wasn't so much her snappish tone as the words "in your own home" that made Lyra resist stubbornly" (86). Lyra resists this reorientation and by the conclusion of the conflict in this scene begins seeking out a new home, which she finds temporarily among the Gyptians. Lyra's childhood is thus spent in flight from the ideologies of her parents.

At this early stage Lyra has not yet discovered her 'home' or her particular morality. To invoke Blake, she is *innocent*, and because of her ability to resist parental influences, she remains innocent until the close of the first novel when her resistances culminate in the pursuit of her own beliefs. This innocence typifies children in general in *His Dark Materials*, but Lyra's resistance seems uncommon. Mrs. Coulter's ability to persuade children to come along without resistance is used by the General Oblation Board (GOB), the antagonistic 'Gobbers' of the first novel. She is able to woo children with little more than verbal charm, food and hot chocolate; these children are used to test a science which severs their souls from their bodies leaving them zombie-like (40-44). It is not through a desire to test what Pullman terms "experimental theology," but rather a desire for companionship and care that children follow her (*Compass* 82). Their decision making process is divorced from ideological considerations – they are *ignorant* of the ideology which is taking them in, and cannot be freed from that ignorance because they do not resist Mrs. Coulter. The children of the novel are lead like lambs to the slaughter, and given in a "kind of sacrifice" to further research which they do not understand (95). The concept of a

greater good (to which a sacrifice is to be made) is necessarily ideological whether that greater good be theological, scientific, or medicinal. Lyra is unique among children in that she questions this sacrifice. Lord Boreal, an individual linked to Marisa Coulter via his serpent daemon attempts to convince Lyra that “*Sacrifice* is rather a dramatic way of putting it. What’s done is for their good as well as ours. And of course they all come to Mrs. Coulter willingly” (*The Golden Compass* 95). Lyra immediately makes a judgment of this practice: “She and Pantalaimon could sense each other’s horror” (95). There are several problems with Boreal’s line of thinking which Lyra seems immediately aware of. The reason that the children follow Mrs. Coulter is not ideological, and thus Boreal’s implication that these children wish to assist an ideological cause is an intentional manipulation – they are willing, but not for the reasons Boreal implies. Lyra resists this manipulation, employing her own in turn (“she smiled politely back”) and refusing to accept the veracity of his claims (95). Furthermore, the assertion that this work is done for ‘good’ implies that Boreal knows the *Truth* of what ‘good’ is. Boreal does not consider the possibility that his chosen ideology is corrupt – he is *inconsiderate* of ideology, rather than *ignorant* as the children seduced by Marisa Coulter are. By contrast to Lyra, Boreal too lacks the ability to resist an ideological claim, a deficit revealed when he states: “Dust is an emanation from the dark principle itself” (96). Though he is aware he could be incorrect in this analysis, he states his opinion as if it is *Truth*. Ignorance and lack of consideration are equal contributors to ideological blindness, and in each of these cases (Boreal is in a relationship with Coulter) are tied to the manipulator Marisa Coulter. Lyra transcends Marisa’s influence on several occasions, and demonstrates her ability to test ideologies without accepting them. All of this is based on the fundamental assumption that ideologies should/can be tested; that there is a metric for measuring the quality of an individual’s figurative viewpoint; that if this viewpoint is measured and found

wanting it can be shifted or corrected. The subjectivity of these assumptions is depicted clearly in Pullman's Daemons who choose their forms without the possibility for choosing correctly; after all, who can say what the proper shape of a soul – or of one's morality– should be? Falconer claims:

The... sign of childhood flexibility in this text is, of course, that children's daemons change their shapes rapidly and constantly. And Lyra's daemon Pantalaimon seems nimblest of them all; he changes from mouse to insect, to bird, to pine marten (his final form) and to ermine, the creature in the Leonardo da Vinci painting said to have inspired Pullman's portrait of Lyra. All this shape-changing and mental agility suggests that in *His Dark Materials*, children are adept at thinking 'as if': as if they were somebody else, as if they lived somewhere else, or as if they existed at some other time. In other words, they are more attracted by the dream of Away than the dream of Home, and they are instinctive masters of time travel (evidenced in Lyra's alethiometer), magic space travel (Will's subtle knife), disguise, mimicry, imaginative empathy and many other forms of escaping to an 'elsewhere'. (Falconer 85)

Children in the narrative are lured by hot chocolate or kind words. They entertain new concepts 'as if' they have accepted them, and their ability to entertain concepts *without* accepting them is indicated by their daemons shifting form. For instance, Tony Makarios is described by another girl captured by Mrs. Coulter: "It was because his daemon didn't change. They thought he was older than he looked, or summing, and he weren't really a young kid. But really his daemon never changed very often because Tony himself never thought much about anything. I seen her change. She was called Ratter..." (249). This scene seems to confirm a link between consideration or 'thought' and the ability of a daemon to shift. If this is the case, then Lyra demonstrates the special ability to shift her line of thinking repeatedly, and in so-doing refuse to accept any adult assertion of *Truth*.

Empowered to Seek Truth: the Devices of *His Dark Materials*

The Golden Compass is concerned with the closing off and opening up of possibilities. It begins with Lyra's resistance and demonstrates how this resistance prevented her from inheriting an ideology, as embodied by her parents. Through her successful rebellion against a multitude of adult authority figures, Lyra's resistance becomes power (the power of leadership, of manipulation, of consideration). With her newfound power (as well as independence) Lyra pursues wisdom, which should allow her – as she enters the worlds of *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass* – to judge between 'good' and 'evil,' 'right' and 'wrong' as well as other subjective qualities. Such an ability to make qualitative judgments is the conclusion towards which Lyra strives, but she claims at the close of *The Golden Compass* that she does not know if this is the correct course of action: "I reckon we've got to do it, Pan. We'll go up there and we'll search for Dust, and when we've found it we'll know what to do" (Compass 399). The final words of this sentence imply that Pan and Lyra do not *yet* know what to do when they find Dust/wisdom. Lyra comes to terms with "the enormousness" of her task by making several empowering claims (398). She demonstrates a conviction in her cause: "we'll do it" (*Compass* 399). She accepts guidance: "we've got the alethiometer" (399). She privileges her communication with Pantalaimon and his communication with her ("We're not alone") (399). Lyra's refusal of adult ideology has brought her to the cusp of a new world, and while entering this world reminds her "how small they were, she and her daemon," it does not cow her (398). She feels equipped for the trials to come.

Despite her eventual mediation of secularism and religion, Lyra is initially viewed as a possible enemy, or a possible convert to adult causes. In a manner parallel to her development of agency in *The Golden Compass*, Lyra, now with the company of Will Parry, continues to eschew

the normative ideologies of the work. The adults who view Lyra's possible ideological outlook as a choice between religion or secularism, take a particular stance towards her: both hopeful and fearful. Lyra thus resembles an adolescent: "When you are sixteen adults are slightly impressed and almost intimidated by you" (*A Separate Peace* 31, quoted. Trites 6). The adults of *The Golden Compass* react accordingly. They attempt to convert Lyra to their ideological cause, and though Asriel and Marisa function as antagonists in that novel, they remain her parents and mean her no harm. As such a conversion to adult ideology proves increasingly unlikely, adult agents of the church seek to eliminate the threat of Lyra's conversion to a competing ideology. Father Gomez is dispatched to kill Lyra, and Marisa Coulter describes the possibility of ideological violence which Lyra faces:

Lyra will somehow, sometime soon, be tempted, as Eve was – that's what [the witches] say. What form this temptation will take, I don't know, but she's growing up, after all. It's not hard to imagine. And now that the Church knows that, too, they'll kill her. If it all depends on her, could they risk letting her live? Would they dare take the chance that she'd refuse this temptation, whatever it will be? (*Spyglass*, 205).

This passage illuminates Lyra's place at the center of the novel's adult ideological conflict.

Either Lyra is with the church (she will resist temptation) or against it (she will not). She is with Lord Asriel's rebellion or against it. If atheism is one side of the coin, and theism the other, Mrs. Coulter and other adult figures in the novel often clearly desire one outcome above another. Mrs. Coulter suggests that:

Killing is not difficult for [the church]; Calvin himself ordered the deaths of children; they'd kill her with pomp and ceremony and prayers and lamentations and psalms and hymns, but they would kill her. If she falls into their hands, she's dead already. (*The Amber Spyglass*, 205)

Lyra's conversion to an adult ideology is equated with death. Marisa describes the limiting of an individual's beliefs via ideology, not just violently, but via lamentations, psalms and hymns. The

sub-text equates the indoctrination (coerced inheritance of ideology) of children with murder. Controlling an individual's capacity for independent moral judgment is condemned. Subjective, or moral choice is once again privileged, but to make the correct decision Lyra must be able to decide "without realizing what she's doing" or without the influence of a previously established moral viewpoint (*Compass* 31). An established moral perspective is indicated by a settled daemon. A daemon's true form is revealed after it has been "infected with Dust" (283). The mixture of an individual's conscience with wisdom results in an understanding of personal truth. In order to guide her towards and help her understand the shape of her daemon, or her subjective conception of moral right and wrong, Lyra is granted a device, the *Alethiometer*. She is told ominously: "It tells you the truth. As for how to read it, you'll have to learn by yourself" (73).

Guiding Lyra's acquisition of wisdom is one of the eponymous devices of *His Dark Materials*. Lyra's golden compass aids in the pursuit of her daemon's true form, as do the subtle knife and the amber spyglass for their owners. The wielders of those materials each realize the true form of their conscience alongside Lyra at the end of trilogy. These three items are diabolic tools: Lord Asriel claims of the golden compass, that "Dust communicates through the instrument," and thus it is linked to original sin, as is the amber spyglass which allows humans to see Dust (Frost 294, 309). The subtle knife has similar diabolic intentions, and is from its introduction perceived as a weapon which might slay the Authority (God). All three devices bring their users knowledge of themselves. The *alethiometer* – from the Greek *aletheia*, "truth" – is a device which answers questions using a set of 36 symbols, each of which has a number of meanings which move from obvious to obscure.

Several of the meanings for each symbol have been revealed extra-narratively by Pullman and described online. For instance: *the hourglass* symbol indicates time but has the secondary

and tertiary meanings of death and change, along with countless meanings unrevealed within the course of the narrative; *the child* indicates the future, as well as malleability and helplessness (*RandomHouse.com*). Alongside these symbols are a host of Christian allusions: *the apple*, *Madonna*, and *the walled garden*. These symbols reflect knowledge and sin; femininity and motherhood; and the innocence of Adam and Eve before their exile (*RandomHouse.com*). Such symbols directly correlate the device which guides Lyra, and the myth of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. The golden compass is described doubly as "like a large watch or a small clock: a thick disk of gold and crystal. It might have been a compass or something of the sort" and thus tied to both spatial (compass) and temporal (clock) orientation (*Compass* 73). Falconer describes Lyra's use of the *alethiometer* – the golden compass – as a type of "time travel" (Falconer 85). In some manners it is this: it allows Lyra to gain information about future events, and it indicates her ability to think-forward and consider. In addition, however, the device is a compass: it directs the protagonist, and encourages movement within the narrative. In one scene Lyra is led by the compass: "She soon found the door the alethiometer had told her about. The sign on it said DARK MATTER RESEARCH UNIT" (*Knife* 83). In this passage Lyra is guided to Dr. Mary Malone, described previously as a middle ground between secularism and religion in the work. It is Dr. Malone who encourages Will and Lyra to be affected by Dust via expressing their love. It is "the task of this ex-nun physicist...to play the tempter or serpent in a drama in which Lyra is Eve" (Frost 71). Dr. Malone helps explain the pursuit of wisdom, again via the metaphor of Dust: "We think it's some kind of elementary particle....We're trying to detect this almost-undetectable thing among the noise of all the other particles crashing about" (*Knife* 87). What Dr. Malone claims is that she seeks subjective *Truth* within the loudness of falsehood – the one particle which is most difficult to observe because of the 'noise.' Thus, the *alethiometer* is a

tool for moving Lyra towards her personal *truth* (settled sense of moral right and wrong). When at the close of the narrative the compass ceases to work for her, it is because she no longer needs to communicate with Dust via a medium, but rather has become ‘infected’ with her own Dust. If we consider the *alethiometer* a figurative moral compass, then it seems reasonable that such a device cannot be easily read by an individual who provides their own moral guidance.

Lyra claims: “. . . she was beginning to sense now that it [the compass] had moods, like a person, and to know when it wanted to tell her more” (Knife 80). Here Lyra identifies a motivation in the compass which was not previously apparent. It directs her not simply via answering questions, but as she comes to know it more intimately, by offering advice: “*You must concern yourself with the boy. Your task is to help him find his father. Put your mind to that*” (80). Here Lyra is given explicit *direction* following a scene during which she wandered a museum and accomplished little; she is advised by the compass rather than answered, and yet she does not question this advice. The compass thus encourages Lyra’s movement within the narrative towards a complete understanding of Dust; since “Dust is what makes the alethiometer work,” Lyra is experiencing guidance via knowledge towards knowledge-of-knowledge, or wisdom. Simply by possessing the *alethiometer* Lyra is encouraged to consider sources of influence: “Lyra, I urge you again: keep it private. It would be better if Mrs. Coulter didn't know about it. . . .” (*Compass* 73). In this scene, without reading the alethiometer, Lyra becomes aware that she may be in danger.

Lyra begins to question the motivations of Marisa Coulter and the Master of Jordan College: “Which of them did she owe most obedience to?” (76). At this moment Lyra is once again considerate of the two primary adult ideologies in the work: secularism as symbolized by the Master of Jordan College, and religion as symbolized by Marisa Coulter. Despite the

awareness of ideology which the device prompts, it is imperfect: as described above, Lyra sees the compass as having moods, but these moods mean that the compass can be “cross” or conceal things which it “doesn’t want Lyra to know” (*Knife* 105). This is problematic because it means the *alethiometer* tells the truth, but not necessarily the whole truth. The reason for the *alethiometer*’s deception may be linked to the Master’s assertion that Lyra must act “without realizing what she’s doing” (294). In some ways the *alethiometer* then, conceals the truth from Lyra, ostensibly in her interest. This resembles the concealing of ideology from a child in order to avoid explicitly influencing Lyra’s future ideological orientation – the *alethiometer* offers direction without moral judgment, thus encouraging Lyra’s own judgment in critical situations. For instance, when Lyra asks the compass if Will is “A friend of an enemy,” it replies “He is a murderer” (28). Contrary to expectations: “she relaxed at once. He could find food, and show her how to reach Oxford, and those were powers that were useful, but he might still have been untrustworthy or cowardly. A murderer was a worthy companion...She felt...safe with him” (*Knife* 28). In this passage the compass provides information, but Lyra draws her own conclusions based on that information – the compass provides a link to Dust (knowledge) and Lyra provides a link to Pantalaimon (conscience). She shows critical and lateral thinking, immediately listing the positive qualities of a murderer. The compass’ advice is always heeded by Lyra, and never questioned, but requires frequent interpretation. The ability to interpret knowledge is wisdom.

We are informed that as a child Lyra read the *alethiometer* “by grace” and can regain that ability “by work” (*Spyglass* 491; Frost 296). As a device which encourages the pursuit of knowledge, but conceals some knowledge, it is possible that when re-learned as an adult the *alethiometer* can be made to bear additional information previously kept secret. Likewise, there

is the issue of what questions Lyra asks. When the device is ‘cross,’ or when it ignores Lyra’s advice, or offers unsolicited advice, it could be that Lyra has asked the wrong question, or an irrelevant question. It could also indicate a refusal by the device to answer certain questions. Perhaps in adulthood when the skill is relearned Lyra will know the correct questions to ask, or will be answered regardless of the question. This means that the skill Lyra gains when she possesses the compass can be returned to her, and may be enhanced when it is returned. Both of these attributes of the compass indicate a possible increase in agency should Lyra pursue that agency in her adolescence. This would fulfill the *Bildungsroman* requirement put forward by St. Clair and Brown that a child must undergo “*reunification* with community accompanied by increased status” (St. Clair and Brown 26, italics mine). Lyra experiences such a reunification when she returns to Jordan College, and the presence of the Master of Jordan. She brings with her a desire to relearn the use of the *alethiometer*, and her ability to do so seems promising (*Spyglass* 517). Ostensibly this child’s tool could become even more useful in the hands of an adolescent; or its use could be different in nature, providing secrets previously inaccessible. It is because of this caveat that Lyra is able to maintain her empowerment despite losing the use of the compass. Rather than an absolute loss of power, as is often the case at the end of children’s stories, Lyra retains the ability to seek out that power once more.

The subtle knife empowers Will, but also demonstrates the damage which unchecked power in the hands of a child can cause. It is a tool reminiscent of the sword of Michael, in *Paradise Lost*, specially designed by God to cut through the substance of angels:

...but the sword [320]
 Of Michael from the Armorie of God
 Was giv'n him temperd so, that neither keen
 Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
 The sword of Satan with steep force to smite

Descending, and in half cut sheere, nor staid, [325]
 But with swift wheele reverse, deep entering shar'd
 All his right side; then Satan first knew pain,
 And writh' d him to and fro convolv'd; so sore
 The griding sword with discontinuous wound
 Passd through him, but th' Ethereal substance clos'd [330]
 Not long divisible, and from the gash
 A stream of Nectarous humor issuing flow'd
 Sanguin, such as Celestial Spirits may bleed,
 And all his Armour staind ere while so bright. (*Paradise Lost Book VI* 320-334).

In the novel the blade is called Asahættr, literally ‘God Killer’ of “god-destroyer” (Gene Veith, 168; *Knife* 274), which contrasts its inspiration in *Paradise Lost* which is wielded to wound Satan. This tool is dual edged – possibly a commentary on power wielded by children (both harmful and helpful). One edge can sever any physical material; the other edge can cut holes into other universes, or destroy non-physical beings such as Spectres, or ghosts. The first edge is functionally a method for enhancing Will’s agency – it allows him to enact violence, craft tools and solve problems, or achieve victory in combat. Will wins the knife in a fight by contrast to Lyra who is given the compass as a gift; Will’s acquisition of his device is thus more traditionally masculine. The second edge of Will’s knife allows him to cut holes into other universes. These holes are called windows, and described by Frost thusly:

In the world of the dead, Will tells Lyra that he feels as if the abyss were an enormous window, one he wishes he could close. He senses too that whenever windows are left open, “things go wrong” and is certain that the enormity of the abyss-window will lead to disaster.

Changes wrought by too many windows include physical or geographical displacements of worlds, but most seriously, it is through windows that Dust empties out of the world into the abyss and Spectres enter. After their journey through the world of the dead and Will’s creation of a window through which the ghosts can escape, Lyra and Will’s happiness is short-circuited when their daemons tell their people that all windows must be closed to keep Dust from leaking into the emptiness that the knife cuts into. (Frost 307)

Frost describes the moment in the land of the dead when Will begins to judge his opening of windows as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. This is the culmination of a host of judgments. For instance, upon first encountering Lyra in a universe new to him, Will shows respect for the house they occupy without permission: “We’ve got to eat, so we’ll eat what’s here, but we’ll tidy up afterward and keep the place clean, because we ought to” (26). In this scene Will makes a minor moral decision while occupying a space accessed via the knife. Later Will learns how to wield the knife more capably, causing him to examine the extent of his own power, and empowering him further: “Now he could find his way home; now he would not get lost; now he could hide when he needed to, and move about safely. With every increase in his knowledge came a gain in strength” (Spyglass 20). Further exploration of the knife’s power increases Will’s agency and is linked with the acquisition of knowledge. This increased agency once again leads Will into subjective judgments. He discovers that the knife cannot cut love when he shatters it by attempting to open a window while thinking about his mother (153-154). Later, when the blade must be shattered a second time, Will uses Lyra’s love to cause the break (*Spyglass* 510). The knowledge of a second form of love indicates an ability to differentiate between the two, and thus links love back to knowledge. In the same way that Dust cannot be sliced because it is an elementary particle and thus beyond division, Will discovers that love has some of the same qualities.

Knowledge, Dust and love are intertwined. In contrast to these fundamental elements of life, Pullman’s ironic portrait of God *can* be harmed by the knife, but not in the violent manner that is at first implied by Baruch and Balthamos (*Spyglass* 10-11). The narrator describes the death of God by Lyra and Will’s hands:

Between them they helped the ancient of days out of his crystal cell; it wasn’t hard, for he was as light as paper, and he would have followed them anywhere, having no will of his own, and responding to simple kindness like a flower to the sun. But in the open air there

was nothing to stop the wind from damaging him, and to their dismay his form began to loosen and dissolve. Only a few moments later he had vanished completely, and their last impression was of those eyes, blinking in wonder, and a sigh of the most profound and exhausted relief. (*Spyglass* 410-411).

The Authority dies, but not because Will cuts him down violently. Will Parry releases the Authority, and he is so frail that he naturally decomposes. The Authority is insubstantial – he represents the lack of substance in the Magisterium’s ideology. God’s death is depicted as a new form of ‘knowledge,’ which causes wonder in a centuries old creature, and comes as a ‘relief’ to that being. To move on into death, and disperse to rejoin the world is a new experience for the Authority, and thus Will’s knife grants God a new experience (an increase in knowledge). A variance of experience is thus privileged as a positive force, and death is the last of those experiences (not something to be rushed towards, but not something to be feared).

Lyra’s compass encourages her to search out new experiences, new knowledge, or to take action; Will’s knife equips him to act similarly. Where Lyra’s compass has moods and provides or denies her information based on a sort of consciousness, Will’s knife “has intentions, too” (*Spyglass* 180-181). Will’s knife was originally sought by his father, and thus he concludes that the acquisition of the knife was “directly responsible for both their desertions [of his mother]” (Frost 304; *Spyglass* 182). Will’s acquisition of the knife reflects his father’s quest for the same and indicates Will’s taking up of his father’s mantle. Like Lyra, Will succeeds where his father failed and wields the knife successfully, disposing of it responsibly when it is revealed as a threat. Finally, there is a duality and sense of balance to the knife which is worth noting: “the handle is intricately designed. Inlaid gold wires portray angels: on one side, an angel with wings folded, and on the other, an angel with raised wings” (Frost 303). The duality of this design parallels the dual edge of the device which gives power, but which allows Dust to exit the world. It also highlights the control required of the wielder – Will must strike a balance between

spreading his wings (wielding his power) and folding in his wings (containing that power).

Falconer calls the use of Will's knife to move between universes "magic space travel" (Falconer 85) and both Falconer and Gene Veith place emphasis on this quality of the knife by contrast to its other.

The magic space travel provided by Will's knife directly compares to the spatial-directional components of Lyra's compass, but the other qualities of the tools differ explicitly based on the gender of their wielder. Lyra's device is best wielded in private – she often takes time by herself to read the compass, and then applies the advice it offers in order to gain power or knowledge. Will's device is often used in the heat of the moment, in order to avoid danger or face it. Due to the difference in their devices Will experiences movement from violence towards safety, and Lyra the opposite. Lyra becomes cognizant of danger and the future, while Will is able to explore a multitude of universes. Veith claims: "If the fantasy concept of "other worlds" is analogous to the realm of the mind and imagination...Pullman's device of an infinite number of worlds corresponds well to the postmodernist assumption that truth is relative" (Gene Veith 168). Lyra attempts to understand a subjective reality in the form of Dust. Though Lyra goes on a journey to discover the truth about Dust, she has no way of knowing for certain that Dust is a positive thing. She expresses no doubts about her course of action, but accepts that the *alethiometer* is truthful, and that her actions are 'good'. The performance of actions which Lyra cannot verify the 'goodness' of is proof that she is nearing an age where she might espouse, instead of resist, an ideology. Both the Asahættr and the *alethiometer* assist Lyra and Will's conformation to the archetypal integration of adolescents into society. Each device encourages experimentation, increases the power of the child, and is ultimately rendered useless to the protagonists when they enter adolescence. This might be considered a striking example of

repression in YAL: Lyra's insight and Will's ability to commit violence are brought in check by the removal of the devices granting their increased agency. As theorized by Trites, Lyra and Will are here asked "to give up the subject position culturally marked "adolescent"" and with that position, the power it has afforded them (Trites 83). Though Will and Lyra are not traditionally adolescent, the critique applies: these children are asked to give up the devices which within the narrative made them a threat, and an asset, to adults. At the same time that Lyra and Will are asked to give up childhood, they begin to fall in love. Falling in love becomes the new fall from grace and is a new type of knowledge to be explored in adolescence, one which had been previously unavailable in childhood (or of a different texture – the love between a mother and child, for instance). This fall is recognized by an adult arbiter of wisdom in the form of Dr. Mary Malone who wields the third device of the series.

The amber spyglass is a short cylindrical tube with two lenses which allows the user to see the presence of Dust, and the attachment of this Dust to people and things, or the movement of Dust into or out of an environment. This tool, rather than a tool of adolescence or childhood, is crafted by an adult, and is the only tool which is not rendered useless at the narrative's close. The amber spyglass is crafted and used by Dr. Mary Malone, and it is via this device that she recognizes Lyra and Will's coming of age:

Mary turned, spyglass in hand, to see Will and Lyra returning. They were someway off; they weren't hurrying. They were holding hands, talking together, heads close, oblivious to everything else; she could see that even from a distance.

She nearly put the spyglass to her eye, but held back and returned it to her pocket. There was no need for the glass; she knew what she would see; they would seem to be made of living gold. They would seem the true image of what human beings always could be, once they had come into their inheritance.

The Dust pouring down from the stars had found a living home again, and these children-no-longer-children, saturated with love, were the cause of it all. (The Amber Spyglass 470)

This moment has several fundamental implications for the conclusion of Pullman's narrative.

Here, the children have entered the next step in their maturity – whether they have moved from childhood into adolescence, or adolescence into adulthood, they have crossed a threshold of experience into a new stage of life – the crossing of this threshold is expressed in the attraction of Dust to the children, and in the phrase 'children-no-longer-children' (470). This moment of maturation is perceived by Dr. Malone to be true, but she does not check their newfound maturity with the spyglass so it is difficult to determine by this scene whether she is correct or not (470). It seems safe to say that she is, but were this not enough proof of Lyra and Will's adolescence, the settling of the children's daemons a chapter later would be – and in any case it seems that the children have at least affected the movement of the Dust, causing it to fall:

The terrible flood of dust in the sky had stopped flowing. It wasn't still, by any means; Mary scanned the whole sky with the amber lens, seeing a current here, an eddy there, a vortex further off; it was in perpetual movement, but it wasn't flowing away anymore. In fact, if anything, it was falling like snowflakes.

...

The young ones, said Atal. (470)

Again Pullman uses the keyword 'fall,' here associating it with the picturesque scene of a soft snowfall. Dust is associated with the picturesque and with love – the scene preluding this moment considers the devotion of Will to Lyra and vice versa, and the confession of their love to one-another (466). The 'fall' in this case is caused by the love between Will and Lyra, the new Adam and Eve, the two of which have just finished feeding one-another a red fruit in a garden closed away from their daemons (465-466). The feeding of a lover is the final iteration of a theme traced throughout the trilogy: Iorek Byrnison eats the body of his fallen friend Lee

Scoresby to gain the energy to save Lyra (*Spyglass* 42); the chapter Marzipan is the telling of a tale by Dr. Malone to Lyra and Will in which she is reminded of temptation by food (*Spyglass* 434); finally the sharing of food is reminiscent of the biblical Adam and Eve described by Asriel in the very first novel (*Compass* 372). The allusions are thinly veiled: Lyra and Will are separated from their daemons (conscience or ideology – sense of ‘good’ and ‘evil’); they fall in love. Their love indicates an essential attraction between humans which reflects the joining of lesser things to create something new, or the acquisition of knowledge: “Matter loves matter, it delights to join with itself and form organised structures” (Tony Watkins *Bible Blog* 2.0). Their love attracts Dust (original sin; responsible for sentience), and is thus linked to knowledge, be it carnal knowledge or the depth of knowledge which loving another individual implies. Love itself is the final type of knowledge, and upon the discovery of that particular form of knowledge, simple knowledge becomes wisdom as indicated by the settling of Will and Lyra’s daemons. This is not to say that Will and Lyra were not in love before this time, but only that love is recognized at the end of the trilogy, and via this recognition, takes on the texture of wisdom. After discovering (or recognizing) love, Will and Lyra are reunited with their daemons which will soon take their true form. Their subjective sense of good and evil is revealed, prompted by their knowledge of love, and Will is able to see – where he was not previously – his daemon. The discovery and recognition of love provides the distinction (whether it be qualitative or quantitative) between wisdom and knowledge. It is via love, and via wisdom that Will and Lyra enter adolescence, not via secularism or religion.

Pullman’s trilogy is about developing a conscience and finding that conscience’s true form. *His Dark Materials* demonstrates the effectiveness of resisting established ideologies in favor of self-discovery. Despite this favoring of resistance, conformity does reestablish itself in

the closing chapter of *The Amber Spyglass*, and this complicates the success of resistance in the trilogy. Despite being given room to experiment and freedom to resist, Lyra eventually chooses the life of a female scholar, is separated from Will, and becomes an adolescent on her way to adulthood. It momentarily seems as if the empowered child character is a myth and that Trites is correct in her analysis that the state of carnival during which children seem powerful relative to adults, must come to an end. Though Pullman's protagonists have demonstrated their ability to resist aetnornativity, the conclusion of *His Dark Materials* jeopardizes their adhering to Satan's example in *Paradise Lost*: does the conclusion of *His Dark Materials* indicate a loss of resistance and a conformity to the requirements of adulthood/adolescence?

Conclusion: "These Were Their Shapes for Life: They Would Want No Other."

Trites addresses the possibility that:

In communicating...ideologies to adolescent readers, the [YA] genre itself becomes an Ideological State Apparatus, an institution that participates in the social construction of the adolescent as someone who must be repressed for the greater good. (Trites 83)

The possibility that Lyra and Will must give up the subtle knife and the golden compass in order to safely occupy adulthood in *His Dark Materials*, is a considerable concern. After accomplishing so many of her goals via the use of the compass, if feels unjust that Lyra should lose the ability to read it, and unjust too that Will and Lyra must separate permanently from one-another after recently discovering love. Lyra and Will do not fail to resist aetnornative oppression, and this only deepens the sense that the end of the trilogy is unduly tragic. Rachel Falconer explains:

At key points, both [Lyra and Will] choose not to obey adult authority but to follow their own instincts: Lyra at the end of *Northern Lights*, when she decides that 'Dust' must be a force for good, and Will at the end of *The Subtle Knife*, when he decides to help Lyra, rather than deliver a magic instrument to Lord Asriel. The climax of their disobedience,

which constitutes their moral awakening, occurs in the third volume, *The Amber Spyglass*, when Lyra and Will release the ‘Authority’ (Pullman’s ironic portrait of God) from a glass bottle in which he has been imprisoned, allowing Him to evaporate and disappear. They also negotiate the release of the souls of the dead from the underworld, thus ending a long regime of religious tyranny which promulgated the fear of death in its followers. And they consummate their attraction to each other, in defiance of religious and social prohibitions. (Falconer 75-75)

Integration into aetnonormative thought processes have been effectively resisted until the conclusion of the final novel. At the climax of *The Amber Spyglass* the children Lyra and Will return to Dr. Mary Malone, young and in love. They have the tools which have empowered them throughout the work (the subtle knife and the golden compass), and their daemons have returned to them. The adult ideologues of the novel are dead: Marisa Coulter, Lord Asriel, Balthamos, and Father Gomez. At this moment it seems possible that Will and Lyra have effectively resisted or supplanted each ideology in the work, and that the narrative will conclude as a romance with Will and Lyra living out the rest of their days with one-another. In contrast to the desired outcome, aetnonormative pressures quickly and effectively reassert their hold on these now adolescent characters:

While Pullman’s stated aim was to rewrite Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to make the Fall a happy one, his conclusion is paradoxically more tragic than Milton’s. Not only are the lovers separated from God (in [*The*] *Amber Spyglass*, He ceases to exist), but they are also separated from each other, as they ‘make their solitary way’ into separate worlds (cf. *Paradise Lost* 12.646). Furthermore the movement at the end of Milton’s epic is from an enclosed space to an open one: ‘the world was all before them’. By contrast, Will and Lyra are being shut in at the end of *The Amber Spyglass*, and multiple, spacious worlds are being closed off from them. This representation of coming-of-age as a process of learning to inhabit a smaller world has a particular resonance in the contemporary context. (Falconer 94)

His Dark Materials, though hopeful (the potential to regain what is lost is maintained) is ultimately tragic. In *The Golden Compass* we witnessed Lyra’s concern regarding her daemon’s final form over which she was not sure she had control: “But suppose your daemon settles in a shape you don’t life?” (167). Furthermore, she resisted the reality that Pantalaimon must settle:

“I want Pantalaimon to be able to change forever. So does he” (167). In *The Amber Spyglass*, despite this concern, Lyra’s daemon comes to settle in a form which is not of her choosing:

The daemons flew back down now, and changed again, and came toward them over the soft sand. [...]

Will put his hand on [Lyra’s]. A new mood had taken hold of him, and he felt resolute and peaceful. Knowing exactly what he was doing and exactly what it would mean, he moved his hand from Lyra’s wrist and stroke the red-gold fur of her daemon.

Lyra gasped. But her surprise was mixed with a pleasure so like the joy that flooded through her when she had put the fruit to his lips that she couldn’t protest, because she was breathless. With a racing heart she responded in the same way: she put her hand on the silky warmth of Will’s daemon, and as her fingers tightened in the fur, she knew that Will was feeling exactly what she was.

And she knew, too, that neither daemon would change now, having felt a lover’s hands on them. These were their shapes for life: they would want no other.

So, wondering whether any lovers before them had made this blissful discovery, they lay together as the earth turned slowly and the moon and the stars blazed above them. (*Spyglass* 498-499).

It is not by Lyra’s agency alone that Pantalaimon’s final shape is decided; rather Will’s touch helps to settle Pantalaimon’s form, and Lyra’s touch settles Will’s daemon, Kirjava, in turn. Rather than a forceful interaction, however Will only encourages Pantalaimon to permanently occupy a form which he was already willing to take. Since neither individual prepares for this moment Pantalaimon does not consciously choose a form, nor is a specific form requested of him. His settled form is thus based on Lyra’s development as a character rather than Will’s influence, her destiny to become Eve, or the ideologies of her parents. Despite this both Lyra and Will are accepting a form which is permanent and not directly chosen by them. Still, Will knows what he is doing when he touches Lyra’s daemon, and what his touch will mean for Pantalaimon. He thus intends to settle Pan: it is not an accident or a coincidence. Most importantly, Pullman phrases this settling perfectly to allow his protagonists to remain empowered. He claims, “these were their shapes for life: they would want no other” (499). This sentence does not indicate that

Pantalaimon and Kirjava have lost their ability to change, but only that they no longer *desire* to change. This can be interpreted in two manners: as conformity, a surrendering of resistance; or as the moment at which the protagonists' resistance is accomplished and thus no longer required. I will argue the latter is true.

Following the settling of their daemons, Will and Lyra make further concessions to their resistance: Lyra joins Dame Hannah at St. Sophias as a female scholar (516), Lyra and Pan conceal the distance from Lyra which he can now travel (516), and parental influences are established for each character via the promises made to Lyra by Dr. Malone, and to Will by Serafina Pekkala (508-511). Most importantly however, the narrative concludes by identifying the actions taken by Will and Lyra, not as a destiny they are forced into, but rather as a decision they have made. Will and Lyra no longer demonstrate resistance, as Satan is assumed to continue to do at the close of *Paradise Lost*; rather, the goals of their resistance have been met. It is this possibility which allows the protagonists to remain empowered at the close of the work, and which demonstrates the possibility for continued agency post-narratively. First there is the possibility given by Xaphania (a powerful angel) that Will and Lyra might communicate, via dreams, despite their separation (494). Likewise there is the dual possibility of Will repairing his blade (the fragments of which he keeps), or Lyra relearning the golden compass (the books offering instruction on such matters well within her reach). Though they are isolated from one another Will could end this isolation by reclaiming the blade which he has destroyed.

Likewise there are two final assertions by Will and by Lyra of their agency within this narrative, pointing once more towards the possibility which their adult life presents. When Xaphania suggests that Will has work to do, he responds:

“What work have I got to do, then?” said Will, but went on at once, “No, on second thought, don’t tell me. I shall decide what I do. If you say my work is fighting, or healing, or exploring, or whatever you might say, I’ll always be thinking about it. And if I do end up doing that, I’ll be resentful because it’ll feel as if I didn’t have a choice, and if I don’t do it, I’ll feel guilty because I should. Whatever I do, I will choose it, no one else.” (496)

This quotation directs our thoughts towards the post-narrative, and thus no one can know what Will actually pursues, but we will know that he intends to pursue something without the influence of another ideology, or of adults in his life – here he eschews the wisdom of Xaphania in favor of his own wisdom. This is for Will a moment of perfect resistance because there is no opportunity in the narrative to dictate what he should do, or for that dictation to be analyzed or challenged. This resistance effectively extends beyond the narrative, which is ideal because it places him in league with Milton’s Satan, whose resistance is never entirely defeated within *Paradise Lost*, but likewise continues post-narratively.

Likewise, and more explicitly, Lyra’s post-narrative is concerned with the reconstruction and repurposing of the entire “Kingdom of Heaven,” into what she calls “The Republic of Heaven” (518). Lyra’s attachment to the concept of the republic is perhaps a reclaiming of the state of carnival which she has just surrendered – perhaps within the republic of heaven daemons may be able to shift freely even in adulthood, as it is implied Pan is able to shift should he choose. Lyra and Pan discuss the fact that the old order is “finished,” that they “shouldn’t live as if it mattered more than this life in this world, because where we are is always the most important place” (518). This line serves to ground the reader in Lyra’s post-narrative world, wherein she is on course to relearn the use of the golden compass (“the books [to do so] are still in Bodley’s library. The scholarship to study them is alive and well” (513)) and inherit a sum of money, with which to pursue her future goals (514).

His Dark Materials brings into conversation ideology and maturation, claiming that all elements of one's personal ideology, and the long-held ideologies of groups and other individuals, should be interrogated. Through a rigorous process of scientific interrogation, and the acquisition of knowledge (not limited to objective knowledge, but also subjective) a child may overcome adult ideologies permanently. Lyra's final dismissal of adult ideology comes with the realization: "I never asked[...]about my father and mother – and I can't ask the alethiometer, either, now....I wonder if I'll ever know [what happened to them]?" At this moment Lyra has successfully entered adolescence without accepting as wholly true either of her parents' teachings. In this scene Lyra is distanced from those teachings permanently unless she should *choose* to relearn the compass and question it regarding their fate. Those ideologies remain available to Lyra, but are no longer able to influence her against her will. Lyra and Will are successful in their resistance, but they are uniquely blessed with devices which assist that resistance, which empower or guide. Tony Makarios and Roger Parslow are not as fortunate, and die because the adults of the narrative are unflinching in their ideological outlook. This indicates that though ideological indoctrination can be overcome, it is only specially empowered individuals who can accomplish such a feat. Though entering adulthood has limited the protagonists' access to these empowering devices, it also depicts them as having grown beyond the need for such agency-enhancing tools. Throughout their shift into a new subject-position Will and Lyra have retained their intentions to pursue knowledge, and though in some ways Lyra and Will have been repressed (contained in their own worlds), they will be able to move forward from that repression because they have resisted ideological indoctrination for the duration of childhood. Rachel Falconer claims:

In contrast to Philip Pullman, twentieth-century psychologists have described adulthood as a stage of life that is not in any way settled, but full of major transitions. Following Jung, Erik Erikson writes extensively about the changes that occur in the development of an adult. (Falconer 80)

Pullman's assertion that adulthood is a state of stability is supported in his work, but does not bear the critique offered here by Falconer. Rather than a place devoid of the possibility for change, adolescence in the narrative promises the opportunity to make choices, and if required, return to a state of indecision. He presents adolescence as a place where one's outlook has been decided, but in so doing leaves copious room for modifying or refining this outlook by relearning the skills granted in childhood (reforming the blade, relearning the compass) and using these skills to once again combat blind acceptance of ideology. Adherence to ideology is thus overcome in childhood, but can be revisited in adolescence should its influences be deemed worthy.

Lyra and Will demonstrate not only the importance of resistance to and distance from ideology in childhood, but also how ideologies might be reconsidered (without danger) during adolescence. For instance, Will may have the ability to re-forged his knife, but should he do that it will be wielded in a responsible manner and will represent a revision of his subjective value judgment that opening windows with the knife is 'bad'. Since he is comfortable with himself, such a choice seems unlikely. By contrast Lyra has always considered reading the compass 'good' and will thus re-learn that ability. Pullman's adults are not settled because they are unable to change, but rather because they accept – and have been allowed to fully develop – what they believe. Lyra especially teaches resistance to and revision of adult ideology and valorizes wisdom as an asset which is developed to combat the negative aspects of such ideologies. In *His Dark Materials* the ability to overcome ideology and by so doing reveal the shape of one's

conscience – a shape chosen not by ideological indoctrination, but via communication with loved ones – is a special quality to be nurtured in children, and is the natural antithesis of oppression.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Texts:

Pullman, Philip. *His Dark Materials*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. Print.

Secondary Texts:

“Definitions of Symbols of Alethiometer.” [Online]. RandomHouse.com. Available at:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/materials/definitions.php> [ref. of August 9, 2014].

Bartodano, Helena. “I am of the Devil’s Party.” [Online]. The Telegraph, Jan 29, 2002.

Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3572490/I-am-of-the-Devils-party.html>. [ref. of August 13, 2014].

Beckett, Sandra L. *Crossover Fiction: Global and Historical Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Knopf Distributed by Random House, 1976. Print.

Bobby, Susan R. *Beyond His Dark Materials: Innocence and Experience in the Fiction of Philip Pullman*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2012. Print.

Brown, Joanne, and Nancy Clair. *Declarations of Independence: Empowered Girls in Young Adult Literature, 1990-2001*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2002. Print.

Colás, Santiago. "Telling True Stories, or the Imminent Ethics of Material Spirit (and Spiritual Matter) in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." 27 (1) *Discourse*. (2005) 34-66.

Colbert, David. *The Magical Worlds of Philip Pullman: Inside His Dark Materials*. Toronto: McArthur, 2006. Print.

Falconer, Rachel. *The Crossover Novel: Contemporary Children's Fiction and its Adult Readership*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Frost, Ginger S. *Victorian Childhoods*. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2009. Print.

Frost, Laurie. *The Elements of His Dark Materials: a Guide to Philip Pullman's Trilogy*. Niles, Ill. London: Fell Turnaround distributor, 2007. Print.

Garcia, Antero. *Critical Foundations in Young Adult Literature: Challenging Genres*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2013. Print.

Greenwell, Amanda. "The Language of Pictures: Visual Representation and Spectatorship in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." 42 (1/2) *Studies in the Novel*. (2010) 99-120.

Hintz, Carrie, and Elaine Ostry. *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Holz, Adam R. "Sympathy for the Devil." [Online]. PluggenIn, November 22, 2007. Available at: <http://www.pluggedin.ca/upfront/2007/SympathyfortheDevil.aspx>. [ref. of August 13, 2014].

Kellaway, Kate. "A Wizard with Worlds." [Online]. TheGuardian, October 22, 2000. Available at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/oct/22/booksforchildrenandteenagers.whitbreadprize2001>. [ref. of August 11, 2014].

Knott R. John, Jr. "Milton's Heaven." 85 (3) *PMLA* 487-495.

Milton, John. "Paradise Lost." [Online]. Dartmouth.edu. Available at:

http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml. [ref. of July 3, 2014].

Nikolajeva, Maria. *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments, Translated out of the Original Tongues and with the Former Translations Diligently Compared & Revised, King James Version. New York, N.Y: American Bible Society, 2004. Print.

Trites, Roberta S. *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000. Print.

Veith, Gene E. *The soul of the Lion, the Witch, & the Wardrobe*. Colorado Springs, Colo. Eastbourne, England: Cook Communications Ministries Kingsway Communications, 2005. Print.

Wall, Barbara. *The Narrator's Voice: the Dilemma of Children's Fiction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. Print.

Waller, Alison. *Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Print.

Watkins, Tony. "Interview with Philip Pullman: Part Two." [Online]. TheFilm&BibleBlog, 2004. Available at: <http://www.damaris.org/film-and-bible-blog/369>. [ref. of August 12, 2014].

Wheat, Leonard F. *Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials--a Multiple Allegory: Attacking Religious Superstition in The lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe and Paradise lost*. Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books, 2008. Print.

Whittaker, Jason. "Zoapod 10: His Dark Materials – Blake and Pullman (transcript)." [Online]. Zoamorphosis: The Blake 2.0 Blog, April 09, 2010. Available at: <http://zoamorphosis.com/2010/04/zoapod-10-his-dark-materials-transcript/>. [ref. of August 11, 2014].

Uncited References:

"Carnegie Medal Acceptance Speech." [Online]. His Dark Materials website, 1996. Available at: <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/philippullman/speech.html>. [ref. of August 9, 2014].

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. Print.

Blake, William. "Songs of Innocence, and Songs of Experience." [Online]. ProjectGutenberg. Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1934>. [ref. of July 3, 2014].

Blake, William. "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." [Online]. ProjectGutenberg. Available at:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45315>. [ref. of July 3, 2014].

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge: New York and London. 2006. Print.

Crow, Chris. "Young Adult Literature: What is Young Adult Literature?" 88 (1) *The English Journal*. (Sep., 1998) 120-122.

Crowe, Chris. "Young Adult Literature: The Problem with Young Adult Literature." 90 (3) *The English Journal*. (Jan., 2001) 146-150.

Curtis, Claire P. *Post-apocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract: "We'll not go Home Again."* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010. Print.

DeLuca, Geraldine. "Taking True Risk: Controversial Issues in Young Adult Novels." 3 (2) *The Lion and the Unicorn*. (Winter 1979-1980) 125-148.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: an Introduction*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Print.

Hey, Valerie. "The Politics of Performative Resignification: Translating Judith Butler's Theoretical Discourse and Its Potential for a Sociology of Education." 24 (4) *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. (2006) 439-457.

Horn, Pamela. *The Victorian Town Child*. New York: New York University Press, 1997. Print.

Hunt, Caroline. "Young Adult Literature Evades the Theorists." 21 (1) *Children's Literature Association*. (Spring 1996) 4-11.

James, Kathryn. *Death, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Adolescent Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Joosen, Vanessa. *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales: an Intertextual Dialogue Between Fairy-tale Scholarship and Postmodern Retellings*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011. Print.

Lüthi, Max. *Once Upon a Time; on the Nature of Fairy Tales*. New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co, 1970. Print.

Metzger, Michael M., and Katharina Mommsen. *Fairy Tales as ways of Knowing: Essays on Märchen in Psychology, Society and Literature*. Bern Las Vegas: P. Lang, 1981. Print.

Moorcock, Michael, and Darrell Schweitzer. *Exploring Fantasy Worlds: Essays on Fantastic Literature*. San Bernardino, Calif: Borgo Press, 1985. Print.

Nealon, Jeffrey T.; Searls Giroux, Susan. *The Theory Toolbox: Critical Concepts for the New Humanities (Culture and Politics Series)*. (pp. 46-47). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Nikolajeva, Maria. "Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern." 17 (1) *Marvels & Tales*. (2003) 138-156.

Nikolajeva, Maria. "Imprints of the Mind: The Depiction of Consciousness in Children's Fiction."

26 (4) *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. (Winter 2001) 173-187.

Reynolds, Kimberley. *Children's Literature: a Very Short Introduction*. Oxford England New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Print.

Tatar, Maria. "From Bookworms to Enchanted Hunters: Why Children Read." 43 (2) *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. (Summer, 2009) 19-36.

Thomas, P. L. *Science Fiction and Speculative Fiction: Challenging Genres*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013. Print.

Weinreich, Torben. *Children's Literature: Art or Pedagogy*. Frederiksberg, Denmark: Roskilde University Press, 2000. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. London: Heinemann, 1983. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

Zipes, Jack. *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.