

**In between Materiality and Meaning: World, Dust and  
Daemon in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* Trilogy**

Hsiao Hsien Hsu

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies

University of Essex

May 2017

**TO MY PARENTS, YO-RU HSU AND MEI-NI CHU**

## Abstract

This thesis investigates materiality, meanings and the use of three crucial elements, World, Dust, and Daemon in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials Trilogy*. Together, the three novels *Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997) and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000) juxtapose and represent not only Philip Pullman's counter-interpretation of Biblical representation, *Genesis* in particular, but also his worries about religious absolutism and story-telling based in Christian belief. As a New Atheist fantasy fiction written to young adult and adult readers, Pullman's enthusiasm for playing with and materializing obscure religious concepts and relating them to our real life through story-telling is remarkable. This research is aimed to analyse the methodologies and further to understand how Pullman can fulfill his unique cosmology, as well as the problems and paradoxes these elements could have brought together with.

The first chapter, World, composes etymological, philosophical and constitutive studies of Pullman's World system in His Dark Materials. That system takes an organic tuber-like form in its arrangement of worlds in time and space. The thesis attempts to suggest that Pullman's atheistic cosmology is, paradoxically, constructed in terms of a heavily theological materiality.

The research in the second chapter, Dust, focuses on the transformation of Dust. It attempts to argue that Pullmanic Dust is a process of becoming rather than a status of being. The whole process is divided into three stages, and my critique observes how Dust is materially changed in meaning in each stage. The research also provides detailed studies of how Dust can be metaphorically related to the doctrine of original sin and, in consequence, the work's close relation to the very Christianity that it seeks to eschew.

Daemon, as the most materialized entity made of Dust, is at the crux of Pullman's understanding of the human soul. It is also a starting point for high fantasy in His Dark Materials. By studying the materiality and meaning of Daemon, my research into what is termed the laws of "settlement" finds that they violate the ontological foundation of Pullman's realism and of his psychological (and philosophical) understanding of the soul. This chapter suggests that Pullman's animalization of the human soul and, conversely, his anthropomorphism of daemons together make for a significant contradiction in his cosmology

## Acknowledgement

For a Taiwanese student who has travelled more than 10,000 miles from home and dedicated four years to doctoral research, acknowledgments can be one of the most difficult tasks. During my time as a student at the University of Essex there have been many people who have provided advice, encouragement, and motivation for my extended research into Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. My thanks here are given to all of those who so generously helped me with their guidance.

The first and the most gratitude must be given to my supervisor, Dr. Susan Oliver and her husband, Professor Jonathan White. Dr. Oliver's expertise helped me to find new ways of reading English literature. Professor White has supported me with encouragement, suggestions for the development of language skills, and advice in critical thinking. In December 2015 my father passed away during my return to Taiwan. I was overwhelmed by that bereavement. Dr. Oliver and Professor White gave me strength to continue with my studies.

I am especially grateful to the members of my Supervisory Boards: Professor Marina Warner, Professor Peter Hulme, Dr. Deirdre Serjeantson, and Dr. Jordan Savage. They provided invaluable feedback on my work-in-progress along with suggestions for the development of my project. I am also indebted to those members of the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies who organize the weekly Open Seminar, where I found inspiration and ideas in different genres and disciplines. A special thank you must be given to Mrs. Jane Thorp, who from the first day to the last of my stay in Essex has helped me to deal with procedural matters. I am also extremely grateful to the librarians and staff in the Albert Sloman Library: they not only assisted me in finding sources but were also able to convince me that lifts without doors are actually not dangerous at all.

## Table of Contents

### Contents

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Abstract .....             | i   |
| Acknowledgement.....       | iii |
| Table of Contents .....    | iv  |
| Abbreviations.....         | v   |
| <br>                       |     |
| Introduction.....          | 1   |
| Chapter One: World .....   | 35  |
| Chapter Two: Dust.....     | 91  |
| Chapter Three: Daemon..... | 154 |
| Conclusion .....           | 209 |
| <br>                       |     |
| Bibliography .....         | 229 |

## Abbreviations

|      |  |
|------|--|
| BBC  | British Broadcasting Corporation             |
| HDMT | <i>His Dark Materials</i> Trilogy.           |
| KJV  | The Holy Bible: King James Version.          |
| OED  | <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> .           |
| RSV  | The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version.    |
| SEP  | <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> . |
| UNIX | Uniplexed Information and Computing Service. |

## Introduction

Maybe the whole thing is weakened by a fatal lack of ambition. This is what I find most irritating in my contemporaries among writers: lack of ambition. They are not trying big things. They are doing little things and doing them well<sup>1</sup>.

-Philip Pullman, 1999.

### Contextualizing Pullman's *His Dark Materials*: Action and Reaction, skepticism and insecularization, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

The above epigraph is taken from Wendy Parson's 1999 interview with Philip Pullman in *The Lion and The Unicorn*, two years after the release of *The Subtle Knife*, the second volume of *His Dark Materials* trilogy. Pullman's attraction for contemporary readers and critics did not begin with *The Subtle Knife*. By the time that novel was published, the first volume of the trilogy, *Northern Lights* (1995), published as *The Golden Compass* (1996) in North America and adapted as a film and video game under that name, had already been recognized as a success in children's and young adult fantasy literature. *Northern Lights* had gained a literary reputation by winning the Carnegie Medal for Children's Fiction in the United Kingdom in 1995. The third volume of the trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), was further awarded both the 2001 Whitbread Prize for best children's book and the Whitbread Book of the Year prize in January 2002. The trilogy stimulated not only book reviewers and critics but elicited a strong response from Christian religious commentators and modern philosophers.

In *His Dark Materials*, the origins of cosmology and aspects of the human soul are configured and reviewed in a humorous, ironical manner. Pullman's treatment of cosmology (and arguably astrophysics) and the soul have been classified as anti-Christian or atheistic fiction by critics including Alona Wartofsky and Peter Hitchens.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wendy Parsons and Catriona Nicholson, "Talking to Philip Pullman: An Interview," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 23, 1 January 1999, 117.

Wartofsky criticized Pullman's trilogy in *The Washington Post* of February 2001 in an article ironically titled "The Last Wood: Philip Pullman's Trilogy for Young Adults Ends with God's Death and Remarkably Few Critics." In this article, J. K. Rowling's "pagan witchcraft" in her *Harry Potter* series is described as a "relatively innocuous glorification"<sup>2</sup> in comparison with Pullman's treatment of religious mysticism and conspiracy in *His Dark Materials*. Peter Hitchens claimed in *The Mail on Sunday* in January 2002 that "Philip Pullman is the most dangerous author in Britain."<sup>3</sup> However, the more controversial the issues Pullman addresses, the more attention his fiction attracts, and the clearer his philosophical agenda becomes. For Pullman the wrath from Christian commentators is exciting and represents an anticipated response to his taunts; it provides him with a stage on which to perform *His Dark Materials*, and consequently with a platform further to communicate with his target readers (or target enemy, where they are defenders of Christianity). In 2004, Pullman and Dr. Rowan Williams, then the Archbishop of Canterbury, debated the matter of religion in *His Dark Materials*. For critics, this was a significant formal talk between seemingly Christian and anti-Christian agendas in which Pullman earned religious allies that would later cite him in a BBC report as their favourite modern writer. I refer particularly to Dr. Williams' expression of admiration for Pullman's work, in which he said:

I only hope that teachers are equipped to tease out what in Pullman's world is and is not reflective of Christian teaching as Christians understand it<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Williams spoke at the Hay Festival in Wales after the debate: "Philip Pullman helps understanding theology . . . especially when theology was 'drifting out' of mainstream thought." Williams' support to some extent confirms that

<sup>2</sup> Alona Wartofsky, "The Last Wood: Phillip Pullman's Trilogy for Young Adults Ends with God's Death and Remarkably Few Critics," *Washington Post*, 19 February 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Hitchens, "This Is the Most Dangerous Author in Britain," *Mail on Sunday*, 27 January 2002, 63.

<sup>4</sup> "Archbishop Wants Pullman in class," *BBC News Online*: 10 March 2014, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/3497702.stm>> (accessed 10 November 2015)

Pullman's effort in critiquing commonplace assumptions about Christian doctrine is not in vain. It can be observed that the value of *His Dark Materials* lies in more than its status as a children's book or a number of the literary bestseller lists, especially if we try to discover its interaction with contemporary cultures.

Pullman's success with *His Dark Materials* is not coincidental; there is ample evidence that it is closely connected with religious and scientific anxieties of the years around the millennium and early twenty-first century. He makes strange the timing of those anxieties by defamiliarising time and place. The provocative naming of characters (i.e. John Calvin as the Pope of his fictional "Magisterium") and the temporal device of choosing Lyra's alternative primary world (the framework of the narratives of that world draws on the seventeenth century, as shown in the architectural style and the names of the buildings) manifests an overt interaction with the time and contextual culture. We can interpret these techniques as a prefiguration of what both Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate refer to as insecularization in the twenty-first century.<sup>5</sup> To be more precise, the term insecularization refers to a cultural counter that responds against Christian secularization<sup>6</sup>. Christian secularization was a long-term religious and cultural transformation that has taken place since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation (i.e. from around 1517), in which the Catholic Church was gradually losing its authority in Northern Europe in all aspects of social life and governance. The process was slow and obstructed by the intervention of

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate, "Introduction," *The New Atheist Novel: Fiction, Philosophy and Polemic after 9/11* (London: Continuum, 2010), 4. The Introduction to this volume is written by Arthur Bradley. It is noteworthy that Bradley sees New Atheism as "respond[ing] to a very specific cultural and political climate: the so-called return of the religious in the supposedly secular West (Bradley and Tate, 3.) For Andrew Tate, in a specific chapter on *His Dark Materials* written by him, "Pullman's narrative, though peppered with biblical references, overtly writes against conventionally religious interpretation of the authorized body of Jewish Christian Literature" (Bradley and Tate, 61).

<sup>6</sup> "secularization, n.". OED Online. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/174625?redirectedFrom=secularization> (accessed December 12, 2016). In most of the circumstances, the word secularization suggests a conversion or transformation of ecclesiastical or religious institutions. Here the word is specifically used to describe the special cultural climate and political status in Northern Europe and the US.

political and religious power. If anything hastened this process in the twentieth century, the two most significant turning points were World War II and the event of the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Associating Pullman's work with World War II and the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States of America may be considered distracting from the central theme of my dissertation, yet it is particularly meaningful when these historical events are considered in conjunction with another two fantasy novel sequences, namely Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*. Both were published in the post-World-War period. Their connections with the time's anxiety are noted by scholars and commentators. Even though compared to the *Narnia* books *The Lord of the Rings* does not provide direct evidence that Middle Earth is relevant to reality and to World War II, although critics such as Tom Shippey and John Garth have suggested that the descriptions of Shire parody British daily life and the invaders of Mordor destroy its peace and harmony just as World War II did. John Garth in his *Tolkien and the Great War* also suggests that the mythology of *Middle Earth* is reflected and inspired, or even traumatized from the experience of Tolkien's life in war into his writing:

Elsewhere Tolkien did recall writing some of the mythology "down in dugouts under shell fire," but it can have been little more than jotted ideas, outlines, or names. The anxiety of war, however, stocked the creative fires. His mind wandered through the world that had started to evolve at Oxford and in the training camps, in his lexicon, and in his poem.<sup>7</sup>

Both Shippey and Garth point out similarly that Middle Earth can be seen as a parodied epitome of Europe in war and that what Tolkien wrote about is his version of

<sup>7</sup> John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle Earth* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 168. See also Tom Shippey, "Shorter Works: Doubts, Fears, Autobiographies," *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 266-269. Shippey suggests that in the autobiographical allegory *Tree and Leaf* (1964), through the main character Niggle, Tolkien demonstrates his anxiety and loss of faith in the Post-World-War period. The word "niggle", accordingly, is also a pun to describe Tolkien himself.

World War II which took millions of lives from the continent of Europe, with the consequence that Christianity, which was then the dominant religion across the continent, faced new doubt and distrust. This is not the first time that Western European religious belief structures have been forced to change. People's faith in religion is more likely to alter or collapse when they are encountering unsolved threats. This kind of change, as has been historically proven, is associated with a significant war or with widespread infectious diseases. The relationship between the rise of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire is a good example of explaining such a cultural phenomenon. Its chain-reactions alter history. The Emperor Guangwu of the Han's Northern Expedition forced the Huns to separate into Northern and Southern tribes in 51BC. The Southern Huns surrendered and submitted to the Han Dynasty; The Northern Huns escaped into Anatolia (Asia Minor), and their movement forced the resident Germanic tribes to move west into Europe such that the Roman Empire declined in consequence. The Germanic invasion destroyed Roman civilization. Yet superstitious Germans respected supernatural powers. Therefore Christian religions could preserve significant parts of their culture and knowledge within churches. The Germanic invasion led in Western Europe to more than one thousand years of the Dark Ages, but precisely because of this long period of development Christianity had a chance to grow and spread worldwide. Not until the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was religion reevaluated and its political power gradually diminished.

In *His Dark Materials*, the primary world where Lyra lives is stuck in this period without secularization. The coexistence of more than one world provides Pullman with a platform to compare a religious-dominated realm of Lyra's world with the verisimilitude of reality, namely Will's world. Lyra's world, in which Pullman creates an imperfect Dystopia without Enlightenment, becomes a necessary control to contrast with what is being treated in terms of religious ideas. World Wars in the twentieth century largely hastened the process of this transformation and in Lyra's world, there were not two World Wars. From a sociological point of view, secularization is an important part of the cultural development in every human civilization worldwide, regardless what type of religion is dominant. That is because after a period of time, secularization will give people new possibilities and chances to

reexamine the necessities of systems such as Caesaropapism<sup>8</sup> (the main object of Pullman's critique). Representing the social control exerted by religion, Caesaropapism argues that only by combining secular government and religious power can the power of the ruling elite be enlarged. This viewpoint for the ruling elite is logical, because, under Caesaropapism, the nation can be more stable because the influence of religions is more likely to stimulate citizens to develop self-control skills rather than to rule by law. Therefore, secularization in the early twentieth century is a two-edged sword. Simultaneously it separates the realms of influence of government and religion. The argument frequently made against secularisation is that it also decreases the positive influence that encouraged people to pursue virtue and good behaviour. Wherever is an action, there is also a reaction. The publication of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1955) and C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950) can be recognized as two similar reactions to the increasing secularization of western society. Evidence can be found in the adventures of the Hobbits and return of Prince Aragon in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the resurrection of Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; both these works attempt to imitate or represent Christ's story in alternative universes. Heroes in both narratives follow the course of Christian providence. Aslan, for example, is executed on the stone table for the crime that Peter has admitted. This can be read as an analogy of Christ's sacrifice. A king of kings (lion) sacrifices himself for the "children of Adam and Eve" (human)<sup>9</sup>, emphasizing similarities with Christ's death on the cross. There is more evidence to show that throughout these two novels (or three, according to Tom Shippey's research, 2000), *The Lord of the Rings* is the expansion of Tolkien's first novel *The Hobbit* (1937), the hometown of the Hobbits, the Shire, is the representation of daily life in pre-war England, and the Siege of Minas Tirith is the representation of WWII, in which evil

---

<sup>8</sup> "Caesaro-papism, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/26020?redirectedFrom=Caesaropapism> (accessed 26 July 2016). Bradley and Tate do not mention this term in their book, yet I found it accurate to describe Pullman's worries about religious absolutism with the word Caesaropapism. In Pullman's dystopia, the governance of the Magisterium is the best example to demonstrate this.

<sup>9</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian* [1951] (New York: Collier, 1972), 175. "'You come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve,' said Aslan."

makes its approach and people's faith collapses<sup>10</sup>. Both Tolkien and Lewis were trying to communicate with conventional readers by recalling virtues of Christ or the necessary painful experience before ultimate success. The most important point in common is that they were both serving one of the great, grand narratives in literary history: the Holy Bible.

Pullman does have a grand narrative of his own to which he responds, but it is entirely opposite to that of Tolkien or Lewis. By way of alternative, *His Dark Materials* radically responds to the late twentieth century's "insecularization" by rewriting another Christian epic, namely John Milton's *Paradise Lost*<sup>11</sup>. If the secularization since the Protestant Reformation is the action and was "adjusted" by Tolkien and Lewis's wake-up call of rewriting the biblical stories, I see Pullman's *His Dark Materials* as a counter force to make another wake-up call for a secular re-awakening in the face of the twenty-first century's religious-based authoritarianism. This to some extent also explains Pullman's literary abomination of Lewis's *Narnia* books as "one of the most ugly and poisonous things<sup>12</sup>." Indeed, in *His Dark*

<sup>10</sup> Shippey, "The Hobbit: Re-inventing Middle Earth," *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, op. cit., 9-10.

<sup>11</sup> Carole Scott, "Pullman's Enigmatic Ontology: Revamping Old Traditions in His Dark Materials," *His Dark Materials Illuminated: Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy*, ed. Millicent Lenz (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 97. Critics such as Carole Scott and William Gray overtly show their interests in researching the literary relationship between Philip Pullman, William Blake and John Milton. This relationship is usually addressed as a response from the influenced to the influencing text. Evidence shows that a high level of overlapping theological ideologies can be found among Pullman, Blake and Milton. Scott emphasizes this in her essay and further suggests that "Pullman, Blake, and Milton all share great cynicism regarding the church's part in this battle, perceiving corruption and a destructive use of power in which politics and debased practices have joined with the force of evil to seduce and bully people from the truth" (Scott, 97). See also, William Gray, "Pullman, Lewis, Macdonald, and the Anxiety of Influence" *Mythlore* 25:3 (Summer: 2007), 117-129.

<sup>12</sup> Burton Hatlen, "Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, a Challenge to the Fantasies of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, with an Epilogue on Pullman's Neo-Romantic Reading of *Paradise Lost*," in Lenz (ed.) 82. Here Hatlen describes Pullman's essay "The Dark Side of Narnia", in which Pullman is critical of Lewis's Narnia books, as a "quickly notorious little essay."

*Materials*, it can be observed that many so-called “mistakes” of which Pullman accused Lewis in *The Chronicles of Narnia* have been corrected. For example, the perspectives of gender: it is clear that Lewis’s narrative frameworks in almost every novel that he wrote are patriarchal territories. In the *Narnia* books, women are subordinate to the patriarchal narrative. They are very often described as helpless, over-reacting and narcissistic, waiting for males to aid or rescue them. Lewis has described Susan, who is the eldest sister of the four children, in the *Narnia* books as follows: “She’s interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown up.<sup>13</sup>” Lucy, who is the youngest of the four, is usually noisy at critical moments – which inevitably means that the children’s’ enemies can recognize them. Each of the children is given one gift at the beginning of the novel, which indicates their future value in the world of Narnia. Lucy is given a mythical potion as a gift that expresses that her ultimate providence is to resurrect Aslan (who is another male), let him kill the white witch (another evil model of the female) and save the world. Contrasted with the *Narnia* books, it can be observed that Pullman’s perspective on gender favours feminism. In *His Dark Materials*, the heroine Lyra Belacqua is designed as the second Eve and the saviour of multiple universes. Her mentor, Mary Malone, was a nun. Mrs. Coulter, who is by turns both good and evil, plays a significant role by assassinating the regent of the Authority and ends the war. The tribe of Witches, an all-female ancient race, controls mythical power and prophesies. These female protagonists in Pullman’s novel are either well-educated (Dr. Malone, Mrs. Coulter) or gifted (Lyra’s ability to read the golden compass and her great providence, as well as the witches’ much longer lifespan). Nowadays the literary relationship between Tolkien, Lewis, and Pullman is a favourite topic for critics and researchers; not just because all of them successfully delivered messages to readers through fantasy trilogies, but also because the goal they served became a significant echo of contemporary culture.

However, merely using the words “time” and “insecularization” does not explicitly address how certain historical events can affect modern literary works. To

<sup>13</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* [1950] (New York: Collier, 1972), 741. See also Hatlen’s suggestion that Pullman sees this description of Susan and Lucy subordinating to male characters as evidence of Lewis’s anti-feminism (Hatlen, 82-84).

be more precise about what kind of “insecularization” Pullman is reacting against, research must give credit to the discourse of “New Atheism”. According to Arthur Bradley, this restoration of Caesaropapism is clearly shown in U.S. president George W. Bush’s administration.<sup>14</sup> Besides his dogmatic positions on the issues of creationism, abortion, stem-cell research and homosexual marriage, Bush’s Christian-based foreign policies can be seen as one of the direct causes of the two Persian Gulf Wars (1980-1988) and 9/11 Terrorists Attack (2001). Essentially, 9/11 is a typical manifestation of placing religious power above anything else. However, if we try to make an analogy between U.S. foreign policies and those of al-Qaeda, or more recently, with ISIS (Islamic State), it can be observed ironically that these ideologies share a fundamental belief in the virtue of religion. For both Christian George Bush, Islamic Osama bin Laden and the leaders of Islamic State, religion gives privileges that can be exercised over other people’s lives under a “holy providence”. Bradley describes U.S. motivations in his book in ways that I think are also appropriate to describe Islamic forces: “it is all too clear that Christian Fundamentalism’s malign influence over the American political and educational system provides the main impetus for their wholesale attack on ‘religion’ as such.<sup>15</sup>” I am not trying to argue that the mainly Christian U.S.A. or Islamic fundamentalism are responsible for a growing counter movement of insecularization, but this incident provides us with a perspective that is similar to Tolkien’s and Lewis’s reaction to World War II. Pullman in the same sense is using his power of storytelling to react to conventional secularization. I hereby simplify what I have to suggest by means of the following figure, in which I try to explain the action and reaction relationship between the time and the fantasy novelists, Tolkien, Lewis, and Pullman. Those relationships operate according to a pendulum-like model. Whenever the focus on action becomes too

---

<sup>14</sup> Bradley , “Introduction,” in Bradley and Tate, 4. It is noteworthy that in the chapter “Philip Pullman’s Republic of Heaven,” Tate also acknowledges that, based on the time sequence, Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* cannot be treated as a response to 9/11 events (Bradley and Tate, 56). However, this does not affect Pullman being a New Atheist since his counter-Christian heresy in *His Dark Materials* is obvious. “We might see *His Dark Materials* as a fictional rewriting of Nietzsche’s own genealogies of morality, belief and Christian ressentiment” (Tate, in Bradley and Tate, 57).

<sup>15</sup> Bradley “ Introduction,” in Bradley and Tate, 4.

extreme, there will be a reacting force to adjust, or to balance. Pullman, if anything, is one of these necessary reacting forces that fight against the insecuralization of the over-adjusted mainstream since World War II:

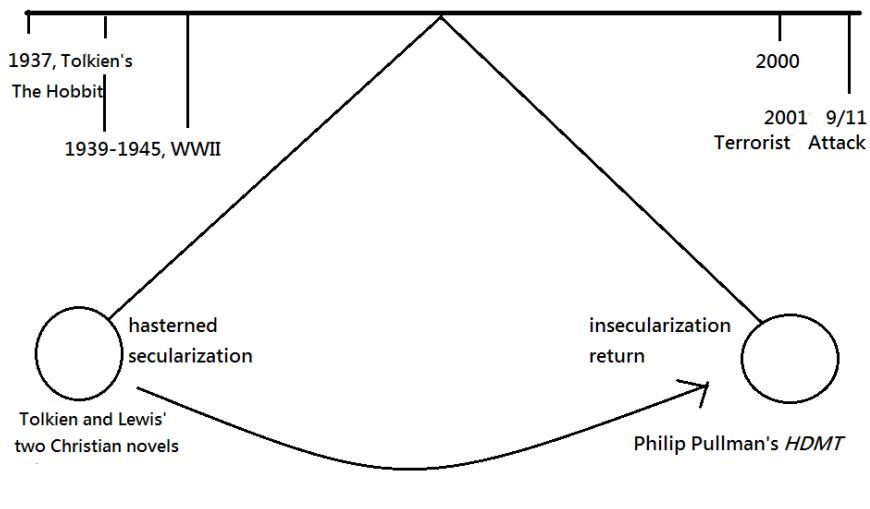


Figure 0-1

#### Terminology: the three motifs of His Dark Materials in the dissertation

My dissertation has three chapters. Each of the chapters concerns one of the three most important elements that comprise Pullman's fictional framework: World, Dust, and Daemon. I see these three components as having great significance for research into the meaning of *His Dark Materials* because they help Pullman to explain his author-oriented theology and in many circumstances to redefine biblical quotation in atheistic contexts. Unlike heterocosms such as Tolkien's Middle Earth or Lewis's world of Narnia, Pullman's fictional cosmology is hybridized with simulated reality along with the real timeline. Evidence can be found in Lyra's Oxford and London in which the majority of the historical and cultural landmarks are identical to those in our own work in their styles or symbolical allusion which sometimes even

confuse the protagonists. Systematically, Pullman's world setting of *His Dark Materials* has three layers: First, there is the primary dystopia, Lyra's world that is also the headquarters of the Magisterium. Then there are several secondary dystopias and a utopia in the form of the Mulefa world, also recognized as the representation of the Garden of Eden. Our world, which I often compare with Lyra's dystopia, is also an important realm that functionally makes Pullman's fantasy novel less fantastic (and hence more realistic). More details will be dwelt upon in my section dealing with the world of the trilogy. Indeed, the world settings in *His Dark Materials* are particularly worth mentioning when compared with other fantasy works. By comparing, we can say more about the uses of the fantasy genre. Critics including William Gray and Burton Hatlen contribute their valuable perspectives in comparing Pullman with other fantasy literature writers, mostly with Tolkien and Lewis, but also with George McDonald, who is commonly known as the literary father of Lewis<sup>16</sup>. Classification of the genre is hard but necessary because different genres provide authors with their unique privileges and limitations of storytelling and their target readers are also different. Structurally *His Dark Materials* is a typical High Fantasy trilogy as it contains the genre's commonplace framework of three distinct (although related) volumes, narratives that have an overall time-span of more than three years duration, and uses an organizational setting in an alternative cosmos. The trilogy has repeatedly been awarded prizes for Children's Literature in 1995, 2001, 2002, and 2004, yet interestingly, according to Pullman, the target readers are never children because *His Dark Materials* contains too many sensitive issues such as murder, poisonings, and eventually Lyra and Will's sexual behaviour under the age of consent. Existing researchers have very different ideas about the *His Dark Material*'s genre as well: Steven Barfield for example argued in two essays that even though the definition of the science fiction genre generally appears to distinguish strongly between romance and fantasy novels, *His Dark Materials* happens to be a hybrid of science and magical fiction, especially when the idea of Dust has been added. Barfield claims:

*His Dark Materials* also presents worlds where science and magic seem to be co-existing and, because of the peculiar consciousness of Dust which lies behind the thematic framework of the books, it is

---

<sup>16</sup> Gray, 119.

particularly hard to decide what might separate magic from science<sup>17</sup>.

Barfield's statement not only suggests the difficulty of classifying the genre of *His Dark Materials* but also brings up strong evidence that the second motif, Dust, has the greater correlation with the other motifs. The three motifs deeply influence and intersect with one another, forming a complicated network. My ultimate goal is to study the strength and weakness of each motif and how they support one another and are complementary.

## World

In the *OED*, “world” suggests a particular realm or space of “human existence on earth”<sup>18</sup> that can be understood alongside other spatial words such as universe or cosmos. One argument can be that the *OED*’s definition focuses on the spatial part of “world”, and that the factor of “time” is marginalized. Contemporary philosophers have increasingly shown skepticism about the word “world” as a signifier that implies a particular place: existentialist Martin Heidegger for example, argues in his *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, 1962) that this concept is only “accurately meaningful” to one

---

<sup>17</sup> Steven Barfield, “Dark Materials to Create More Worlds: Considering His Dark Materials as Science Fiction,” *Critical Perspectives on Philip Pullman’s His Dark Materials*, ed. Steven Barfield and Katharine Cox (London: McFarland & Company, 2011), 58. In order to explain his own categorization of genre, Barfield lists four facts in *His Dark Materials* that meet the requirement of its being a science fiction. They are: “[1]The creation of non-humanoid aliens with their own highly particularized and internally consistent society and ecology (such as the Mulefa), or [2] real world animals with re-imagined quasi-human characteristics; [3] the representation of scientists as heroes and as anti-heroes, and [4]the representation of scientific practices such as experimentation and the use of scientific theories” (Barfield, 58). See also Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction: the New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5.

<sup>18</sup> “world, n.”. OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/230262?rskey=difRuL&result=1> (accessed 31 July 2016).

individual whilst for another, the essence of the world or what they may prefer to call “worldhood” is different. In the third chapter of *Being and Time*, namely “The Worldhood of the World”, Heidegger discuss and identify the term worldhood as:

To give a phenomenological description of the “world” will mean to exhibit the Being of those entities which are present-at-hand within the world, and to fix it in concepts which are categorical.<sup>19</sup>

Pullman, to some extent, establishes Heidegger’s ontological world setting in his novel by juxtaposing historical events, some of them real, and some counterfactual. The majority of critics suggest that *His Dark Materials* is an anti-Christian novel and what Pullman wishes to make is an atheistic world. However, evidence shows that Pullman’s concern is actually much larger than the religious issue. The evidence is found in every single world of the novel. In *His Dark Materials*, the world is constructed by infinite parallel universes that are initially closed and independent. All the universes have very similar geographical and historical backgrounds, yet there is also some “branch point” that makes its cultural development distinguished from what we are familiar with. (For example, in Lyra’s world there is neither Enlightenment nor Protestant Reformation and the head of the church is John Calvin, who is known as a radical Protestant reformer of the sixteenth century). In my research, I demonstrate how this very complicated world setting is a large organic system. Pullman contrasts various dystopias, utopias, and our reality, to trigger the reader’s “metanoia.”<sup>20</sup> Metanoia is a way of self-reevaluation, with which people can thus converse with their experience inside their mind, and so understand the voice of new imported

---

<sup>19</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Worldhood of the World,” *Being and Time* [1927], trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 63.

<sup>20</sup> “metanoia, n.”. OED Online. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/117322?redirectedFrom=metanoia> (accessed December 12, 2016). According to the *OED*, the word metanoia does not only suggest the act or process of changing ones’ mind, it also indicates the spiritual conversation to oneself, similar to inner voice (yet they are still different in ways of functionality and origin). In my thesis I attempt to suggest that this type of inner voice can be produced by been stimulated in the act of reading stories of different, but similar multiverse in *His Dark Materials*.

objects or stories by recognizing differences, or further, make changes if the object is successfully accepted. An example of metanoia, which took place for many times in *His Dark Materials* would be: when many different versions of Biblical quotes were used by protagonists (Atal, Lord Asriel, or Pullman himself, quote Bible as epigraphs of some chapters) to explain the doctrine of original sin or to redefine evil, our existing experience of reading the Holy Bible would automatically lead us to discriminate Pullman's Garden of Eden from the original. Even though Pullman in the trilogy never explains the Fall from the first-person perspective, his messages, through creating metanoia, are successfully delivered. Our metanoia is concerned with a range of real issues that we face today and in *His Dark Materials* Pullman hastens this process by giving his readers an exaggerated fictional dystopia to contrast with other worlds that are either realistic or imaginary. These "realistic matters" are many, they are ecological, sociological, theological or even ideological, such as the Antarctic ozone hole, child abuse, sweatshops, deforestation or most obviously religious forms of brainwashing. Pullman uses these multiple universes as a tool through which he represents the problems in a dramatic way to reveal his concerns. In order to provide a "realistic platform" in an "imaginative context", Pullman creates a verisimilitudinous world, which is obviously a parody of our reality, overlapping with fictional elements. In the first chapter of my thesis, I find both useful and dangerous Linda Hutcheon's theory that parody is not necessarily ironical or cynical.<sup>21</sup> In *His Dark Materials*, parodied reality is usually playful and creative. It is quite true that parody should be ironical, yet it is also true that this definition cannot be reversed; an ironical text in many circumstances can be a satire, which is an entirely different genre from parody. A very well-known example of satire, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, has many similarities to the world setting of Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. Both the texts attempt to create dystopias that imitate a particular period of human

---

<sup>21</sup> Linda Hutcheon, "Defining Parody," *The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* ( New York: Methuen, 1984), 30-49. In this part of the book, Hutcheon suggests that even though in the *OED* the word root "para" usually means counter or against, it is not necessarily in opposition to or cynical about the original source text. It is "in its ironic 'trans-contextualization' and inversions [that there is] repetition with difference" (Hutcheon,32). Yet in my December 2014 supervisory board one member, Dr. Peter Hulme, suggested that satire can be very similar to parody in ways that Hutcheon has defined.

history in ironical tones<sup>22</sup>. If there is anything that can differentiate the two, Pullman's alternative universes inverse the historical facts in a “counterfactual style” whilst Swift's worlds mimic and make them strange. In other words, even though both of the works are parodies, Pullman's world setting relatively satisfies what Hutcheon's definition shows to be a characteristic of “inversion”. If we agree with Hutcheon's definition in *A Theory of Parody* that parodies are “works that actually manage to free themselves from the background text enough to create a new and autonomous form<sup>23</sup>” and that “Parody, then, in its ironic ‘trans-contextualization’ and inversion, is repetition with difference,<sup>24</sup>” then it follows that examining the relationship between the parody (fictional) and parodied events (reality) is a useful method to distinguish parody from satire. This issue too is associated with the genre and will be discussed in my first chapter.

### Pullman's organic, interactive worlds

In the first chapter, I also argue that Pullman's setting is an organic and self-conscious system. This system is maintained in a tuber-like form, with different worlds arranged like the tubers of a plant, connected and each drawing sustenance from the same outer cosmological environment. There are two primary worlds, namely reality and Lyra's world, with many other secondary worlds playing subordinate roles. Each world in *His Dark Materials* has its metaphorical significance as I have just mentioned, yet to link his worlds of Dust and of Daemon is the key to

<sup>22</sup> Nick Guenther, “Reason, Passion, Nature, Utopia, Dystopia in *Gulliver's Travels*” (Paper presented at the EGSA's second annual Spring Conference. Chicago, US, 15 April, 2011). Nick Guenther in this essay claims that “the Yahoos seem to represent the filth, greed, hatred and selfishness of human nature. These speechless humans exemplify human flaws in primitive ways.” Swift's utopian Houyhnhnms are a totally non-human society, yet this race somehow displays a relatively more civilized manner than the more human-like species.

<sup>23</sup> Hutcheon, “Defining Parody,” 35.

<sup>24</sup> Hutcheon, “Defining Parody,” 32.

understanding the text more deeply.

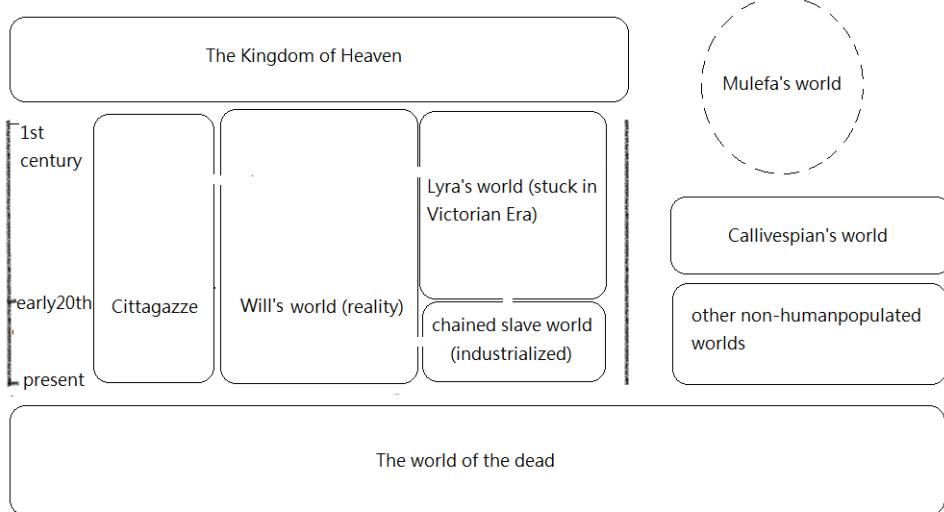


Figure 1. The tuber-form world design of HDMT

It can be clearly observed that in *His Dark Materials* the narrative is not fragmentary or unorganized. Its system functionally provides Pullman with convenient ways of presenting and readers with equivalently convenient means of understanding the novel. If Heidegger makes any sense in creating the word “worldhood”, in terms of *His Dark Materials* this so-called “world setting” is only meaningful for Pullman himself because, without the Affect Linking and Defamiliarization, Pullman’s heterocosm would become identical to Tolkien’s Middle Earth or Lewis’s world of Narnia - both of which are just other invented names for strange places. By parodying reality, the problems that Pullman wishes to show are successfully combined with his fantastical elements and then reproduced and represented to the readers. The existence of the “World” in this case is not regarded as just space or a container for all of these elements; rather, Pullman’s fictional worlds have been fused with them as a large interactive and interdependent whole. As I have mentioned, *His Dark Materials* shows his worries about the imperfections and troubles in our reality. The conflict between the environment and technology, for example, has repeatedly been associated and concretized; twice remarkably with Dust, the Antarctic ozone hole, and technology in *Northern Lights* and *The Amber Spyglass*. In the chapter titled “Betrayal”, Lord Asriel invents a machine to cut a daemon from its human, which will produce a burst of energy sufficiently powerful to tear open the sky and create a tunnel-like hole that can transport material between two

parallel worlds. For the worlds, this tunnel is a wound. Pullman describes the scene as follows, beautifully yet metaphorically, in terms of how these living worlds are bleeding. Every particle of Dust is a living and conscious being that has been killed by human technology.

There was no floor; the sides sloped vertiginously down towards the edge of a great pit hundreds of feet below, and darker than darkness itself and into the pit streamed the endless Dust-full, pouring ceaselessly down. Its billions of particles were like the stars of every galaxy in the sky, and every one of them was a little fragment of conscious thought. It was a melancholy light to see by<sup>25</sup>.

It is reasonably inferred from the location (the North Pole), behaviour (tearing open the sky with technology) and impact (the billions of conscious beings that die) that Pullman is being ironical about the Antarctic ozone hole and, through the narrative, expresses how technologies can harm the planet. He calls this tunnel “the bridges to the stars”. The irony again reveals how human ambition and arrogance can severely damage nature. Similar images repeatedly occur throughout the novels, especially in *The Amber Spyglass* where the Magisterium Church launches a nuclear tracking bomb in order to kill Lyra and Will before the “Second Fall,” without considering any other impact that may follow in consequence: The bomb results in a great pit and more Dust flows from the worlds; yet ironically this pit also becomes the Magisterium's God's - namely Metatron's - graveyard. Indirectly, the pit brings more phantoms from the World of the Dead. Trees in the Mulefa world die due to the significant loss of Dust, emphasizing the essential connectedness of human and other life forms. Pullman's trilogy is concerned with the damage that humans cause to the ecological systems within which they live. In ecocritical terminology, his fiction renders inseparable the issues of biospheric ethics and environmental justice. I argue that although the two “technological hazards” happen in different books of the trilogy and seem independent and unrelated, yet these two distinct moments of plotting evidently address two significances in Pullman's world setting:

- A) Even though Pullman's thematic concerns are well-spread among various

---

<sup>25</sup> Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass* (London: Scholastic, 2000), 918.

aspects of his narrative and become multivalent, they are all subordinate to an umbrella concept that is, according to Robert C. Fuller, the churched dystopia, and unchurched utopia<sup>26</sup>.

B) The “living worlds” not only realize the author's thematic concerns externally but they also functionally reveal a more systematic “internal relationship” within the work. In other words, every world in the novel is independent in time and space, yet they, at the meantime, are interdependent; whatever happens in one world will indeed affect another. Given this unique world setting, we can preliminarily assume that Pullman's *His Dark Materials* is strongly different from Tolkien's and Lewis's “heterocosm.”

To sum up, in the first chapter I provide a detailed study of three aspects of Pullman's world setting in *His Dark Materials*. I start with an analysis of the functions of each world. In that section, I decode and map his fictional worlds into a systematic tuber-like form (including their time, space in different hierarchical layers, and thematic concerns). Secondly, I address how these worlds coincide or else contradict one another in logic. This step is crucial to understand the strength and weakness of the setting. The third aspect that I observe is how Pullman's world setting is helpful in developing the other two key elements in the novel, namely Dust and Daemon.

### Dust

As the most popular motif for researchers, Dust has usually been addressed as the most important thematic core of the trilogy. Literarily, Dust responds to Milton's

---

<sup>26</sup> Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* ( New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Fuller states that after the twentieth century more Americans are identifying themselves as “spiritual, but not religious” whilst these words for earlier, less secure centuries are interchangeable (Fuller, 5). This climate is similar to what Bradley observed in Post 9/11 cultures. It is explained by Fuller from a rather psychological point of view. He argues that spirituality can be demonstrated through imagination and by psychological manifestations rather than religious observance. He calls such psychological spirituality “hidden self” (Fuller, 124). This idea echoes Pullman's cosmology, which suggests an atheistic but spiritual utopia.

line “His dark materials to create more worlds<sup>27</sup>” in Book two of *Paradise Lost*, in which “his dark materials” echoes the title of the trilogy. Even though there are already numerous researchers concerned with the relationship between *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost*, there is still a need to mention this quote not only because it is the origin of the novel’s title, but also to some extent because the creation of Dust suggests a possible non-religious cosmos, in which there are no Christian versions of Genesis and of the Garden of Eden. This cosmology and the metanoia behind it reveal what Pullman means about “ambition” and the “big thing,” mentioned earlier in this Introduction. My study aims to deal with Dust’s functional (physical) and symbolic (metaphysical) presentation, as the literary engine of *His Dark Materials*. Functionally, Dust is an invented fantasy to replace the Christian God. It plays a significant role in explaining Pullman’s atheistic worldview in the novels, in which there are overlapping universes constructed under the principles of probability and chance. However, because of this special significance, Dust is excessively deployed by Pullman in many circumstances of the novel and this excess reveals ambiguity or even absurdity for many critics or religious defenders. The study of the physical existence of Dust can show how this author-oriented element is uncertain and unstable. It can be understood as the foundation of everything, yet this “basics of everything” is at the same time hierarchically supreme above everything else due to its intellectual complexities. Compared to its physicality, Dust’s metaphysical presentation is more obvious and easier for readers, especially in terms of the way it is usually parodied, the biblical reference to dust being redefined by Pullman. Many critics question whether this co-existence of physical and metaphysical aspects of Dust is rational. For example, whilst Anne-Marie Bird calls Dust “the logos of ‘Total Being’<sup>28</sup>” in her essay “Dust as an Alternative Theological Vision”, she also questions whether Pullman has underperformed his invention without recognizing that Dust has been overloaded with too many fantasies or theological elements that expose its logical deficiency and even become an absurdity. Katharine Cox, in a more optimistic approach, sees Dust as a “superhero-like element” that solely explains and combines

<sup>27</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost* [1667], ed. John Leonard (London: Penguin Books, 2000), II. 912-913.

<sup>28</sup> Anne-Marie Bird, “Circumventing the Grand Narrative: Dust as an Alternative Theological Vision in Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*,” in Lenz (ed.) 189.

Pullman's anti-Christian agenda, political argument, scientific curiosity and even ecological vision. For her, this cross-disciplinary element very well demonstrates Pullman's manifestation of "physical Pantheism<sup>29</sup>", which is a kind of godly beautifulness, as in Wordsworth's ecological writing.

My second chapter has three sections that ultimately aim to discover the material functional and literary meaning of *His Dark Materials*. The first section provides the background and literature reviews that begin with the etymology of the word dust. For although Dust is an invented element that cannot be understood by its common meanings, there is also evidence that Pullman purposefully manipulates this word rather than create a new term such as mulefa or Gallivespian. In other words, this "original etymological interference" is intentionally created for two main purposes. The first concerns the reconstruction and fusion of multiple worlds. As a writer, Pullman wishes to establish a frame of contemporary values that readers are familiar with. This will benefit both the author and the readers when the author needs to destroy and reconstruct the worlds in his fictional narratives, and the readers want to elicit the metanoia within (making the frame and establishing frame-breaking). Therefore, having detailed analyses of Dust at the beginning of the chapter is useful for me to make the connection between fictional and realistic dust. Secondly, the collective images of smallness and lightness of Dust help Pullman to describe how Dust exists as an atomic or powder-like entity that is guaranteed to be smaller than anything it forms. These readings are also associated with the reader's general understanding of dust as a common noun.

Etymologically, the word dust is an old word with complicated theological and historical backgrounds. With the development of Christianity and in the twentieth century, it is endowed with new meanings due to the improvements in technology and science. As a common noun, the definitions in the *OED* are prone to suggest a collective image of something "small, less important and cheap in the sense of presence,<sup>30</sup>" which altogether underestimates the value of it. Furthermore, in the

---

<sup>29</sup> Katharine Cox, "Imagine Dust with a Capital Letter: Interpreting the Social and Cultural Context for Philip Pullman's Transformation of Dust," in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 139.

<sup>30</sup> "dust, n.1". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/58683?rskey=ukQ5Gt&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed 30 July 2016).

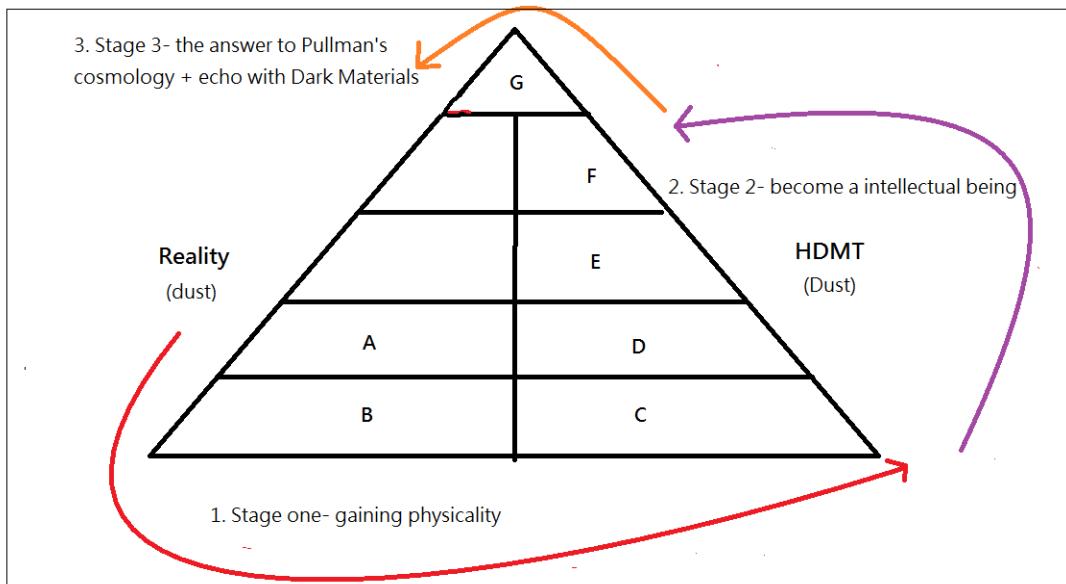
chapter I give examples of many images of Dust in contemporary literature that treats it from different viewpoints. In Karen Duve's *Taxi* (2008) for example, dust is understood as physical evidence that records the relationship between the various passengers and the city of Hamburg. In this case, the silent dust becomes emotional and represents a collective memory of time and space. However, in Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2010), dust becomes a deadly threat to humans as it has been made a "gene ripper" and killed crops for economic and political purposes. In Bacigalupi's novel, dust is presented in terms of its common image, yet fused with medical and scientific extra value endowed by the author. These are examples of how dust has been used differently from its old, theological origin in Genesis, where "dust shall you eat all the days of your life<sup>31</sup>" is God's condemnation and punishment of the Serpent. This issue became even more striking when in 2014 the British theoretical physicist Peter Ware Higgs was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for discovering the Higgs Boson, also called "the God particle," which is proven to be the cause of the universe gaining material form. To some degree, this finding shows Pullman's *His Dark Materials* as more foresighted and realistic, for his Dust is functionally and phenomenally the same as the Higgs Boson in that both suggest an atheistic cosmology in which the existence of things is physically rather than theologically determined. Pullman's Dust becomes an echo responding to the Higgs Boson in a more romantic and imaginative way in contemporary literature. As a result, whether it is called Dust, Higgs Boson, Shadow, or God's particle, this word can no longer be viewed as a magical trick of the 1016 pages of a fantasy fiction.

While Dust/dust, as both an old and new element, helps Pullmans to "create more worlds", its multiple meanings also confuse readers and critics who wish to understand it further. This confusion, as far as I have observed, is partially caused by the author's intentional uses of defamiliarization. More important is the fact that a majority of readers attempt to identify dust as a complete, fixed, and immutable entity. Their doing so is proven problematic in the second part of the chapter.

### The Transformational Model of Dust

---

<sup>31</sup> Genesis 3:14 KJV.



In relation to the second part of chapter two, I have drawn the model above to demonstrate that the existence of Dust is actually a process of becoming rather than a status of being. The whole process includes three phases that respectively exhibit the different presence of dust as a common noun in reality (phase one), physical evidence of original sin in the novel (phase two), and a conscious, intellectual being that affects uncountable billions and metaphysically symbolises everything associated with happiness and love, in both reality and in the fictional worlds of the novel (phase three). Along with transformation, Dust's extra values are added gradually. The common noun dust is changed into a capitalized Dust. Interestingly, when the protagonists in *His Dark Materials* wish to explain what Dust is actually about, they usually use biblical quotation that again links dust and Dust even closer. To some extent, even though Dust is Pullman's tool to create an atheistic "worldhood" in the Heideggerian sense, he never really attempts to cut the connection between Dust and biblical hermeneutics. A good example is when Lord Asriel tries to explain the evil of Dust from the Magisterium's point of view. He quotes the Bible as follows,

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto  
the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto  
dust shalt thou return.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Genesis 3:19 KJV.

This is not the only example of quoting the Holy Bible in the novel or the trilogy. There are still many paraphrased biblical dialogs that Pullman uses against Christianity, mostly from Genesis, some from William Blake's or T. S. Eliot's poems, all associated with original sin. As I have repeatedly mentioned, to purify original sin is the ultimate goal of Pullman's writing of this trilogy: Dust, which eventually becomes the “all-around intellectual<sup>33</sup>,” is the most important key to the rewriting of Genesis and thereby resetting Pullman's ideal theological vision. Section one therefore looks at the relationship between dust (small letter d) and Christian culture. In this stage, dust is not different from what we are familiar with in the *OED*. As well as materially comprising small and visible particles, it is “decided” upon as the “physical evidence” of original sin.

That left them with the problem of deciding what it was. And given the Church's nature, there was only one thing they could have chosen. The Magisterium decided that Dust was the physical evidence for original sin<sup>34</sup>.

The verb “decides” somehow shows that the definition of words is actually controlled by the power of human will rather than God or any other metaphysical divinities. This not only reveals Pullman's viewpoint of how Christian doctrine is “roughly man-made,” it also leaves him to “redefine” and “rediscover” what Dust really is. In this phase, the physicality of Dust has been determined and in the meantime, it needs to be separated from its family-of-origin as a newborn element. Three important things are confirmed here: (a) Dust is material and touchable, it can be examined by scientific methods and can be weighed when intensively concentrated in the form of “daemon.” It can be easily attracted by certain things (i.e. by innocent children and by behaviour associated with love and the passion of adolescence); (b) without considering its theological providence, Dust's physicality is very similar to the definition of dust in the *OED*. As an elementary particle, which in plural form one “can't break ... down any further<sup>35</sup>”, dust is imported by Pullman as the material foundation of everything.

<sup>33</sup> Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife* (London: Scholastic, 1997), 401.

<sup>34</sup> Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights* (London: Scholastic, 1995), 304.

<sup>35</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 303.

In other words, with the help of physical Dust in phase one, the author's "atomic", "atheistic" world setting that is manipulated to replace the Christian version of Genesis can be thus introduced to *His Dark Materials*; (c) In this phase Dust is still a dead entity that is passive and speechless. For a human, Dust is subordinating to living beings as a tool. This can be observed by the passive tenses that are frequently used in this stage. This "master-slave relationship" is the most characteristic point compared to the other two phases. Dust in this phase is still too close to the image of dust that is not powerful enough to underpin Pullman's atheistic worldhood.

In the second phase, Dust actively reverses the master-slave relationship and becomes an entirely different being from the first. The turning point is in its first "online conversation" with Dr. Mary Malone, through a computing device called "Cave." In the conversation, Dust firstly shows its autonomy by telling humans that they are uncountable billions and are the cause of everything, including themselves. It can be clearly observed that Mary Malone in this context becomes passive and relatively weaker. In order to have a physical presence, Dust must have a communicative, physical existence so that the messages can be delivered. Dust in the second phase manipulates the images of "angels" as their "physical vehicle" so that they can do so. "Angels" in the novel are functionally significant because it can be observed that Pullman repeatedly uses "angels" to demonstrate his own cosmology in *His Dark Materials*. Without this vehicle, Dust can only maintain itself as a dead entity. Yet similar to the problem of the word dust, the angel is, even more, Christian-rooted, and this enlarges the risk of using it to display an atheistic worldview. An etymological study of the word angel provides useful information that perfectly explains that all the important messages in *His Dark Materials* are from angels, including the cause of the universe that briefly summarizes Pullman's world settings by rejecting the Christian God as the creator, indeed addresses him as a liar. The following is a message of Balthamos, who is a lower angel "banished by the Authority". He claims,

The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty, those were all names he gave himself. He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves - the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are,

and the Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself, and Dust is formed. The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was the first of all. He told those who came after him that he created them, but it was a lie<sup>36</sup>.

This quote is the thematic core of the second phase and is also the most powerful statement confirming Dust's autonomy by replacing the Authority and all the titles he was endowed with by the Holy Bible. Within such a narrative vehicle, Dust is no longer restricted by its original frame (dust) and becomes an independent species (uncountable billions of angels) that are supreme to every living being because they have created them. Dust in this phase is both physical and metaphysical as it suddenly undertakes considerable responsibilities and becomes over-aggressive and active. The enchantment not only exhausts Dust's limitation too quickly from being an atom-like particle but also exaggerates its functions into an absurd level and causes readers' disbelief. This Dust (of phase two) is what has been most criticized by critics and religious defenders, while it explains Pullman's atheistic vision in a violent manner, in which he can be accounted to accuse the Christian God of telling a big lie. However, what I wish to argue is that the Dust of this phase is still in development, and has not yet become as "ripe" with meaning as Pullman initially predicted. More accurately, an absolute cause of everything cannot differentiate Dust from Christian God than becoming Him; controversially, this kind of creator is what Pullman was always against most: an unarguable, even tyrannical absolutism.

In the third section, which is the ultimate stage of the model, I suggest a more interdependent relationship between Dust and the human as a complementary for stage two. It can be noted that Dust in this phase is an organic living being that needs human help to reproduce. It can be "killed quickly" if the worlds it forms are damaged by technology: in the novel, Lord Asriel and the Magisterium respectively "tear open" the sky with technical equipment and destructive weaponry, which both result in severe losses of Dust as it vanishes from every world in the universes. And in the Mulefa world, Dust supports the living of the seedpods whilst the trees produce the oil which is the liquid state of Dust; if any of each is harmed, both of them will be damaged and die. This mutual relationship somehow decreases the deification of

---

<sup>36</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 622.

Pullman's creationism in phase two. The most distinctive figure can be observed through the interaction between Dust and its host (i.e. human and daemon; Dust and the seedpod trees). The evidence clearly shows that Dust in this phase is very different from the previous two; it is not a profound knowledge of scholars, nor a mythical term in the Holy Bible. Alternatively itself and human, a close mutualism emerges in which neither can live without each other. Unlike viewing Dust as the new creator of the worlds, critics have different viewpoints on this reciprocal relationship: Cox, for example, addresses this 'feedback system' as Pullman's ecological vision and an important turning point in the novel.

Dust is transformed from a dry, arid and negative substance into a fertile and life-affirming concept. In doing so, Pullman is partially mimicking the natural role of dust in our environment. By drawing attention to the life of dust, Pullman supports the idea of a cycle of life which he terms an ecological "feedback system" (*His Dark Materials*, 879).<sup>37</sup>

With the help of this model, I have tried to sketch a complete process of the transformation of Pullman's Dust rather than treating it as a simple substance, which most critics do<sup>38</sup>. It can be noted that within each phase, Dust undertakes different responsibilities and in the meantime its presence is seen as strange in the familiar. What I mean by the familiar is the physicality and conventional definition of dust as a common noun. Pullman's approach is clear, yet it is arguable whether this romantic

---

<sup>37</sup> Cox, in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 137.

<sup>38</sup> Critics such as Katharine Cox, Rebekah Fitzsimmons, and William Gray provide sophisticated overviews that are concerned with Pullman's perspectives onto religions (Gray), ecology (Fitzsimmons) and even social functions (Cox). There are some claims such as that "Pullman's invention of Dust is a manipulation of prior literary sources, cultural and social meanings and also galvanizes theological and scientific concepts into a comprehensive whole (Cox, 127)"; or "In Pullman's universe, Dust is the reconciliation of matter and spirit, pre-packaged, already a material substance. (Fitzsimmons, 220)." Yet all of these critics treat Dust as a complete entity rather than, as I do, a process developing in time and transformed throughout the trilogy by reason of traditional, conventional and author-oriented elements.

element can simultaneously underpin such a complicated narrative system and stem it from being absurd. Stating the motif of Dust in the second chapter of my research is a strategic arrangement; with which I plan to connect Pullman's cosmology and Dust's functional presences, and furthermore carry on the theme of Daemon, which is often treated as the outcome of Dust that explains Pullman's aspect of soul and psyche.

### Daemon

My third chapter investigates the invention Daemon, which in the trilogy not only functionally takes the role of activating the fantasticality of *His Dark Materials* but also thematically becomes the media of explaining the aspects of soul and spirit in the atheistic context. Additionally, in this chapter, I argue that on the social level Daemon is manipulated by Pullman as a border-making standard in dividing hierarchy layers and value exchanges. With examples of different daemons and creatures without daemons, I will provide a detailed study of how daemon can be so influential to *His Dark Materials*.

The study will take different angles, examining daemon from perspectives of philosophy (Aristotle's notion of form and matter), theology (the intertextuality between *His Dark Materials* and other texts), sociology (the master-slave relationship between human and daemon, which leaves us with an unchanged social hierarchy.) and even psychology (the settlement of daemon and depression of losing control of one's fate).

The existence of daemon has two different significances. On the literary level (genre) it helps Pullman to fulfil the status of *His Dark Materials* as fantasy literature. This imaginary manifestation of the human soul, as well as a trigger of his anti-Christian agenda, clearly addresses Lyra's world and shows it as different from other worlds. Furthermore, the existence of daemon in Lyra's world is never a coincidence. In the dystopia that overwhelms Christianity, the Magisterium, which governs the whole world, daemon is treated as the physical evidence of original sin. Agents of the Magisterium therefore legally kidnap, imprison, and even murder children in order to research and remove their daemon from them before settlement. By exaggerating the power and extreme behaviours that the Magisterium has applied in Lyra's world,

Pullman provides a tyrannical dystopia to contrast with other worlds. Therefore, for Pullman as a writer who fights against any forms of absolutism, daemon's role is crucial.

In the novels, daemon's role is even more important. As the outside and physical manifestation of human souls in animal forms, daemon undertakes the responsibility of explaining Pullman's perspective on souls in an atheistic context. This job is never easy because the concept of the soul is already deeply religious. In order to do this, I will examine the intertextuality between Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Holy Bible and show how the Christian, theological version of cosmology can be different from Pullman's atomistic and mathematical one. Besides the religious parts, daemon also practically presents Pullman's social hierarchical layers in the novel due to a special activity, namely the settlement. In the settlement daemons will change their form for the last time and will never have a chance to alter again. By observing the different psychological responses to settlement respectively from both parts, I further argue that both humans and daemons are exchanging their autonomy and become mutual slaves to each other in personal and interpersonal contexts.

This chapter has two parts. In the first part, I provide a detailed etymological study of the word daemon, which has a very ancient historical and literary background. After being translated into modern English it is often confused with the word "demon". It can be evidently claimed that this literary confusion is intentionally made by Pullman with a purpose to overturn the stereotype of word games such as darkness, shadow, and dust. Interestingly, the cultural part of this word has not yet (as of February 2016) been enclosed in the *OED* archive. However, I also found that Pullman is not the first person that uses the word daemon ambiguously. After reading the Chinese version of *His Dark Materials*, I believe this confusion has been exported into another cultural background in which both daemon and demon exist and have respectively clear signification. Through the act of translating, the concept of daemon in *His Dark Materials* becomes even more complicated in the target langue context so that for Chinese readers, this imported signifier "daemon" cannot easily replace the already existed signified “靈” (*ling*, which is the translated version of daemon in Chinese) particularly when in both source and target languages the daemon has long existed and signified different things. The problem is: can we thus far treat this process as a mistranslation? If we can, can we then assume that the word demon is

also an outcome of mistranslation and demonization of the word daemon based on a religious purpose, just like how the word demon has been mistranslated from Greek? And in term of this, can we thus treat what Pullman has done for daemon as a rehabilitation of the term in the face of Christianity?

In order to answer these questions, I make a comparative analysis of the term daemon in *His Dark Materials* and *The Journey to the West*, which is one of the classical fantasy novels from the Ming Dynasty. The reason I choose this novel is because it shares several important similarities with *His Dark Materials*: first, they are both fantasy literature in prose. Second, they both serve a religious purpose. Third, and most important, in both works there are daemons and demons even though these words in the two novels signify different objects. The etymological study of the word daemon is important to my research because it explains why both the mulefa and Daemon are invented terms and exclusive to the *His Dark Material* trilogy, but also why only the mulefa is given an invented name. Using an already controversial term shows that daemon may bear more responsibilities. These responsibilities and the problems they entail will be the main theme for the next two parts.

In the second part of this chapter daemon's animacy and animality are examined. According to the *OED*, animacy is the quality or condition of being alive or animate while animality, on the other hand, means a) the state of fact of being an animal; animal nature of life. Or b) the qualities and characteristics of an animal as opposed to distinctively human qualities.<sup>39</sup> In my search, I consider these two figures as two important criteria to examine whether daemon, as Arthur Markman notes, is nothing more than a “ghost-in-the-machine.” In his essay ““Science, Technology and the Danger of Daemons,”” Markman notes:

If your goal is to explain how thinking works, then resorting to a ghost-in-the- machine like this does not solve any problems, because eventually you would need a theory of the psychology of the homunculus...When people in Lyra’s world are separated from their daemon, they act as though there is no longer anyone viewing their

---

<sup>39</sup> "animacy, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/248721?redirectedFrom=animacy> (accessed 27 July 2016).

Cartesian Theatre. Of course, this begs the question of who Pantalaimon's homunculus is<sup>40</sup>.

Markman brings up an important issue about the creation of daemon: what is the soul and how does it work? Obviously, Markman takes a psychoanalyzing approach to examine Lyra's daemon and argues that it is evidently clear that even Pantalaimon has its own Cartesian Theatre. His argument is simple: if Cartesian Theatre is what we define as soul, psyche, or inner voice, Pullman might immediately face a dilemma of explaining whether a human can have more than one soul and whether these multiple souls may conflict in traditional and religious understanding of the soul. Even though in Markman's essay this question is left unanswered, I found it crucial to think about what soul is to both the Christian religion as well as to Pullman as the author of *His Dark Materials*, not from the psychological point of view, but based on already existing literary or cultural proofs. Starting from Aristotle's *De Anima*, *Metaphysics*, and his matter-form theory in *Physics*, it is observed that long before the emergence of Christianity philosophers had already noticed the relationship between body and soul, even though the word "soul" was not as complicated and clearly defined as nowadays. Aristotle's matter-form theory provides us a valuable perspective not on what the soul is because in this stage every entity has its own form. Aristotle, from an ontological perspective, notes that form is the determined structure that endows things with their essential characteristics, physical attributes, and even psychic features. This theory was later developed by Thomas Aquinas as the foundation of the notion of the soul, and if this theory is confirmed, Pantalaimon can have its own soul, too. However, the daemon is already the outward manifestation of the human soul. How can a soul have another soul? In term of this, Pullman's Daemon is proven to violate the uniqueness of the soul. This problem becomes more complex when it is discussed with the settlement. By examining animacy and animality of the daemon, it is found that daemon is placed in an awkward position; it is not a living being, nor an entity. It doesn't have a fixed form before the settlement, but it can be weighted and measured by the ordinary methods. It has an independent thought, but it is bodily connected to a

---

<sup>40</sup> Arthur B. Markman, "Science, Technology and the Danger of Daemons," *Navigating The Golden Compass: Religion, Science & Daemonology in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*, ed. Glenn Yeffeth (Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005), 62.

human. When its human dies, it vanishes. Daemon in this relationship is relatively vulnerable and restricted; its thoughts are never necessary because its shifting ability is designed to reflect its human attributes. Being an animal companion to the human world is not a choice, but an obligation. In the basic setting, the relationship between human and daemon is more close to that of master and slave.

However, this master-slave relation is overturned when we observe it in society. With more people and more daemons, the situation becomes uncontrolled by any human as an individual unit of the whole society. Daemons here are symbolic and even determine their human's social and hierarchical status. And also due to the settlement, these statuses become fixed and irreversible. An example is at the beginning of the first chapter of *Northern Lights*, when Stuart, the housekeeper of Jordan College first appears:

He was a servant, so she was a dog; but a superior servant, so a superior dog. In fact she had the form of a red setter. The dæmon seemed suspicious, and cast around as if she'd sensed an intruder, but didn't make for the wardrobe, to Lyra's intense relief.<sup>41</sup>

Simply using a cause and effect sentence clearly addresses Stuart's social hierarchical status will always be a servant and it can also observe that even in servants there is another hierarchical layer in which whoever's daemon is cheaper will never be promoted above the superior ones. It can be seen that in a social class ranking system even the same species of settled animals can have different hierarchical ranking. This ranking determines social status. For example, people with a red setter daemon like Stuart become a housekeeper, and those with beagle daemons can't and never will be because their daemons have settled. Daemon, which combines with conventional social values, has overwhelmingly taken the absolute dominance while the human in this social context can only passively accept the ranking. In this sense, it can further be argued that because of daemon and the setting of the settlement, societies in *His Dark Materials*, especially in Lyra's world, are more feudal and lacking in social class mobilization. In the novel, there are also many other examples to show daemon's influence in personal, interpersonal or social levels and these are included in this

---

<sup>41</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 12.

section of the chapter.

The official significance of the daemon in *His Dark Materials* is the soul.

Because the materiality of daemon is very pure and concentrated Dust, which is the most important element not just in Lyra's world, but in all the universes in Pullman's cosmology without a first creator, daemon's role becomes more significant than that of a mere animal-like companion to children. If the worlds provide Pullman a platform, and Dust is the material Pullman can use, then the daemon is the ultimate exhibition of his writing and creativity.

In my thesis, I try to sketch firstly the environment and the literary context that Pullman as a writer has provided in the first chapter, with an attempt to understand why and how his cosmology can be different from other fantasy works. The work rewrites another, namely Milton's *Paradise Lost*. More than I originally expected, in the process of my research I found that Pullman does not just rewrite, but parodies some important part of the original text. In his novel he creates a laboratory-like space in which he compare and contrasts and sometimes even integrates worlds in order to reveal some important messages (metanoia) that he wishes to deliver to his target audience.

The second chapter is concerned with Dust, which has different names such as shadow, dark matter or oil. It is the elementary particle that forms everything in Pullman's fictional world. While Dust has been treated as the thematic core of Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, many have criticised Dust's omnipotence on the basis that it has been installed with too many functions while at the same time it is also the most fundamental unit of all. Critics such as Anne Bird and Catherine Cox both argue that this powerful, overwhelming, omnipotent element has gone beyond Pullman's control. In Bird's essay, the word "monster" is used to describe how Dust gets out of control in the novel. I argue that Dust should not be interpreted as an entity, but as a developing process from a common noun into an intellectual being. Ultimately it becomes billion of angels and the origin and destination of everything. Therefore, in order to have a clear understanding of Dust, we should "zoom out" from seeing it as a thing, and start to look at the whole process of development; it can be quite surprising that Dust, like everything it forms, is organically growing.

As the underpinning literary fantasia of the trilogy, Daemon, equally important to Dust, is the main theme of the third chapter of my thesis. I demonstrate as far as

possible daemon's figures and functions, as well as the problems that this core of fantasia in the novel may face. By analyzing daemon's animality and animacy, I can further support Markman's idea that Daemon is essentially a ghost-in-the-machine and cannot solve any problems. As an animal-like being, Daemon cannot exhibit any biological characteristics of animals because lacking experience of the animal into which it has changed. In many circumstances it doesn't use its organs correctly, because as a daemon rather than the actual creature as it has not been biologically designed along the creature's physical, evolutionary pathway. Daemon doesn't have its own form, and what it presents to humans is always the imitated images of other creatures. However, being ghost-in-the-machine-like doesn't mean it is not important. On the contrary, daemon in *His Dark Materials* has crucial significance in many areas; it not only explains Pullman's conception of the soul. By labelling each character with the stereotype images of certain animals, and more importantly, with daemon and cutting, Pullman can thus successfully demonstrate in *His Dark Material* how an absolutely theocratic world can be harmful.

Even though Daemon is crucial to *His Dark Materials*, it also brings problems that may violate Pullman's main principles, some of which are social, and some theological. In chapter I give examples of what constitutes a New Atheist Novel, which should be essentially anti-religious. Pullman's trilogy has repeated and even broadcasted the human centrism that has been long rooted in the Holy Bible. Furthermore, the nature of a daemons' settlement also restricts the possibilities of social class mobility because even the social hierarchy and personal career planning are determined and reflected by the settled form of the daemon. The limitation is not merely individual or class-related, since stereotypical images of different cultures can liken entire peoples to certain species of animal. I provide an example from a semi-autobiographical novel, namely *Wolf Totem*<sup>42</sup>, in which the author Jian Rong, very similar to what Pullman in *His Dark Materials*, symbolizes the wolf as a national symbol of the Tartar people. This novel has been translated into English by Howard Goldblatt in 2008 and published by Penguin. It has faced much critical judgment, mostly from Tartar writers who assert that wolves are enemies to Tartars and that for thousands of years this wild animal has never been marked as a symbol of them. More recently, On 20 January 2016, the Inner Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences, the

---

<sup>42</sup> Rong Jiang, *Wolf Totem* [2004], trans. Howard Goldblatt (London: Penguin, 2008).

leading academic and research institution in Inner Mongolia, confirmed that the wolf totem does not exist in ethnic Mongolian belief. The false connection between wolves and Tartars which also takes place in *His Dark Materials* not only shows problems of the settlement, it also indicates that Pullmans' cosmology may face criticism similar to that which Jian Rong's novel has attracted in the future.

In concluding my study of *His Dark Materials* trilogy in terms of World, Dust and Daemon, I agree with Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate's definition of Pullman's discourse of "New Atheism." Indeed, Pullman's work exhibits the very characteristics of a "return of the religious in the supposedly secular West<sup>43</sup>" of which Bradley writes. To some extent, Pullman has done a perfect job of reflecting his theological worries by parodying and rewriting a classic, namely *Paradise Lost*, and composing it with science, fantasia, and realism. Pullman's multiverse is a huge system, and there are still spaces to fill in. As one of the authors listed in the canon of the New Atheist Novel, his struggle between atheistic ideology and a deeply rooted Christian background provides *His Dark Materials* with a compelling philosophical and intellectual framework that following chapters will explore.

---

<sup>43</sup> Bradley, "Introduction," in Bradley and Tate, 3.

## Chapter One: World

### **1.0.1 Unpacking the word “world” and its meaning in *His Dark Materials Trilogy.***

In *His Dark Materials*, Pullman took the phrase “ His dark materials to create more worlds,”<sup>44</sup> from Book II of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* as the narrative point of departure and the structural base of his trilogy. “His dark materials” later becomes the title of the trilogy. As the author of *His Dark Materials*, Pullman proclaims that the three novels are his version of *Paradise Lost*, written for teenagers. An interesting point of similarity between Milton’s poem and Pullman’s twenty-first century reworking of the story can be seen in the relationship between “dark materials” (Milton) and “worlds” (Pullman). In both works imagery of darkness, emptiness and chaos is repeatedly used. In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, chaos is not necessarily evil. It can be like a “womb” that creates multiple colors from the bottomless darkness. These images of darkness are manifested to describe how the world is created out of a chaotic abyss through God’s almighty power. As the original text in *Paradise Lost* puts it:

Into this wild abyss,  
 The wombs of Nature and perhaps her grave,  
 Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,  
 Bore all these in their pregnant causes mixed  
 Confus’dly, and which thus must ever fight,  
 Unless th’ 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; for no narrow frith  
 He had to cross.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 912-913.

<sup>45</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 910-920.

Through these lines, Milton provides a skeptical perspective on distinguishing good from evil. Pullman is evidently influenced by this. It is clear that in his rewriting of *Paradise Lost*, the cosmology of *His Dark Materials* is also designed from the dark emptiness of a cosmos. Yet it can also be observed that the absence of the first creator in Pullman's cosmology makes his text unique from not only Milton's original version of *Paradise Lost*, but from all works associated with the story of Genesis from the Bible, the Fall of Man, and Original Sin. Instead of invoking the first creator, Pullman's fictional cosmology is more scientific; it is mathematically and arbitrarily formed with the aid of an intellectualised atom, Dust. This is something innovative to Pullman's literary creation in *His Dark Materials*. However, the setting and invention of Dust do not distract Pullman from some close imitation of *Paradise Lost*. In the original text by Milton images of dust, shadow and darkness are frequently used to explain the elemental nature of the universe. Unlike in *Paradise Lost*, God's presence in *His Dark Materials* is tragic and ironical: he is never the creator. He is either a helpless, weak, and old "creature" (which is more often used to describe animals) in *The Amber Spyglass*, or the first liar of the universe in *The Subtle Knife*. This false God is eventually killed by ghasts, which in Pullman's fictional design are an ancient, ugly, and hierarchically low species. The chapter of *The Amber Spyglass* in which the killing takes place is titled "The End of Authority". A comparison of two passages, the first of which characterises God as a liar and the second depicting him as a helpless, aged figure facing death, demonstrates the anti-Miltonic theological position that Pullman takes:

He was never the creator...The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was the first of all. He told those who came after him that he created them, but it was a lie<sup>46</sup>.

He was so old, and he was terrified, crying like a baby and cowering away into the lowest corner... 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

---

<sup>46</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 622.

completely, and their last impression was of those eyes, blinking in wonder and a sigh of the most profound and exhausted relief.<sup>47</sup>

In the early phase of my research, I tried to find a connection between Pullman's and Milton's God. The conventional reading would be that the capitalisation of God-related personal pronouns and nouns reveals the level of irony with which Pullman treats not only God, but also those who treat him with a special degree of reverence: both Pullman and Milton refer to "He," "His," and "God," using conventions taken from the Bible. The use of the possessive "His" to whom the "dark materials" belong is an example of supreme irony. In *Paradise Lost*, the Christian "Almighty Maker"<sup>48</sup> creates the world from chaos, along with the bottomless abyss into which Satan is cast. However, in *His Dark Materials*, while images of abysses and pits are repeatedly shown with deadly threats and catastrophes, pictures of Hell and of a Serpent do not necessarily suggest evil. For example, in the Mulefa world it is Serpent who teaches mulefa how to live with nature, and in consequence mulefa and the seedpod trees can both survive in harmony. To rewrite and to recreate the various worlds that correspond with Milton's conceptualisations of Paradise, Earth and Hell becomes Pullman's literary goal of *His Dark Materials*. His methodology to realize this objective through the fantasy genre is the thematic core of my dissertation. In this first chapter, I investigate Pullman's different world settings with the aim of understanding their strengths and the weaknesses

Even though "world" has been defined in terms of space as "the state or realm of human existence on earth"<sup>49</sup>, it has been argued for approximately the last half century by philosophers, and particularly by the existentialists Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), that world involves an "ontological-existence concept of worldhood."<sup>50</sup> This suggests that the meaning of the word

<sup>47</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 926.

<sup>48</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV, 91-94. Milton here calls God "The Creator in his holy rest" (91) and suggests everything is begun with chaos, "In Chaos, and the work begun, how soon." (93)

<sup>49</sup> "world, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/230262?rskey=OrN3Ym&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed 01 Agust 2016).

<sup>50</sup>Martin Heidegger, "The Worldhood of the World," *Being and Time*, 93. In order to explain

“world”, in philosophical level, is much more complicated than what has been defined in the *OED*. This becomes meaningful only when it happens to have connection with the human. Despite how contentious the concept of the Earth as a “world” still is today, earlier thinkers provide us with an important clue to understanding. We should consider “world” along with time, history, and even with ecology, as correlative terms. In Pullman’s other works, such as his postmodern metafiction, *Clock Work* (1995), his New Atheistic Novel, *The Good Man Jesus and The Scoundrel Christ* (2010), and his rewriting of another allegorical classic, *Grim Tales for Young and Old* (2012), the “world” was seldom an issue due to the fact that patterns of worlds were either too simple or not clearly illustrated. For example, in the first story in *Grim Tales for Young and Old*, there was only one sentence that mentioned time and space of the world frame, and there was nothing more about the world later in the story. “In the olden days, when wishing still worked, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful.” Or in *Clock Work*, the whole story started, “In the old days, when this story took place, time used to run by clockwork”<sup>51</sup>. Such stereotypical openings quickly ignore the material setting, as if the “world” in question was nothing more than a stage for characters. The frame of *Clock Work* is relatively complex due to its metafictional patterns, which recall Italo Calvino’s *If On A Winter’s Night, A Traveler* (1981). Calvino’s text also adopted metafictional, labyrinth-like narratives that are layered like a Russian Doll. Within these works, the “world” is manifested as a silent framework for the narrative<sup>52</sup>. However, in *His Dark Materials*, the multiple worlds

his invented term “Worldhood”, Heidegger starts this chapter with a question: “What can be meant by describing ‘the world’ as a phenomenon?” (Heidegger, 91) Four attributes are introduced later in the same chapter, suggesting a fundamental ontology of Heideggerian Worldhood. In brief, the word world for Heidegger is an ontological concept with ontological function. It can even be used to signify anything that already exists with a pre-ontological signification. The last and also most important attribute is that Worldhood designates a totality of everything that makes up the world. (Heidegger, 93).

<sup>51</sup> Philip Pullman, *Clock Work* (London: Doubleday, 1995), 1.

<sup>52</sup> Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter’s Night, a Traveller*; trans. William Weaver (Orlando: Harcourt, 1979). The reason I compare the cosmology of *Clock Work* with that of Calvino’s *If On a Winter’s Night, a Traveller* is that worlds in both of the works share similar frameworks, composed by multiple layers of worlds (including the real one) and the narrators can easily engage in frame-breaking, since they can talk to the readers, or even pretend to be the readers.

that exist alongside one another represent more than just their separate materiality. They contribute significant collective meaning that underpins Pullman's stories. That meaning, or rather those meanings, are best understood as "talkative tubers" that interact with one another. At the primary level of the literary arrangement, the worlds provide a physical environment for the narrative; but in the higher level of literary value, each fictional world is enhanced with metaphorical, allegorical and even metaphysical meanings constructing a collective author-orientated utopia and dystopia that Pullman wishes to reveal.

The present chapter interprets the world settings in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy through their religious, literary and philosophical contexts. Where religious world contexts are concerned, Anglicanism is a significant influence in this fiction set in an imitated Britain (Brytain)<sup>53</sup>. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a growing tendency towards atheism was reflected in literature, biblical hermeneutics, and postmodern philosophy. Discourses such as Friedrich Nietzsche's the "Death of God" and nihilism, Martin Heidegger's reexamination of being and Dasein, and Derrida's decentralism challenged the deep faith in a Judaic-Christian God that had prevailed in Christendom for almost two millennia. More particularly, literary works have appeared in the early twenty-first century addressing a growing disbelief in a Christian God that has contributed to global secularization. The ultimate goal of that literature, to borrow from Nietzsche, is not so much the dismissal as the death of God.

Early twenty-first-century British secularism has been influential in the rise of a new transnational atheism; for those influenced are not limited to Britain or Europe, but extend worldwide. Bradley provides some outstanding examples in the

---

For example. Calvino's novel starts with second person narrative in which the pronoun "I" will soon be lost in this word game: "You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*" (Calvino, 1). This type of metafictional writing also happens in Pullman's *Clock Work*, in which the character recognizes his own identity and takes control of the narrative.

<sup>53</sup> "Brytain" is the name for "Britain" in Lyra's world, in which many cities and states are renamed with similar spelling. There are other renamed terms used in the novel. For example: Gypsies in Lyra's world are called Gyptians and the Bodleian Library is renamed as Bodley's Library.

introduction to his book<sup>54</sup>. For instance: philosopher and neuroscientist Sam Harris at *The End of Faith* (2004) has suggested, “Words like ‘God’ and ‘Allah’ must go the way of ‘Apollo’ and ‘Baal.’” Another one is Richard Dawkins who is a radical atheist. In *The God Delusion* (2006), Dawkins describes religion hyperbolically as “a pretty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully”<sup>55</sup>. In *His Dark Materials*, at one level the fall of false Gods such as the Authority and his regent the archangel Metatron, imply that Pullman’s utopia is based on atheism, but at another level also demand that Pullman provide a substitute worldview that values rational processes. Since Pullman believes that the problem faced in the world today stems from religion, he tries to purify his fictional world by making it Godless (in other words, atheistic). However, logic suggests that an atheistic world is not necessarily the world in which God’s existence is neither mentioned nor ignored. This point can be observed in two fantasy works which are very often used to compare with Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy, namely C. S. Lewis’s *Chronicle of Narnia* (1949-1954) and J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* (1937-1949). It is clear that Tolkien and Lewis attempt to avoid using the word “God”, biblical references, or anything that can be associated with catechism. Their purposes are to display secondary worlds of distinctive reality. However, many critics have suggested that even though the word “God” has no existence in the novels, the narratives of both the *Narnia* books and *The Lord of the Rings* have a clear tendency to represent biblical stories. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1949), Lord Aslan sacrifices himself at the stone table to decriminalize the son of Adam’s sin of disloyalty and is resurrected three days later. This story contains obvious references to Christ’s resurrection in the New Testament, with both Jesus and Aslan giving life to Adam’s children by sacrificing themselves. St. Paul wrote

But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise. Death came because of what a man did. Rising from the dead also comes because of what a man did. Because of

---

<sup>54</sup> Bradley “Introduction,” in Bradley and Tate, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Transworld, 2006), 51.

Adam, all people die. So because of Christ, all will be made alive.<sup>56</sup>

To some degree, Pullman is doing the same thing for different purposes. Andrew Tate in *The New Atheist Novel* has argued that

*His Dark Materials* is crammed with competing literary allusions: it re-imagines biblical stories, blissfully explores the Western canon for its juiciest motifs and also makes reference to a dazzling plethora of pop culture sources.<sup>57</sup>

Writing an atheistic story by reimagining biblical stories raises the logical problem I have just mentioned. Pullman chose to start his narrative in a context that Church authorities dominate and control, and in this religious context it is rather difficult to develop his own anti-Christian agenda while the catechism gives roots to and frames the narratives. The methodologies to approach such an atheistic agenda are many and can include different genres, including science or detective fictions, poetry, and movies. Likewise in Dan Brown's detective fiction *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), the protagonist, Harvard professor Robert Langdon, is summoned to collect historical evidence and eventually prove St. Mary's adultery and the fallacy of Jesus's birth<sup>58</sup>. Or in the Larry and Andy Wachowski's movie *The Matrix* (2003), the protagonist Neo finds that what humans know about the world is actually produced by a solar powered machine. The memories, feelings and knowledge that people experience is a simulated reality made of nothing. Pullman, in *His Dark Materials*, establishes something similar in terms of a religious context by creating parallel universes while denying God as the creator of all.

Unlike Lewis and Tolkien, Pullman has insisted that his story began in a physical world where humans dwell, not an alternative world as in Tolkien's imagined Middle Earth, or Lewis' world of Narnia, the entrance to which is hidden in a wardrobe. What Lewis and Tolkien have done for him is explicitly platonic and escapist.

---

<sup>56</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 KJV.

<sup>57</sup> Tate, "Phillip Pullman's Republic of Heaven," in Bradley and Tate, 59.

<sup>58</sup> Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Corgi, 2009.)

Tolkien also said didn't he - he was accused of escapism? And he said this is sort of a proud banner. He said, well if we are in prison it's the right thing to do to escape from it. He was like Lewis a sort of thoroughgoing Platonist in that he saw this world, this physical universe as a fallen state created no doubt by God but marked and weakened and spoiled by sin and his imagined world was so much more truthful and full of beauty and what have you. Well I passionately disagreed with this. This physical world is our home, this is where we live; we're not creatures from somewhere else or in exile. This is our home and we have to make our homes here and understand that we are physical too, we are material creatures, we are born, and we will die.<sup>59</sup>

This quote from Pullman, recorded by Burton Hatlen, provides an important message that in Pullman's viewpoint both Tolkien and Lewis treat the imperfect reality a "prison" and therefore as never an ideal frame for their literary utopia; their utopia is "up there" in an imaginary space such as Middle Earth or Narnia whilst for Pullman, this imperfect prison is "our home". It can be observed clearly that Pullman is taking a relatively more "realistic" and "material" approach in the frame-making of his novel. The "physical world is our home", "material creatures" and "we are born, and we will die" altogether echo the ambition that he wishes to write a fantasy novel realistically.

### **1.0.2 Affect linking and worldhood**

The difficulty is that at the same time that Pullman published his trilogy and wrote freely about its atheistic agenda, he also undertook the responsibility for explaining his version of cosmology. Such an explanation is necessary, he suggests, since the Christian God-creator has been denied. If Pullman failed to offer a plausible

---

<sup>59</sup> Hatlen, in Lenz (ed.), 78.

alternative explanation for the origins of Brytain, the world he created would be very much like Middle Earth or the World of Narnia: an imaginary fantasy. Even worse, because a weak imitation of our reality, that world could become merely a setting for a parable – the kind of obvious biblical fictional location that Pullman says he tried to avoid. To give his fictional world verisimilitude, Pullman played a systematic word game by adopting a methodology called “Affect Linking.” This concept was firstly brought up by David Gelernter who attempts to discuss how the reader’s mind can associate ideas through the precise connection of shared memories, emotions, and background experience when encountering a new text which has a semi-identical context. With help of this concept, according to Margaret Mackey, we can at least benefit from act of reading at two levels: a) we gather solutions by searching our memories for the “relevant ingredient in common” (62). And b) we “feel” other’s thoughts by “re-experiencing” (63). This term is similar to the metafictional technique of “defamiliarization” or “making strange”, yet is still concerned with different focuses. If anything that distinguish them, Affect Linking is less analytical because it relies more on reader’s thought rather than author’s context making. For Gelernter Affect Linking is an important phenomenon produced in act of reading. Mackey argues that the process of Affect Linking can be explained as follows,

A person thinking at high focus is concentrating on methodical connections between facts, extracting the common factors for the rational and useful group. At a lower focus, thought is less analytical and more concrete. Something resembling free association becomes more important. It is at this stage that metaphor and creative connections are engendered.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Margaret Mackey, “Northern Lights and Northern Readers: Background Knowledge, Affect Linking and Literary Understanding,” in Lenz (ed.), 62. Affect Linking is similar to defamiliarization or making-strange which guides readers to associate the background or context they read with their personal experience. Mackey uses a quite interesting term called “mental leap” to describe this reading behavior. A “mental leap” occurs when readers encounter a new and unfamiliar thing. Their experience will “leap” back to the reader’s old memories and juxtapose them with new images. Hutcheon, with a similar observation but a totally different approach, suggests that in order to have the reader suspend disbelief, the

By exploring how Affect Linking works within the narrative and atheistic agenda in *His Dark Materials*, I will show the roles played by (a) geographical features of fictional Britain (topography); (b) the art of place naming (toponymy), and; (c) variations between different world settings in the text. The aim is to clarify the worldhood of Pullman's fiction as a key to distinguishing *His Dark Materials* from the novels of Tolkien and Lewis. Comparative analysis shows the differences between a "realistic fictional world" and "platonic utopian world" such as Middle Earth and the world of Narnia. Plato in his the "Allegory of the Cave" plays a significant role in interpreting Pullman's worldview. As Dave Weich has written in his interview with Pullman, he comments

When I made that comment [about His Dark Materials as stark realism] I was trying to distinguish between these books and the kind of books most general readers think of as fantasy, the sub-Tolkien thing involving witches and elves and wizards and dwarves.<sup>61</sup>

## 1.1 Tuber-form World Arrangement

### 1.1.1 Worlds as the Literary Frame for Living Beings, and Natural Sources

---

author must "negotiate" with readers by using what they are familiar with, to construct a Heterocosm (the combination of hetero and cosmos). See Linda Hutcheon, "The Language of Fiction: Creating the Heterocosm of Fictive Referents," *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1985), 87-103.

<sup>61</sup>"Dave Weich, 'Interviews: Philip Pullman Reaches the Garden,' " Powell Books Blog, <<http://www.powells.com/post/interviews>> (accessed 30 July 2016).

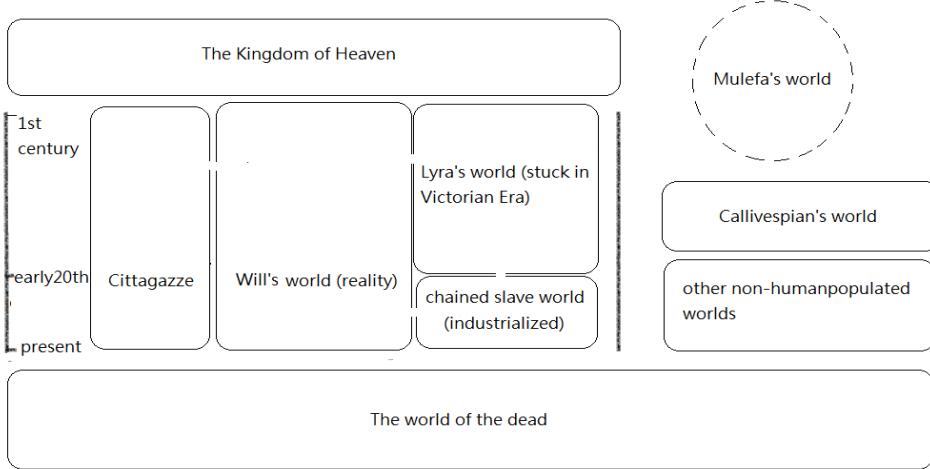


Figure 1. The tuber-form world design of HDMT

The figure sketch above shows how Pullman's world design works as a tuber-like structure. Through this structure it can be observed that the word "parallel" does not sufficiently explain how Pullman make these worlds work simultaneously under the same rule, such as a law of physics or concept of time and history. I will now show how the extraordinary worlds and rules pertaining to Pullman's text, with a goal of comparing and contrasting how his settings differ from Lewis's and Tolkien's.

Structurally the narrative of *His Dark Materials* is placed in countless universes. The six primary worlds that support the narrative are Lyra's world, Will's world (reality), Cittagazze world, the Gallivespian's world, and the Mulefa world. However, among these worlds, there is one final destination where all living beings go after death: the world of the dead. There is significant value in discussing this final reality since it supports not only Pullman's idea of soul and death, hell and heaven, but also suggests that his cosmology is never atheistic. There are also minor worlds that are only mentioned in passing, such as the beach world, chained slave world, and desert world. These worlds demonstrate that Pullman's concern is not only focused on the battle against a religious force but has a broad importance to other global issues, such as those of the sweatshop and global warming. An example would be when Will tests the windows and discovers a world of chained slaves. Within that world a highly industrialized image is represented, in which the light is dim, the air smells like iron rust, and chained labourers toil. Or in the Mulefa world, Mary Malone tries to find out the reason that the Seedpod Trees that the mulefa depends on are dying and eventually discovers that there is a large hole in the sky and the Dust is flowing out. These are all problems with similarities to those we are faced with nowadays in our own world.

By using the subtle knife invented and crafted by the Guild of the Torre Degli Angeli in the Cittàgazze world, Lyra and Will can travel across different worlds. From their doing so, new issues emerge and become a meaningful narrative. They are not the problems that occur in Mountain Doom or the White Witch's castle<sup>62</sup>, but in a familiar city named London or Oxford. In *Northern Lights*, a conversation between Lyra and Mr. Scoresby gives strong evidence that these worlds even have the same physical and chemical reactions and natural resources.

“How do you inflate your balloon, Mr. Scoresby?”

“Two ways. I can make hydrogen by pouring sulphuric acid onto iron filings. You catch the gas it gives off and gradually fill the balloon like that. The other way is to find a ground-gas vent near a fire-mine.

There's a lot of gas under the ground here, and rock-oil besides”<sup>63</sup>.

This plot takes place in Lyra's world when Lyra and Mr. Scoresby are trying to escape the Magisterium's army by using only an empty balloon. By pouring acid on the iron to produce hydrogen in a process of modern chemical electrolysis, the balloon can fly because the mass of hydrogen is lighter than the normal atmosphere on earth. This act of “filling the balloon” explains at least two plausible chemical and physical phenomena in Lyra's world: (a) In Lyra's (fictional) and Will's world (our world), the basic laws of chemistry are the same, so that the chemical reaction of iron and acid in both worlds is identical. (b) It is observed that in Lyra's world, hydrogen is also lighter than oxygen and other air elements so that it can be used as the primary gas for the balloon. There are other variable elements in the air, but basically, the atmospheric pressure and proportion in both worlds are similar, just as in the laws of physics. The rock-oil preserved under the ground also indicates that there were living creatures long before the evolution of human civilization, and the soil upon which they were standing might have as long a history as that of our earth while the transformative process from the corpses of plants and animals into rock-oil requires certain

---

<sup>62</sup> These are two examples of names in secondary worlds. Mountain Doom, or Mount Doom is a volcano in Tolkien's Middle Earth, where Frodo Baggins destroys the Ring in Mordor. The White Witch (Jadis) is a fictional character in Lewis's world of Narnia.

<sup>63</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 190.

temperatures, pressure, and action of anaerobic bacteria.

Besides Lyra and Will's world providing suitable geological conditions for natural recourses, it can also be calculated that other universes have existed at the same geological time so that the natural resources in every world are identical. As far as concerns the literary arrangement of worlds, it is clear that the realism of Pullman's fantasy is not merely represented in the naming of cities or countries, but involves a systematic replication of whole geographical, biological, physical and chemical constituencies based on those of our earth. If we contrast that environmental frame (the worlds) to Tolkien and Lewis' literary arrangements of Middle Earth and Narnia, or Carroll's Wonderland without considering the narratives first, Pullman is technically making a utopian parody of real human lives rather than just telling a story. Setting this narrative in a familiar physical environment (even in an alternative world) helps readers to suspend their disbelief. This process is explained by Margaret Mackey: "these readers are feeling their thinking, an under-acknowledged element of much fiction reading. It is a typical case of bringing life experience to bear in a text in order to give emotional life to the fiction on the page"<sup>64</sup>. However, these everyday events do not happen only in Lyra and Will's world, but in every single world in *His Dark Materials*, including a non-human-populated realm, the Mulefa world.

### **1.1.2. The Mulefa World**

---

<sup>64</sup> Margaret Mackey, "Northern Lights and Northern Readers: Background Knowledge, Affect Linking and Literary Understanding," in Lenz (ed.), 66.



A cartoon image of mulefa and Mary Malone in *His Dark Materials*, made by K. Thierolf.<sup>65</sup>

The mulefa were initially inspired by Pullman and his son observing skateboarders practicing their skills in Odessa. An interesting question and one worth considering is hereby raised: Since in *His Dark Materials* there are varieties of imaginary creatures including armoured bears, dragonfly knights, harpies and witches who either have strong, mighty power, battle skills, or the ability to travel through universes, what makes this elephant-like creature so special and meaningful as well as the world in which they dwell? It is important to note that many crucial events including Mary's ultimate enlightenment of knowing Dust, the creation of the Amber Spyglass and the representation of the second Fall are all take place in this world. Physically it is a world divergent from the reality of other primary worlds where the narratives happen. I use the adjective "divergent" for three reasons. In the tuber-form I have categorized the Mulefa world into an isolated quadrant, apart from Lyra's world. Firstly, it has a different geographical and ecological system. Unlike Lyra's

---

<sup>65</sup> Katie Thierolf, "Mulefa & Mary Malone," Artstation.com, <<https://www.artstation.com>> (accessed 20 June 2015). This cartoon picture of Mulefa and Mary Malone accurately sketches the bodily characteristics of the Mulefa, which have a diamond-shaped torso, horn-like claws, and seedpod wheels perfectly matched with their limbs.

world or everyday reality, creatures and plants in the Mulefa world are totally strange to human beings. In that world, the bodily structure of living creatures is uniquely designed to live in harmony with other creatures as one big and “whole” society. The mulefa play a significant balancing role in that process. This section of *His Dark Materials*, which occurs in *The Amber Spyglass*, the third novel in the trilogy, expresses Pullman’s ideal ecological worldview, and will be discussed later with Mary Malone’s entry into that world. Secondly, the world of the mulefa is a non-language realm. In *His Dark Materials* the majority of creatures in other worlds can communicate through language, including the armoured polar bears in the North, ghosts in Cittàgaze, and even the harpies in the underworld. However, in the Mulefa world, all living beings don’t speak but still maintain in harmony with each other following their natural instinct. This silent system operates throughout the Mulefa world among interspecies without being interfered with by influence from religion, politics or any form of civilization. To some extent, it is evidently assumed that for Pullman the world that is not yet polluted by human culture is most utopian and ideal. Thirdly, there is an independent timeline and historical background in the Mulefa world: there is a separate evolutionary path although the speed of time flow is identical with others, and because of this the mulefa’s history does not overlap with any part of human history. This unique background provides Pullman with a context for his utopia in which both language and virtues don’t work. What creatures follow is their biological instinct. I will now analyze the importance of the mulefa in Pullman’s world configuration.

Before proceeding, a question should be asked: why the mulefa and why here? In an online interview, I found an interesting talk by Pullman that showed that the existence of the mulefa was originally meaningless until an extra value of the fictional storytelling was added. Pullman expresses in that talk his intention of placing the mulefa at the core of his narrative and furthermore distinguished their world from human civilization. Interestingly, the two words that are used to describe the mulefa and non-mulefa beings are “innocence” and “experience,” corresponding with William Blake's song collections of 1789-1794.<sup>66</sup> Blake notoriously critiques

---

<sup>66</sup> William Blake, *Songs of Innocence, copy L: electronic edition*, ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi, Blakearchive,< <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive>> (accessed 30 July 2016).

idealistic assumptions that innocence and experience are distinctive categories. In doing so, he questions not only the innocence of childhood in a morally corrupt world, but also ironically dismantles the idea that childhood can be equated with freedom from sin. However, being isolated from the primary worlds does not marginalize the Mulefa world or diminish its importance to the whole narrative. In fact, even though the Mulefa world is not the main setting of *His Dark Materials*, it is often neglected by critics simply because that world is not involved in the battle with Heaven. Other critics have shown their interests in this unique realm, however. Rebekah Fitzsimmons, for example, points out in her “Dialectical ‘Complexifications’: The Centrality of Mary Malone, Dust, and the mulefa in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*,” that the world of mulefa actually contains some of Pullman’s most profound narrative innovation and symbolism: it covers significant philosophical themes such as Dust and original sin, political themes including mastery, slavery and the equation of both, and ecological themes of natural and environmental preservation.<sup>67</sup>

In order to study the Mulefa world, it must explore the circumstances through which Mary Malone becomes enlightened about Dust. The most common critical perspective on the Mulefa world focuses on the harmony of its biosphere, and the lifestyle it supports. Some critics even argue that in the Mulefa world, the “ecology is incredibly simple”<sup>68</sup> and that this kind of fairy-tale wonderland cannot be more important than other worlds. I argue that the Mulefa world physically plays an

---

<sup>67</sup> Rebekah Fitzsimmons, “Dialectical ‘Complexifications’: The Centrality of Mary Malone, Dust, and the Mulefa in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*,” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* (22:2 [81]), 2011, 212-214.

<sup>68</sup> Robert A Metzger, “Philip Pullman, Research Scientist,” in *Navigating The Golden Compass- Religion, Science & Daemonlogy in Philip Pullman’s His Dark Materials*, ed. Glenn Yeffeth (Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005), 58. Metzger uses “incredibly simple” to describe the ecology of the Mulefas’ world. Rebekah Fitzsimons, on the contrary, suggests that the Mulefas’ world makes an outstanding contribution to the trilogy as many problems of the reality are solved here. “However, after defamiliarizing these common readings and engaging with dialectical criticism, it becomes clear that the ecological elements of the Mulefa tale contribute a significant element to the conclusion of the trilogy” (Fitzsimmons, 214). See also Fitzsimmons, “Dialectical ‘Complexifications’”, 214.

important role in *His Dark Materials*. Whilst it is the first-mentioned divergent world (biologically) of species in the novel, more textual evidence indicates that it is similar to other parallel worlds. Mary in the novel hypothesizes the evolution of the Mulefa world as “predicted by quantum theory” and suggests that “evolution had favoured enormous trees and large creatures with a diamond-framed skeleton.”

It was evening there, too, and she sat down to breathe the air and rest her limbs and taste the wonder without rushing.

Wide golden light, and an endless prairie or savannah, like nothing she had ever seen in her own world. To begin with, although most of it was covered in short grass in an infinite variety of buff-brown-green-ochre-yellow-golden shades,...

And secondly, here and there on the plain were stands of the tallest trees Mary had ever seen...

And finally, herds of creatures, too far off to see distinctly, graze on the prairie...

She awoke with the early sun full in her face. The air was cool, and the dew had settled in tiny beads on her hair and on the sleeping-bag<sup>69</sup>.

The tallest seedpod trees, early sunlight, and dews on the sleeping bag once again emphasise that in the world of the mulefa the living environment is not too different from ours, since there are also the sun, water, and air. “The evening” and “the early sun” also suggest that the world is on the same earth. The length of the night is similar. The basic rule of day and night or even the way we calculate time are not too different. This is the first night when Mary Malone enters the world of mulefa through the window in Oxford; therefore, if the universe in *His Dark Materials* is really parallel, the place Mary sleeps should be where Oxford is located on the same earth. The first image is important because for Pullman the world of mulefa gives him a chance to address how special his “Oxford” can be compared with the other three “highly developed” Oxfords (They are Will’s Oxford with which we are familiar, Lyra’s Oxford that in her world is also the political and religious centre of England,

---

<sup>69</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 644-645.

and that in the world of Cittàgazze). Their differences also explain why Pullman chooses Mary Malone to experience a transformative journey alone into this world; in the context of innocence, Mary's highly educated and religious background as an ex-nun is particularly needed. Only by configuring the situation as he does can, Pullman present the landscape of the Mulefa world through Mary's scientific observation and her religious self-reevaluation. Many adjectives, colours, and new species are carefully juxtaposed with figures of creatures of which we already have knowledge. To some extent this step for Pullman's narrative is important, for there is a balance between rationality and absurdity that his storytelling can adjust. On one hand he introduces his readers to an entirely strange place that will later become critical, whilst contrarily he tries very hard to prevent Mary's adventures in the Mulefa world from becoming another text such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), which is purposefully absurd and exaggerating. If this balance is not well kept, the Mulefa world will become either too similar to our world, therefore needless to mention, or too absurd so that the metanoia is hard for readers to work out.

The exclamation "How every biologist on earth would envy her, if they could see what she was seeing!" not only describes Mary's excitement over the creatures in the Mulefa world, but is also the first sentence in which Pullman directly compares mulefa's ecology to that of our earth.<sup>70</sup>

The verb "envy" is very convenient and powerful for it is not only a word to describe the emotion. Unlike jealousy, "envy" involves a counter interpretation of divine justice that for Catholic Christianity is one of the seven deadly sins<sup>71</sup>. It is first encountered in Genesis as the motivation of Cain murdering his brother Abel<sup>72</sup>. Therefore Pullman as a writer who dominates the creation of a literary realm, at the same time also introduces his anti-Christian agenda. Additionally, when the words "on earth" are used as an adjectival rather than adverbial phrase, Pullman seems to defamiliarize or to make the Mulefa world less realistic than other human-populated

<sup>70</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 665.

<sup>71</sup> Justin D'Arms, "Envy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/envy/>>. (accessed 25 July 2016)

<sup>72</sup> Genesis 4:1-8 KJV.

realms. Initially, this world was also designed as one of the parallel universes, namely one in line with his “realistic fantasies”. In other words, if Pullman intends to distinguish his work from Tolkien’s or Lewis’s, there should not be a world such as that of mulefa.

Mary and Pullman have similar religious backgrounds; Mary was a nun before she became a scientist, and Pullman was raised in an Anglican family. They both spend most of their lives working and studying in Oxford. A confessional conversation between Mary and Will deeply expresses Pullman’s idea about restrictive dualism, much as if it were a conversation between Will and Pullman himself.

“When you stopped believing in God, did you stop believing in good and evil?” [asked by Will]

“No. But I stopped believing there was a power of good and power of evil that were outside us. And I came to believe that good and evil are names for what people do, not for what they are. All we can say is that this is a good deed, because it helps someone, or that’s an evil one, because it hurts them. People are too complicated to have simple labels.”

“Did you miss God?” asked Will.

“Yes,” Mary said, “terribly. And I still do. And what I miss most is the sense of being connected to the whole of the universe...”<sup>73</sup>.

It is clear here that there is no absolute evil or good; not even the Authority, Lord Asriel, who wished to dominate, and who was the first living being created by Dust, and lied to everyone that He created them. Here in *The Amber Spyglass*, and in *His Dark Materials* as a trilogy, the Authority and his regent Metatron worry that conscious beings of every kind have become dangerously independent, and hence have tried to enlarge their influence through the Magisterium. By observing the cruel activities of the Magisterium (slaughters, kidnaps, and experiments such as the cutting daemon from humans), readers are naturally convinced that the Authority as the being behind everything must be evil and tyrannical. However, in the chapter “Authority’s

---

<sup>73</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 955.

End”, we encounter for the first time the Authority represented visually. In the plot, Lyra and Will accidentally find a crystal litter in which the Authority has been transported away from the battlefield. Surprisingly, the Authority is described here in words that are ironical and not quite consonant with how he logically should be designed. This is another indication in Pullman’s work that there is no absolute good or evil.

The shaking hand seized his and feebly held on. The old one was uttering a wordless groaning whimper that went on and on, and grinding his teeth, and compulsively plucking at himself with this free hand; but as Lyra reached in too to help him out, he tried to smile, and to bow, and his ancient eyes deep in their wrinkles blinked at her with innocent wonder<sup>74</sup>.

The shaking hand, wordless groaning, and ancient eyes deep in the wrinkles suggest a very clear physical image of an old man and also indicate that the angels too faced their bodily ageing as other creatures, even though they were made of an original form of Dust. (According to Balthamos all the angels including the Authority are made of Dust.) In every world (even in the Kingdom of Heaven) everything undergoes the process of change in the tide of times, nothing is immortal, and it seems that the multiple universes share only one singular time flow.

### **1.1.3 Non-humanized Utopia**

Metaphorically the Mulefa world represents Pullman’s ideal utopia, an unpolluted Garden of Eden in *His Dark Materials*, resided in not by Adam and Eve, but by an elephant-like creature that Pullman and his son invented out of a teenage subculture (skateboarders). A factor worthy of mention is that Pullman invented mulefa last in his mythology, after everything else. During our observation of the Mulefa world we have been aware from the outset that the purpose of creating this

---

<sup>74</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 926.

secondary world was to distinguish innocence from experience and that Pullman's methodology intended to parody the Bible. It is particularly meaningful that in the Holy Bible humans were the last creation in Genesis, not appearing until the sixth day. In behaviour and lifestyle, the mulefa is very similar to a human being; they live in groups with a complete and complex social system. Humans know how to improve their material life by using the resources provided by the land. They live in a cooperative way. Similarly, the mulefa do not just consume resources, but guard and feed the seedpod trees. This can be compared with Adam and Eve tending the Garden of Eden, extended into the development of human beings after the fall.

In many ways, Pullman was making an ironic parody of biblical stories generally and not just the story of the creation and fall in Genesis when he planned the world settings in *His Dark Materials*.

A question needing an answer is why Pullman insists upon creating an alien species that is not even communicative, while in other worlds there are armoured bears and even Harpies that can easily communicate with human beings. In many parts of the story, he ignores the barrier that languages may cause among cross-species. Lyra never finds it difficult talking to King of the armoured polar bear, Iofur Raknison, or the Harpy named No-Name, who is the guardian of the World of the Dead. Mary Malone in the Mulefa world, however, encounters a basic communicative problem because there is no language used. Mary tries to express herself with gestures, but that doesn't work either, since mulefa isn't designed for hands. This is the first moment that Mary meets mulefa, and obviously, it doesn't count as a successful conversation because language has no use here.

So she stood up and called, very self-consciously:

“Over here, This is where I am. I looked at your seed-pod. I’m sorry.

Please don’t harm me.”

Instantly their [mulefa’s] heads snapped round to look at her, trunks held out, glittering eyes facing forward. Their ears had all flicked upright... She held out her hands, realizing that such a gesture might mean nothing to creatures with no hands themselves...

Close up, not five steps away- she could see much more about their appearance, but her attention was held by something lively and aware

of their gaze, by intelligence. These creatures were as different from grazing animals nearby as a human was from a cow<sup>75</sup>.

This kind of speechless situation does not last for long simply because the narratives require languages to continue. Mary learns a few chapters later how to communicate with the mulefa through mimicking their trunks with human hands. Even though the situation has been overcome by sign language invented by Mary, the big question of whether language is still the only way for the narrative to continue in Pullman's writing remains unanswered. The same uncommunicative context can be found in John Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse* in which many word games are played. On an isolated island the narrator Ambrose encounters a species of prophet-birds called Glossolalia. When they try to talk the noises they make are incomprehensible:

Ed' pélut', kondó nedóde, ímба imb' imb', Singè erú. Orúmo ímbo  
ímpe ruté sceléte. Ímpe re scéle lee lutó. Ombo té scèle té, beré té kúre  
kúre. Sinté te lúté sinte kúru, te ruméte tau ruméte. Onkó keere scéte,  
tere lúte, ilee léte leel lúto. Scélé<sup>76</sup>.

---

<sup>75</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 669.

<sup>76</sup>John Barth, “Glossolalia,” *Lost in the Fun House* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 115. Barth’s *Lost in the Fun House* is very often commented upon as a self-begetting novel, which exhibits the art of playing with words. According to the narrator, this arbitrarily combined alphabet is a love song. To some extent Barth gives readers an example of how language can be fun and at the same time functional in meaning-making. Many other examples of using words and punctuation without considering limits and rules can be found in the book. For example, in the chapter “Menelaiad”, multiple layers of quotation marks are applied within the narrator’s dialogue. I quote “Glossolalia” to compare with the Mulefas’ lingual system as a way of suggesting that Pullman’s utopia is a world without corruption by civilization. Unlike Barth, Pullman does not have the intention of playing word games, otherwise Mary Malone would never have the chance to understand Dust, nor the history of the Mulefa. However, once any form of language is invented, civilization begins. In term of *langue*, the world of the Mulefa seemingly becomes a parody of primitive human lifestyles in *His Dark Materials*, or in other words a representation of the prelapsarian period in the Garden of Eden.

By recording the glossolalia in the Roman alphabet without making any sense, Barth faces cross-species untranslatability as an inevitable aspect of communication, which in fantasy literature is very often ignored. As discussed above, Pullman creates such a context through the Mulefa world, yet his method in doing so involved a form of compromise by creating a language in a rough form of mimicry. Compared to the systematic complexity of language among other human-populated universes, mulefa's is relatively simple. The purpose of mentioning the relationship between living beings and languages in the Mulefa world is to pose the question why there must be a figurative world that is not human-centred.

The reasons are many, but the most relevant of them involves dealing with the biblical notion of original sin. Words have been long acknowledged as an outcome of original sin. (Humans started to have knowledge once they ate the forbidden fruit). To purify and to remake this harmony there was one physical disability that Pullman intentionally plants on mulefa: their torsos are shaped like diamonds with thin and weak legs centred on each side, front and back. Therefore, they are designed with clumsiness of movement. This disability is crucial and also the fact that they were educated by a serpent on how to live on seedpods. The seedpods that contain oil have been used by mulefa as wheels, while mulefa's limbs that bear the wheels were designed with very tough horn-like claws set at right angles to the legs. These claws slip neatly into holes at the centre of the seedpod wheels. The perfect combination of body and nature (as I have said, the trees provide the seedpods and mulefa take care of trees) stresses ecological harmony. It is evident that this type of interdependent living is the ideal model to replace life before the fall in Genesis. The trees, the seedpods, mulefa and the serpent, reverse the biblical story of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve, and the snake who is actually Satan himself all seem to constitute a systematic parody of Genesis. However, when Rebekah Fitzsimmons suggests that the Mulefa world is Pullman's Utopia<sup>77</sup>, this statement can be misleading for there is more than one Utopian image separately addressed in different worlds. In the primary storyline plot, the Mulefa world is never the ultimate Utopia in any sense. Their Garden of Eden must be clearly differentiated from another Utopia in the novel, namely Lord Asriel's Republic of Heaven. If Asriel's Republic of Heaven captures an atheistic realm with perfectly balanced

---

<sup>77</sup> Fitzsimmons, "Dialectical Complexifications", 213.

political status and a human-ruled country, the Mulefa world is, by contrast, a reminder of the mythological Golden Age of Ancient Greece. The earliest concept of the Ages of Man appeared in the Greek poet Hesiod's *Works and Days* (109-126), in which Hesiod defines the human condition according to a chronology of four orders - Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron (present day) by adopting mythological aetiologies for the toil and pain of agriculture. The concept of a Golden Age appeared not only in Hesiod; Plato in his *Cratylus* also classified a golden race of humans who came first and who were an ideal but unreal form. The word gold contributes a sense of the goodness and nobleness of the race. Interestingly, the conversation between Hermogenes and Socrates where they discuss daemon evokes another name for people in the Golden Age. It is not the same word as soul, as Pullman manifests in the novel. However, his text provides evidence that the word daemon, just like Dust, was borrowed from mythology or the Bible and thus has metaphorical or theological meaning (as will be discussed in the Chapter on Daemon)

Socrates: He [Hesiod] said this about it:

*Since this race has been eclipsed by fate,  
They are called sacred daemons;  
They live on earth and are good,  
Warding off evil and guarding mortal men.*

Hermogenes: So what?

Socrates: Well, I don't think he's saying that the golden race is by nature made of gold, but that it is good and fine. I consider it proof of this that he calls us a race of iron<sup>78</sup>.

According to Plato, human and nature maintained a period of primordial peace, harmony in the Golden age; Nature would provide everything they needed just like

---

<sup>78</sup> Plato, "Cratylus," in *Plato: Complete Works*, trans. and ed. John M. Cooper (Indiana: Heackett, 1997), 397e-398. See also David Sedley, "Plato's Cratylus", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2013 Edition) , <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/plato-cratylus/>> (accessed 24 July 2016). In Plato's Cratylus, Socrates appears often as a speaker in dialogue. Sedly emphasizes in "Plato's Cratylus" that these are actually Plato's own thoughts.

that the way Adam and Eve live in the Garden of Eden. Yet unlike the prelapsarian Adam in the Holy Bible, human race in the Golden Age are never immortals. They had much longer lifespans than humans in other ages and rarely got ill. In the Mulefa world, this kind of harmony was perfectly reconstructed among mulefa and all the living creatures. The mulefa had thus become a representation of the Golden race in their isolated world. In the very last section of chapter 36 the assassin Father Golmez, sent by the Magisterium, is killed by the rebelling angel Balthamos. His corpse is left on the riverside in the Mulefa world. A mature giant blue lizard finds the body and feasts upon it with her children, based on “an ancient understanding with the mulefa, [that] they were entitled to take any creature left dead after dark.”<sup>79</sup> When the ancient understanding and the verb entitle are used in this context, they again emphasise that mulefas not only dominate the world but are also responsible for its ecological and biological balance. This seems a cross-species agreement that does not need to be contracted by means of language or words, but a rather mythological providence Hesiod has spoken about in terms of the golden race: “Warding off evil and guarding mortal men [other species<sup>80</sup>]”

In addition, in my research, I have found Bobonich’s morphological studying of the word utopia interesting that the word utopia is actually compound with two different syllables to the same lexeme “topos” which means a place in Greek. In Greek the syllable οὐ refers to “no”, whilst there is also another interpretation supporting that the vowel was actually a εὖ, meaning “good and fine.<sup>81</sup>” Therefore, even today there is an ambiguity between “good place” or “no place” when defining the morphology of “utopia”. This perfectly accords with what Plato meant by saying that an ideal world was poetic rather than unreal. To some degree, it is convincing that Pullman’s world of the mulefa may maintain both meanings - no place, and good place - as it is the most imaginary part of the novel, and an obvious exception from Pullman’s purpose in *His Dark Materials* of “writing a fantasy literature realistically.”

### **1.2.0 Parody, Heterocosm and the Imitation of Reality**

---

<sup>79</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 985.

<sup>80</sup> Plato, “Cratylus,” 397e.

<sup>81</sup> Chris Bobonich and Katherine Meadows, "Plato on utopia," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Zalta (op. cit., accessed 25 July 2016).

Historical and cultural background of the narrative is one of the most important literary preparations before storytelling itself, especially for fantasy literature in which the narratives normally take place in a secondary world. To suspend disbelief, the readers of fantasy literature very often demand the author to provide an agreeable and familiar background, with fairly detailed descriptions of unfamiliar and imaginary objects, such as unicorns, goblins in Tolkien's Middle Earth or armoured polar bears, witches, and cliff-ghasts in *His Dark Materials*. These imaginary creatures become realised through an act of agreement made by both the readers and the author. This process is significant in world-creating because it dominates how deeply readers can be "engaged" by the text. The theorist Linda Hutcheon in her *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* has talked about this kind of agreement by means of a theoretical term, heterocosm, suggesting that knowing and agreeing on the fictional alter world is just like the process of how we first come to understand reality itself. The key factor is instructive language, and the goal is convincing to communicate with and effectuate compromise between the reader and the writer, especially in the fiction and narrative, while in other genres such as poetry the figure of the form of languages applied is transitive in different way from prose. "Poetic language is now more or less accepted as autonomous and intransitive, fiction and narratives still suggest a transitive and referential use of words"<sup>82</sup>. Hutcheon's claim recalls to me that in an early meeting with my supervisor, we discussed why Pullman may have chosen to rewrite *Paradise Lost* in the prose form of the novel, while the original was in poetry. Prose, relatively speaking, is a discursive, colloquial, but also communicative medium of words in which everyday dialogue and characterisation are used to transmit ideas. Pullman was deeply attracted by the idea that the ideal world was actually a conceptual existence in the individual's mind, a mental process of world-creating. It is the imagination and creativities, the power of storytelling that counts. In the last chapter of *His Dark Materials*, there is a conversation between Xaphania (the head of the rebelling angel, another representation of Satan in woman's form) and Lyra, who clearly state Pullman's fictional world view:

---

<sup>82</sup> Hutcheon, "The Language of Fiction", 88.

“Baruch and Balthamos told me that they used openings like that to travel between the worlds. Will angels no longer be able to do that? Will you be confined to one world as we are?”

“No, we have other ways of traveling.”

“The way you have,” Lyra asked, “is it possible for us to learn?”

“Yes. You could learn to do it, as Will’s father did. It uses the faculty of what you call imagination. But that does not mean making things up. It is form of seeing.”<sup>83</sup>

Here Pullman’s form of seeing (imaginative interpretation of words) perfectly echoes Hutcheon’s concept that the discourse of heterocosm is not merely a verbal communication organized by the author alone, but a partnership that creates the literary cosmos. Additionally, Hutcheon quoted from the *OED*’s definition of cosmos and emphasised that a so-called cosmos is not just an “another world”, but the world or a universe as an ordered and harmonious system<sup>84</sup>.

The world settings in *His Dark Materials* are no doubt a good example of putting Hutcheon’s discourse of heterocosm in practice. Pullman manifested reality (Will’s world) as the original prototype, which is thence expanded and parodied within countless universes. The only problem is: can we really call this act of imitating the real world a parody since these universes are all developed in a similar way, but different historical and cultural backgrounds from our own? Even though textual evidence shows there are loads of similarities found in Lyra and Will’s worlds, it remains ambiguous to consider Lyra’s world a parody of the reality because unlike the relationships among Mulefa world in *His Dark Materials*, the Garden of Eden in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Garden of Eden in the Holy Bible that Pullman intentionally contrasts, there is very limited evidence to show irony or ridiculousness within the novel. The word parody in the *OED* is defined in terms of a certain essence of absurdity and irony as,

A composition is prose or verse in which the characteristic turns of thought and phrase in an author or class of authors are imitated in

<sup>83</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 996-997.

<sup>84</sup> Hutcheon, “The Language of Fiction”, 90.

such a way as to make them appear ridiculous, especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects; an imitation of a work more or less closely modeled on the original, but so turned as to produce a ridiculous effect<sup>85</sup>.

The *OED* also points out that the word parody was first cited by Ben Jonson in *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) in such a way as to define the meaning of the term: "A Parodie, a parodie! to make it absurder than it was." Hence, when this word was initially used in English, irony was already included as part of its nature. However, in *A Theory of Parody*, Hutcheon has argued that irony can be used as a main rhetorical mechanism in parodic works, for strategically activating the reader's awareness and dramatization<sup>86</sup>. She adds, however, that irony is not necessary or essential for parody. By researching the etymological root of parody, which in Greek is a noun, parodia, associated with music, meaning counter-song, it can be estimated that the earliest use of parody was to play against more powerful or suppressing subjects, in a colloquial or playful art. Hutcheon further states that in Greek, "the root para can also mean 'beside,' therefore there is a suggestion of an accord or intimacy instead of contrast"<sup>87</sup>. Given her belief that not all parodic texts necessarily stand in a position that opposes their originals, in many contexts the parodic and the parodied can even cooperate and stimulate each other. A well-known example she give, is when Wendy Cope parodies Shakespeare's Sonnet 55. The interaction between the present and a recent social construction of different times is therein represented in a parallel, but similar structure. Of course, Cope's parody is not aimed at detracting from Shakespeare's Sonnet, but rather casting a critical discourse upon the social values of the contemporary world.

Parody can be seen as a neutral and self-reflective technique rather than a counter-story. It can be used in a more positive way, as a wake-up call for self-

<sup>85</sup> "parody, n.2". *OED Online*. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/138059?rskey=6TbGIY&result=2&isAdvanced=false> (accessed August 03, 2016).

<sup>86</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 31.

<sup>87</sup> Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody*, 32.

evaluation. If this is true, then through being parodied, the heterocosm in *His Dark Materials* may also develop correspondence with other texts and exhibit what is termed trans-contextualization. Trans-contextualization, similar to the function of Affect Linking, prevents readers from feeling insecure traveling from one world into another and also helps the author to focus the primary theme by exaggerating the figurative characteristics of it, for example, suppressing the violence of the Magisterium. Unlike geographies or ecological figures in parallel worlds, no single event can escape its historical and cultural background, usually determined or affected by other historical events in a chain-reaction. How can Pullman make the histories in the different worlds exist simultaneously in the same period of certain ages if the secondary world is an imitation of reality? For example, if in one of the multiple worlds, Han Emperor Kuang Wu (5 BC -57 AD) hadn't declared a punitive expedition against the North Hun, and the Hun didn't escape to Anatolia, the Byzantine Empire would not have been destroyed. There would not be an eight-hundred-year-long Dark Ages in the Early Middle Ages. If there were any segment in the historical chain missing, the whole history would be no longer identical to the one we already know some things about.

### **1.2.1 Time-gap, Affect Linking, and Anxiety.**

If we look back to tuber-form (see 1.1.1), it can be observed that Lyra's world is stuck in the early twentieth century while Wills' world continues to the present. In the research the investigation is focused on Lyra's and Will's world for their historical divergence. These two worlds culturally overlap in their lingual, technical and political figures, and both have received a high degree of influence from British Anglicanism as the fundamental religious belief. That is to say, the cultural background of the narrative is parodied from Oxford and London of both the contemporary era and Victorian times, with added elements of science fiction. It is important to note that even though the worlds in *His Dark Materials* are designed to be parallel, the historical background of these two worlds have a large cultural gap between them, approximately a century long. This gap logically challenges the fundamental rule of world-creating in Pullman's fiction that the time flows in each world are equal. In *Northern Lights*, this gap caused "cultural shock" when Lyra

firstly entered Will's Oxford. For Lyra the Oxford in Will's world was like a combination of "known" and "unknown" objects that forced her to believe it was Oxford, but not hers. She was stunned by what "not my Oxford" presented to her and felt that "she was a lost little girl in a strange world, belonging to nowhere."<sup>88</sup> There are many examples in *the Subtle Knife* that Lyra is confused and even terrified by the plausible "two realities" both existing at the same time. And this confusion is made stronger when more details of Lyra's Oxford are added in and contrasted with Will's.

Lyra let him [Will] deal with the bus, and sat very quietly, watching the houses and gardens of the city that was hers and not hers. It was like being in someone's dream. They got off the city centre next to an old stone church, which she did know, opposite a big department store which she didn't. "It's all changed," she said. "Like... that en't the Corn Market? And this is the Broad. There's Balliol. And Bodley's Library, down there. But where's Jordan?"<sup>89</sup>

In the above passage Lyra's anxiety is inevitably exposed by Pullman's creation of an alternative Oxford because her world was stuck in the unfamiliar heterocosm that is also named Oxford and both of these places are geographically the same in the UK. For her these similarities are confusing, because architectural styles and landmarks in Oxford in this context are partially different from that of the Victorian era. Her anxiety is caused by unfamiliar objects in a plausible Oxford. For instance, Balliol College, which was founded in 1263, exists both in Lyra's and Will's worlds. It is one of the oldest constituent college of the University and is located in the centre of both Lyra's and Will's Oxford. It is the best memory point for Lyra to recognize Oxford and develops her own sense of unfamiliarity at first sight. This anxiety is made stronger when Lyra sees Bodley's Library afterward, another landmark to ensure the location. Here an obvious difference is thus revealed by comparing Lyra's experience of Will's Oxford to Marys' adventure in that of mulefa's : Lyra's sense of insecurity is never like Mary's excitement when she discovers the Mulefa world, which is totally beyond her imagination and not verisimilitude at all. It is shown in the contrast that in

---

<sup>88</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 386.

<sup>89</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 385.

Mary's journey into the Mulefa world there aren't such a negative emotions (confusion, fear, anxiety, and disappointment) because there isn't any Affect Linking between the Mulefa world and reality, whilst for Lyra, this Oxford is incomplete, fragmentary and confusing. In Will's world Lyra is injured in a car crash. This kind of accident never happened in her Oxford because in Lyra's world there is no car. By using the word "hopelessness"<sup>90</sup> in terms of Lyra, Pullman clearly enlarges this sense of alienation and deprivation of "something unfamiliar within somewhere familiar" to emphasise the difference between the real Britain and the fictional Brytain. In term of this, the methodologies of Heterocosm and Affect Linking together provide me a firm theoretical support that the functionality of "make strange" through these two writing techniques is clear. That is, between the author and the target reader, "an agreement" on the authenticity of the world is important. Through Lyra's anxiety, Pullman thus provides a perfect example by practicing these two methodologies in an alternative Oxford, a wide differentiation from the escapism that he accused Tolkien and Lewis of.

However, we should not only consider the account of space, but also that of the time if the context involves part of human history. To explain this, I will again compare Pullman's time settings in *His Dark Materials* with Tolkien's in *Lord of Rings*. The former is more realistic than the latter; Tolkien's being an imaginary secondary world that doesn't have a shared history with the reality.

### 1.2.2 Divergent Histories and the Problems of Time Flow

Pullman's time arrangement in *His Dark Materials* is even more purposeful and complicated than his arrangement of space. In the tuber-form, it can be seen that there are two main blocks that have very different ways of timing. On the left-hand side are the human's worlds in which humans take the advantage in size. These worlds are usually ruled by humans. In this section all the worlds follow the Common Era and it can be observed that even though in different multiverses, there is no problem of using the same unit of time measurement, that of the "century". The way they count centuries are identical; whilst on the right it is the non-human worlds that do not follow the same measurement of historical time. It is also interesting to note that

---

<sup>90</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 386.

despite the fact that these non-human worlds do not follow the Common Era, the speed of time flow in both blocks are the same, and there are examples of expression of the time that can be treated as evidence: for instance, in the Mulefa world, Mary is told that everything was created 330,000 years ago, which shows a consistency with Mary's radioactive test of the fossils in Oxford.

Among these multiverses, Lyra's world is the leading indicator to show Pullman's time arrangement because it is paused in the Victorian era (1837-1901), which provides the narrative not only with plenty of romantic cultural materials regarding its architecture and social activities, but also in our real world was a cultural turning point from Enlightenment rationalism toward mysticism and skepticism with regard to religion and social values. Unlike Tolkien's Middle Earth, the time setting in *His Dark Materials* overlaps with reality and this for Pullman is the methodology of "writing a fantasy novel realistically." By doing so *His Dark Materials* is relatively more "realistic" than *The Lord of the Rings*. This kind of "author-oriental temporality" provides Pullman the platform to demonstrate his fictional dystopia in which there is the Magisterium and all its malicious activities.

Likewise, another parallel world in the novel, Lyra's world, was also developed along the same historical timeline with other worlds until a crisis, namely the Religious Reformation when progress stopped. As I have stressed, history is a long period of countless chain-reactions taking place with one another. Any change of the events will result in an entirely different consequence, and the history itself will not be the same. This complicated partially-shared historical background of different worlds has made Pullman's world setting rather confusing. The confusion results in Pullman's cosmology being as unreal as Tolkien's and Lewis' imaginary worlds, even though Pullman deployed a great deal of effort to prevent unreality. This kind of issue never took place in secondary worlds, such as in Tolkien's isolated Middle Earth in which there is an independent historical timeline; Lewis's world of Narnia, similar to the Middle Earth, shows totally different time flow from reality. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* the four children experience four years in lands of Narnia during 1940, the year of the London Bombing of World War II. When they come back to the real world they realize that the time flows of the two worlds are dramatically different and that four years in Narnia is only equal to a few minutes in reality. In the second volume of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, namely *Prince Caspian*,

the four children come back to Narnia a year later in 1941 and it has been already 1,300 years since their last left. This thirteen-hundred-times-faster time flows in *The Chronicles of Narnia* to sharply separate the fictional world from the real world. Even though there is a magical wardrobe that is an access route between them, it would not convince readers that these two worlds can ever correlate in any sense. The situation in *The Lord of the Rings* is slightly different due to the fact that in terms of both time and space Middle Earth and reality don't have any shared realm. This time gap can also be found in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tom Shippey in his *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (2002) has noted that in Tolkien's imaginary world settings the author does show concern with time by describing the swiftness of its flow and the changes of seasons from an observer's point of view in the Middle Earth through Legolas' eyes in a poetic and ambiguous way.

“The world moves, and it moves both very swift and very slow. Swift, because they themselves change little, and all else fleets by: it is a grief to them. Slow, because they do not count the running years, not for themselves. The passing seasons are but ripples ever repeated in the long long stream.<sup>91</sup>”

Taking Legolas' point of view especially on the perspective of temporality, is interesting and meaningful, yet can be dangerous because unlike a human, Legolas is a wood elf. These legendary species have an everlasting lifespan and so-called time for them is nothing more than passing seasons. Shippey also notes in his book that Tolkien's understanding of Elfland and time flows is best demonstrated through his “Lothlórien”, a gigantic magical tree and known its place in the fairest forest realm of Elves during the third age of Middle Earth. In Lothlórien, Elves experience a totally different time flow, sometimes quicker and sometimes slower than in the outside world. However, this subtle time flow never confused the Elves due to their lifespan being too long and, therefore, their not being as sensitive to time flows as humans are. In order to explain this, Shippey mentions two ballads that are related to elves' territories: the traditional Scottish Border ballad "Thomas the Rhymer" (based on Thomas of Erceldoune, who lived 1220-97) and the Danish ballad named *Elverhøj*

---

<sup>91</sup> Shippey, 90.

(Elf-hill). In Thomas the Rhymer, a mortal man finds the entrance into Elfland by accident while composing poetry. He is seduced and abducted by the Queen of the Elves After spending seven years in her underground realm, he returns home and finds there isn't anyone that knows him, but only the cultural memory that many years before someone got lost in the Elf-hill. He also has the gift of prophecy, but is not believed.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, in order to emphasise that the time flows in Elfland and reality are different, everything outside Elfland pauses when music is played.

In *Lord of the Rings*, both Lothlórien and Legolas may not be the best example to explain temporality. Yet they provides us a clue that in Tolkien's world setting there is no unified timing system. Time flows are different even in a single world. Due to the generic reason, counting of years in *Lord of Rings* is privileged to ignore the cultural and historical background and more importantly, unlike parallel worlds in *His Dark Materials*, Middle Earth is a monistic and isolated realm in which the lack of reality and rationality will be balanced by literary fantasy. This defamiliarization will not reduce the reader's trust in the heterocosm because for readers a fantasy fiction already does nothing to summon reality. Hutcheon mentions that because of the genre, a mutual agreement has been made by both reader and author through the act of reading. However, the same theory may be found difficult to apply in researching *His Dark Materials* because in this fiction the worlds are assessable to each other, including the imaginary worlds such as the mulefa's and Gallivespian's worlds, overlapping with the semi-fictional reality and Lyra's parodied dystopia in which there is an enormous combination of what Pullman has fought against. In other words, the timing system compared to other fantasy works, "must be" simple because the spacing system is already too complex. This can be proved by observing similar legendary beings, namely witches and elves, particularly in terms of their perspectives on time and ways of time counting. Compared to elves in Lothlórien, there are also witches in *His Dark Materials* whose lifespan is also relatively much longer than that of human beings. Taking witches in *His Dark Materials* to compare with elves in *The Lord of the Rings* provides valuable evidence to study two different world settings in the texts. By studying Legolas and Serafina Pekkala on their understanding of time

---

<sup>92</sup> I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Susan Oliver, for a more detailed discussion of "Thomas the Rhymer." See also Ellen Kushner, *Thomas the Rhymer*, Tam Lin Balladry,< [http://tam-lin.org/stories/Thomas\\_the\\_Rhymer.html](http://tam-lin.org/stories/Thomas_the_Rhymer.html)> (accessed 25 July 2016).

and lives respectively, it can be induced that witches and elves are very similar in their life span, perspective on time and nature. Both of them are good looking, and are gifted with abilities to use magical powers. However unlike elves in Middle Earth, witches don't lose their immortality or change their understanding of time even if married to human beings; they can bear children through human intercourse and the action will not change their nature. Pekkala, for example, proclaimed that she had had a human baby forty years ago. She didn't ignore the different lifespan between humans and witches; it evidently shows that witches are very well aware of the difference and can even calculate it in a human way. Pekkala's accuracy and authenticity in time counting compared to Legolas's confusion not only enlarges the difference between Pullman's witch and Tolkien's elves but also shows us that in Pullman's world setting there is a more unified and systematic time system that is universal among the worlds. An interesting discussion in *Northern Lights* expresses this setting explicitly:

“I am three hundred years or more. Our oldest witch-mother is nearly a thousand... men pass in front of our eyes like butterflies, creatures of a brief season... I would have change my nature, I would have forsaken the star-tingle and the music of the Aurora; I would never have flown again- I would have given all that up in a moment, without a thought, to be a gyptian boat-wife and cook for him... But you cannot change what you are, only what you do. I am a witch. He is a human. I stayed with him for long enough to bear him a child... and he died in the great epidemic of forty years ago, the sickness that came out of the East.<sup>93</sup>”

This passage provides valuable information about the time setting in *His Dark Materials* and an opportunity to demonstrate Pullman's unique design of witches in his trilogy. It can be observed through Pekkala's talk about her own “nature” that witches themselves are clearly aware that they are biologically different from other human beings, even though it is possible for humans and witches to bear offspring. The numbers of “three hundred or more”, “nearly a thousand” and “forty years ago”

---

<sup>93</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 259.

altogether expresses that for witches in *His Dark Materials* time is concrete. Modules of time are measurable and mechanical and witches are happy to preserve their memories by means of this way of counting time. Even though their lifespan is as long as elves in Lothlórien, in *His Dark Materials* witches evidently are less confused about passing time and the swiftness of it. This can also be evidence that Lyra's world in the Victorian era never coincides with another world, since universes in *His Dark Materials* follow the same stream of time, and none is quicker or slower than another. The questions I wish to answer are why and how Pullman's version of the Victorian era is demonstrated and made possible in literary terms.

Religiously, the end of the Victorian era also indicates a symbolic model of religious liberation. People of that time who received intensive and long-term religious influence from both Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism tried to prevent a political status in which church and governance cooperated and were closely interdependent. The social values and agenda of Britain in the meantime were increasingly liberal with shifts in the direction of political and industrial reform. In many aspects of this period, Britain played a leading role in the world and hence the Victorian period was symbolically a pronoun of patriotic honour and national confidence. Therefore, pausing Lyra's world in this historical era to some extent fulfils Pullman's anti-Christian motive and recalls the pride of being a British writer, though it also causes the time fragment in Pullman's world setting in *His Dark Materials*; this fragment can also be understood as a form of divergent or counterfactual history.

### **1.2.3 With and Without John Calvin: the Definition of Original Sin under the “Tossing Coin” Principle**

To explain the existence of a divergent historical background and make it reasonable, Pullman dismissed theological or mythological solutions in favour of mathematical (probability) methods that make his worlds a result of “choice making.” In other words, all the evolutionary paths and histories in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* are arbitrary. Lord Asriel in the novel explains this idea as “tossing coins” tricks. Different decisions made in important historical moments result in completely

different histories. Lord Asriel explains to Lyra how multiple worlds come into existence:

Take the example of tossing a coin . . . If it comes down heads that means that the possibility of it coming down tails has collapsed. . . . But on another world, it does come down tails. And when that happens, the two worlds split apart.<sup>94</sup>

In *His Dark Materials*, this is called “possibilities-collapses” theory, and means that when one possibility stands, the others will automatically collapse. The theory is based on the process in particle physics known as structure formation, which led to the creation of galaxies and other cosmological bodies following the Big Bang. In this “act of choosing”, it can be found that the chosen changes in the novel have determined the world's historical and political environment ever since. So that a brand new stage of history is thereby created, to be compared with reality. The religious development of Christian Europe in parallel worlds in *His Dark Materials* can be treated as a demonstration of the result of “choosing” in such a way. The key man is the leading figure in the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin (1509-1564), who in our reality was known as an influential French theologian and a pastor of the sixteenth century. In both the real and in Pullman's counterfactual history, this person and his choices become the fulcrum of a very important turning point between the two primary worlds. By comparing the real and fictional religious history in the novel, it can be observed that John Calvin is the best example for explaining the divergent history that Pullman has intentionally made. John Calvin was also a polemicist. His anti-Catholic support to reformers such as Philipp Melanchthon and Heinrich Bullinger brought about considerable change to Christian Europe during the Protestant Reformation of the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>95</sup> His religious perspective was

---

<sup>94</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 308-309.

<sup>95</sup> N.P. Williams, “Lecture VII. ‘Original Sin’ Re-interpreted,” *The Ideas Of The Fall And Of Original Sin* (London: Longmans, 1924), 447-468. See also “Calvinism, n.”. OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/26578?redirectedFrom=Calvinism> (accessed 26 July 2016).

influenced by Augustine, particularly the latter's discourse on covenant theology and the interpretation of Original Sin, which in *His Dark Materials* Pullman treats as the thematic core of the novel, for it results from the fall of man. In *His Dark Materials* Pullman's theology is constructed over this divergent counterfactual: with and without John Calvin's influence. Consequently, to research Pullman's world setting we need to understand Calvin's doctrine of original sin. We can then further analyse how this notion of a predestined human sinfulness is represented in term of Daemon.

In order to understand the connection between Pullman's contexts and his doctrine that undermines "free will", there is a need to mention St. Augustine's interpretation of original sin. In contemporary studies, the development of accounts of original sin is usually divided into pre-Augustine and post-Augustine periods. Henri Blocher in his *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* has suggested that original sin in the pre-Augustine period and Jewish theologians adopted Gnostic interspersion, believing that we share Adam's sinfulness as a collective guilt that is inherited and unavoidable. Even though in the Old Testament Adam and Eve's "responsibility for the fall" is affirmed, Christian doctrine before Augustine is more frequently to be categorized as the "originating original sin" rather than Augustine's "originated" one.

These two types of sin are both associated with the fall from Eden, yet they sharply differ over the question as to who sinned. Discussion of the term "original" has tended to focus on the biblical event itself, particularly on Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit and thus his bringing death into the world, rather than to question human nature or how this sin may continue to influence humans as something original about them. Adolescence is a particularly sensitive period of development in these discussions. For pre-Augustine theologians, original sin is not born with humans; it is purely external and treated as a result of the historical and biblical event brought about by the first human, Adam. It affects human beings when they start to have sexual desires. This kind of pre-Augustine Adamic Sinfulness<sup>96</sup>, according to Blocher,

---

<sup>96</sup> Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 32. See also F.R. Tennant, "The Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin in the Fathers before Augustine," *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 273-306. Both Blocher and Tennant see St. Augustine as a turning point in the doctrine of original sin. Yet it remains arguable whether adding "pre" or "post" to Augustine is necessary. Tennant suggests in his book that Augustine may be one of

is universal in humankind, and present ‘from youth’<sup>97</sup>. Blocher explains how Orthodox pre-Augustine theology emphasises the importance of adolescence to original sin:

Children are born innocent, but as they approach adolescence they are increasingly able to handle abstract ideas, and ultimately, the realization of sin and guilt. It is awareness of guilt that causes sin to kill spirituality. <sup>98</sup>

This youth-centred and youth-originated sinfulness is important to Pullman’s trilogy for teenagers. It is not really as “original” as is claimed, since in the doctrine of pre-Augustine theology this kind of sin may “grow” and “develop” once an individual starts to realize that he/she is no longer a child.

Similar interpretations of original sin are clearly shown in *His Dark Materials* through the Magisterium in the counterfactual history from which Pullman has removed John Calvin and the Reformation. Without the influence of the Reformation, the Magisterium successfully adapts this kind of original sin and tries varieties of methods to prevent it from “infecting” teenagers in Lyra’s world. The cutting of daemons in the General Oblation Board’s Experimental station of Bolvangar is one example, where the staff members test children’s daemons and try to separate them physically by applying experimental techniques. Daemon in this context is the physical manifestation of original sin and the “settlement” of adolescence becomes the proof of “pollution” and “infection”. In order to cure and remove sin, the Board invented the silver guillotine equipped with an electrical blade that can cut the

or the most influential theologians, but not the first to doubt Adamic sinfulness. Before Augustine, St. Paul is the leading authority who suggests that we inherit Adam’s sin. “He [St. Paul] has been taken to imply that all Adam’s race have been ‘constituted sinners’ by imputation.” (Tennant, 265) However, there are also Greek Apologists, such as Justin Martyr, who “speak … strongly of the universality of sin… and he [Martyr] alludes to an evil inclination which is in the nature of every man” (Tennant, 275).

<sup>97</sup> Blocher, 24.

<sup>98</sup> Blocher, 24.

connection between humans and their daemon. The conversation between Mrs. Coulter and Lyra in Bolvangar also treats adolescence as the key to sin:

“Dust is something bad, something wrong, something evil and wicked. Grown-ups and their daemons are infected with Dust so deeply that it’s too late for them. They can’t be helped... But a quick operation on children means they’re safe from it. Dust just won’t stick to them again. They’re safe and happy and... All that happens is a little cut, and then everything’s peaceful. For ever! You see, your daemon’s a wonderful friend and companion when you’re young, but at the age we call puberty, the age you’re coming to very soon, darling, daemons bring all sort of troublesome thoughts and feelings, and that’s what let Dust in. A quick little operation before that and you’re never troubled again.”<sup>99</sup>

This passage from *Northern Lights* reveals several important clues that play significant roles in Pullman’s cosmology. Firstly it defines what kind of original sin *His Dark Materials* refers to, and also provides an explanation as to how the author makes it possible through technology. The passage demonstrates the Magisterium’s viewpoint, which coincides closely with an older Catholic version of original sin that abominates the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis. This idea of being severed from original sin is fundamental to the three novels of *His Dark Materials* and to any dystopia with a highly theological core. Yet the thematic question is: should they (body, soul and sin) be separable? As a writer, Pullman creates a platform for readers to compare the world of human nature, sex, and original sin with and without the intervention of theological doctrine. The negative adjectives, without adornment or coloration, such as “bad,” “wrong,” “evil” and “wicked” directly connect the concept of daemons, the fall, original sin and all the ensuing destruction. However, in reality, the interpretation of original sin, including all the developments accruing from John Calvin’s reform in the sixteenth century, becomes relatively more human centred. Calvin was influenced by St. Augustine of Hippo, who argued that sinfulness is originally part of human nature, and not merely inherited from Adam and Eve.

---

<sup>99</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 235.

Augustine's definition of original sin was strongly opposed by the doctrine of Pelagianism, which maintains that free will can choose between good and evil<sup>100</sup>. Both the Catholic Church and Jewish theologians reject Augustine's account of original sin and insist that it is Adam's disobedience that brought death into the world and made us mortal. Blocher also indicates that unlike Adamic Sinfulness, this kind of "Natural Sinfulness" has its origin in the Greek word *physis*, which means nature and is frequently used with original sin in Philo's *De confusione Linguarum (The Confusion of Dialect)*. Philo's use of the word *physis* to describe original sin to some extent suggests that this kind of evil is "innate" and "co-natural" with humans as part of their nature. According to Blocher, the reprehensive passages in Philo's work can be found in *De confusione Linguarum*, 17: 'Hē mochthēra *physis*' (the corrupted nature), and also in *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit*, 55-57: ta symphta kaka tou genous hēmōn (those who lived by the blood and pleasure of the flesh).<sup>101</sup> In Ephesians, the word nature is also found in reference to guilt accruing from God's wrath. More importantly and essentially, this evil and human nature are bounded as a

<sup>100</sup> "Pelagianism, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/139817?redirectedFrom=Pelagianism> (accessed 29 July 2016). See also Michael Mendelson, "Saint Augustine," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2012 Edition), <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/augustine/>> (accessed 30 July 2016). and Dermot Moran, "John Scottus Eriugena", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/scottus-eriugena/>> (accessed 28 July 2016). In the OED, Pelagianism is the doctrine of Pelagius and his followers; belief in or advocacy of these doctrines. In the SEP there is no direct article about Pelagian. However, articles related to John Calvin or St. Augustine always mention the Pelagian heresy against the doctrines of Predestination and Original Sin. Pelagian theologians reject any form of divine predestination to both grace and damnation. Their theological logic is easy: "Since God is outside time, He cannot be said to *fore-know* or to *pre-destine*, terms that involve temporal predicates" (qtd. Moran). This suggests that humans can live without original sin and eventually reach salvation simply by their good will and behavioral efforts. As a result, Pelagian theologians are often treated as heresy by Calvinists, who believe in St. Augustine and in John Calvin's doctrine of predestination and original sin.

<sup>101</sup> Blocher, 25.

combination not just of sex and desire, but of free-will that directs humans, and in this case the pagan Ephesians, indulge themselves in lust and promiscuity:

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.<sup>102</sup>

Desire, thoughts and all the other biological reactions treated in Ephesians have clearly become evidence of humans' collective sin. The word nature in “[we] were by nature” in KJV again was translated from the Greek word *physei*. Unlike physics which addresses natural forces, *physei* is more often used in contexts that describe race and ethnicity. If we try to link this sentence with its previous one, we may find it interesting that the word “flesh” somehow suggests a material part of human nature while “*physei*” refers to more immaterial ones. Besides the common use of flesh that means the body, in many contexts including old English and Greek, the word flesh can also refer to “family,” “tribe” or even “frailty” which suggests an ethical connection to the human race. In the *OED*, flesh means one's kindred descendants;<sup>103</sup> therefore, flesh here can be interpreted as either biological substance or as ethical proofs of “sons of wrath”. For Augustine and for Calvin, our body and sin and the identity of being a human are indivisible in the Bible. Besides Ephesians, there are many other biblical passages to suggest that the relation between sin and human nature is close. For instance, in Psalm, the sin is “shapen” and “conceived” from one's motherhood. This kind of invisible sin, hermeneutically, is a result of visible bodily inheritance.<sup>104</sup> Blocher's morphological study of the word *physei* brings out more valuable clues in understanding the close relationship between nature and evil in

---

<sup>102</sup> Ephesians 2:3 KJV.

<sup>103</sup> "flesh, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/71460?rskey=Bq8fuF&result=2> (accessed 29 July 2016). 7-1 suggests “one's near kindred or descendants.” Several examples are given. For instance, in the *Holy Bible* (Wycliffe E.V.) (1850) Isa Lviii7: Thi flesh thou shalt not despise. Or in 1553 T. WILSON *Arte Rhetorique* (1580) 71 Your grace, lackyng twoo suche portions of your owne fleshe [your two sons].

<sup>104</sup> Psalm 51:5 KJV: Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

hermeneutics, not with new evidence, but a totally different implication of using the same quote to understand Bible studies in Jewish and non-Jewish commentaries on Ephesians. Pullman's use of John Calvin to lead the Magisterium is dangerously doubled edged. Although not recognized by Blocher, the reasons for the ambivalence arise from St. Augustine's doctrine of predestination and the historical Calvin's doctrine of "double" predestination.

Predestination is a theological term that suggests that every event is foreseen, and predestined by the will of God;<sup>105</sup> in terms of this, salvation is accordingly only meaningful to chosen individuals. This religious determination enlarges God's omniscience ultimately, and is paradoxical in terms of what in the Bible God has claimed about free will. Clear evidence of predestination can be found in *Romans* 8:28-30 which states:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.<sup>106</sup>

By observing this biblical quote, it can be noted that the words "foreknow" and the repeated uses of "he did predestinate" doubly confirm God's absolutism, which for Pullman is the worst part of religion. In the premises of predestination, even though humans are created with free will, everything that is already predestined cannot be changed by a human. In the third century, the concept of predestination was endorsed by Augustine of Hippo and became one of the most essential doctrines of Christianity. Calvin, profoundly influenced by St. Augustine, redefines predestination

---

<sup>105</sup> Michael Mendelson, "Saint Augustine," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/augustine/>> (accessed 25 July 2016).

<sup>106</sup> Romans 8:28-30 KJV.

into a “double” predestination, which asserts that not only salvation but also damnation is predestined. Calvin believed that before the world was created, a particular group of people was elected for salvation, and that others would be condemned to hell.

Until today, Calvin’s doctrine of double predestination is still hotly debated. The most common argument is: if one’s sin is settled by destiny long prior to actual sinful behaviour or intention, should one still be responsible for one’s damnation, since individuals can do nothing against their predestined fate? Even though in terms of original sin Calvin shows a relatively more enlightened perspective than those who believe the sin is a part of human nature, his discourse of predestination and unconditional election has made his theology excessively absolute and nonnegotiable. By creating a counterfactual history in *His Dark Materials*, Pullman’s John Calvin and his doctrines are planted directly and deeply into the dystopia represented. The Magisterium church dominates political power and economic resources. Based on the Magisterium’s absolute divine right, the clergy and Bolvangar scholars can thus legally kidnap children, conduct research on them, and even murder them. For Pullman, these activities that disregard human rights are a sign of God’s absolutism.

Yet it is still worth mentioning that, based on such a special (counterfactual) religious context in which the Reformation never took place, the way that the *Holy Bible* is interpreted is very different from elsewhere. When Lord Asriel explains original sin to Lyra by reading chapter three of Genesis to her, the impact of this divergent history is interestingly shown. In the *Holy Bible* the original text of the fall is:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Genesis 3:6 KJV.

The original version of the fall is revised in a more inspiring approach in *His Dark Materials*. In traditional readings, awareness and self-consciousness emerge when Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruits, whilst in *His Dark Materials* Pullman adds the elements of Daemon and Dust into the text. There is in consequence an obvious intention to bind original sin with settlement of an individual's daemon, which the Magisterium has treated as a physical proof of the fall. Settlement in the novel is a term to explain that only in Lyra's world does one's daemon no longer change to another type of animal, and always stay in a fixed form, by reflecting its human character, usually acquired in adolescence. For the Magisterium church that believes in Natural Sinfulness (as it is influenced by John Calvin), there is a strong connection between sexual desire, original sin, and the daemon's settlement. Hence the plot of chapter three of Genesis is similar to that in *His Dark Materials*. It is rewritten thus:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for good, and that is was pleasant to her 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. But when the man and the woman knew their own daemons, they knew that a great change had come upon them, for until that moment it had seemed that they were at one with all the creatures of the earth and the air, and there was no difference between. 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...<sup>108</sup>

By contrasting the two versions of the fall, it can be found that Pullman's, unlike that of the traditional Genesis, focuses on the part of "the great change after eating the forbidden fruits" rather than on the disobedience itself. Daemon is the outside manifestation of one's soul in animal form in Lyra's world, and of course it can be treated as part of human nature. Until "they knew that a great change had come upon

---

<sup>108</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 304-305.

them”, Pullman’s first pair of humans in his version of Genesis start to gain the ability to talk to their own souls. Even though for the Magisterium this change makes an individual’s daemon the physical evidence of original sin, the interaction between the human and his daemon is the first event that happens after the fall. For readers it is more like a moment of self-awakening or enlightenment, and it perfectly echoes one of the author’s most important purposes in writing this trilogy: to reinterpret original sin again and decriminalize it.

This decriminalization can be found more overtly in the other version of genesis, though the mulefa never call it genesis, they call it a “historical story”. In my dissertation I would still call this the mulefa’s rewriting of the story of genesis for the purpose of making a contrast with the actual book of Genesis and that of the Magisterium. In this version, the role of the serpent is designed as a wise and enlightening mentor who “teaches” and “guides” the mulefa how to live better by using the seed-pod. To compare and contrast with the previous two, I only quote the area of the plot that is similar to the original process of the fall:

The story tells that the snake said What do you know? What do you remember? What do you see ahead? And she said Nothing, nothing, nothing. So the snake said Put your foot through the hole in the seed-pod where I was playing, and you will become wise. So she put a foot in where the snake had been. And the oil entered her foot and made her see more clearly than before, and the first thing she saw was the sraf [dust]. It was so strange and pleasant that she wanted to share it at once with all her kindred. So she and her mate took the first ones, and they discovered that they knew who they were, they knew they were mulefa and not grazers. They gave each other names. They named themselves mulefa. They named the seed-tree, and all the creatures and plants.<sup>109</sup>

Here the traditional story is made strange in the Mulefa world. The forbidden fruit is replaced by the seed-pods, and Adam and Eve are replaced by other creatures. The context is reinterpreted in an entirely positive perspective in terms of which sinfulness doesn’t exist anymore. As I have suggested, the world of the mulefa preserves

---

<sup>109</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 778.

Pullman's alternative or deepest utopia, which very different from another utopia, namely the Republic of Heaven, that Lord Asriel is pursuing in the primary narrative. If there were anything that can differentiate the two, it would be the following. The mulefa are utterly material, for they have a physical realm without language, religion, and human civilization, while the Republic of Heaven is only an ideal political status and until the end of the trilogy still a concept. It is an interesting and parody-like story, but should never be under-estimated.

#### **1.2.4 Exceptions and Shared Damage in Multiple Worlds**

Even though Lyra's world is historically stuck in the Victorian era and, as a fictional counterfactual, becomes religiously conservative, that doesn't mean the time flow in this world is stopped. On the contrary, more evidence shows that this world synchronizes with others. This can be found not just in historical moments, but also during devastating natural disasters, which became collective nightmares in reality; for example, the Big Flood on the east coast of England. On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1953, because of a storm tide that combined with a spring tide and European windstorm over the North Sea, the combination of the wind, high tide and low pressure caused extensive flooding in Belgium, the Netherlands, and the UK. In the UK it was the most devastating natural disaster recorded over the last five hundred years. Over 1,600 kilometers of coastline was damaged. 30,000 people were evacuated from their home towns. According to records, in the UK 307 people died on land and 224 at sea, and the total financial damage was estimated at £50 million at the time.

Interestingly, we are wrong if we think that the parallel between different worlds only means that these worlds are geographically and ecologically similar to each other: in *Northern Lights* the same flood strikes as occurred in Lyra's world in 1953. In order to describe this John Faa mixed it with other two divergent historical events and called them altogether "our history":

For them as has forgotten our history, it were Lord Asriel who  
allow gyptian boats free passage on the canals through his property. It  
were Lord Asriel who defeated the Watercourse Bill in Parliament, to  
our great and lasting benefit. And it were Lord Asriel who fought day

and night in floods of '53, and plunged headlong in the water twice to pull out young Ruud and Nellie Koopman.<sup>110</sup>

The above quote combines two artificial historical events and one natural disaster. It demonstrates the characteristic way Pullman deals with time and history in his world setting, as well as his inbuilt contradictions. In this hybrid cosmology of real and unreal events mixed in the same time and space, there is one point worthy of discussion regarding the tuber-form I offered as a premise to this chapter: the incomplete synchronization of the parallel worlds. For Pullman as author, 1953's flood explains how he fulfils his wish to write a fantasy trilogy realistically by recalling the collective memories of Britain. Lyra's world is really a parallel cosmos very similar to our own. On one hand, the existence of the Big Flood shows an harmonious parallel between Lyra's and Will's worlds, which emphasises the strong connection between the two. On the other it reveals deficiency and difficulty. It is highly questionable that there could be uncountable billions of parallel universes because other universes are marginalized at the same time. The Big Flood was caused by natural climate and cannot be determined by the "Coin-tossing" principle that Pullman used to produce divergent history. There is no direct evidence that the same flood can be "produced" and occur in other minor worlds such as those of the mulefa and Cittàgazze, which in Pullman's world system are two further parallel worlds. Hence it becomes arguable whether there really are parallels in Pullman's cosmology or whether, on the contrary, there are hierarchical layers among the worlds. Logically, if the parallels only exist in Lyra and Will's world, the fact that other worlds in *His Dark Materials* subordinate the two primary worlds and travel from Will's or Lyra's world into the Mulefa world through the window is much the same as entering Narnia through the wardrobe, then Pullman's cosmology is similar to that of Tolkien or Lewis, both of whom have been criticized by Pullman as manifestations of negative escapism. However, the bombing in *The Amber Spyglass* in the meantime makes this imbalance rather complicated. In order to stop the fall, the Magisterium decides to assassinate Lyra by launching a tracking bomb. While the bombing in Lyra's world creates a huge pit and results in a significant loss of Dust, at the same time it causes severe damage to the seed-pod trees in the Mulefa world:

---

<sup>110</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 117.

Every fiber in the trunk, the bark, the roots, seemed to cry out separately against this murder. But it fell and fell, all the great length of it smashed its way out of the grove and seemed to lean towards Mary before crashing into the ground like a wave against a breakwater, and the colossal trunk rebounded up a little way, and a settled down finally, with a groaning of torn wood... And of the two, the Dust was flowing more quickly and at much greater volume. In fact the whole sky seemed to be flowing with it, a great inexorable flood pouring out of the world, out of all the worlds, into some ultimate emptiness.<sup>111</sup>

The physical destruction of the seed-pod trees does explain one thing: in *His Dark Materials* the parallel universes do have a material connection to each other. The vast amount of Dust that flew from the pit in Lyra's world results in serious physical damage to the plants in the Mulefa world. To some extent the bombing and the torment of the seed-pod trees are made relevant, which (more exactly speaking) they are not. The action of "murder" and reactions such as "groaning and crying out" suggests an intensive interaction between two parties. However if we try to understand the correlation of the two we find that the murderer (the tracking bomb) and that which is murdered (the seed-pods trees) are not even in the same universe or aware of each other's existence. Both of these two objects are responding to each other through a medium that makes everything in *His Dark Materials* associated, namely Dust. In the second chapter of my dissertation I provide a more detailed account of Dust, but here I only wish to display the paradoxically parallel and non-parallel status in the two primary worlds and other worlds, particularly that of the mulefa. Even though in 1.1.2 and in the tuber-form I have placed the Mulefa world in a marginal panel, since it is too different from others and has a totally independent ecological system and path of evolution, that doesn't mean that the Mulefa world can be isolated from the others. In fact, apart from the bombing there is other evidence to show that these worlds, even though placed in different panels, are still physically connected by Dust. If we reevaluate Pullman's cosmology by observing the way they are connected, the only exception will be the two primary worlds; between Lyra's and

---

<sup>111</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 958-959.

Will's world the situation is different from that among others. Despite there being a significant difference between them based on the divergent histories that are determined by "Coin-tossing" principles, the frames of space in the two primary worlds, including geographical backgrounds, evolutionary paths, cultural development and even habits and customs, are identically synchronized. Through the creation of Dust, worlds in *His Dark Materials* are forced to be linked, however farfetched this may seem. Some are totally imaginary yet still bound together. To a degree this does enlarge Dust's metaphysical value, as I will stress in the next chapter. Yet at a deeper level, it is dangerous to call the worlds in the design of the trilogy "parallel" while some of them are divided by divergent histories and some by different geographical landscapes.

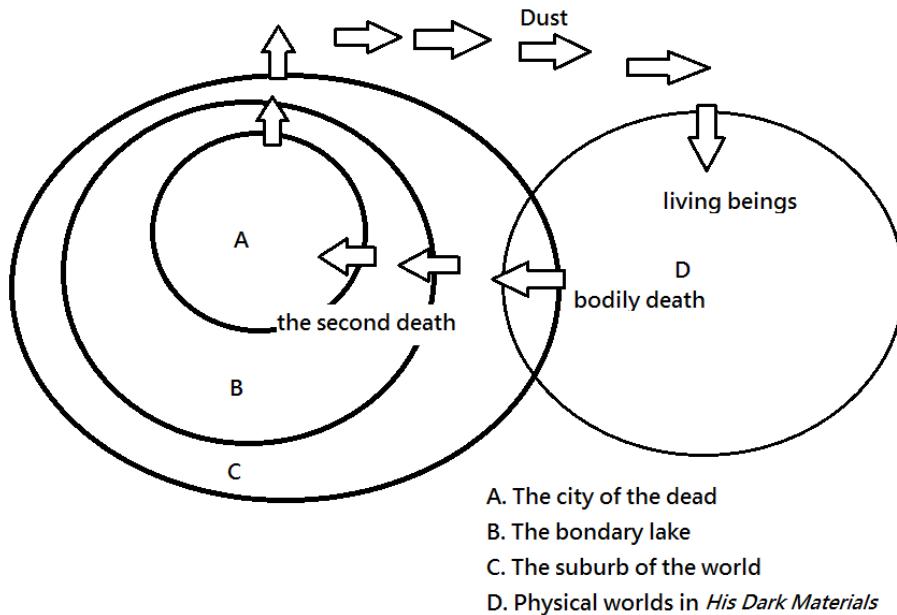
Even though there are deficiencies, Pullman's cosmology does provide contemporary writers with a good role model for dealing with the physical worlds in terms of a hybrid of realistic and fantastic elements. These worlds become a perfect stage, allowing him to exercise and demonstrate his atheistic thematic concerns and what he earlier proclaimed to be his ultimate motivation for writing *His Dark Materials*: namely, to write a fantastic trilogy realistically. However, there is another example of how he "deals with metaphysical place physically". In the trilogy, there is an important debate that concerns the issue of the "afterlife" in a very particular realm. This realm is neither that which is called heaven or hell in the Holy Bible, nor the same as inferno or paradiso in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It doesn't borrow names from any other religious texts this time. It is called simply and directly "the world of the dead".

### **1.3.0 The World of the Dead.**

Ideologically, the world of the dead is definitely worth an independent chapter for two reasons: first, it alone explains Pullman's perspective of the afterlife in *His Dark Materials* since heaven is physically concretized as a place for angels and the Authority to dwell. Additionally, there is a particular reason why Pullman doesn't use the word "hell" to describe this place. For a writer like Pullman, who very often borrows words from the Bible or other Literature, it is assumed that there must be a

reason for him to reject using terms such as heaven and hell to name the world that functions like those above. Second, in the structure of Pullman's cosmology that I drew, the world of the dead is the only shared destination of creatures from every universe, no matter how their bodies and souls are designed. For example, in this world there are not only dead people from Lyra's and Will's world, who coexist in an identical way, but also from the Mulefa world of creatures who are not even humans and don't have daemons. This world ignores time and space, yet it physically exists, and its entrance overlaps with every single world that can be entered with the help of the subtle knife. Therefore in the following sections there are two things to be researched: a) In Pullman's cosmology of *His Dark Materials*, how does he demonstrate a completed unified circle of life among so many universes, particularly in those in which creatures are not even designed with souls? b). The idea of heaven and hell. The world of the dead can be treated as a replacement of traditional Christian heaven and hell. In *His Dark Materials* heaven or the Clouded Mountain is physicalized as a military fortress rather than as a metaphysical realm of divine goodness. Traditional Christian dualism includes a negative afterlife, hell, in which the dead are represented as condemned and suffering. Towards the end of this chapter, I aim to display a clearer overview of Pullman's cosmology and furthermore to observe both the strength and the weakness of the pattern. Furthermore, I attempt to suggest that the way the world of the dead correlates with other worlds in tuber-form is not merely "another tuber" but a soil that provides theological nutrition to Pullman's atheist cosmology in the trilogy.

### **1.3.1 The Endless Circle of Life: Pullman's Fulfillment of his Dusty Atheistic Cosmology**



The above is the simple structure of the world of the dead and how it works with other physical worlds; with this figure, it would be clearer to see a traffic flow regarding the whole process of Pullman's endless cycle of life in his cosmology. In Pullman's cosmology there isn't really a destination: all in the parallel universes are following the same cycle unless they are "stuck" in some way due to their free wills. A point worth mentioning is that in this cycle bodily death is only the end of biological functioning in the physical world. In other words, in *His Dark Materials* people can die twice. The first death is subjective to how one's body and soul maintain themselves or don't, while the second death happens dramatically and mythically when one is transported from the suburb to the city of the dead. For example, in Lyra's world, the death of a person is determined by whether his daemon vanishes. In a normal situation, the death is confirmed once the separation of one's body and soul has taken place. In this world daemon is the physical manifestation of souls: hence dying can also be treated as a process of the daemon leaving its human and returning to its raw materials, namely dust. At the moment that one's daemon has faded out like atomic smoke, one's consciousness will be transformed similarly, and one's body left in the original world. Despite the fact that everything in the world of the dead is the same, the color of that world is gray and dim. However, this is not really the world of the dead, but only the entrance that will guide the dead to use their "instinct" to find the correct way forward. This plot is described by Pullman in a

fascinating way as a “migrant-bird-like movement”. All the dead people are queuing and wandering in an invisible direction, peacefully and silently:

As they moved on, they could see a movement on the horizon to left and right, and ahead of them a dirty-coloured smoke was rising slowly to add its darkness to the dismal air. This movement was people, or ghosts: in lines or pairs or groups or alone, but all empty-handed, hundreds and thousands of men and women and children were drifting over the plain towards the source of smoke<sup>112</sup>.

This movement combines the image of darkness, crowdedness and a sense of an invisible discipline on the part of the dead. To some extent it echoes what Balthamos said about the world of the dead. In the trilogy, Pullman rejects using the name of heaven, which structurally differentiates his world from traditional Christian doctrine, suggesting an alternative notion of the afterlife, or more accurately, a parody of that which we find in Greek mythology. Even though according to the angel Balthamos the world of the dead was created by the Authority and was called a “prison camp”, in many ways it can be treated positively as the extension of Pullman’s interpretation of souls in the physical world. Its importance is particularly enhanced in terms of the significant debate held by a Magisterium priest and others who seek an alternative afterlife. The structure of the world of the dead has three layers. Where the dead souls gather isn’t really the centre of the world, but only a suburb on the outer layer of this world. This layer is overlapping, with countless billions of universes as an entrance to the world of the dead. In order to enter the city of the dead, there is a wooden gate on a stone wall aside the lake, guarded by harpies who are also legendary creatures in Greek Mythology. Interestingly, if we try to compare the world of the dead in *His Dark Materials* with the underworld in Greek Mythology, besides the harpies there are other geographical similarities between the two. The lake for example, which is described in the following way, “[t]he oily, scummy water lay still in front of them, an occasional ripple breaking languidly on the pebbles<sup>113</sup>,” plays an important role as a parody of the river Styx. In Greek Mythology Hades is surrounded by four famous

---

<sup>112</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 799.

<sup>113</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 822.

rivers: Styx, Phlegethon, Acheron, Lethe, and Cocytus. Styx is of particular importance because, by boarding boats on the river Styx and a marsh also called Styx, with the help of Charon the dead souls can reach the centre of Hades. In *His Dark Materials*, this lake is functionally similar to Styx because the second death happens during the journey to the city of the dead. It is the only way to the wooden gate. If the first death stops the functions of one's physical body, the second death incurs withdrawal of one's psychological inner voice. In Will's world, this inner voice is called soul, while in Lyra's world it is called daemon. Before boarding the boat, Lyra is forced by the boatman to leave her daemon on the coast so that when the boat moves further, she will undergo the pain caused by the separation of human and daemon. Those who don't have a daemon also undergo an equally great pain while the boat is moving on the lake:

Part of it was physical. It felt as if an iron hand had gripped his heart and was pulling it out between his ribs, so that he pressed his hands to the place and vainly tried to hold it in. It was far deeper and far worse than the pain of losing his fingers. But it was mental, too: something secret and private was being dragged into the open where it had no wish to be, and Will was nearly overcome by a mixture of pain and shame and fear and self-reproach, because he himself had caused it.<sup>114</sup>

Pain, shame, fear and self-reproach demonstrate how the feeling of the second death is pervasive. Coincidentally, this second death, which is mixed with bodily and mental pain and guilt, is made relevant to the doctrines of Judaism and to Christianity's concept of an afterlife. In the book of Revelation in the New Testament, those who are "unsaved", such as materialists, unbelievers or atheists will suffer a second death. For Protestants, this death is of particular importance as it is related to original sin. In representing the process of death, Pullman as an unbeliever is self-deprecating. Even though he rejects using the word hell, his world of the dead is evidently influenced by Christian doctrines.

It can be seen that the whole process of observing the traffic flow of dead souls in *His Dark Materials* is a parody and rewriting of earlier traditions; after wandering

---

<sup>114</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 826-827.

and gathering at a ferry point upon a lake in the suburb of the dead, all the dead souls wait to be transported to the opposite side of the lake, an action that accompanies their own death. Though the traditional image of death is horrifying and hopeless, Pullman in his trilogy does not change these stereotype atmospheres. He repeatedly uses dead colors and pictures such as gray, black, smoke and dirt. This resembles what we came to realise about his reaction to dust as a common noun. However, Pullman's "deaths" are designed as a kind and customized assistance to every living being while they are still alive. This difference and the later debate over Dust that I will discuss in detail in my second chapter, raises significant ideological concerns in terms of Pullman's idea of an afterlife and, furthermore, the ultimate return of the dead to Great Nature.

Pullman's cycle reverses the negative image of "hell" and "death". He takes a rather positive approach to the inevitable necessity of death. However, the creation of the world of the dead is never just a way of differentiating his life cycle from what happens in Christian doctrine. In the last half of the chapter entitled "No Way Out", Lyra was made a Moses-like prophet, leading millions of ghosts to escape "the prison" and return to Nature. Here we have another ironical parody, this time of Exodus. It is a march that again fulfils Pullman's anti-Christian agenda and advertises his atheistic cosmology. It is attended by interracial and interspecies millions. Taking place at the end of life, it is a protest demonstration against the Authority:

So they set off, and the numberless millions of ghosts began to follow them. Behind them, too far back for the children to see, other inhabitants of the world of the dead had heard what was happening, and were coming to join the great march. Tialys and Salmakia flew back to look, and were overjoyed to see their own people there, and every other kind of conscious being who had ever been punished by the Authority with exile and death. Among them were beings who didn't look human at all, beings like mulefa, whom Mary Malone would have recognized and stranger ghosts as well.<sup>115</sup>

Structurally, Pullman's world of the dead juxtaposes materials from Greek Mythology, the Holy Bible, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It not only exhibits the last

---

<sup>115</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 855.

part of his the dust-centred cosmology and combines with his physical worlds into a systematically significant whole; more importantly it clearly proves what Bradley and Tate said about the New Atheism. Functionally with the world of the dead, World system in *His Dark Materials* can work (or live) as an organic plant that every tuber (worlds) can absorb nutrition from the soil (the world of dead) and exercise in an endless cycle. Philosophically, it also becomes the very core of Pullman's New Atheistic agenda by providing an alternative way of "decriminalising original sin". Though the world of dead only appears in five chapters of the third volume of the trilogy, its significance to the whole should not be undervalued.

#### **1.4.0 Conclusion**

Researching the "worlds" of *His Dark Materials* provides materials for studying Pullman's writing strategies, showing how his "fictional frame" can vividly interact with the narrative and metanoia. As a fantasy work, the complexity and the systematic world setting produce more metanoia than children's literature normally can. With techniques such as parody, affect linking, and use of counterfactual history, Pullman connects his fictional world frame with reality. His anti-Christian agenda attracts more than his target readership of teenagers, to include critics and scholars. Whilst more critical attention has been concentrated on Pullman's physical world settings, religious beliefs or even political affiliation, it can be disputed whether his work can compete with other masterpieces of fantasy such as Tolkien's *Lord of The Rings* and Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*. Up to September 2015 there had been thirty-five books concerned with Pullman's different worlds. Through keeping on writing, Pullman exhibits perfectly what he meant about the power of storytelling, echoing Milton's "His dark materials to create more worlds."

Within this chapter, my study of Pullman's cosmology with its tuber form examines how these parallel universes can cooperate and interact in a single time and space, to underpin the big and multiple narratives of *His Dark Materials*. What I have attempted to display is a detailed observation of the world settings in *His Dark Materials*, not just as the frame of the narrative, but as an organic and living whole constructed by many interdependent worlds with meanings.

## Chapter Two: Dust

Both read the Bible day and night,  
But thou read'st black where I read white.

-William Blake<sup>116</sup>

### **2.0.0 Introducing the Chapter**

The second chapter of my research aims to study the most important element in *His Dark Materials*, namely Dust. Whether it is called Dust, shadow, dark matter, or Higgs Boson<sup>117</sup>, Dust plays a significant role as it replaces the Authority who claimed to be the creator of the universe in Pullman's fictional worlds. There are two main sections in this chapter. In the first I construct a model to show how the common noun "dust" is transferred to literary "Dust" and also argue that Dust is not just a "status of being", but rather a "process of becoming." In the second, the research focuses on Original Sin for its high correlation to Pullmanic Dust, which is also known as the manifestation and materialized image of original sin. The goal of this chapter is to suggest a point of view that through promoting and purifying Dust, Pullman declares a counter-interpretation of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, which in turn becomes the main theme of *His Dark Materials*.

### **2.0.1 Dust, Literature Review, and Moral Sensibility**

---

<sup>116</sup> William Blake, "The Everlasting Gospel," *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, ed. Nicholson & Lee (Oxford: Clarendon, 1917). 58:13-14.

<sup>117</sup> The reason why the elusive and unstable Higgs Boson particle is included here is that it not only shares atomic similarity with Dust, but also represents outstandingly in the process decay and interaction with other entities. Regarding its scientific value, the Higgs Boson particle can be studied in terms of its effect on other particles - not as an entity in itself. It is found similar to Dust in *His Dark Materials*. Dust in some degree plays the same role as the Higgs Boson particle, as a key to humans' ultimate curiosity. Yet what is important about the Higgs Boson is not its nature, nor its existence, but its effect on other particles and how their interactions can transfer force to matter, or furthermore, to the whole universe.

In the *OED*, the word dust is most commonly defined as “earth or other solid matter in a minute and fine state of subdivision, so that the particles are small and light enough to be easily raised and carried in a cloud by the wind; any substance comminuted or pulverized; powder”<sup>118</sup>. That definition mainly focuses on the size and weight of dust, as a composite of particles that is accessible everywhere. The small size of the particles means that they can be easily ignored, and the definition is sometimes extended to ashes and dirt (suggesting something undesirable or shameful). Observing the more literary use of the word, the words dust and dirt very often appear in the same cohesion and correlation, because they are materially similar. Despite their particular size, this correlation becomes rather stronger in the late nineteen century when more scientific and ecological studies became concerned with dust and dirt’s influence on human beings, bodily and culturally. In Lucretius’s poem *De Rerum Natura*, imagery of dust and dirt is used to allegorize the dissipation of power or the death of men. Another example is the material I used, namely Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy, in which dust is recreated as Dust and imbued with the author’s reevaluation and feedback against Christian religion. Interestingly, when Pullman wishes to introduce Dust to his reader, he uses Lyra to read a biblical quote from Genesis that suggests Dust, dust, dirt and ground (soil) are fundamentally connected materials. This connection, not God’s mercy, nor mythical holiness, is the represented as the real womb of life:

He [Lord Asriel] opened the Bible again and pointed it out to Lyra.

She read:

*“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return...”*

Lord Asriel said, “Church scholars have always puzzled over the translation of that verse. Some say it should read not ‘unto dust shalt

---

<sup>118</sup> “dust, n.1”. OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/58683?rskey=Ek94Ro&result=1> (accessed 25 July 2016).

'thou return' but 'thou shalt be subject to dust', and others say the whole verse is a kind of pun on the words 'ground' and 'dust'.<sup>119</sup>

Besides Pullman's alternative hermeneutical reinterpretation, it is also worth considering Heather Sullivan's theorization of the relationship between human, dust and dirt. For Sullivan, dust and dirt are useful agencies for objectivising people's anxiety about their relationship with the material, nonhuman world. Her twenty-first century ecocritical perspective is consistent with Pullman's and the other New Atheists' more pragmatic, scientific understanding of the world. However, it is necessary to understand the difference between such a theory and the theological theme that underpins Pullman's trilogy.

Even though the relation between dust and ground is only Pullman's fictional reinterpretation of the Bible and cannot be read as orthodox understanding of the word, his approach is correct. The earliest existing record of this word suggests a rather higher and more divine essence than that of other words during the long period when human society was less secularized. Dust has a divine origin in the Hebrew Bible c1000 BCE. It appears in Genesis, where the Christian God created the form of a man from dust and His own breath. The Genesis narrative furthermore describes how dust is not only the origin but also the end of humankind: "For dust, and to dust."<sup>120</sup> The influences caused by the Christian religion are deep in human culture and long lasting. Even today, dust is often treated as harmful or disgraceful, in terms of how it is defined in the Bible. Katherine Cox in an important essay that I have already referred to suggests that

The Church's desire to eradicate or nullify through intercision the effect of the Dust can be seen as an extension of the cultural anxieties surrounding dust. Biblical usages connect it firmly with death (without redemption) while contemporary investigation into its composition reveals that it includes skin material, pollution, and waste.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 305.

<sup>120</sup> Genesis 3:19 KJV.

<sup>121</sup> Cox, in. Barfield and Cox (eds.), 130.

Although the Christian version of the creation of mankind emphasises God's almighty power that can create lives from something dead and insignificant, it also metaphorically links the relationship of dust and the human body as one of raw material and outcome products.

Interestingly, religion is not the only cultural dimension in which concern about the relation of dust and the civilization of human beings is manifested. As Cox suggests, the so-called scientific investigation of Dust more or less affects the public's contemporary evaluation, or to be more specifically accurate, it has enlarged the anxieties. Researchers from different disciplines show interest in the material substance of dust, its mystery, and complicated historical background. Dust and dirt are not just adopted within a theological context, but constitute a ranging concern based on their physicality, including the particle usage of dust, its beneficial functions or even its ecological threats. Likewise in Heather Sullivan's essay "Dirt Theory and Material Ecocriticism" (2012), attention is drawn to how closely dust and the human are connected. Sullivan explores dirt as a material substance and in its symbolic capacity. In her essay, she does give some examples which treat Dust differently. Karen Duve's German novel *Taxi* (2008), for example, is a representative literary example of the physical connection of dirt and the human body, in which the protagonist Alex Herwig becomes a taxi driver in Hamburg after abandoning his academic career. By representing Alex Herwig's organic sensory perception of a modern city, Karen Duve observes how dust is transported and produced with passengers as an ever-shifting weave of dirt, bodies, things and places<sup>122</sup>. Within Pullman's trilogy dust escapes its theological context and takes on the role of an important alternative, unconscious and symbolic bodily exchange, which takes place daily but is often ignored. Another example, Paola Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2010) sees the totally negative side of dust. In this novel dust represents a deadly disease. So-called "gene rippers" in Thailand tend to dominate the world economically and genetically by creating both a virus and an anti-virus to create and kill new crops. Dust and dirt here are treated as synonymous with plagues, fearsome

---

<sup>122</sup> Heather Sullivan, "Dirt Theory and Material Ecocriticism," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19.3 (Summer 2012), 519.

mutations, and mass starvation<sup>123</sup>, and become a fatal threat to mankind within human bodies. In each of the above examples, dust and dirt are treated as harmful, while their relation to the human body remains inseparable. These are examples of how the seemingly simple noun dust is lexically inconstant and changeable. When this already complicated word is adopted into *His Dark Materials* and imbued with consciousness, Pullman as the father of Dust has extended the meaning into an entirely new realm. Through hermeneutics, Dust is combined with its historical and morphological root in the Bible. Furthermore, in Pullman's hands, the word "dust" is longer a dead thing, but a Christian God-like living "being" that creates everything including itself. The self-producing and self-becoming figure of dust in *His Dark Materials* is a very distinguishing characteristic and remarkably differentiates it from other definitions of dust. However, the question remains whether this Pullman-originated dust can be filtered from the conventional definition of dust and become Dust (with a capital D) even in the same theological context. Technically speaking, Pullman was not the first writer who employed dust within an anti-Christian agenda. In William Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" the word dust/sand is not only a word to describe the decay of originally living and vivid things, but demonstrates that even divine or lawful commitment can be broken and brought to the end.

The terror answerd: I am Orc, wreath'd round the accursed tree:  
 The times are ended; shadows pass the morning gins to break;  
 The fiery joy, that Urizen perverted to ten commands,  
 What night he led the starry hosts thro' the wide wilderness:  
 That stony law I stamp to dust: and scatter religion abroad  
 To the four winds as a torn book, & none shall gather the leaves;  
 But they shall rot on desert sands, & consume in bottomless deeps.<sup>124</sup>

In this quote, a clear counter-Christian doctrinal metaphor can be seen in the line "that stony law I stamp to dust." The first person pronoun "I" and the verb

<sup>123</sup> Sullivan, 520.

<sup>124</sup> William Blake, *America a Prophecy* [1794], copy F: electronic edition (DTD version 2005), ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi, Blakearchive, <<http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive>> (accessed 30 July 2016).

“stamp”, which also has a meaning of imprinting on leather or metal to display ownership to others, shows a strong desire and intention of breaking the conventional barrier socially and religiously. It shows typically the way Blake rejects doctrinal laws and so-called-divine regulations. In these religious contexts, the role of “dust” is symbolically seen as the outcome of rebellion towards or betrayal of the divine commitment, “the stony law,” namely Moses’s Ten Commandments. Something similar can be said of Blake’s other poem *Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion*, in which the Giant is condemned by angels and has “fallen into dust”<sup>125</sup>. Dust, solid rocks, and earth are once again here the words associated with the origin and nature of the human. These are altogether the natural and material foundations that support life. At the same time they are also the destinations after the decay of lives. It can be observed that for Blake, the soil, ground or earth can hardly be separated from human beings. Regarding the significance of dust, in the following content of this chapter I will provide evidence to suggest that Pullman in *His Dark Materials* concretizes and reverses William Blake’s practice of reducing the ground and institutions into dust another way around, but that their (Blake’s and Pullman’s) goals are ultimately similar.

Is gather'd in the scorching heat, & in the driving rain:  
 Where once he sat he weary walks in misery and pain:  
 His Giant beauty and perfection fallen into dust:  
 Till from within his witherd breast grown narrow with his woes:  
 The corn is turn'd to thistles & the apples into poison.<sup>126</sup>

...

The Human majesty and beauty of the Twentyfour.  
 Condensing them into solid rocks with cruelty and abborrence  
 Suspition & revenge, & the seven diseases of the Soul

---

<sup>125</sup> William Blake, *Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion [1821], copy E: electronic edition*, Blakearchive, Plate 10. <<http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive>> (accessed 20 July 2016).

<sup>126</sup> Blake, *Jerusalem*, Blakearchive, Plate 19 (accessed 26 July 2016).



*Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion, copy E, object 19 (Bentley 19,  
Erdman 19, Keynes 19)*

It is clear that dust in the bible is often used as an image of human transience or insignificance apart from God. Dirt, however, is not. Even though in other areas (medical, literary, and ecology) dust and dirt are often interchangeable, in the Bible they are fundamentally different. Mary Douglas has suggested in her *Purity and Danger* that not just in Hebrew religions, but in other African and Arabic primitive religions, dirt, based on hygiene concerns, is usually a threat to human wellbeing. With the improvements of hygiene and medicine, this sense of ‘uncleanness’ may be proven a false assumption, yet the idea of ritual uncleanness, or defilement has penetrated very deeply into the religion. Douglas brings up this observation, not directly with dirt, but with an interesting example: pork. It is a primitive taboo for Hebrews to eat pork because they believe pigs are unclean. Pigs in the circumstances

are associated with pollution, danger, and defilement, and this taboo becomes a custom for many Jewish people. Even the rule of cleanliness changes, its ritual uncleanness which distinguishes it from images of pure, sacred and holiness remains the same. In the case, the “agent” is the point.

Primitive rules of uncleanness pay attention to the material circumstances of an act and judge it good or bad accordingly. Thus contact with corpses, blood or spittle may be held to transmit danger.<sup>127</sup>

As the material agent of uncleanness, dirt in the Bible is hierarchically lower than dust and when this uncleanness is related and fused with human’s deepest fear (illness, painful and death), it becomes symbolic. In other words, dirt becomes a symbol of evil. Paul Ricoeur, in his *Symbolism of Evil* has also mentioned this process of “signification”.

[E]vil and misfortune have not been dissociated, in which the ethical order of doing ill has not been distinguished from the cosmobiological order of faring ill: suffering, sickness, death, failure. We shall see after a while how the anticipation of punishment, at the heart of the fear of the impure, strengthens this bond between evil and misfortune. <sup>128</sup>

The complexity of the word dust and dirt to some extent explains the reason why Pullman does not use the word dust directly in *His Dark Materials* trilogy, but create a word in a similar form of “Dust” instead. With a capital letter D, it is no more just a pun, but a new literary creation which undertakes the burden of the old, with an expectation to make a subversion.

Unlike the concept of the world that I investigated in the previous chapter, which reconstructed the literary framework of Pullman’s fictional world, in this chapter my research will focus on dust in a way that proves the word to be overloaded

<sup>127</sup> Mary Douglas, “Ritual Cleanliness,” *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* ( London: Rutledge,2003), 11.

<sup>128</sup> Paul Ricoeur, “Defilement,” *Symbolism of Evil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 27.

with extreme theological and cultural elements. For the construction of the narrative and Pullman's atheistic purpose, the concepts of world and dust are equally important. They altogether support the basic needs of *His Dark Materials'* heterocosm, by explaining its cosmology of verisimilitude, convincing readers how the universes exist and correlate. If the world in *His Dark Materials* demonstrates Pullman's concrete material and exterior design, Dust, and dust, at rather abstract levels, provide throughout a theological and philosophical context. Effectively, the narrative becomes imbued with hierarchical layers, as well as an "interior" design that is relatively mythical. There is already a sizeable body of research about *His Dark Materials*, mostly concerned with Dust rather than any of Pullman's other themes such as a daemon, the Authority, and feminism. For example, in Katharine Cox's already referred to article, "'Imagine Dust with a Capital Letter': Interpreting the Social and Cultural Context for Philip Pullman's Transformation of Dust," dust has been seen through its material and historical background and extended into its role in *His Dark Materials*. Cox gives a clear overview in exploring the relation of "dust" and "threat" affects. We are led to understand how not only a religious point of view is established, but also the terms in which dust becomes biologically "threatening" to humankind as a material foe, one that needs to be prevented or "cleaned up" by the affected human beings.<sup>129</sup> The Dust in *Northern Lights* echoes this negative judgment as nothing less than a biblical evil, in which the Magisterium relates it to original sin and the satanic cause of the fall of man:

Dust is something bad, something wrong, something evil and wicked. Grown-ups and their daemons are infected with Dust so deeply that it's too late for them. They can't be helped... But a quick operation on children means they are safe from it. Dust just won't stick to them ever again. They are safe and happy.<sup>130</sup>

The words "infect" and "operation" are medical terms, normally used to describe how illness and viruses spread and are treated. This shows that in Pullman's trilogy, the negative values of both dust and Dust are combined and seen as harmful not just

---

<sup>129</sup> Cox, in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 128.

<sup>130</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 234.

spiritually, but also bodily to humans. People need to be cured or have infection removed by medical attention. What is interesting is that dust in the trilogy is seen here as a material representation of original sin and evil, which are in other respects conceptual, invisible and untouchable as they do not have substance. By concretizing this invisible sin into a visible daemon, the concepts have been turned into “objects”. However, in *His Dark Materials*, these “objects” are conscious and intelligent beings and strongly motivated. They are clearly aware of their existence and deny the “thinghood” that narrators locate onto them; this is another transforming process from a material object into material subjects. It is briefly shown as a process from immaterial sin to, material objects with thinghood in animate form, and then transferred again into material conscious Subjects. “From what we are, spirit; from what we do, matter. Matter and spirit are one.”<sup>131</sup> The materialization of dust in *His Dark Materials* ensures Dust’s subjectivity and capacity for thinking as a super being. Meantime it also allows the Magisterium to separate dust easily from humans. In other words, in this part of the trilogy the abstract and spiritual sin has been linked with physical and biological disease. The way Pullman chooses to solve the problem of purifying sin is through material treatment. The manifestation of physical and immaterial dust and its transformation of status constitutes a powerful metaphor that helps explain Pullman’s judgment of the Christian religion as a brutal force that neglects the fundamental nature of human beings (immaterial sin) and attempts to remove them through religious doctrines (material words written in the Bible). Yet just like the idea of dust, original sin also has multiple lines of development within medieval Christian history. For example, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) claims that original sin is transmitted by means of a metaphysical rather than psychological concupiscence. That is to say, because of already existing desire hidden in innocent human nature, Adam uses this transferred nature to fall. Original sin for Augustine is inborn, and humanity is easily polluted by bad qualities such as concupiscence or unholy lust. Martin Luther (1483-1546), as one of the radical reformists in the Reformation, sees original sin as a part of human nature that comes at birth from the womb. He uses the term “inborn sickness” to describe original sin, which suggest its hereditary feature in Christian doctrines.

---

<sup>131</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 527-530.

That is, all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin is truly sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. Rejected in this connection are the Pelagians and others who deny that original sin is sin, for they hold that natural man is made righteous by his own powers, thus disparaging the sufferings and merit of Christ.<sup>132</sup>

Another interesting question is whether sexuality is a God-given gift or a curse of sin. The first human sexual intercourse is described biblically in Genesis in the following words: "Adam lay with his wife Eve"<sup>133</sup>. Milton in *Paradise Lost* has also justified sexual union by adopting God's command in the Bible, "Our Maker bids increase, who bid abstain/ but our destroyer."<sup>134</sup> It is becoming rather obvious that the definition of original sin does not command universal agreement. The term "wife" has already shown the biblical legitimacy and commitment of Adam and Eve's sexual encounter. In *His Dark Materials*, Pullman uses this paradox and enlarges it by inverting the role of the Bible: the Authority condemns Dust, Dust represents original sin, original sin represents the Fall, and the statement will logically conclude that the Authority condemns sexuality. Interestingly, the serpent who in the Mulefa world teaches the mulefa how to survive by deploying knowledge of dust takes on the role of an enlightener. This can be seen as a parody of Genesis. The serpent in the Garden of Eden is purely evil, and its goal is not to enlighten, but attract Adam and Eve to fall. By purifying the serpent and sexuality, Pullman meantime also promotes original sin and Dust. Even though this could be a logical fallacy, it is obvious that the definition of original sin is also critical because Dust and original sin are inseparable. Therefore, to understand what Dust actually represents in the trilogy, it is firstly essential to have a careful analysis of classifications of origin sin and evil in the contextual background of *His Dark Materials*, and furthermore to clarify what the

---

<sup>132</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 29.

<sup>133</sup> Genesis 4:1 KJV.

<sup>134</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 748-749

Magisterium has defined and been against. In *His Dark Materials*, the church views Dust as “physical proof that something happened when innocence changed into experience.”<sup>135</sup> What we gather is that when original sin takes place “innocence” fades away. The only difference is that Pullman makes this proof of human physicality from an abstract conceptual sinfulness. I will demonstrate the process of the transformation of Dust with several figures that I personally made, with a goal of proving that Dust’s change is not a sudden development, but has a careful chronology.

Even though my research starts from an alternative approach from conventional critics who treat Dust as an entity rather than a process, Dust’s significance for both my own and other studies is equally crucial. Critics like Bird and Cox see the importance of Dust as the key to Pullman’s cosmology, a sort of massless force of God or dark matter that transfers into physical mass. Bird in her essay “Circumventing the Grand Narrative: Dust as an Alternative Theological Vision in Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*” suggests that the creation of Dust is set on an ultimate purpose; “to disturb traditional Christian hierarchies - namely, the value-laden binaries of innocence-experience, good-evil, and spirit-matter.”<sup>136</sup> Through sexual awakening, or what the Magisterium would prefer to call the “Fall,” Dust simultaneously becomes the proof of sin and the origin of life. For Pullman a revolution and second phase of battle (the first phase is in *Paradise Lost*) is necessary and for Bird this paradoxical ambiguity is intentional and meaningful because it creates a “Weave of Difference”<sup>137</sup> and emphasizes the idea that “neither term in the spirit-matter binary is hierarchically superior or capable of existing independently of the other term.”<sup>138</sup> Even though the word dust represents its rebellious character under a religious aspect, as well as its ambiguous figure in the whole narrative context, the high degree of uncertainty also gives Pullman privilege of free play over the meaning of the word. Dust becomes a deceitful and mythical enemy for the Magisterium in the trilogy, and for the Anglican church in reality.

Research concerning dust is not limited to its religious influences nor to the

<sup>135</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 373.

<sup>136</sup> Anne-Marie Bird, “Circumventing the Grand Narrative: Dust as an Alternative Theological Vision in Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*,” in Lenz (ed.), 189.

<sup>137</sup> Bird, 190.

<sup>138</sup> Bird, 190.

complexity of its historical backgrounds. Furthermore, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century advanced medical and physical experiments into viruses and dark matter have confirmed the complex nature of the world of minute particles. Dust's high involvement with modern science and technology may explain why *His Dark Materials* is very easily categorized as science fiction or Steampunk rather than as a trilogy of Magical Realism. In terms of Dust, Pullman is no longer writing about an imaginary entity that can be found in most of the fantasy literature, such as goblins or elves, but rather about material that is intricately interrelated with the cause of the cosmos. In Mary Malone's Oxford, researchers use modern technology and machines (the Cave, for example) to "investigate" Dust, and they call this "experimental theology." (This is the name in Mary's world. In reality, it is called experimental physics.) Steven Barfield suggests in his "Revitalizing the Old Machines of a Neo-Victorian London: Reading the Cultural Transformations of Steampunk and Victoriana" that Pullman in his trilogy attempts to convince his reader by dealing with science rather than with magic, including particularly the matter of coping with Dust.<sup>139</sup> Interestingly, according to Pullman, creation from dust and the title of the trilogy was inspired by Milton, not by any research-based pieces of evidence. Pullman's purpose is to rewrite John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in particular that part of Book II in which Milton, in referring to chaotic nothingness writes of God working with "His dark materials to create more worlds"<sup>140</sup>. Whilst more than once Pullman has claimed that "I don't do science!" (2004), 2013's Nobel Prize has dramatically challenged his claim: on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the Noble Prize in Physics was awarded to Peter Higgs and François Englert for their theoretical discovery of the mechanism of Higgs Boson, or God's particle, in a theory that posits the first evidence helping humans to understand the origin of mass and hence of the universe.

While this surprising finding isn't *ipso facto* the groundwork of any literary works, certainly not Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, it does provide a rather "realistic support" to Pullman's probabilistic cosmology when "Higgs Boson" and "Pullmanic Dust" can be seen to be so similar that one and the other provide the origin of not just

<sup>139</sup> Steven Barfield and Martyn Colebrook, "Revitalizing the Old Machines of a Neo Victorian London: Reading the Cultural Transformations of Steampunk and Victoriana," in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 83.

<sup>140</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 912-913.

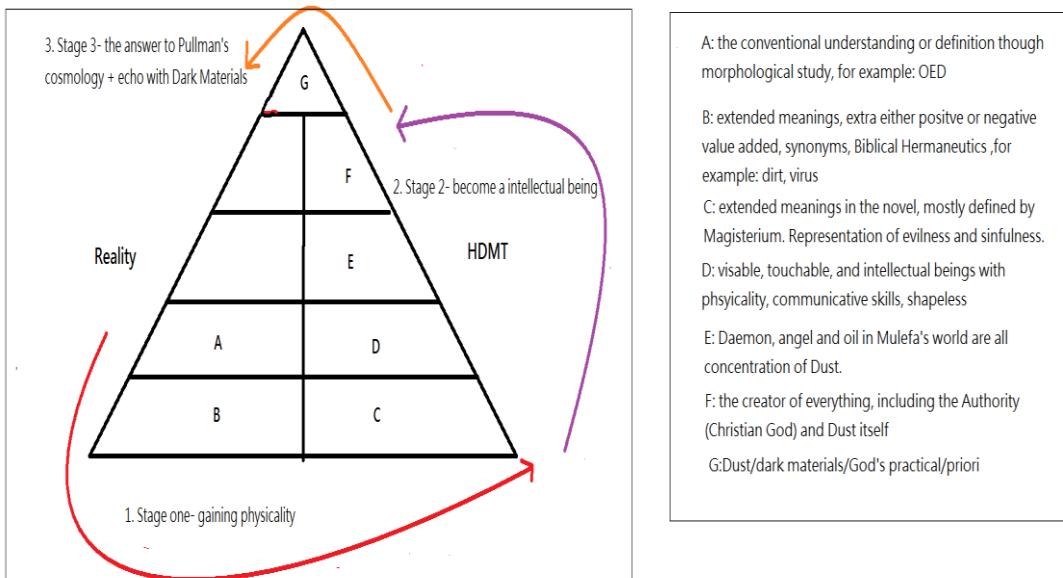
lives, but the whole universe. Even though this Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded in 2013 and *His Dark Materials* was published in 1995, the influence that Pullman received from scientific inquiry into “God’s matter” cannot be neglected. Higgs’s idea emerged more than forty years ago. The well-known hypothesis of the “God particle” was raised by Peter Higgs in 1964, and since then his proposal has cast its influence worldwide, including in literature. Cox in his “Imagine Dust with a Capital Letter (2009)” also mentions Higgs Boson. At the time experiments had not proven the existence of such a particle. Yet to some extent, for all researchers who are interested in Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*, Higgs’s progress in dark matter is meaningful and motivating. The reason is not just Higgs’s contribution to all humans who are concerned with our origin. Rather, our very understanding of *His Dark Materials* changes in consequence of scientific inquiry. Indeed, its genre becomes rather more realistic and less able to be classified as fantasy literature. (In my supervisory meetings with Dr. Susan Oliver, she always called *His Dark Materials* magical realism rather than fantasy literature. This classification seems closer to the truth of the case, though with ongoing advances in science we can increasingly drop the term magical from the formulation.) Higgs has stressed that he was displeased when the Higgs Boson was nicknamed the “God particle”. He believes the term may offend people who are religious.<sup>141</sup> However, Pullman as a New Atheist writer did not waste a chance. As Cox has suggested in his essay, not just the finding of the God particle, but all other scientific or social concerns about dust such as John Tyndall’s contention in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that dust is composed of organic materials have also attracted Pullman’s attention: “[t]hese composition and social concerns are at the forefront of Pullman’s usage as protagonists vie to elucidate what Dust is, to attribute its social meaning, and take the necessary action.<sup>142</sup>” The necessary measures, as Pullman has demonstrated, are to endow dust with enough qualities for it to become the main theme not just to underpin *His Dark Materials* from the foundation of the narrative, but also to guide the protagonists to realize Pullman’s utopia and dystopia at the same time.

---

<sup>141</sup> Ian Sample, "Interview: the man behind the 'God particle,'" *New Scientist*, <<https://www.newscientist.com/article>> (accessed 5 May 2016), 44–45.

<sup>142</sup> Cox, in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 128.

### 2.1.0 The Hierarchical Layer and Transformation Process of Dust



The three stages of transformation of Dust (from A to G)

#### 2.1.1. Stage One: Gaining Physicality (A-C)

The figure above shows how dust is known (or expected to be known) in fiction/reality and how it is transferred from a common noun into a metaphysical phoneme. It can be observed that dust only exists in reality while Dust and dust simultaneously exist in *His Dark Materials* as a theme. In this part of the research I try to argue that even though Pullman differentiates dust and Dust by giving a capital letter D to those aspects of the phenomenological world which he has designed in terms of his cosmology and atheistic thinking, these two words are nonetheless gradually synchronized, and there is a high degree of influence between the two. I have drawn a figure very roughly explaining that there is actually a transformation taking place in which Pullman tends to make Dust out of dust. This theme has a chronicle process/progress through the whole trilogy and gradually “develops” into Pullman’s expectation that from dust will emerge Dust in the course of the narrative. This “development” begins in *Northern Lights*. In *Lyra’s World*, anything related to Dust is taboo and prohibited by the Magisterium, who sees it as the representation of original sin. At this point in the narrative, Dust is completely conceptual and symbolic until Rusakov proves its existence after having been tortured in his own laboratory. In

the chapter “Lord Asriel’s Welcome” Lyra is firstly told the essence of Dust with biblical evidence from Genesis (another proof that the Magisterium is just another parodied name for the Christian church.) Yet the first description of Dust is rather scientific. There is another turning point in the narrative when Boris Mikhailovitch Rusakov tries to link the “unusual react of Dust” to adolescence, and this becomes an evidence of original sin.

Some years ago a Muscovite called Boris Mikhailovitch Rusakov discovered a new kind of elementary particle. You’ve heard of electrons, photons, neutrinos and the rest? They’re called elementary particles because you can’t break them down any further: there’s nothing inside them but themselves... it was very hard to measure because it didn’t react in any of the usual ways.<sup>143</sup>

The first part of the paragraph seems to echo with contemporary definitions of dark matter (definitions in *OED* or Higgs Boson in our world) and is the first author-oriented acknowledgment in the trilogy that conceptual Dust is concrete and materialized with “materiality”. It has acts but is hard to measure or observe. The characteristic of “can’t break them down any further” again proves and emphasises that its size and weight can also be measured. This research-like description is significant because it can be seen as the first step of transformation from dust to Dust, when Pullman creates Dust and makes it a “physical object.” Hence, we can claim that insofar as Pullmanic Dust has escaped its conceptual barrier and become a “subject” rather than an “idea,” we are also in contact here with the first place that Dust can be distinguished from dust. And the transformation is still going on.

That left them with the problem of deciding what it was. And given the Church’s nature, there was only one thing they could have chosen. The Magisterium decided that Dust was the physical evidence for original sin.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 303.

<sup>144</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 304.

In this paragraph, Lord Asierl explains to Lyra the reason why Dust is evil with the story of Adam's fall. He guides the problem back to biblical hermeneutics with an interesting biblical quote from Genesis,

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return<sup>145</sup>.

Interestingly, this isn't Pullman's *version* of Genesis. The words that Pullman quotes are identical to Genesis 3:19 in the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible, which was the first authorized and also the most famous English translation of Scripture. The KJV Bible was published in 1611. It was influenced by the 16<sup>th</sup> century's Protestant Reformation. It is interesting and not so coincidental that John Calvin (1509-1564) is remade by Pullman and becomes the Pope of the Magisterium as a counterfactual character. (In reality, John Calvin was against the Catholic Church and played a significant role as a leading radical reformer in the Protestant Reformation.) Therefore, it seems clear that time settings of *His Dark Materials* are located in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries for the reason that both people's faith and the doctrine of the Christian religion were facing significant changes. Even ideas related to original sin were reinterpreted by Martin Luther and John Calvin. This gives us evidence that Pullman chooses John Calvin to be the speaker of the Magisterium for a reason, namely that the historical Calvin is very relevant to his redefinition of original sin in the dystopia, namely Lyra's world. In my research I will also focus in more detail on Calvinism and the related study of original sin, since Calvin's idea of original sin was an "originated" rather than "originating" one<sup>146</sup>. These are the traditional (conservative) classifications of original sin that the Roman Catholic Church has compromised since the Protestant Reformation. Original sin, according to Henri Blocher in his *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* is, "the tendency to sinfulness with which we were born", while originating sin is designated in specific events, namely the Fall of Adam and Eve: "the transgression Adam perpetrated in the

---

<sup>145</sup> Genesis 3:19 KJV.

<sup>146</sup> Blocher, 32.

Garden and through which sin and death invade the world.”<sup>147</sup> By concretizing Dust with physicality, Pullman is hence able to rewrite *Paradise Lost* by combining these two sins again. However, in the first stage of the transformation, the overlapping historical and biblical interpretation of original sin catalyzes the process from B to C.

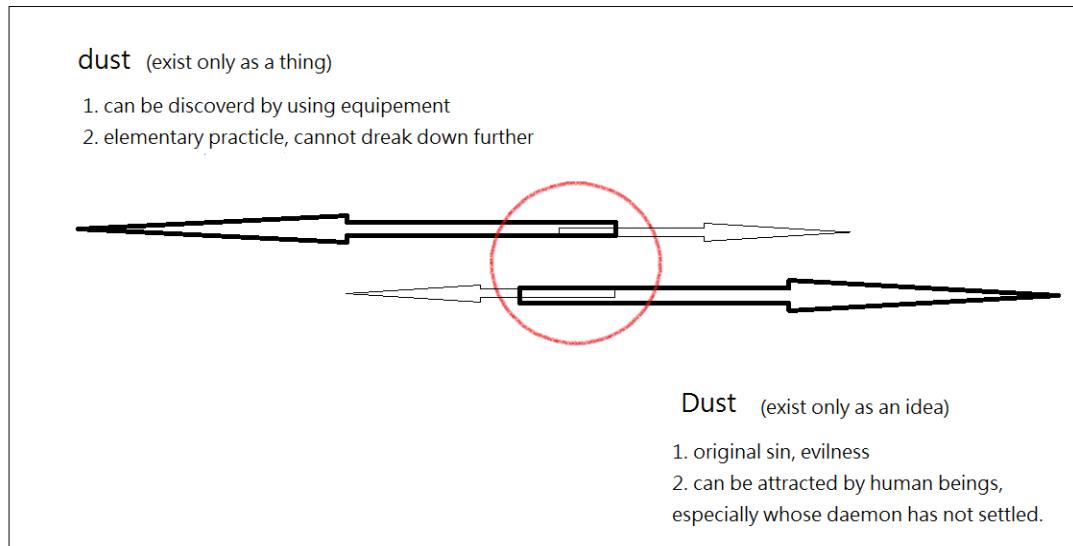


Figure 2-2 : the first stage of dust transformation

### 2.1.2 Stage Two: Becoming Intellectual (C-F)

Upon the transformation of phase one, it is observed that after bridging dust with original sin, and successfully endowing the fictional Dust in *His Dark Materials* with physicality, Dust has been already distinguished from the common noun dust as that which denominates the physical existence of original sin. In this stage, the status of Dust in Pullman’s design cannot alone underpin the fictional world while it is still

---

<sup>147</sup> Blocher, 37. See also F.R. Tennant, “St. Paul’s Doctrine of the Fall,” *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 248-266. Blocher gives an account of how St. Augustine treats the doctrine of original sin, yet simply by discussing Augustine and Calvin cannot tell how their doctrines are different. Evidence is given when Tennant discusses St. Paul, who was part of the first generation and main stream of Christian teaching before St. Augustine. According to Tennant, St. Paul’s theology was “deeply influenced by his rabbinical training” (Tennant, 250), namely the acceptance of Jewish speculation about the Fall in the Old Testament. For St. Paul, Adam’s sin does not originate from his transgression, nor cause human mortality. Adam’s is, nevertheless, “the first sin that makes all men sinners (Tennant, 251).”

passive and silent. The master-slave relationship between human (subject) and Dust (object) has no change. In other words, even though Dust is released from the image of dust, and in *His Dark Materials* can be proven physical and measurable, the initiative is still in the narrator's hand. Yet in *The Subtle Knife*, Pullman "activates" the silent Dust by introducing Mary Malone, who is the researcher working in "our" Oxford. Dr. Malone takes over the role as narrator and her position is proven significant when in this volume of the trilogy Pullman has made Dust "alive". Being alive does not mean that Dust is made organically reachable. It can be seen as a significant premise that Dust is self-conscious and has emotions. In the meantime Mary has a chance to "communicate" with Dust. The interaction between them is still mythical or even absurd. (It is rather a blind-date-like chat when Mary and Dust first "talk". Mary has no idea with what and with whom she is chatting, but the conversation just goes on, as a kind of spiritual communication.) This is the ground zero where Pullman tries to connect Dust and "human will" through technology - a specially designed machine called "the Cave" which is powered by electricity and activated by human brain waves. Vividly, Pullman sketches the anxiety and the sense of insecurity of Mary (even she knows that trying to connect with something dead is insane). However, this semi-scientific and semi-mythical communication is where the second stage of the transformation takes place, and there are some critical ideas that expose details in the design of Pullmanic Dust.

She locked the door behind her and lowered the blinds. She switched on the detector and then took a floppy disk from her pocket and slipped it into the computer that controlled the Cave, and within a minute she had begun to manipulate the numbers on the screen, going half by logic, half by guesswork, and half by the program she'd worked on all evening at home... Finally she brushed her hair out of her eyes and put the electrodes on her head, and then flexed her fingers and began to type. She felt intensely self-conscious.

Hello. I'm not sure what I'm doing.

Maybe this is crazy.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 526.

Locking the door and lowering the blinds shows Mary's insecurity and disbelief in the fact that Dust may be commutative. Her panic does not originate from religious taboos (while in Mary's Oxford there is no Magisterium, so the study of Dust is not counted as criminal behaviour), but the self-conflict with "common sense" and "reason", both of which would tend to confirm that an entity like Dust cannot be communicative. The expression of her panic ("I am not sure what I am doing") and that of her uncertainty ("maybe this is crazy") are what Pullman intends to demonstrate. Our discussion at this point can also be referred to the stereotype of interaction between Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Mary here is taught by Dust to become a serpent. It is an interesting start when Pullman plans to convince the readers that Dust is different from dust; he has to show how the narrator struggles and conflicts with common sense and then overcome it. To some extent, Mary Malone is a perfectly self-conscious narrator due to her multiple identities. She was a nun in the past, is a scientist in the present and will be an adventurer into the Mulefa world in the future. These multiple identities provided Mary/Pullman with enough convenient background of both theology and science, which are generally on the extreme opposite sides when it comes to explaining the origin of the cosmos. In terms of this, Fitzsimmons also suggests in her essay "Dialectical Complexifications: The Centrality of Mary Malone, Dust, and mulefa in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*," that "Dust is the reconciliation of matter and spirit, pre-packaged, already a material substance."<sup>149</sup> To reveal this author-oriented particle, Fitzsimmons sees Mary's role as the core of the trilogy. In the trilogy, Mary not only invents "The Cave" which was inspired by Plato's "The Allegory of Cave", but also addresses Dust's behavioural characteristics, which are more easily attracted to things related to creativity or works of art than to natural or dead things. "A piece of ivory, just a lump, and there were no Shadows with that. It didn't react. But a carved ivory chess piece did"<sup>150</sup>. This distinctive and selective figure of Dust is designed by Pullman, presented by "the Cave", and imported by Mary Malone.

### 2.1.3 The Cave as the Office of Dust

---

<sup>149</sup> Fitzsimmons, "Dialectical 'Complexifications'", 220.

<sup>150</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 379.

In this part of the research I try to argue that the Cave's importance is underestimated. In most existing criticism on Pullman, the Cave has been seen only as a tool to connect Mary Malone and Dust. Yet more evidence shows that the Cave is actually autonomous and active as it "wishes to" connect to Mary and delivers messages. Functionally, the Cave in *His Dark Materials* plays the role of a narrating aid to Mary. But when it works as an independent narrator, it can be observed that the Cave is even more assertive than Mary Malone. The Cave is a computing device firstly introduced by Mary in Will's Oxford and, it appears, is very philosophical and thoughtful.

"Capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—" You have to get into that state of mind. That's from the poet Keats, by the way. I found it the other way. So you get yourself in the right state of mind, and then you look at the Cave.<sup>151</sup>

Introducing the Cave, Mary quotes from John Keats' letter on "Negative Capability" in which Keats suggests there is some "mystical goodness" such as truth, beauty, and love that can be reached only through imaginary intuition, a rather instinctive way of thinking without needing rational explanations or religious beliefs. This idea expresses ultimately how Pullman considers reaching the truth and is also mentioned as part of the conclusion of *His Dark Materials* in the last chapter, when Will decides to shut down every door among the different universes. For Pullman, imagination and creativity are the keys to multiple universes, not the golden compass, the subtle knife, or the brooms that the witches in *His Dark Materials* are riding. These "things" are just the carriers of Dust, and the goal is to build up a harmony of mind and Nature as John Keats suggested in his "To Honor" in 1818,

Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,  
And precipices show untrodden green,  
There is a budding morrow in midnight,

---

<sup>151</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 401.

There is a triple sight in blindness keen<sup>152</sup>

Keats provides a clear vision of the correlation between nature and the human mind in his letter. The image of darkness along with light is the core in his ideal utopia, and it is clear that *His Dark Materials* shares the same fantasy with Keats. In *His Dark Materials*, Dust is designed as the origin of both phenomena and noumena. For Kant it is impossible that both should be embodied within one entity. In Kant's *Transcendental Idealism* phenomena is the realm of perception that is the outer object while noumena means the "things-in-themselves."<sup>153</sup> The etymological meaning of it is "I think, I mean." Yet in *His Dark Materials* Dust is invented as not only the "all-round intellectual"<sup>154</sup>, but also the cause of the material universe. To realize this literary and philosophical purpose, Pullman combines phenomena and noumena and levels up Dust from a material entity into a thinking being. At this moment, Dust has just transferred into a thing but does not yet have any form to deliver ideas. Without a form, Dust will be a ghost-like echo in the air. To have a body for housing and transporting Dust, the Cave is therefore needed. Unlike general ways of introducing a machine or a piece of electrical equipment, which normally focus on its functions or advanced applied technologies, the Cave is made relevant to how contemplation takes place; an irrational and romantic medium rather than a piece of cold iron. In spite of being related to meditational thinking, the reason that the computer is named "the Cave" again emphasises the significance of this medium. In Mary's Oxford, Dust is also called "Shadow" that in the *OED* means "comparative darkness that is caused by the interception of light."<sup>155</sup> Darkness and light, likewise in Keats' poem, become a metaphor for mind and nature. In a similar manner the names of the Shadow and of the Cave are highly relevant in a philosophical and symbolic context, namely Plato's

<sup>152</sup> John Keats, "To Honor[1818]," *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

<sup>153</sup> Nicholas F. Stang "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Zalta (op.cit., accessed 28 July 2016).

<sup>154</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 401.

<sup>155</sup> "shadow, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/177212?rskey=D2KrJM&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed 23 July 2016).

“Allegory of the Cave.”

The computer. We call it the Cave. Shadows on the walls of the Cave, you see, from Plato... Once you’re linked up to it, if you think, the Shadows respond. There’s no doubt about it. The shadows flock to your thinking like birds.<sup>156</sup>

The Allegory of the Cave is found in Book VII of Plato’s *Republic*<sup>157</sup> which is often used to divide reality into two categories: what can be sensed by perception and what can be grasped by the mind. The allegory has two parts. In the first part there is a group of dwellers who have lived in a deep cave since birth and can only look forward; what they have in the cave are a fire and a partial wall. The dwellers in the cave are always misguided by the shadow reflected on the wall of the cave, which is a weak imitation of the object (Truth). Even though the shape of the shadow is unstable and unclear, the dwellers would rather believe what they are shown is the truth itself; moreover, if a person behind them speaks, the echo in the cave makes it seem like the voice of the shadow. In the second part of the allegory, one of the imprisoned dwellers is freed, and he firstly comes out of the cave. Under the sunlight he is able to see the exact figure of things by means of which he was cheated with fire and shadows in the cave. And once this man has a chance to go back to rescue other dwellers and tell them what they have been seeing is false, he will fail. By telling this allegory, Plato suggests that every man in this world is a prisoner of truth, and there is actually another world that is hierarchically higher than the one in which we are living. This “upper world” is symbolic and for Plato, is the ultimate utopia, not likely to have existence in any of the forms of touchable phenomena. It is found interesting that this is the second time in *His Dark Materials* Pullman has mentioned multiple worlds (universes) and the correlation between darkness and light. However, among the universes, there is no hierarchical system and all the worlds in the trilogy are equal. To some extent the Cave and the Dust/Shadow hold a dual philosophical meaning; at the lower level all living beings in *His Dark Materials* are convinced (or cheated) by

---

<sup>156</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 401.

<sup>157</sup> Plato, “The Republic,” in *Plato: Complete Works*, op. cit., 514a-521d.

the phenomena, while at the higher level there is an upper world that is imaginary and fantastic and exists outside of the Cave.

However, when Pullman writes “The shadows flock to your thinking like birds<sup>158</sup>,” Dust again loses its physicality and becomes symbolic and metaphysical. Only in this mode, the status of Shadow as an active living being differs from the image of Plato's shadow, which is always passive and controlled like a puppet. On the contrary, the Cave in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* shows its autonomy and illuminating motives. It can be assumed that even though the name of the Cave originates from Plato's “the Allegory of the Cave,” to some degree Pullman is creating a counter-allegory from Plato. In his new version of the allegory Dust becomes the enlightener who frees the dweller, namely Mary. In this sense the Cave as a medium not only communicates with Dust and humans, it also demonstrates men's limited understanding in relation to Pullman's cosmology. The way Pullman guides Mary to escape the Cave and know Dust is worth mentioning. Not just the content of the conversation, but the method of their contact in the trilogy is important, for it is a chat-room-like conversation typed on the monitor of the Cave. (In the quote I use Arial Unicode font for screen language and Times New Roman for Pullman's narration to avoid any confusion)

She tried again.

I'm trying to do with words what I've done  
Before with a state of mind, but  
Before she had even finished the sentence the cursor raced across to  
the right of the screen and printed:

Ask a question

She gathered herself and typed again, and again the answers zipped  
into being with no discernible pause.

The mind that is answering  
these questions isn't human,

No. But humans  
have always

---

<sup>158</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 401.

is it?

known us.

Us? There's more than one  
of you?

Uncountabl  
e billions.

But what are you?

Angels.<sup>159</sup>

Through the Cave, Mary is given a chance to understand the essence of Dust by the account of “their/its” own words. In this part of the conversation, apart from the fact that Dust is found to be communicative, there are two characteristics of Dust that are revealed. First, the pronoun “us” shows that Pullmanic Dust is actually a collective name for plural atom-like beings and the word “the mind” explains that for Mary Dust is no more a thing, but a subject that maintains the status of reciprocity and which might provide information that Mary desires. Second, “angels”, like the Cave become another “host” for Dust’s atom-like particles to live in. In other words, Dust’s parasitic nature is revealed within the conversation. The plurality of Dust, which is manipulated by Pullman as the foundation of the universe, echoes with his ultimate goal of *His Dark Materials*, namely the Republic of Heaven. The idea of a “republic” is opposite to the absolute monarchy in Christianity’s “Kingdom of Heaven”, in which there is only one Authority who is the truth itself; a God-like king and king-like God. By making Dust into “uncountable billions,” Pullman challenges the basic theistic idea and political status of Christianity and deconstructs its foundation, which for so long had been that of one of the leading monotheistic religions. Interestingly, to assert his atheistic agenda, the most powerful counterexample Pullman quotes, is something that St. Augustine understands about angels:

Angel is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is spirit; if you seek the name of their office, it

<sup>159</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 528.

is angel; from what they are, spirit, from what they do, angel.<sup>160</sup>

The word “office” suggests a rather vehicle-like figure for an angel. The nature or form of it has obviously been marginalized. It seems that the vehicle and the essence of angel are intentionally distinguished as two independent entities and what we know about them is actually an artificial combination for a purpose. In Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* (in English translated as *City of God against Pagans*) the word angel is ontologically “made” as a composition of spirit and space (or container) by a human who is endowed with God-given power. It can be understood as an extraordinary claim that for St. Augustine, the essence, or the nature of a holy being is not necessarily maintained in the noun “angel”, and what is used to describe this noun is only valid as its vehicle or “spirit”<sup>161</sup>. In Hebrew or Mandarin, the word angel is translated as “mal’akh” and “天使” (tian shi, the messengers from the sky), which also simply refers to a messenger. Therefore, when Dust confesses to Mary that it is in reality angels, on the one hand the etymological meaning of angel has been borrowed and at the same time, the word “angel” is redefined. On the other hand this helps Dust to transfer from an entity to a higher level. Dust becomes, hierarchically speaking, a collectivity of higher intellectual beings. In *His Dark Materials*, Pullman recreates his angel by reinterpreting St. Augustine’s idea and the etymological root of this word, combines the matter and spirit again, but this time he replaces spirit with Dust. What Pullman needs here is a vehicle, even though this vehicle has an open

---

<sup>160</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 528. This is a verbatim quote from St. Augustine’s essay *Enarrationes in Psalms* (103,1,15), which originally suggests that notion of an angel is a dogma of Christian faith. However, it is used by Pullman to describe the vehicle (office) of Dust in *His Dark Materials*. To some extent, through Cave, Dust has been integrated with the image of the angel and made holy. See also in Psalms 103:20.

<sup>161</sup> Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 958. See also "angel, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/7458?rskey=IOZKbg&result=1> (accessed 28 June 2016). Noteworthy evidence is shown with the definition of angel, which suggests that “angels, according to the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other theologies, are the attendants and messengers of the Deity.” It becomes clear that the relation between angel and messenger is introduced into the English language through the act of translation.

hierarchical system. For example Metatron, the regent of the Authority is “too dazzled to see”<sup>162</sup> while the lower angels Balthamos and Baruch, who are even physically weaker than human beings, are not even visible in the day. According to Pullman, the reason angels assume human form is because seeing a human-like image is what our eyes expect. This idea somehow echoes the Allegory of the Cave; what we know about angels is actually the shadow reflected on the wall of the cave. Furthermore, this subdivision is not contradictory to how angels are manipulated in the trilogy, as actors in the continuance of *Paradise Lost*, namely the unfinished battle in heaven. After the second stage of the transformation, angels are made the equivalent of Dust, and the battle of heaven becomes the battle between Pullmanic Dust and the Authority (or Pullman’s Cosmology versus Catholic tradition). In spite of that, the theme of making Dust replace the office of angels in *His Dark Materials* is not too different from the traditional biblical image of them. The true form or nature of angels in *His Dark Materials* is described as follows: “ All they are is light.”<sup>163</sup> In “their true form, they would seem more like architecture than organism”.<sup>164</sup> More characteristics are displayed on the screen of the Cave in the second part of the conversation as if after this confession. Dust in Pullman’s design becomes a more systematic and self-conscious existence.

Dizzy, trembling, she typed again:

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Angels are creatures | Structures,        |
| of Shadow matter?    | Complexifications. |
| Of Dust?             | Yes                |
| <hr/>                |                    |
| And Shadow-matter    | From what we do,   |
| is what we have      | matter. Matter and |

---

<sup>162</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 528.

<sup>163</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 550.

<sup>164</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 442.

---

called spirit?

Spirit are one.<sup>165</sup>

---

In this part of the conversation Pullman displays a theological interpretation of his creation by integrating angel, matter and spirit into Pullman Dust. This is his cosmology. It is interesting to note that even though the purpose of creating Dust is anti-Christian, the interpretation Pullman selects to use is deeply religious. Hugh Rayment-Pickard sees this contradiction as a stereotypical aspect of New Atheist writing. In his *The Devil Accounts* he says,

Everything in Pullman's counter-Christian myth has been framed by the Christian paradigm. His constellation of concepts and characters only really make sense when referenced to Christian concepts.<sup>166</sup>

However, the reason Pullman writes in such a manner is not simply to construct an ironical counterpoint to Christianity. There are two recognizable dilemmas that force Pullman to take actions before his cosmology becomes fiction. The first is the cultural burdens that accompany Dust, and that Dust is carrying. In other words, Dust is still culturally dirty and smacks of sin. Even though made into a living being, it is still associated with Evil. To avoid this, Pullman tries to purify Dust here by linking it to Holy Spirit. Not only in *His Dark Materials* but also from a contemporary biblical point of view the theological association between material dust and evil is close. Cox

---

<sup>165</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 529. This part in *His Dark Materials* is presented as a conversation between Dust and Mary Malone on the screen of the Cave. The context is completely silent as it is also the last time Mary Malone uses the machine. It is difficult to represent the way they communicate. Yet this conversation as well as the way Mary talks to Dust are both important. Technology, mythology and fantasia are hereby perfectly fused with each other and this is also a proof that Dust does change and transform into another stage.

<sup>166</sup>Hugh Rayment-Pickard, "Pullman's Hidden Theology," *The Devil's Account: Philip Pullman & Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004), 88.

in her essay also quotes from H. P. Maler, who has written that “the creation of dust prefigures the birth of Adam, as on the third day God created the land and in so doing, the dust was born.”<sup>167</sup> Unlike other elements such as witches and armoured bears that depend upon a third-person narrator to introduce them, Dust in this phase faces its own transformation in an active and dialectical way. Pullman allows Dust to express itself face to face to Mary in an imperative tone. (The tone in the next part of the conversation is even stronger.) In this conversation Dust releases itself from the master-slave relationship, as an entity that was passively studied like a sample in a laboratory experiment. The second reason, and one that is more significant, is to relate Pullmanic Dust to the main theme of *His Dark Materials*. Pullman does so because combining angel and Dust is an essentially literary step. As my research has repeatedly shown, the main purpose of the entire trilogy *His Dark Materials* is to rewrite the Christian epic, *Paradise Lost*, and to continue the unfinished battle between heaven and hell. As John Wesley’s proverb suggests, “ Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness”(1791). It seems that only by making Dust relevant to biblical stories will the narrative be rational. Hence, it can be seen that transforming Dust into an intelligent, angel-like being is not only a literary strategy but also an authorially constructed turning point, convenient for establishing a metanoia. The following quote in which many biblical elements are involved overtly demonstrates this goal,

She shivered. They’d been listening to her thoughts.

And Did you intervene in human

evolution?

Yes.

---

Why?

Vengeance!

---

<sup>167</sup> Cox, in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 140.

Vengeance for- oh! Rebel  
 angels! After the war in  
 Heaven- Satan and the  
 garden of Eden- but it isn't  
 true, is it? Is that what you-  
 but why? <sup>168</sup>

Find the girl and  
 the boy. Waste no  
 more time. You  
 must play the  
 serpent.

There are three things worth mentioning in this section: human evolution, vengeance and the role of the serpent. The ideas of vengeance and of the serpent are typical manifestations of justice and evil and originate in the Bible. These two hence can be categorized as one theme while human evolution is not a theme welcomed in the Bible. The concept of vengeance is condemned by most religions due to its intention to produce equal suffering, whether of a physical or mental nature, with the original action that is being revenged. However, Judaism, which is the origin of the Christian religion, sees vengeance as a way of balancing. Even though the reciprocal idea of “an eye for an eye”<sup>169</sup> is not accepted by modern Christian doctrine, especially when the book of Leviticus says “do not seek revenge ...love your neighbors”<sup>170</sup>, its influence is still profound and visible and there are always examples of vengeance which can be found in the Bible (“‘vengeance is mine’ says the Lord”: *Deut. 32:35*). Dust replies to Mary’s question with only one word (Vengeance), which demonstrates an absolute certainty and wrath. Indeed, the main motivation or power that vengeance needs is wrath, which is one of the seven deadly sins. In spite of that, vengeance for the Christian religion is not sin. In some circumstances it is justified behaviour. The idea of “getting even” has even been one of the core values in Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic thinking for thousands of years. Therefore, when Pullman combines vengeance and Dust to fight against Christianity, he also exposes the paradox within; the “unjust just” whose essence is violence.

However, vengeance is not the only word game Pullman plays here. The serpent,

<sup>168</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 529.

<sup>169</sup> Exodus 21:24 KJV.

<sup>170</sup> Leviticus 19:18 KJV.

which betrays God and directs the Fall of humans by convincing Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of Knowledge of good and evil, was known as the authentic representation of Evil.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?<sup>171</sup>

The serpent's notoriety is not limited to Genesis. There is more verbal evidence in the Holy Bible that shows that in many circumstances the serpent, Satan, dust, and the Fall are highly relevant, such as, "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."<sup>172</sup> Notable words about the serpent clearly display how unpopular this animal is seen to be in Christianity,

They shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the Lord our God, and they shall be in fear of you<sup>173</sup>

The cause of the Fall makes this reptile for thousands of years become unambiguously a symbol of dishonesty, disloyalty, and evil in Christian culture. With a clear counter-Christian purpose, the serpent in *His Dark Materials* has repeatedly emerged and played a significant role as the enlightener in Book two and three of the trilogy. When Dust commands Mary who is an ex-nun to play the role of serpent and says, "you have been preparing for this as long as you have lived"<sup>174</sup>, it is interesting to emphasise Mary's ex-job overlapping with the role of the serpent because being a nun is also part of the preparation. Logically, in order to fight against Christianity, Mary is expected to understand more about Christianity than others. According to Tate, this again shows one of the most recognizable characteristics of New Atheist Novel writing; to attack the enemy (or the old ally) from "within". All the narratives

<sup>171</sup> Genesis 3:1 KJV.

<sup>172</sup> Corinthians 2:11 KJV.

<sup>173</sup> Micah 7:17 KJV.

<sup>174</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 529.

and biblical references Pullman has been using help to juxtapose a counter-Christian image.

Pullman's narrative, through peppered with biblical references, overtly writes against the conventionally religious interpretation of the authorized body of Jewish-Christian Literature.<sup>175</sup>

This part of the conversation between Dust and Mary provides a clear example of New Atheist Novel writing; furthermore, it provides Dust with a fixed position in *His Dark Materials*. By synchronizing Dust with the Holy Spirit and resetting the role of the serpent, Pullman has recreated and contrasted his version of the Garden of Eden from Genesis by reversing the most influential role of the serpent with opposite qualities and virtues. There are two significant moments in the trilogy when the serpent functions as a helping figure and teaches not only humans but other living species the correct ways to survive. The first is when Mary manages to study the mulefa's history and lifestyle. She is told by Atal how Snake has taught the mulefas the techniques of producing and using oil from sraf, which is the most valuable resource they depend on. The context is very meaningful especially if it is seen from a biblical point of view.

Ever since we have had the sraf, we have had memory and wakefulness. Before that, we knew nothing.

*What happened to give you the sraf?*

*We discovered how to use the wheels. One day a creature with no name discovered a seed-pod and began to play, and she played she-She?*

*She, yes. She had no name before then. She saw a snake coiling itself through the hole in a seed-pod, and the snake said-*

*The snake spoke to her?*

*No! No! it's a make-like. The story tells that the snake said What do you know? What do you remember? What do you see ahead? And she said Nothing, nothing, nothing. So the snake said Put your foot through*

---

<sup>175</sup> Tate, in Bradley and Tate, 61.

*the hole in the seed-pod where I was playing, and you will become wise. So she put a foot in where the snake had been. And the oil entered her foot and made her see more clearly than before, and the first thing she saw was sraf. It was so strange and pleasant that she wanted to share it at once with her kindred. So she and her mate took the first ones, and they discovered they knew who they were, they knew they were mulefa and not grazers. They gave each other names. They named themselves mulefa. They named the seed-tree, and all creatures and plants.*<sup>176</sup>

Echoing with the serpent's most well-known and crafty rhetoric - “can it be sin to know?”<sup>177</sup> - which seduces Eve to the Fall in *Paradise Lost*, the quote above expresses Pullman's reinterpretation of the Fall by rewriting the story of Garden of Eden in an ironical tone. The irony is made through the mulefa, elephant-like creatures. The world of the mulefa is totally atheistic. The word sraf (Dust in the mulefa's language), which is a representation of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil becomes the turning point for the civilization of the mulefa, who have had “memory and wakefulness” since the first mulefa was taught to eat them. Interestingly, on one hand the story Atal shares with Mary reveals the mythical history of the mulefa, who see her in the role of the new serpent in *His Dark Materials*. It is essential for her to remove the prejudice and accept the role of being a serpent. (Since she was an ex-nun, and hence must be familiar with the negative image of the serpent in Christianity.) In another respect, this story demonstrates the very core of Pullman's theological perspectives through techniques of storytelling. Pullman's intention to parody the myth of Garden of Eden is obvious and ironical. The pronoun “she” refers to the first enlightened mulefa. Metaphorically “she” represents the role of Eve, who first tasted the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Both “she” in the mulefa's history and Eve are significant factors of enlightenment. The only difference

---

<sup>176</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 778. The whole conversation was typed in italics because Pullman wants to distinguish it from English. In the novel Mary and Atal are communicating through a sign-language-like method by using trunks and limbs that Mary learned in the Mulefas' world.

<sup>177</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 517.

is that in *His Dark Materials*, the first enlightened female mulefa earns respect from her race while Eve becomes the first sinner because interpreted as cause of the Fall. By repeating this pronoun, Pullmans attempts to remind his readers of similarities between his version of Genesis and the original. In other words, if we recognize the resemblance between the mulefa's origin story and Genesis in the Holy Bible, Mary as the snake is ironically trained and enlightened by Atal, who is symbolically the offspring of Adam and Eve. From “Nothing, nothing, nothing” to “know, remember and see ahead” the text shows that the snake teaches the mulefa to live harmonically with nature. Additionally, because of their enlightenment, the mulefa are able to recognize independent beings and the difference among individuals of their society, and thus have names in their culture. In the Holy Bible the snake says, “when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil...and they were ashamed.<sup>178</sup>” whilst in *His Dark Materials*, that passage is rewritten as,

Your eyes will be opened, and your daemons shall assume their true forms, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil... until that moment it had seemed that they were at one with all the creatures of the earth and the air, and there were no differences between them.<sup>179</sup>

By imitating the Bible in different contexts and contrasting the word “ashamed” with the start of self-consciousness, it is obvious that for Pullman the Fall is not a sin. On the contrary, only with the Fall can a human identify an individual selfhood and hence human culture has its beginnings. However, a human who carries unnecessary guilt is not the best choice to establish the principle of purification; in other words, an innocent medium is needed. When the same myth is retold by a non-human creature, the interpretation is changed. Through the mulefa, a species not mentioned in the Bible and not born with original sin, the religious Fall in *His Dark Materials* is transferred into a “gnostic” awakening of consciousness, a rather “essential” Fall that helps human to “arrive at maturity.”<sup>180</sup>

Another word game is hidden in “human evolution”, which concerns the

<sup>178</sup> Genesis 3:4-5 KJV.

<sup>179</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 326.

<sup>180</sup> Tate, in Bradley and Tate, 69.

relationship between the biological origin of humans and the biblical one. Mentioning human evolution in a biblical context brings another significant meaning due to its historical correlation with the Christian religion. The term evolution regards a process of biological change that claims the physical organization of different species will adjust biochemically and morphologically so as better to survive. Charles Darwin (1809-1882) was the naturalist who formulated the earliest theory of evolution by means of natural selection, which became influential and increasingly accepted by genetics and other branches of biology at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Darwin's publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) demonstrates his complete version of the theory of evolution. Of course, this assertion attracted critical judgments worldwide, especially from Catholic and Anglican churches as this account rejected the biblical version of the origin of humanity. Biblically, God in Genesis created the first pair of humans, Adam and Eve, in his own image on the sixth day. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."<sup>181</sup> Ironically, if Darwin's claim is accepted by the public, some logical fallacies like that Genesis is actually a lie, or that God and apes also share an ancestry, will damage religious faith. Therefore, talking about evolution in a Christian context is problematical. Pullman as writer of *His Dark Materials* always displays his counter-Christian agenda. Mary is his mouthpiece narrator who undertakes to recast the Fall. The reason that she (and behind her Pullman) mentions the alternative account of human evolution is to reveal and enlarge this contradiction, so that it will be easier to remove the old biblical cosmology and replace it with a new one. This is a case of using "the neo-Romantic terms as a crucial image of human self-definition and personal liberty"<sup>182</sup>, according to Tate. If this is so, Tate defines here a core value of Pullman's trilogy and of his gnostic narrating technique.

However, in some respects human evolution may not be as useful as "overwhelming" weaponry against dogmatic problems, because so many unsolved and unproven problems about evolution remain. Evolution is defended by many theologians or related researchers such as Henri Blocher, who argues that for Reformers, scientific knowledge such as Darwin's theory is often denied a constitutive role in the interpretation of biblical texts. The reasons are twofold. Firstly,

<sup>181</sup> Genesis 1:27 KJV.

<sup>182</sup> Tate, in Bradley and Tate, 68.

it is irrational to deal with the narrative story as if it were true history: what is in Genesis has proven symbolically and collectively meaningful. Secondly, the earliest theory of evolution was not scientific at all when it was first raised into a philosophical dimension; it was an abstract, broad and flexible paradigm, incapable of formal proof, and many details of which remain questionable. Relatively, biblical hermeneutics concerns a range of human doubts or faith in a rather romantic (or mythical) form; it may not be “scientifically correct”, but is usually “anthologically meaningful”. For example, the first human, Adam, is used as a common word in Hebrew. The story of the Fall is a symbolic warning for readers or followers that we need to remain true to our naïve nature. When the Genesis story is seriously and scientifically studied as a representation of actual historical events rather than as theological text, its value is underestimated and abused.

The language of Genesis 2 and 3, we are told, takes us into the world of aetiological myths: a man fashioned from clay, wonderful trees bearing magical fruits, a serpent, or rather the Serpent, naturally gifted with speech and craftiness. All these are typical products of the mythopoeic imagination. They signal the genre of our narrative: a story, but not history, a beautiful myth trimmed to suit monotheism.<sup>183</sup>

### **2.1.3 Stage Three: Pullman’s Dusty Cosmology**

Negation of the biblical cosmology and the Christian God as the first creator on a higher level means Pullman must offer an alternative cosmological setting to replace the old. Theologically speaking, *His Dark Materials* is deeply framed by a Christian cultural context, essentially of the post-Victorian era. It possesses overlapping history and political background with that of Christian countries, and geographically the trilogy is Euro-centred. This frame also shows Pullman’s concerns about how religion has affected Britain in a parodied Oxford and London. The frame more or less limits Pullman’s resetting of cosmology to narrative methodology based in biblical hermeneutics. Unlike J.R.R Tolkien, C.S. Lewis or even Lewis Carroll, who

---

<sup>183</sup> Blocher, 38.

organized their narratives into alternative worlds that allowed them to ignore conventional logic and sometimes to be plainly absurd, Pullman wishes to deal with the core issues in terms of a context based on verisimilitude. In the previous stage of my argument, the noun dust acquired material substance and became purified through biblical parody. Becoming spirit-like particles makes it hierarchically higher than those who learn about them (humans), use them (the mulefa) or even wish to destroy them (the Authority and the Magisterium). Stage three, in which Dust becomes the absolute foundation of every living or dead thing, takes place mainly in Book III of the trilogy. There is an important moment when the rebel angel Balthamos firstly reveals Pullman's setting overtly at the end of *The Amber Spyglass* and subsequently promotes Dust to an ultimate level, the origin of everything.

Balthamos said quickly, “The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty, those were all names he gave himself. He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves - the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are, and the Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself, and Dust is formed. The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was the first of all. He told those who came after him that he created them, but it was a lie”<sup>184</sup>.

Balthamos' autobiographical claim has become the most controversial section in *His Dark Materials*. Researchers have increasingly referred to it as the centre of Pullman's theological perspectives. For example, Bird in her essay “Circumventing the Grand Narrative: Dust as an Alternative Theological Vision in Pullman's *His Dark Materials*” sees this as Pullman's “irrepressible desire” for a “transcendental signified”<sup>185</sup>. The so-called transcendental signified is a rather phenomenological understanding of the “deconstructive criticism” in Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, which suggests that for humans there is always a longing for a centre of reference. The centre is not necessarily a theological idol or a super-hero. According to Derrida, God is just one of the “signs” among many others that are

---

<sup>184</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 622.

<sup>185</sup> Bird, in Lenz (ed.), 191.

produced arbitrarily to describe the invisible “truth”<sup>186</sup>. The combination of G, O and D is just an arbitrary “signifier” to display the “signified”. In other words, “God” is just a collective concept or memory of a transcendental signified of a sizable group of people. Even if this semantic signifier were removed, it wouldn’t mean that the signified vanishes. The centre still remains the same; just the name has been changed. Radical atheism like Nietzsche’s *The Death of God* and Nihilism can hence easily be charged with absurdity and meaningless, since the rooted ideological signified is still there. Denying the creator to some extent is equal to denying what has been created, namely everything. Nietzsche claims in his *Will to Power* that

A nihilist is a man who judges that the real world ought *not* to be, and that the world as it ought to be does not exist. According to this view, our existence has no meaning: this 'in vain' is the nihilists' pathos — an inconsistency on the part of the nihilists.<sup>187</sup>

However, the way Pullman realizes his atheistic Republic of Heaven is not to remove the centre and make the universes totally decentred; on the contrary, all the names that were used to refer to the “ex-centre” (God) are listed and replaced. On the one hand, Pullman says “it was a lie” to reject both the Christian creator and all the biblical references; but on the other hand he also endows the names of the “real creator” or new centre that he has made. In *His Dark Materials*, Dust is the fictional transcendental signified and the new centre in Pullman’s “New Atheistic” cosmos. As the new centre that assumes the same names that God used to denominate himself, the argument of who is the creator is thus raised as a new issue. It is also the first concern about the relationship between the “origin” of things and the “things themselves.” Bird is not the only critic with concerns about this. Tate, by quoting Nietzsche’s

<sup>186</sup>Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 228-229.

<sup>187</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*[1887], trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967), 585. See also Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "Moral Skepticism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/skepticism-moral/>> (op. cit., accessed 24 June 2016).

famous words from his *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, suggests that the relation between creator and those created was originally ambiguous. “Which is it? Is man only God’s mistake or God only man’s mistake?”<sup>188</sup> For Tate, the answer to this question is presented by Pullman with *His Dark Materials* in the form of a trilogy that is described as a responds to Nietzsche,

Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* Trilogy might be read as an epic, 1,300-page response to Friedrich Nietzsche’s provocative question about God and Man.<sup>189</sup>

However, in the quote Tate also brings up another interesting issue: If the word “epic” he uses here means the literary definition of genres or subgenres, *His Dark Materials* is technically an epic fantasy because it contains three formative elements, just as does Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* and Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*. The three elements, according to Derek M. Bunker, are: 1) In the length of the text, it must be a trilogy or longer. 2) The time-span needs to be long enough, usually a few years or more. 3) It must contain a great back-story or universe setting in which the story takes place.<sup>190</sup> Interestingly, despite the fact that *His Dark Materials* is formed as an epic fantasy, is a trilogy in which the time-span is more than four years, and the whole world setting is so unique and stylised, Tate still uses “might be read as an epic” instead of a more certain tone such as “is epic”, or “Pullman’s epic”. The reasons are two and significant. On a lower level, the general rules of classification of the genre are gray and riddled with controversy. In other words, there isn’t an affirmed position for fantasy literature as a genre. Apart from Tolkien and Lewis, there are rarely works that can be with certainty be classified as fantasy literature. Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* is not an exception; it has more than once been under-estimated by critics and is very often classified as children’s literature, science fiction or even Steampunk. Doubtless, being classified into a subgenre is not always negative. Critics like

---

<sup>188</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), 33.

<sup>189</sup> Tate, in Bradley and Tate, 56.

<sup>190</sup> Derek M. Bunker, "The Long and Longer of It: Epic Fantasy," *The Science Fiction and Fantasy Readers' Advisory* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2002), 118.

Barfield value *His Dark Materials* positively and see the creation of Dust and of Lyra's world as a perfect counterpoint to the pessimistic dystopia that produces metanoia for readers.

In the case of Pullman's creation of Lyra's world, this would be an accurate appraisal, since for all the attractiveness of the steampunk-aligned world that we see, it is a world which points continually to severe social and political retardation which we as readers are meant to acknowledge and learn from.<sup>191</sup>

Even though Pullman's works are usually welcomed, there are still critics who see *His Dark Materials* as nothing more than a series of children's books: in 2002, soon after Pullman was awarded the Whitbread Prize, Andrew Marr argued in *The Daily Telegraph* that *His Dark Materials* was less than a masterpiece "in roughly the same way that *A Christmas Carol* is only a fireside fable."<sup>192</sup> Technically, if the genre epic is used as a literary term, Tate's "might be" can be understood as an indication that the classification of *His Dark Materials* remains difficult and problematic. In the case of epic, in traditional terms the text must be a lengthy narrative poem that contains heroic deeds and significant cultural or national events. Being classified as epic fantasy theoretically speaking is an compromise to the rules, because even though the term intergrates "epic" and "fantasy" into a new realm, with a work like *His Dark Materials* the text is essentially neither "epic" nor "fantasy" but a customized subgenre that again distinguishes *His Dark Materials* further from both.

Nevertheless, if the thinking around the word epic is changed to a different perspective, for example, the religious symbolism or the metaphorical providence that *His Dark Materials* carries, the situation is different. Tate's "might be read as epic" precisely expresses why this work is always associated with classics or epics. For part of Pullman's purpose of writing this trilogy is to rewrite Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*, especially on the issue of the Fall. Many critics suggest that at some levels *His Dark*

<sup>191</sup> Steven Barfield, "Dark Materials to Create More Worlds: Considering His Dark Materials as Science Fiction," in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 89.

<sup>192</sup> Andrew Marr, "Pullman does for atheism what C.S. Lewis did for God," *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 January, 2002.

*Materials* deserves the word epic in spite of its taking the form of a trilogy; it is the representation of *Paradise Lost* in novel forms and with a different targeted reader. As a twentieth century trilogy, *His Dark Materials* indeed characterizes the uncertainty and anxiety of British securitization by providing an interaction of dystopia with utopia. What Pullman and his *His Dark Materials* contributes is not enlightenment. Yet through storytelling, the century's anxiety is not only shown in those who fight against the Magisterium, but also in the Magisterium, a controlling power that is doubted and eventually overthrown. The Magisterium in Lyra's world or the churches in our world both face the reality that religion is losing its influence domestically in government, politics and education. According to Tate, the emergence of this kind of novel satisfies readers by reason of its anthropological standing. There is a kind of hunger in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a hunger for anthropological myths, a rather human-based imagination that is not about God, or about the Bible, but purely human-centred.

To our eyes, though, it is possible to detect an obscure but even more compelling reason for the massive popular appeal of the New Atheism: it constitutes a new and powerful creation mythology that –like all mythologies - performs an implicit anthropological service.<sup>193</sup>

Interestingly, Tate's words not only describe Pullman's *His Dark Materials* but also the parodied original text, Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In my research, I found that both *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost* are highly influenced by conventional paganism and new scientific findings, even though the authors' motivations for writing are totally opposite. In the seventeenth century, there were two remarkable scientific hypotheses about cosmography offered by Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo Galilei, namely the conflict between their heliocentrism and Claudius Ptolemy's geocentrism. Claudius Ptolemy's geocentrism, also known as the Ptolemaic model is an astrological hypothesis that served as a predominant cosmological system in many civilizations such as ancient Greece or Rome. It asserts that our earth is the centre of the universe, circled by all the celestial entities such as the sun, the moon, and all the stars. This geocentric hypothesis had become the cosmological foundation for many

---

<sup>193</sup> Tate, in Bradley and Tate, 68.

Western religions such as Judaism, Christian and Islam and was firstly challenged by Copernicus and Galileo furthered the heliocentric system by his observations through an astronomical telescope. Even though Galileo's findings were ostensibly scientific, their impact was religious and political for they shook the contemporary Christian religion to its foundation. At that time religion and politics were closely bound together; the new theory seriously threatened the church's prestige and public trust as well as centres of power. Milton's *Paradise Lost* was published between 1667 and 1674. It was not only influenced by Copernicus and Galileo: part of his work even questioned the geocentrism that was still the mainstream in seventeenth century thought. The evidence is in Book VIII, when Raphael tries to answer Adam's questions about astrology. Raphael's "what if" to some extent shows Milton's uncertainty about the Ptolemy's geocentrism, which was the traditional cosmographical understanding of the time,

. . . What if the Sun  
 Be centre to the world, and other stars  
 By his attractive virtue and their own  
 Incited, dance about him various rounds?  
 Their wandering course now high, now low, then hid,  
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,  
 In six thou seest, and what if seventh to these  
 The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,  
 Insensibly three different motions move? <sup>194</sup>

Even though there is no evidence directly to prove that Milton had officially rejected geocentrism, Raphael's doubtful way of speaking leaves clues. As the "divine interpreter", Raphael is the first angel to explain the creation of the world to Adam in the context that heavenly power is beyond human perception. In other words, because what has happened is "invisible to humans", angels need to use a medium of "visible language" to deliver "visible messages".

High matter thou enjoinest me, O prime of men,

---

<sup>194</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 122-30.

Sad task and hard, for how shall I relate  
 To human sense th' invisible exploits  
 Of warring Spirits; <sup>195</sup> . . .

Also because of that, it is less expected that there should be any uncertain or questionable tones spoken from Raphael, such as “what if”, or questions that doubt God’s divine creation of the world. Yet both of these ambiguous expressions are repeated twice in the same plot. Raphael’s uncertainty to some degree represents Milton’s struggle to the authorities, or conventional “common sense” of our universe in the meantime. Even though what Milton means to emphasise here is that human sense is very limited, his anxiety - caused by contemporary scientific findings and the ambition of finding a “transcendental signified,” - compared to Pullman, is never weaker. Technically, these two works share an essential similarity. Both are seeking a new transcendental signified to replace the old. The only difference, roughly speaking, is that Milton’s ideology is to replace the monarchy with a real kingship, that of God, while for Pullman a transcendental truth is the ultimate human goal, rather than absolute authority from elsewhere. Dust, in the third stage, is this truth. To do this, Pullman also introduces a messenger, namely, Balthamot.

In stage three, Balthamot’s claim plays a crucial effect due to his identity. Likewise, Raphael in Milton is an angel, a divine interpreter. When these words are spoken by a divine interpreter, who in stage two was part of the same group of angels that speaks to Mary, the correlation becomes more meaningful. It is a very different self-definition of another form of Dust from what is in the Cave. Comparing the changes with the previous stage, two important figures of Dust are revealed, in conflict with each other. The first is the isolation of Dust from all else, meaning Dust also recognizes the differences among “others,” while the second is, conversely, Dust’s tendency to form bonds as a linking figure. Dust associates closely with all other entities, whether living or dead. Specifically, the isolation is shown in the company of angels, when they break from a plurality signalled by the pronoun “us” into names of different angels; Balthamos, Metatron or even the Authority. The pronouns “we” and “us” are no longer used. A hierarchy is clearly demonstrated by the description of the Authority and a great isolation hence ensues. “The Authority,

---

<sup>195</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V. 563-566.

God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El... those are the names ‘he’ gave ‘himself’” “‘He’ told ‘those’ who came after ‘him’ that ‘he’ created ‘them’” The more frequently and repeatedly the third-person pronoun “he” is used, the more strong the isolation that seeps into the context and the differentiation among the plurality that is Dust is made clearer. For literary or strategic purposes, this division is inevitable because, unlike *Paradise Lost*’s war between heaven and hell, *His Dark Materials* is rewritten in a rather complicated context of conflict and narrated as a form of evolution within heaven. In this battle, there is no clear war between good and evil, but a war among different stands of position, religious perspectives and political values. In order to trigger an epic warfare within so complicated a context, namely between “the kingdom of heaven” and “the public of heaven” in which the differing participants overlap (angels from different parties, humans from different religious beliefs), Balthamot’s role is simultaneously crucial as a messenger, as witness and as representation of Pullman’s rewriting of Milton’s heroic Satan. Balthamot’s declaration can be seen as a declaration of war and a call for unity, even though his position is hierarchically low and insignificant. It not only provides Lord Asriel’s army rightful reason to fight against the Magisterium and the Authority, it literally brings Pullman’s Dusty cosmology to an equal standing with the Christian one. The effect of unity or the bond-making process is critical and interesting, on account of Dust’s isolation from the whole. The dramatic highlight occurs when Balthamot reveals the Authority’s secret, that He also was made of Dust and that what we know about the origin of the universe is a made-up lie. This can be compared to Satan’s speech in *Paradise Lost* when he is presented as a hero-like character in Book I. What he tries to do is to challenge God with doubt and pride. Believing that God is actually a cheater and a tyrant at the same time, he says in his famous speech,

‘Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,  
Said then the lost archangel, ‘this the seat  
That we must change for heav’n, this mournful gloom  
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid  
What shall be right: furthest from him is best  
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme

Above his equals. Farewell happy fields  
 Where joy for ever dwells: hail horrors, hail  
 Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell  
 Receive thy new possessor: one who brings  
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
 The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.  
 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; the 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 heaven<sup>196</sup>.

Within the quote it can be observed that many comparative and superlative adjectives such as supreme, best, less and greater are repeatedly used. All of these adjectives, again and again, are manipulated to strengthen the sense of imbalance and unfairness with which the creator has treated the different realms, some under obvious discrimination although created by him. This discrimination, according to Satan in *Paradise Lost* originates from God's imperfection. It can be seen that both Balthamos' and Satan's speeches directly deny the idea of God's perfect virtue and his positive image in traditional Christian doctrine, by revealing negative personality attributes in him, such as envy and dishonesty. Envy is an interesting word that I discussed in the previous chapter, as an ironical noun used to describe Mary Malone's emotion once she finds the Mulefa world. In *Paradise Lost*, the word is even more meaningful. Using a Christian oriented word in this context is nothing symbolic, but direct narrative and description, because *Paradise Lost* itself has been seen a poetic representation of the story in the Bible. Additionally, envy is included among the seven deadly sins. It figures in the Ten Commandments in which it says, "Neither shall you desire... anything that belongs to your neighbor." It is ironical when the guilt

---

<sup>196</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I. 221-244.

of humanity is charged onto the supreme being, known for creating everything, and who so firmly forbids what we are naturally inclined to do. In the lines quoted from *Paradise Lost*, Satan tries to describe all the unequal treatment as the outcome of God's jealousy. God and the rebellious angels are actually in a position of competition rather than a relationship between master and slaves. The distorted context makes God hierarchically lower than a king. In other words, by using similar literary strategies, God in both Milton's and Pullman's works has been represented as a mean bully.

However, when the Authority has been isolated and removed from what he has been creating in *His Dark Materials*, every name or title referred to has the same identification, namely the Christian/Magisterium God who is organically and structurally the same as Dust. Making the Christian God a product of Dust is symbolically significant because this arrangement is violently paradoxical to the "isolation" which I have just mentioned. This raises another counter effect that I will address as the second prominent figure within Balthamot's explanation of the cosmos, namely synchronization. Calling it synchronization is because there hasn't been any technical terms or related research so far to describe this strange phenomenon, but it is best noted as the combination of the "creator" and "created", or in other words the "raw materials" and "product" that together form the most important function of Pullmanic Dust in *His Dark Materials*.

### **2.1.5 The Dust's Final "Becoming" and the Death of the Authority**

In Pullman's cosmological design and my transformation model, synchronizing the Authority and Dust is a crucial step in the final replacement: it is not only a mythological explanation of Pullman's fictional universe. Essentially, it is like a gravimetric pull force that plays against the surface tension (the isolation I have just discussed) caused by the differences among the products. The two forces are apparently conflicting, and many logical dilemmas will emerge and require Pullman to provide more detailed information about Dust<sup>197</sup>. The interactions (or the conflict)

---

<sup>197</sup> *The Book of Dust* is an upcoming companion novel to *His Dark Materials* that Pullman promised as early as 2003. Like the trilogy, *The Book of Dust* will also feature Lyra Belacqua as the main character and the context of the story will be Lyra's Oxford.

between the two forces aim to abstract the divinity from God and filter out the negativity that concerns tyrannical or violent parts of the Christian doctrine. Even though both the isolation and synchronization exist, considerable problems arise within religious as well as philosophical realms. However, the importance of Balthamot's declaration never diminishes. Regarding the logical concerns I have mentioned, the most obvious sample question would be: Since Dust is made as omnipotent as the Christian God and is also the raw material of all entities, and even stands for spiritual energy like daemon and souls, can Pullman as writer or we as readers really tell the differences between the Authority (concentration of light and dust), rock (minerals, carbon) and us (flesh and blood beings)? In stage three, Dust has been made into what Pullman wanted it to represent. Yet many questions are left unanswered. There is evidence in the text that to some extent explains Pullman's ultimate version of Dust. If in stage two, Pullman purifies Dust by endowing it with thought and free will, then stage three can be firmly understood as the deification, or divination of Dust; not the equal of God, but supreme to Him. Whereas Pullman updates Dust, he also lowers God at the same text to make a contrast. By saying "He was never the creator... it was a lie,"<sup>198</sup> Pullman manages to write the symbolic death of the Authority in the later chapter titled "Authority's End", which begins with a quote from Blake's famous *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "For Empire is no more, and now the Lion and Wolf shall cease"<sup>199</sup>. In an earlier chapter, Dust was made the only cause of the universe after replacing God as the creator of all. Even though the Authority is replaced by Dust, his real death in the trilogy is not yet announced. The death of the Authority is the dramatic and symbolic starting point of the battle between the Kingdom and the Republic of heaven, and it also expresses Pullman's religious perspective:

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

<sup>198</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 622.

<sup>199</sup> William Blake, *The Marriage between Heaven and Hell*[1793], copy B: *electronic edition*, ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Blakearchive, <<http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive>> (accessed 28 December 2015).

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 sign of the most profound and exhausted relief.

Then he was gone: a mystery dissolving in mystery. It had all taken less than a minute, and Will turned back at once to the fallen chevalier. He picked up the little body, cradling it in his palms, and found his tears flowing fast.<sup>200</sup>

In order to dramatize Pullman's intention of writing *His Dark Materials* as a counter-Christian text, God's death must be carefully designed. In "Authority's End" many puns are closely displayed in an intensive, but also sympathetic tone against his death; almost every word associated with the Authority has an embedded metaphor. Pullman uses the term "the ancient of days" as the other name for the Authority. With and without capitalized form, the words ancient of days may have double meanings. On the one hand, by separating the ancient and days verbally, the conventional interpretation of the phrase expresses how Christianity is facing its end and becoming outdated. On the other, the capitalized "The Ancient of Days" is a name of God in the biblical book of Daniel; in the original Aramaic *Atik Yomin*, it was identified by Thomas Aquinas as "the Father" of the Holy Trinity. It seems clear that all these positive honors and titles remind readers and echo what Balthamos has just said about the Authority, "The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty, those were all names he gave himself."<sup>201</sup> After Will and Lyra both know that the Authority was not the creator, this is the second time that these flattering titles emerge, but at this moment they appear in the same sentence as the words "he had vanished completely", causing an ironical and disproportionate sympathy that Pullman wishes to demonstrate. The crystal cell is manipulated as well, to transport the Authority to prison. This luxurious jail can be seen as the metaphor of the Ark of the Covenant, which first appears in the book of Exodus. Like the Holy

---

<sup>200</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 926.

<sup>201</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 622.

Grail, the Ark of Covenant is one of the biggest mysteries of the Christian religion. It is also known as the Ark of Testimony and plays a crucial role in Christianity. In the book of Exodus, Yahweh instructs Moses on Mount Sinai in his 40-days of stay, and it is important moment when the Ten Commandments are initially brought into the world of Christian history.<sup>202</sup> In the New Testament, the Ark is mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Revelation of St. John, both of which note that it contained "the golden pot that had manna and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant." It also says the prophet saw God's temple in heaven opened, "and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple."<sup>203</sup> Even though its existence cannot be confirmed scientifically, its influence is ubiquitous in realms of art, literature, and pop culture.

Theologically, for more than a thousand years the Ark of the Covenant is treated as more than a container of two pieces of stone. It has become a divine symbol of God's words or even God's throne in the human world. Its golden cover is named Kapporet, which in Hebrew means the "Mercy Seat of God."

Yet in *His Dark Materials*, this famous metaphor is totally distorted for special purposes. The word ark is changed to cell, which is the synonym of prison. Even though the cell still preserves its beauty because it is made of crystal, the function of crafting it is still humiliating and metaphorical; in particular, the prisoner inside who is known as the creator of the universe. After being attacked by the cliff-ghast<sup>204</sup>, the Authority is confined in the cell defenselessly; he can neither fight back nor escape from the cell, until eventually rescued by Will by the simple action of cutting and pulling him out. The simpler Will's action, the stronger the impression taken by the reader that the Authority is even weaker than expected.

Will cut through the crystal in one movement and reached in to help  
the angel out. Demented and powerless, the aged being could only

<sup>202</sup> Exodus 19:20; 24:18 KJV.

<sup>203</sup> Revelation 11:19 KJV.

<sup>204</sup> Ghast is the word "ghost" in Lyra's world. It is a mythical flying creature that has the instinct of a killer. In "Authority's End" a group of cliff-ghasts are attracted by the shining crystal cell that is used to transport the Authority. In the trilogy, they are known as the cause of the Authority's death.

weep and mumble in fear and pain and misery, and he shrank away from what seemed like yet another threat.<sup>205</sup>

By contrasting “in one movement”, “Demented and powerless”, “As light as paper”, “he would have followed them anywhere”, “having no will of his own” and “responding to simple kindness like a flower to the sun,” a chain of combined descriptions of the Authority that are linked by a comma is intensively used here to enlarge the unwillingness of the aged man. Pullman in “Having no will of his own” and “as light as paper” suggests a point of view about the sacred doctrines (paper in the surface level expresses the weight of the Authority, yet at a deeper level it also addresses the words of the Authority, the Holy Bible, likewise Milton’s stony laws in Blake’s Plate 19) which were preserved in the Ark of Commandment (crystal cell). They have been abused and lost their original significances since they are wrongly understood and interpreted.

Furthermore, in “A flower to the sun” both the flower and the sun are fine things. Between the two there is an obvious master and slave relationship. The sun provides the solar energy that the flower needs to grow. However in this sentence, the flower is the Authority, and the sun refers to people who originally should worship him. An irony is expressed, though the role of master and slave relation is inverted, and the importance of the original and of the interpreter in the biblical context is reversed. The image of the sun has a special meaning in Christianity, in particular for the Catholic Church. Evidence shows that even though the Christian religion is monotheistic, it was influenced by Sumerian sun worship, since the images of God and the sun were and are closely related. The Holy Bible states that earlier Jews worshipped Tammuz, which in Hebrew is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. Tammuz, Nimrod, and Semiramis are one of the oldest trinities, the three-in-one sun god. Even though evidence is still needed to prove the relation between sun and the holy trinity in Christianity, in the book of Ezekiel it says, “Then he brought me to the door of the gate of Yehowah's house that was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.”<sup>206</sup> In the Catholic account of the Holy Trinity, the image of the sun very often represents the Holy Spirit, a white dove surrounded by

---

<sup>205</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 925.

<sup>206</sup> Ezekiel 8:14 KJV.

dazzling sunlight (In the stereotype of the Dominican Trinity, the Son often appears with a wooden cross, the Holy Spirit like a dove, and the Father is usually a kind elder with a triangle behind).

In normal circumstances related to Christianity, the Authority should be the sun- the only and the most powerful source of light. The stacking of these metaphorical puns juxtaposes and expresses a counter-image that, whether it is called God, Almighty or the Authority, his position and dust are like on the two extreme sides of a seesaw. The more weight Dust has gained from the figures that were used to construct God, the lighter the Authority has become. This can be observed through the whole process of transformation of Dust. The replacement of God happens gradually. When in stage one, Dust is transformed from the realistic common noun into something fictional and endowed with materiality, the Authority in the meantime loses his mythical status and becomes physically touchable. His fortress-like castle, the Clouded Mountain, has been revealed and introduced into the trilogy though Mrs. Coulter's eye from the intention craft. The Clouded Mountain is the very core of the Kingdom of Heaven that was inspired by Milton's lines in *Paradise Lost*, *Book II*:

Far off th'empyreal Heav'n, extended wide  
In circuit, undetermined square or round,  
With opal tow'rs and battlements adorned  
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;<sup>207</sup>.

These lines are used by Pullman as the prologue in Chapter Thirty of *The Amber Spyglass*. In many Christian myths, clouds as well as fire are often manipulated to hide God's physical appearance since it is too divine to be seen by mortals, and even in some circumstances, cloud is the shifting image of God himself. The most remarkable example is in the Old Testament when Moses was summoned by God, who gives him Ten Commandments for the Israelites on Mount Sinai. Within the story, the fire and cloud represent God's arrival and existence in front of Moses. Here is the way this narrative is translated in the ESV of the Holy Bible:

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had

---

<sup>207</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 1047-1050.

descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.<sup>208</sup>

Another example to show the close relationship between cloud and God is the anonymous work called *The Could of Unknowing*<sup>209</sup>, which was written in Middle English in the latter half of the fourteenth century. This book concerns the true nature of God in Neo-Platonism and suggests that to remove the cloud that masks God's real appearance, the best way is to abandon the definitive image and form of God and knowledge of God. For the protagonist in the book who seeks God, so-called knowledge and the intellections built up by education do not help, but on the contrary cast a rather thicker cloud over God's face. Only through intense contemplation and a "dart of longing love" from the heart, can he thereby pierce the cloud of unknowing and grasp the real image of God. In the book a picture of the cloud is repeatedly used as an important symbol of the barrier that prevents God from being seen by mortals. This is the way the contemplation takes place:

When we intend to pray for goodness, let all our thought and desire be contained in the one small word "God." Nothing else and no other words are needed, for God is the epitome of all goodness. Immerse yourself in the spiritual reality it speaks of yet without precise ideas of God's works whether small or great, spiritual or material. Do not consider any particular virtue that God may teach you through grace, whether it is humility, charity, patience, abstinence, hope, faith, moderation, chastity, or evangelical poverty. For to a contemplative they are, in a sense, all the same. Let this little word represent to you

---

<sup>208</sup> Exodus 19: 18-20 ESV.

<sup>209</sup> Patrick J. Gallacher, ed, *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997).

God in all his fullness and nothing less than the fullness of God<sup>210</sup>

The quote demonstrates an overt example of the process of “knowing God from internal contemplation”. It shows not only how God’s appearance is mythical and desirable for Christians, but also emphasises that the fundamental function (usage) of the cloud is to preserve God’s mystery (Everyone who seeks God needs to have the goal of piercing the cloud). This text became increasingly popular in twentieth-century biblical hermeneutics. Its way of knowing/contemplating God has been adopted by the Catholic Church and contemplative prayer practices. Unlike the traditional image of cloud, *His Dark Materials'* Clouded Mountain is constructed so as to represent a physical place rather than a metaphor or a concept of heaven. Even though the essence of the word “Clouded” is not different from what I have suggested in the previous chapter, it is no longer a metaphor that suggests the invisibility of something holy, but a concrete, visual, and geographical adjective to describe a natural phenomenon, which is handled for architectural purposes. It is no longer divine and secret, and can now be easily reached by artificial aircraft like Coulter’s intention craft. In *His Dark Materials*, the first appearance of heaven is described as spectacular and beautiful. It is interesting that even though Pullman wishes to destroy this place in his trilogy, the words he uses to sketch “heaven” are respectful, epic and complicated, but also conflict with ergonomic comfort and beauty:

As Mrs. Coulter approached, she found her attention dazzled and bewildered by the nature of the mountain itself.

It reminded her of a certain abominable heresy, whose author was now deservedly languishing in the dungeons of the Consistorial Court. He had suggested that there were more spatial dimensions than the three familiar ones; that on a very small scale, there were up to seven or eight other dimensions, but that they were impossible to examine directly. He had even constructed a model to show how they might work, and Mrs. Coulter had seen the object before it was exorcised and burnt. Folds within folds, corners, and edges both

---

<sup>210</sup> William Johnston and Huston Smith eds., *The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counseling* (New York: Image Books, 1996), 98-101.

containing and being contained: its inside was everywhere and its outside was everywhere else. The Clouded Mountain affected her in a similar way: it was less like a rock than like a force-field, manipulating space itself to enfold and stretch and layer it into galleries and terraces, chambers and colonnades and watch-towers of air and light and vapour.<sup>211</sup>

“Its inside was everywhere, and its outside was everywhere” vividly suggests that this so-called heaven in *His Dark Materials* is a visually complicated but ugly space that is excessively decorated. Though seven or eight other dimensions display a fabulous and amazing view that can be only seen in the heavenly world, the crowded and suppressed designs soon decrease the divinity and holiness of it. Unlike the experience of Mary Malone first discovering the world of the mulefa, which is described as fabulous and delightful, Mrs. Coulter, on the contrary, expresses a rather disappointed and even confused emotion; nothing like the excitement or ecstasy of a Christian truly seeing heaven with her own eyes. Additionally, what initially informed her of heaven was an object condemned as evil and “exorcised.”

The physical existence of the Authority’s dwelling place has two significances: on the one hand it makes Pullman’s fictional goal of constructing the Republic of Heaven in *His Dark Materials* possible, because having a physical existence means this is no more a war of ideology. In other words, several Christian terms such as God, heaven, and paradise are altogether “un-abstracted” by Mrs. Coulter’s discovery. Through her adventure, the term “Kingdom of Heaven” is also secularized as “a kingdom physically up there”. In fact, the word heaven is descriptive rather than theological. It initially developed from the Old English word heofon, which in 1000 AC was first used in reference to “places where God dwells<sup>212</sup>”, this word has been commonly Christianized as a “promised place” to be synonymized with paradise, opposite to hell. Because of advanced technology, the sky and space become less mythical for humans. As a result, the word heaven is gradually understood in a rather

---

<sup>211</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 914.

<sup>212</sup> “heaven, n.”. OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/85205?rskey=Ee2eS8&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed 30 July 2016).

Platonist conceptual or religious way, without considering its etymological origin. It is an interesting and small finding that the way Pullman uses the word heaven is not an act of rewriting, but a return to its original etymology. Within the trilogy it can be observed that soon after the Clouded Mountain has been detected and proven to exist, the biggest war takes place quickly afterward. It is rather rushed in the narrative that such warfare suddenly starts and then as dramatically ends, within the space of two chapters. The reason is simple: it is always easier to fight with a real army than with a concept or an image, even though the actual army is one comprised of angels.

According to the Holy Trinity and the Holy Bible, God is in everything; a very well-known quote can be found in the book of Ephesians which says, “One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”<sup>213</sup> Being found by mortals is the key to the war because it means that the Authority is not really omnipresent since there is an exact time and space for him to stay. If in the trilogy this status has not changed, the Authority is and will be still undefeatable, as it is impossible to fight with “everything”. In *The Amber Spyglass*, the thirtieth chapter is “Clouded Mountain”, and the next one is “The Authority’s End”. The war does not last long. Yet at a deeper level, making the Clouded Mountain physical is also making the Authority physical. It is a convenient way to upgrade Pullmanic Dust into an equal position with the Authority after the change of Dust in Stage One, namely through gaining its physicality when the existence of Dust in this phase was still maintained as a scientific finding. When both Dust and the Authority gain their physicality and “thinghood,” they can be finally placed on a coordinate position to be compared and contrasted. It is essential for Dust to shed its negativity from the conventional associations of the common noun dust, while the Authority loses its mystery and the divinity that makes Him invisible, omnipotent and omnipresent. For Dust, stage one is of course an upgrade even though the transformation is neutral. The situation is the same for the Authority but inversed: it is always easier to purify “a thing” rather than “a concept” because concepts are usually historically and culturally rooted and consequently harder to change. Therefore, before stage two’s purification and stage three’s deification and final replacement of the Christian God, a complicated and systematic transformation needs to take place simultaneously in both Dust and God. This is also what I am trying to argue in my research. When one attempts to discuss

---

<sup>213</sup> Ephesians 4:6 KJV.

Dust as a theme, it is very important to address a particular stage of Dust since, in different stages, Dust and dust are not shown in an identical form. The instability of Dust may cause severe misreading when it reacts with other words, for example, the crystal cell. Without relating it to the Ark of the Covenant, the Authority's death will become meaningless and valueless. Pullman shows his expertise in playing with words that in his works usually carry more than one pun. It would be less dangerous if Dust could be seen as a process, rather than a thing.

### **2.1.6. Dust and the Fall**

In spite of the fact that in the trilogy Pullmanic Dust manages to replace the Authority, more evidence shows that this “newly made God” does not inherit the old one’s omnipotence from the Bible. Through the transformation model of my research, I attempt to suggest that Dust is still unable to carry such heavy burdens, as within the whole trilogy this “super element” is always changing. Within the transformation, Dust is not just made holy, but has been modified from noumena into phenomena. In other words, the ultimate version of Pullmanic Dust is visible, touchable, and killable due to its physical form. Becoming Phenomena to some extend exposes its weakness: just like the Authority, being a thing also means that it can be easily damaged and corrupted. According to Bird, Dust in *His Dark Materials* echoes Pullman’s religious (129), social/political (135) and even ecological (137) perspectives. From the author’s point of view, Dust does feedback Pullman (its creator) with privileges of playing freely with different genera and expresses his critical judgments over different areas that are originally not even related. In religious terms, Pullman rewrites Milton’s *Paradise Lost* by installing Dust as the manifestation of the outcome of the “Happy Fall” which is also known as Pullman’s (or Blake’s) version of Original Sin. Remarkably, there is a crucial scene when the Fall of Adam of Eve has been represented by Pullman through Will and Lyra; it can be seen in the trilogy that the Fall is not sinful at all, but full of vitality. At the moment of the Fall’s happening great numbers of particulate Dust are hence “produced”. The critic Tommy Halsdorf describes this in terms of “[T]he new Eve … offering the fruit to the new Adam”<sup>214</sup>.

---

<sup>214</sup> Tommy Halsdorf, “Walking into Mortal Sin : Lyra, the Fall and Sexuality,” in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 176.

Lyra took one of those little red fruit. With a fast-beating heart, she returned to him and said, “Will....” And she lifted the fruit gently to his mouth. She could see from his eyes that he knew at once what she meant, and that he was too joyful to speak. Her fingers were still at his lips, and he felt them tremble, and he put his own hand up to hold hers there, and then neither of them could look; they were confused; they were brimming with happiness. Like two moths bumping clumsily together, with no more weight than that, their lips touched... All his body thrilled with it, and he answered her in the same words, kissing her warm honey-fragrant hair and her sweet moist mouth that tasted of the little red fruit.<sup>215</sup>

This scene takes place in the thirty-fifth chapter of the novel, and is obviously a parody (or representation) of Adam and Eve’s fall in a dramatic and romantic way, rather than being descriptive. The image of the red fruit is shown twice in the plot, and, once introduced, it is Pullman’s overt intention to announce that the Fall will happen very soon. Interestingly, this red fruit just emerged from nowhere in the trilogy. We first see it when “Lyra took one of that little red fruit, with a fast-beating heart.” The scene will be considered odd if readers attempt to find out its origin in the context. The only readable clue that shows that the red fruit is related to the Fall and going to be triggered by it, may be hidden. The red fruit is given by Pullman’s serpent, Dr. Mary Malone, with an intention of directing the Fall. “Mary took some flat bread and cheese and some sweet thirst-quenching red fruits, wrapping them in a cloth... ‘Good hunting’ she said as they left.”<sup>216</sup> By combining with other clues, it can be observed that the emergence of the red fruit is also one of Pullman’s tricks or announcements. Apart from the red fruit, there are actually two clues. The first is the location. The place where the Fall occurs is in the Mulefa world, which has been commonly defined by critics as Pullman’s Garden of Eden in *His Dark Materials*. (This part is discussed in the previous chapter of my thesis.) Hence, if there is a second Fall, it must take place nowhere but here. The second clue is that this is an

---

<sup>215</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 969-970.

<sup>216</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 964.

isolated, silent place in which there are only Will and Lyra. More situations show that many of Will and Lyra's actions parody or even mimic the biblical context of the Fall at the beginning of the chapter. All the details are carefully arranged by Pullman, including the Edenic environmental context:

They walked on together in a friendly silence. All around them the wide clear morning lay limpid in the hollows and pearly-blue in the warm air above. As far as the eye could see the great savannah rolled, brown, buff-green, shimmering towards the horizon, and empty. They might have been the only people in the world.<sup>217</sup>

The image of red fruit is very often adopted by scholars as an important metaphor for the biblical Fall, but in *His Dark Materials*, particularly in Pullman's version of the Fall, the red fruit is even more crucial, yet in an entirely new way. Biblically, the red fruit is the symbol of Satanic attraction; it is also a God-made trail that subtly entraps this first pair of humans and then charges them with their fault. Even though the fruit directly causes the Fall, the fact that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit is the physical evidence of their dishonesty and rebellion against God. For Pullman this sin is negligible when compared to what it brings by way of culture and intellect to humans. In *His Dark Materials*, the red fruit is just an ordinary food; it does not have magical powers. Yet it is the strongest symbol of a protest lodged by Pullman, with a clear purpose of decriminalising and purifying the Fall in this "rewriting of *Paradise Lost*". Milton in *Paradise Lost* reveals Eve's internal confusion not only as a response to the serpent but also implies a desire or even a "thirst for knowing" in human nature.

Knowledge forbidden?  
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord  
Envy them that? Can it be a sin to know,  
Can it be death? And do they only stand  
By ignorance, Is that their happy state,  
The proof of their obedience and their faith?

---

<sup>217</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 966.

O fair foundation laid whereon to build  
Their ruin!'<sup>218</sup>

This series of questions discloses not only Eve's confusion, but a near hysteria caused by anger and distrust. By asking six questions continuously, Eve's doubts are infused with Milton's fury. Negative words like "envy," "death" and "ruin" are used as an interrogation-like tone of expression against God. These negative emotions distinguish Pullman's Fall, which is different from the biblical and Milton's versions. In *Paradise Lost* Milton sees clearly the human desires to know and to have reasons for any prohibition on knowledge. He is concerned with questions about the "right to know". Is Eve really sinful, if we grant that she was challenged by the serpent's seduction? But Milton does not actually face these needs and eventually compromises with the biblical ending of the Fall and condemns the Fall as a sin. The moment in *Paradise Lost* is written in a depressing tone as follows,

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour.  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate;  
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat  
Signing through all her works gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk.  
The guilty serpent and well might, for Eve  
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else  
Regarded, such a delight till then, as seemed,  
In fruit she never tasted.<sup>219</sup>

This quote clearly expresses that the Earth and Nature respond to Eve in her "evil hour" with "wound" and "woe". It can be seen that the critical judgment has been made before Eve's first fall. In addition, "that all was lost" again emphasises that Eve's work is unalterable. However for Pullman, the longing for knowledge is something natural that is born with humans; it should not be forbidden, nor threatened by any form of laws or doctrines. In the Bible, the red fruit endows Adam and Eve

---

<sup>218</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 515-522.

<sup>219</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 780-788.

with gifts of speech and intellect. After the Fall, human beings are more enlightened and take on a cultural dimension in their lives. This is not a sin, but a turning point for humans, from being a pet of God, into becoming independent thinking beings. The evidence is supplied in the trilogy when the Fall takes place. Not only the surrounding area (ground zero of the Fall, namely the Mulefa world), but every universe seems to “echo” and “awake” simultaneously with the Fall, as it is a most graceful joy that is given exclusively from God. It is more like a “universal resonance” caused by the new Adam and Eve’s sexual intercourse, namely the second Fall. Before the Fall, there is a totally different scene in which Dust is “dying” quickly by been absorbed into a bottomless abyss. Two quotes explicitly tell the difference:

### **Before the Fall**

There was no floor; the sides sloped vertiginously down towards the edge of a great pit hundreds of feet below, and darker than darkness itself and into the pit streamed the endless Dust - full, pouring ceaselessly down. Its billions of particles were like the stars of every galaxy in the sky, and every one of them was a little fragment of conscious thought. It was a melancholy light to see by<sup>220</sup>. (*Amber Spyglass*, 918)

### **After the 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 any more. In fact, if anything, it was falling like snowflakes.<sup>221</sup>

The first view is narrated by Will and Lyra, who witness the dying of the Dust as well as the world, while the second is told by Mary. The verb “pour down” expresses the hazard that “billions of particles” of Dust are vanishing. In normal situations,

<sup>220</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 918.

<sup>221</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 975.

Pullmanic Dust would not actually die, even if its present form were destroyed (for example, when one's daemon is killed). It is like a circle of life; everything returns to Dust (the big Nature) after death. This part has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter of my research, which suggests that Pullman's Dust exercises as an endless cycle and everything returns to Dust and becomes part of the many parallel universes. At this point, it can already be noted that Dust is facing its true death once people betray their own nature. In *His Dark Materials*, this nature is the instinctive desire for love and faith (a non-religious form of the latter). However, it can be observed that after the second Fall, this deadly flow is gradually slowed down, and more Dust is "produced". Logically, Dust is the raw material of everything, and the increase of Dust in this context is definitely not a sin, but refreshment to the world. This fact decriminalizes Dust's sinful feature. By representing the Fall, Pullman does make a very brief but clear conclusion for this chapter, which perfectly echoes the importance of the Fall in his trilogy. "They would seem the actual image of what human beings always could be, once they had come into their inheritance"<sup>222</sup>.

I would particularly suggest that the self-producing figure and its interaction with human love is best to express the author's expectation as regards Pullmanic Dust. Even though Dust is made overwhelming because it manages to replace the Authority within the narrative, it is not made supreme or isolated from other Dust-oriented beings at the same time. On the contrary, this new God welcomed the fundamental psyche of people. Compared to the Authority, its distance from the nature of humans is much closer: it is the origin of everything, yet it also needs everything to produce more of it. This reciprocity of nature and humanity - linked by Dust – reminds us of the last scene in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's short ballad stanzas "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". In the ballad the albatross is killed by the mariner, then the whole world visits him with endless nightmares of silent horror and death. The old mariner suffers the cursing eyes and painful groans of other dying sailors, yet death itself keeps him alive so that his pain and suffering can last. Only when the ancient mariner starts to appreciate and pray for the true beauty of the great Nature surrounding him, instead of remaining focused upon his own misfortune, is the curse from Nature broken. Indeed the fate of the mariner at this point is very similar to the moment when Pullman's Fall takes place; the whole universe starts to reply to

---

<sup>222</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 976.

Will and Lyra with joy and happiness. The shower of Dust in *His Dark Materials* is somewhat equivalent to the rain in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

And by the light of the moon  
 He prays for their beauty not doom  
 With heart he blesses them  
 God's creatures all of them too.  
 Then the spell starts to break  
 The albatross falls from his neck  
 Sinks down like lead into the sea  
 Then down in falls comes the rain.<sup>223</sup>

## 2.2.0 Conclusion

For Pullman imagination and knowledge are fortunate aspect of being human. They help to make humans different, but not distinct from nature. He suggests in his last chapter of the trilogy that the so-called “Republic of Heaven” is actually a representation of one's utopia, which can be only constructed in the mind. To realize this utopia, Dust, which is the product of the imagination combined with all human virtue, is the most important key.

Surveying the transformation model within this chapter, *His Dark Materials* can be seen as a work in which Pullman demonstrates the development of the core theme of Dust and his counter-interpretation of the biblical Fall. Even though this “dark material” always proves changing and unstable, its ultimate goal could not be clearer. Being transferred from a common noun to an entity (stage one), then purified and decriminalized from Original Sin (stage two), eventually, Pullmanic Dust has been deified into a supernatural being that is ever “super close with nature”. By dealing with its etymological definition in association with other metaphorical words within the trilogy, my research has emphasised that there is no other word that can cover the meaning that Dust takes on for Pullman, solely and collectively. (Not even Dust itself

---

<sup>223</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner [1797-1798],” *The Rime of Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan, Christabel, and the Conversation Poems* (London: Digireads, 2009).

can do all the work of signification that I have explored.) In my research Dust has proven to be more a process than a thing. Yet without this last stage, the meaning of Dust would remain incomplete. Pullman in his trilogy does not force readers to accept Dust and his counter-Christian agenda on first sight. His trilogy starts in a comparative dystopia in which the church (the Magisterium) dominates, and Dust is defined as evil. As a counter-interpretation of the Fall and the rewriting of *Paradise Lost*, he slowly integrates the developing elements of Dust with Lyra's journey. With Pullman's serpent's help, the new Eve has been guided and has matured. In the meantime, Dust has fully developed and prepared for the final war. According to Pullman, his ultimate goal of the trilogy and his ultimate expectation of writing *His Dark Materials* is to present an atheistic utopia to teenagers, namely the Republic of Heaven. Whether he is successful doing so or not, *His Dark Materials* does provide readers with a new perspective of reading biblical stories and his cosmology also displays a role model for contemporary fantasy writing with an alternative gateway to communicate with teenagers.

### Chapter 3: Daemon

Daemons came into my head suddenly and unexpectedly, but they do have a sort of provenance. One clear origin is Socrates' daimon. Another is the old idea of the guardian angel<sup>224</sup>

– Philip Pullman

#### 3.0.1 Terminology

*His Dark Materials* is often categorized in the genre of high fantasy because of its unique fictional cosmology<sup>225</sup>. If the main reason that makes it a “high” fantasy text rather than a “low” or “urban” fantasy is that, like C.S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*, the world settings contain complex, overlapping multiple universes (including fictional, or secondary worlds) and more importantly, the more ‘real’ primary world in which we dwell; the reason it can be classified at all as “fantasy” literature involves

<sup>224</sup> Philip Pullman, “Achuka Interview,” Achuka.co, <<http://www.achuka.co.uk/archive/interviews/ppint.php>> (accessed 20 October 2015).

<sup>225</sup> Nikki Gamble and Sally Yates, “Fantasy and Realism,” *Exploring Children’s Literature* (London: SAGE, 2008), 117-137. See also Rosemary Jackson, “The Fantastic as Mode,” *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. (Methuen: London, 1981), 16-18. High Fantasy is a sub-genre of fantasy fiction that became popular in the mid-twentieth century. According to Nikki Gamble, there are mainly three kinds of high fantasy. The word “high” is not an adjective to suggest a hierarchical level of different novels, but a collective term for those novels in which the narratives takes place in an alternative world, or multiple worlds. The narrative of *His Dark Materials* is located in parallel universes, among which it is accessible through patrolling windows cut by the Subtle Knife. It is ambiguous whether Pullman’s parallel universes should be classified as an example of High Fantasy because they also include our primary world in many scenes. However, most critics believe that the primary world in the novel (Will’s world) is just another false (or weak) imitation of reality. Therefore, there aren’t many controversies in classifying *His Dark Materials* as High Fantasy. This classification also explains why the work is very often compared with Lewis’s world of Narnia and Tolkien’s Middle Earth. For critics, these locations theoretically belong to the same literary tribe.

Pullman's creation of the concept of 'Daemon.' (In this thesis I use upper case D for when this term is figuring as a concept, and lower case for speaking of people's specific daemons.) Most contemporary critics focus on Dust as Pullman's primary entity, interpreting Daemon merely as a product of it. In response to such readings the aims of this chapter are twofold. Firstly, I will argue that a more helpful reading would take account of the autonomy of Daemon, and I shall show how and why that autonomy is important in *His Dark Materials*. The second goal is to provide more detailed research on Daemon in both its physical and metaphysical aspects and its value in Pullman's fictional societies. Daemon is connected with Pullman's interpretation of human souls and inner psychical consciousness, but also used to craft his unique social hierarchy. In order to make a comprehensive study of this special and important element in *His Dark Materials*, the present chapter will be divided into three sections. Similar to the word dust, daemon is not one of Pullman's invented words. On the contrary, it has a long-term historical and mythological background, deeply rooted in the Christian religion and Greek mythology. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, research will focus upon the etymological, as well as historical background of the word daemon and its transformative figure within Christian culture. Part two will focus on how Daemon works with its human equivalents in *His Dark Materials* and why this distinctive and attractive design is necessary. In this section, my research will also concern several paradoxical behavioural reactions that are psychologically problematic. At the same time, fundamental paradoxes are also metaphorically important to Pullman's central theme and cause both controversies and attraction. The last part of the chapter regards the relationship between humans and their daemons, as a response to Pullman's ecological point of view. With an attempt to reveal Pullman's ideal relation between humans and wild animals, including nature more extensively, that third part will be related to the previous two chapters, namely Worlds and Dust. At the close of this chapter, I suggest that the setting of Daemon functionally has two levels, in the lower of which Daemon plays the core of the "fantasia" due to the very nature of its animal form, as well as its companionate bodily and spiritual bond with the human with which it connects. However, on a deeper level Daemon can be seen as another breakthrough by the author (the first is the cosmos constructed by systematic and overlapping multiple universes), by means of which Pullman demonstrates the psychological inner voice and his respect for

human souls (specifically human only) in a fictional way. With nearly everything reset (even though with many controversies) Pullman can thus represent his version of *Paradise Lost* for teenagers in three volumes”<sup>226</sup>, a Christian epic without God. If Derrida’s famous slogan ““*Il n’y a pas de hors-texte*” (there is nothing outside of the text) is true, what Pullman wishes to display is a utopia in which there will be not just interpersonal relationships, but also inner-personal ones, a rather fictional way of self-evaluation.

### **3.0.2 Etymological Research into the Word Daemon and Its Cross-cultural Development**

An authoritative and convincing etymological analysis of an English word typically starts with the definition from the *OED*. Yet interestingly, in the early phase of my research I assumed that the word daemon that Pullman applies in *His Dark Materials* might not officially have a place in the *OED*: because even though this word is rooted in a very ancient historical background in Greek culture, it has not yet inclusively been adopted into the English language as an old literary term. However, there is another more modern form of a daemon that resembles my researching target. When I looked up the *OED* for the definition of the word, I found an instance of the term daemon associated with computing science that is rather young and contemporary. In the *OED*, this word is defined just as a simple description of software as follows,

A program (or part of a program), esp. within a Unix system, which runs in the background without invention by the user, either continuously or only when automatically activated by a particular event or condition<sup>227</sup>.

It was surprising when I studied software terminology more closely to find

<sup>226</sup> Wendy Parsons, Catriona Nicholson and Philip Pullman, “Talking to Philip Pullman: An Interview,” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 23 ,1 January 1999:126.

<sup>227</sup> “daemon, n.”. OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/249688?redirectedFrom=daemon> (accessed 31 July 2016).

whether this “daemon” was relevant to its original etymology or to Pullman’s fictional Daemon, to discover that its practical function provides a valuable hint. The daemon system, more commonly called the UNIX system, has been widely used in PC design as a “guardian-like” or “companion-like” computing tool that runs invisibly in the background whenever the computer is on. This software nowadays has been applied in inventing anti-virus programs, disk image emulator (the virtual CD-ROM software) or even snoopware (spying or hacking software). The terminology of this daemon was initially inspired by a famous thought experiment, namely Maxwell’s demon, which was presented to the public by German physicist James Clerk Maxwell in a book titled *Theory of Heat* in 1872. In this book, Maxwell suggests that the Second Law of Thermodynamics has only a statistical certainty. To demonstrate this hypothesis, Maxwell invented an imaginary being called Maxwell’s demon in his thermodynamic experiment. In the experiment, this “imaginary demon” is manipulated to open the door to a container full of gas and isolated into two parts at different temperatures. The ultimate goal of Maxwell’s experiment is to prove that by providing the options by opening the door, the faster gas molecules will flow on the favoured side of the containers so that the Second Law of Thermodynamics will be violated. What is worth mentioning in the experiment is not the break-through thermodynamic findings, but Maxwell’s “imaginary demon” that “guards” the trapdoors, with its name “demon” always related and interchangeable with “daemon.” It is not an individual case of misusing of the word. Under the influence of the Christian religion, the term demon has changed, such that it connotes absolute evil globally. “Maxwell’s demon” is a good example of this worldwide re-identification of an old word; in Mandarin Maxwell’s daemon has been translated as “麥克斯偽妖”, in which “偽” (wei) means illusionary, imaginary, or falsely-interpreted while “妖” (yao) means goblin-like demon and evil spirit, usually with a poker which is compatible with the image of demons in the Christian tradition. However, when the word “妖” is applied, an obvious cultural sign, multiple mistranslations are clearly shown. Translating daemon into 妖 is an equivalent only, not a close fit. Yet if we convert backward, 妖 into English, it can only be a demon, not daemon because the word 妖 has a very concrete and clear “signified”. Wu Cheng’en’s classic Chinese novel *A Journey to the West* (ca. 1500- 1582) was cross-culturally translated by Anthony C. Yu in 2012 with great success. The translated version provides a perfect example of explaining the hybrid

status of demon and daemon within one work, without any difficulties, yet there is paradoxically a remaining gray area, Yu's translation provides a gold mine for comparative literature and translation studies, but it also shows what kind of problem an inevitable "mistranslation of untranslatability" <sup>228</sup>(where the original and target languages do not have parallel signification in their respective cultures) may cause. This is enormously helpful for my researching of the term daemon. In Wu's novel, the main character Wu-Kong who was originally "an immortal stone" absorbs the Heavenly and Earth aura and "changes" into a "demon" in monkey form. In Chinese Mythology this kind of transformation from one form to another, called "精" (ging), can literally refer to the spirit, or fairy, or "daemon." Even though the classification of stony monkey is demon, in much of the context it is translated as "demon monkey". This definition of demon in the Chinese novel has been accepted and applied to many other contemporary translated novels that are associated with a ghost, spirit or supernatural myth such as Pu Songling's *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. The mistranslation becomes particularly meaningful if we compare these demons to Pullman's concept of Daemon in *His Dark Materials*, for example, Lyra's Pan or Mrs. Coulter's golden monkey. It can be observed explicitly that Pullman's Daemon is more similar to the typical Chinese demons than it is to Western, Christian ones. Interestingly, no textual evidence can directly show that Pullman was aware of the difference between demon (Christianity), daemon (originally Latin), and Daemon (*His Dark Materials*). What inspired him, according to Pullman himself in an interview, was Socrates. Yet it can also be observed, surprisingly, that the more Pullman's rebellious agenda (as regards Christianity) pulls Daemon away from a Christian context, the closer to the original meaning of the word it becomes. The best example of this neutralized type of daemon is the main character Wu-Kong in *The Journey to the West*: he is never evil but has a naïve and naughty character like that of a child. The divine and heavenly description of his mythical birth shows an interesting clue. The reasons why *The Journey to the West* is chosen to be compared with *His*

---

<sup>228</sup> Susan Bassnett, "Untranslatability," *Translation Studies* ( London: Routledge, 1980), 39-40. See also in the same book, "The Problems of Equivalence," (32-38) and "Loss and Gain" (38). Bassnett suggests that when both the target and the source text have similar, but different words, sometimes in order to create equivalence, mistranslation will inevitably take place.

*Dark Materials* are two. First, both works have similar interpretations of daemon/demon in addressing the ability to shift or change into another entity from their original animal forms and their neutral morality, subjective in context. The second reason, which is also the most important, is that the fictional worlds that Wu and Pullman present can meaningfully be contrasted with Milton's Pandemonium in *Paradise Lost*, which is a totally evil and disgraceful place. In order to compare and contrast these "author-invented" worlds, I enclose a quote from Wu's work that describes how Wu-Kung is "self-begotten":

Triple spring mated to beget all things.  
 A divine stone quickened by the sun and moon  
 Changed from egg to ape to reach the Great Way.  
 Loanname and surname matched elixir made.  
 Formless inside he yields no image known;  
 His outward guise coheres in action shown.  
 In every age all persons will yield to him;  
 Hailed a king, a sage, he is free to roam<sup>229</sup>.

The words divine, sun and moon, the Great way and the King altogether express a "hero-like arrival in the world from nothingness" of Wu-Kung, in sharp contrast to Milton's Satan. In Chinese culture, the sun and moon represent (a) an extended period of time and (b) the entire heaven. The sacred stone absorbs the essence of the sun and moon, which reveals the holiness of the daemon, whilst in Chinese culture the sun and moon signify the provenance of lives. The Great Way in Chinese Mythology is a typical Daoist technique of becoming immortal, which normally requires hundreds or thousands of years of meditation. It can be observed in the poem that, very similar to the daemon in Greek Mythology, the word 精 in ancient Chinese Mythology signifies also a divine and natural-born immortal being. The negative word 妖(Christian demon) in this context is mistaken or even essentially

---

<sup>229</sup> Cheng'en Wu, "Appointed a BanHouse, could he be content? Named Equal to Heaven, he's still not appeased," *The Journey to the West*, trans. and ed. Anthony C. Yu (Chicago: Chicago University Press: 2012), 145-147.

incorrect. However, in the fourth chapter, there is also an interesting contrast. When Wu-Kong makes a lot of trouble at the Peach Festival, the influence of Christianity is repeatedly demonstrated in the use of the word demon as a negative connotation representing antisocial behaviour. The original text is:

哪吒道：「這妖猴能有多大神通，就敢稱此名號？不要怕，吃吾一劍。」悟空道：「我只站下不動，任你砍幾劍罷。」那哪吒奮怒，大喝一聲，叫：「變！」即變做三頭六臂，惡狠狠，手持著六般兵器，乃是斬妖劍、砍妖刀、縛妖索、降妖杵、繡毬兒、火輪兒，丫丫叉叉，撲面來打。悟空見了，心驚道：「這小哥倒也會弄些手段。莫無禮，看我神通。」好大聖，喝聲：「變！」也變做三頭六臂；把金箍棒幌一幌，也變作三條。六隻手拿著三條棒架住。這場鬥，真個是地動山搖，好殺也<sup>230</sup>

The literal meaning of the character 妖 in the original Chinese version is demon and here Wu Kung is called demon-monkey (the written word 妖猴) if we translate it directly from Chinese. It can be observed that Yu recognizes this, translating daemon and demon without differentiation. Therefore, in the translated version the translator has avoided using the word demon and replaces it with “monster” instead and the text becomes:

“That he dares claim such a title? Fear not! Swallow my sword.” Said Nata. “I’ll just stand here quietly,” said Wukong, “and you can take a few hacks at me with your sword.” Young Nata grew angry. “Change!” he yelled loudly, and he changed at once into a fearsome person having three heads and six arms. In his hand he held six kinds of weapons, a monster-binding robe, a monster-stabbing sword, a monster- cleaving scimitar, an embroidered ball and a fiery wheel... The conflict was truly earth-shaking and made the very mountains tremble. What a

---

<sup>230</sup> Cheng'en Wu, *The Journey to the West* [1500-1582]: Chinese electronic version, GuoXue Comity, <<http://www.hygx.org/thread-585-1-1.html>> (accessed 25 May 2016).

battle! <sup>231</sup>

Translating 妖 into monster is a purposeful technical translating error; in Chinese Mythology 妖 is not necessarily monstrous. This happens not only in *A Journey to the West* but also in many other literary works, for example, the fox daemons in Pu Songling's *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (1740) usually have much more attractive female forms and figures than ordinary women. These daemons were originally animals. After meditating for hundreds of years, they eventually reach the Great Way and gain the human form that they constantly desire. Daemons in Pu's stories can even get married with mortals as a repayment for rescues or kindnesses. However, it can be assumed that this mistake is intentional and that only by making it can the meaning in the target language (English) be closer to the source language (Chinese). This mistranslating process is very similar to how the Latin word "daemonium" was Anglicized into "demon" during the spread of Christianity. The counter example can be evidently found in Milton's Pandemonium, in which the term also derives from the same Latin word root *daemonium*, yet shows a whole different view. The word Pandemonium is invented by John Milton in *Paradise Lost*. In *Paradise Lost*, it was a citadel initially, built in a corner of hell as God's punishment for imprisoning the rebellious or fallen angels (mainly Satan and his army). It is a combination of pan ( $\pi\alpha\nu$ ) and demonium ( $\delta\alpha\mu\omega\nu\tau\omega$ ), In Greek pan means all, every, and demonium as we have discussed means little spirit or little angels that are hierarchically lower in heaven. Hence, it can be understood as an all-daemon place. This takes it a long way from the original Latin or Greek meaning of the words which make it up. Pandemonium was constructed at the end of Book I as the capital city of Hell, in which all the creatures and demons that are related to disorders, noises, confusion and chaos dwell, or (from the point of view of heaven) are imprisoned. Unlike the world in *the Journey to the West*, Pandemonium demonstrates a rather crowded, visibly dark and chaotic atmosphere with trooping demons.

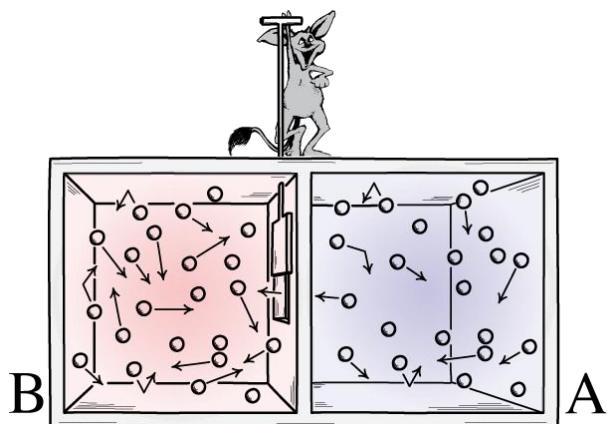
At Pandaemonium, the high capital  
Of Satan and his peers: their summons called

---

<sup>231</sup> Cheng'en Wu, "Appointed a BanHouse," op.cit., 154-155.

From every band and squared regiment  
 By place or choice the worthiest; they anon  
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came  
 Attend: all access was thronged, the gates  
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall.<sup>232</sup>

By comparing these worlds, it can be observed that the image of daemon and demon is inseparable as a whole. However, this phenomenon not only exists in theological texts but also in pop cultures and arts. Maxwell's demon is a good example. A stereotype drawing of Maxwell's demon normally demonstrates a “demon”-like creature. The following picture helps explain how this model works:



The figure explains how “Maxwell's demon” works in the experiment; the demon standing on the top of the container controls the trapdoors.<sup>233</sup>

One fact is thus clear: that no matter whether the word is demon or daemon, the image of both signifies a concrete creature or species whose size is smaller than a human being. Both have free will to display different behaviours. The major difference between them nowadays lies in their nature and origins. To understand Daemon, the etymology of demon certainly provides a useful source for research. In

<sup>232</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I.756-762.

<sup>233</sup> John D. Norton, “The Simplest Exorcism of Maxwell's Demon,” Goodies, <[http://www.pitt.edu/~jdnorton/Goodies/exorcism\\_phase\\_vol/exorcism\\_phase\\_vol.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~jdnorton/Goodies/exorcism_phase_vol/exorcism_phase_vol.html)> (accessed 28 July, 2016).

the *OED*, the definition of the word demon is either “Any evil spirit or malevolent supernatural being; a devil” (*OED*, I-a) or “An idol, a false-God” (*OED*, I-b)<sup>234</sup>. Yet in the *OED* there are also important clues showing that this evil being was not only neutral, but “divine” and “pure” when it was first created and used; before, that is, being “mistranslated” by Judaism and Christianity from the Greek word “δαιμων” into “δαιμόνιον”. The Greek word “δαιμων” means fate, godlike power and god. For a long time it has been an important theological reference in Hellenistic religion and Greek Mythology as it is always associated with the domination of human beings. In other words, the real cause of the connection is the mistranslation: the word δαιμόνιον in Hebrew is translated as *šēdīm* or 'elilim, which both mean evil spirit or false God. Evidence can be found in the Old Testament, particularly in Deuteronomy 32:17<sup>235</sup> and Psalms 106:37<sup>236</sup> that this word was repeatedly used to describe the idol in the context that people offer sacrifice to Canaanite idols and trigger God’s wrath and it can be observed that word in both biblical quotes in KJV is translated as devils. Without considering the religious judgment that was added by a Christian editor, daemon in the original Old Testament (Hebrew version) was only an artificial stony entity. Even though this word is originally translated from the classical Latin word *daemonium*, because of the mistranslation in the Hebrew Bible, it was later fused with the word “devil” by West Saxon Gospels and become “demon”. There isn’t any specific direct evidence that can show the relationship between daemon and demon. Nonetheless, their connection has been accepted widely due to the spread of Christianity, particularly in medieval Europe. This problematic negative connection has been questioned by researchers such as Walter Burkert who is a well-known German scholar of Greek Mythology and Cults. In his book *Greek Religion* Burkert suggests that the historical cause of this negative connection is not purely religious, but empowered by a public agreement over an incident that took place in the fifth century:

---

<sup>234</sup> "demon, n. (and adj.)". *OED Online*. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/49788?redirectedFrom=demon> (accessed 28 July 2016).

<sup>235</sup> Deuteronomy 32:17 KJV. “They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.”

<sup>236</sup> Psalms 106:37 KJV. “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.”

A general belief in spirits is not expressed by the term *daimon* until the 5th century when a doctor asserts that neurotic women and girls can be driven to suicide by imaginary apparitions, ‘evil *daimones*’. How far this is an expression of widespread popular superstition is not easy to judge... On the basis of Hesiod's myth, however, what did gain currency was for great and powerful figures to be honoured after death as a daimon<sup>237</sup>.

The “Imaginary apparition” is very close to the way a daemon was described in Greek Mythology, which for Socrates is a major source of intellectual inspiration. Burkert further suggests that the word daemon came from the Greek verb *daiesthai*, which means to divide or to make something holy. One of the earliest records of the word daemon is Plato’s *Cratylus*, from which I have quoted a conversation between Hermogenes and Socrates in the first chapter of my research when discussing the notion of the Golden Age. In *Cratylus* Plato describes Socrates’ imaginative idea that claims the daemon is the divine guardian of the Iron Age people (human beings) who were initially the Golden Age race of semi-Gods, immortal but eventually fallen. The Fall didn’t bring extinction to this blessed race, but made them “daemons”,

Since this race has been eclipsed by fate,  
They are called sacred daemons;  
They live on earth and are good,  
Warding off evil and guarding mortal men.<sup>238</sup>

The positive adjectives “sacred” and “good” together with the notions of “warding off evil” and “guarding mortal men” establish the nobility of this hierarchically higher race, even though they are only shown as a fallen race in Greek Mythology. For Plato, who is known for his tendency to pursue ultimate truth, “daimon” is the name that provides the closeness and availability of the divine, which is invisible and incomprehensible, but is unquestionably good. However, Burkert’s research somehow

---

<sup>237</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 179-181.

<sup>238</sup> Plato, “Cratylus,” in *Plato: Complete Works*, op. cit., 397e-398.

proves that even though the etymological root of daimon is divine and positive, some evidence in Greek Mythology also reveals the negative sides that are related to the daemon. In his books, Burkert suggests that Plato, on the one hand, sees the good and beauty of daemon which is evidently correct (in terms of mythology and philosophy), but on the other also makes a mistake of simplifying daemon into two forms only: good and simple. In fact, according to Burkert, the word daemon is also used in describing the soul after death or sometimes after religious disgrace. Hence daemon is unavoidably associated with plague or other lethal illnesses in some circumstances. This is not an alternative characterology but is inclusively a part of daemons' nature.

The other traditional notion of the daemon as related to the souls of the dead is elided in favour of a spatial scenario which evidently also graduated in moral terms; though [Plato] says nothing of that here, it is a necessary inference from his account, just as Eros is midway between deficiency and plenitude... Indeed, Xenocrates... explicitly understood *daemones* as ranged along a scale from good to bad... [Plutarch] speaks of 'great and strong beings in the atmosphere, malevolent and morose, who rejoice in [unlucky days, religious festivals involving violence against the self, etc.], and after gaining them as their lot, they turn to nothing worse.'... The use of such malign daemones by human beings seems not to be even remotely imagined here: Xenocrates' intention was to provide an explanation for the sheer variety of polytheistic religious worship; but it is the potential for moral discrimination offered by the notion of *daemones* which later... became one further means of conceptualizing what distinguishes dominated practice from civic religion, and furthering the transformation of that practice into intentional profanation... This account differs from that of the early Academy in reaching back to the other, Archaic, view of *daemones* as souls, and thus anticipates the views of Plutarch and Apuleius in the Principate... It clearly implies that *daemones* can cause illness to livestock.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> Bengt Ankarloo and Clark Stuart, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 226.

Burkett's research provides valuable but alternative materials that contradict earlier academy study in "Plato-centred" daemon research. Even though the actual corruption of the word daemon takes place in mistranslation under the influence of Christianity, the negative connotation has for very long existed in Greek. Despite that, the fusion of daemon and devil is an accidental religious event. There is a path to explain the process of how the word daemon has been transferred from its earliest roots - *daemonium* (Latin), then *δαιμόνιον* (ancient Greek) - eventually into demon (English and French). Based on his theory that daemon and souls are relevant in some highly original sense, it can be said that the significance of Daemon in Pullman is actually not constructed on nothing but is full of an interesting heritage of cultural meanders.

### **3.0.3 Daemon in *His Dark Materials***

The system of Daemon in *His Dark Materials* is unique and exists only on the premise that the universe is constructed by Pullmanic Dust. In Lyra's world, Dust is condemned by the Magisterium Church as the physical evidence of Original Sin and Satanic Evil. A daemon that is a concentration of Dust is hence shot through with sinfulness and evil, since Dust is the raw material of Daemon. Using the word daemon in this context is easier than the conventional use of the word demon. Pullman in his trilogy doesn't ignore the influence of the negative connotations of the word demon. To some extent, it can even be said that the reason Pullman uses the word daemon is so as not to produce controversies, by creating a word that sounds like a demon even though *His Dark Materials* is constitutionally atheistic. Relating daemon with demon in *His Dark Materials* can be really dangerous because the reader's self-association between daemon and demon is natural and unavoidable, particularly on account of the domination of Christendom since the Dark Ages (as the effects of Affect-Linking which I have mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis). In order to expose the arbitrariness and relativism of the cultural assumptions underpinning this elision, Pullman has the character Will question Lyra in their first meeting in the real Oxford. It is a crucial and fascinating scene when the word "daemon" is first introduced to "our world" in the trilogy. What Will questions about the word daemon is not simply his own opinions, but rather a common fallacy that

may confuse the readers of *His Dark Materials*. This is not only the moment in which Pullman is demonstrating (or even showing off) his creation of animal-daemon as a “creative fantasy”, but also an important moment in preventing the word “daemon” from being associated with “demon”, especially in the context of an atheistic trilogy:

“Where is your daemon?”

His eyes widened. Then he saw something extraordinary happen to the cat: it leapt into her arms, and when it got there, it had changed shape. Now it was a red-brown stoat with a cream throat and belly, and it glared at him as ferociously as the girl herself. But then another shift in things took place, because he realized that they were both, girl and stoat...

... he said “I don’t know what you mean about demons. In my world demon means... It means devil, something evil.”<sup>240</sup>

In *His Dark Materials*, Daemon is the physical and external manifestation of human souls in animal forms that were born with “their host”. When Lyra’s asks, “where is your daemon?” it shows the designated ownership that admits of no doubts; for Lyra, having a daemon is like having a soul. Using the word “human” (not owners, or host) is a fictional verbatim in *His Dark Materials* because humans and daemons in the trilogy don’t have a particular master-slave relationship (in the material level), even though they are physically bonded. According to Pullman, Daemon was inspired by Leonardo da Vinci’s “Lady with an Ermine” (1489–90) in which the portrayed lady and the ermine in her arm represent a perfect harmony of human being and companion animal. Pullman in 2001 told Catherine Andronik in a profile that “There’s a real connection between the girl and the animal. That would be her daemon!... if you made a few small alternations... could be Lyra.”<sup>241</sup> The notion of human and daemon was initially only an idea when Pullman began to think about the “bond” between humans and animals as an important issue to fulfil in his work. It was realized when *His Dark Materials* was about to be released to the public, with some six other

---

<sup>240</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 347.

<sup>241</sup> Laurie Frost, “Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology,” *The Elements of His Dark Materials: A Guide to Philip Pullman’s Trilogy* (Buffalo: The Feel Press, 2001), 263.

examples that were illustrated by Pullman in the 2003 National Theatre season production of *His Dark Materials*. The two most famous examples are William Hogarth's *Self Portrait with his Dog Trump*, and Tiepolo's *Young Woman with Macaw*. The three fine arts share an important similarity: the animal and the human are bodily and harmonically connected. The emotions of both portrayed subjects are identically the same; they are either calm (the ermine and the dog) or curious (the macaw) and looking in the same direction. For Pullman, the personalities of a person will be projected (or represented) in the companion animals if there is a close bond between them, and vice versa. This anthropomorphic figure of the daemon has become an important characteristic when Pullman creates each character in his trilogy. The first is Lyra's Pantalaimon, an ermine.



*Lady with an Ermine*<sup>242</sup>

*Self Portrait with his Dog Trump*<sup>243</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> Leonardo da Vinci's, "Lady with an Ermine [1489–90]" Leonardo da Vinci: Paintings, Drawings, Quotes, and Biography, <<http://www.leonardodavinci.net/>> (accessed 20 July 2016).

<sup>243</sup> William Hogarth, "The Painter and his Pug[1745]," TATE, <<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks>> (accessed 20 April 2016).



*Young Woman with Macaw*<sup>244</sup>

Even though the setting of the daemon is fantastical and imaginative, this doesn't mean its system is rough and loosened. On the contrary, by observing every single character who has a daemon in the trilogy, it can be seen that the creation of Daemon obeys rules. Indeed, each rule overtly shows Pullman's utopian worldview. In this section of my research, I will examine each rule with its implication for Pullman's cosmology and theology. The rules fundamentally concern two figures of the daemon. The first is the physical. Here there needs to be a discussion of how and in what way a daemon exists and interacts with its human and also with the other humans in the text and why such interaction is necessary to Pullman's world view. The lifespan of daemons and the way they vanish (physical death) are also worth mentioning since, in *His Dark Materials*, the daemon is the purest concentration of Dust and for the Magisterium Daemon is the physical evidence of original sin. Therefore, examining Daemon also provides a methodology for understanding Dust and Pullman's theological perspective on the Fall. The second figure, which is the most crucial part, is the settlement of Daemon. The literal meaning of settlement is that daemons shift physically into a fixed form and can no longer change. The settlement normally takes place in adolescence, which is a substantial period of time for a teenager to "become" an adult. In addition, teenage readers for Pullman are the primary target readers of *His Dark Materials*. These are the few items my research will focus in this chapter. With a deeper understating of the daemon, I will try to

---

<sup>244</sup> Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, "Young Woman with a Macaw," Ashmolean Museum, <<https://www.artfund.org/>> (accessed 28 July 2016).

conclude my argument about the paradoxical controversies of the setting.

However, there is a major premise to be suggested by the research. It concerns the fact that the system of Daemon is not a universal setting for all the living beings in *His Dark Materials*; it is only applied in Lyra's world among the multiple universes, and only humans deserve daemons. Evidence of this can be found in the armoured bear king Iofur Raknison, who desires to have a daemon as if having one is a blessed privilege only available to humans. This notion of soul somehow echoes Christian doctrines that maintain that only humans have souls. Biblical evidence can be found in Genesis which says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into His nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.<sup>245</sup>"

Separating human and animal souls roughly into material and spiritual types may solve the problems of verbal fallacy, yet it at the same time exposes a rather serious issue that has long existed in Christianity: that the Christian religion is fundamentally human-centred, and all other living beings are exclusively marginalized. This is somehow paradoxical to Pullman's naturalistic worldview that is known for caring for the ecology of the world equally with his concern for mankind. However, if this quote is used to explain Iofur Raknison's desire to have a daemon, Pullman's atheistic universe faces a rather difficult logical dilemma. If daemons are the manifestation of one's soul in Lyra's world, and only humans have them, can it be understood that Pullman's Utopia is just another Christianity-core trilogy like Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* or Lewis' *Narnia* books in which there are only human-centred realms, and all the other living beings (which don't have a soul) are just the tools or decoration that altogether make humans unique? If Pullman fails to explain this, his utopia, namely the Mulefa world, will become empty and void since it is a non-human world. The point is interesting and will also be discussed with Pullman's theology against (or for?) the Church. This is a crux that reveals the most obvious deficiency in the design of Pullman's Daemon.

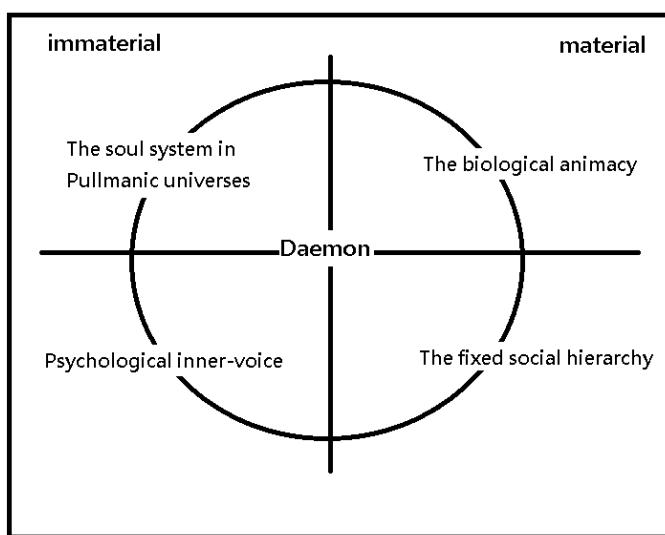
Outsiders who don't belong to Lyra's world and stay for an extended period of time will be gradually bonded with an animal that at first wasn't their daemon but, on the contrary, had many characters in common. This bonded animal will gradually become their daemon: such as the osprey daemon of Dr. Stanislaus Grumman, who was researching and tracking Dust and traveled to Lyra's world. His son, Will Parry

---

<sup>245</sup> Genesis 2:7 KJV.

also gains a cat daemon after a long stay in Lyra's world. "Gaining a daemon" again emphasises the human-centrism of Pullman's perspective on souls in *His Dark Materials* since there are no other examples of non-human races that also enter Lyra's world that bond with other living beings and gain a daemon. (For example, Duke Gallivespians.) However, having an external soul is not a gift. It changes the fundamental construction of the human and its attendant soul and will harm one's health if he/she continues to stay in the universe. In other words, having a daemon (which one didn't formerly have) eventually causes death.

### 3.1.0 The Physicality of Daemon



The four major realms associated with Daemon in *His Dark Materials*

### 3.1.1 Types and Classification

Research into the physicality of the daemon is unavoidably very different from researching Dust, even though the relationships in question are in both cases between raw material and products. I argue that the daemon's physicality is not simply material or immaterial; it actually concerns a more complicated amphibiousness across material (physical, biological, and animal) and immaterial (psychological, metaphorical, and hierarchical) aspects, while the physicality of Dust in conventional research is usually less important than its spirituality. Dust and Daemon basically share one similarity in their physicality. Likewise, as I have mentioned in the introduction, the daemon is very easily treated physically as the productions of Dust

and all the qualities hence subordinate its raw material. In my research, I try to argue that, in many aspects, Dust has powerful autonomy is even more influential than Daemon. Even though they have several figures in common, it doesn't change the fact that Dust in *His Dark Materials* is independent. One important similarity is that both Dust and Daemon are originally immaterial and in order to be visible they need a vehicle. Dust in terms of this proves more flexible in changing its forms. In the previous chapter, I have given examples of how Dust is presented visibly in *His Dark Materials*, sometimes as beams of light, sometimes as voices in the air. When it wants to become "a thing", it needs a vehicle, namely the form of angels. Unlike Dust, critics usually see the essence and the vehicle of the daemon as a whole. In many research papers, the daemon is simply regarded as a fixed vehicle of Dust. They are only allowed to shift their forms for one purpose - to reflect the characteristics of their own human. This is a primary and practical function for Pullman as a writer. It can be a unique way of expressing inner consciousness; as in the case of companion animals, marking and tagging each character with a fixed image, which makes the trilogy easier to read. In terms of writing, it does bring many conveniences. However, there are critics, increasingly, who show their interest in the trilogy by noting the need to separate the essence and the vehicle of the daemon. They are concerned with different themes in the trilogy, and the messages they deliver are equally important but entirely different. They point in the direction of quite different dilemmas. Likewise Arthur B. Markman, views Pullman's Daemon as an alternative (while also too simplified) representation of a "Cartesian Theatre", which successfully separates the mind and brain into a concrete image. He calls Pullman's Daemon an "imperfect homunculus," which is a philosophical term to describe the little spark in our brain. The reason Markman calls it "imperfect" is because psyche should not be simply a one-way relation as, for instance, that in *His Dark Materials* daemons 'reflect' their humans. It can be endlessly reversed as a cycle; the relationship is as reciprocal and unpredictable as two individual living beings when conversing.

If your goal is to explain how thinking works, then resorting to a ghost-in-the-machine like this does not solve any problems, because eventually you would need a theory of the psychology of the homunculus... When people in Lyra's world are separated from their

daemon, they act as though there is no longer anyone viewing their Cartesian Theatre. Of course, this begs the question of who Pantalaimon's homunculus is<sup>246</sup>.

With a philosophical and psychological approach, Markman suggests in his “Science, Technology and the Danger of Daemon” that Pullman’s trilogy provides valuable insights into how our consciousness (spiritual mind) and brain (organic body) interact as two individual units. Despite the fact that the entire paper is criticizing the abuse of technology and power (namely the experiment in Bolvangar), it becomes clear that the relationship between daemons and humans is much more complicated than Pullman may have originally planned. Besides, Markman’s mentioning of a Cartesian Theater does provide us a useful approach to examine how Daemon works as a concretized human consciousness.

With the figure I attempt to show that, based on the observed physicality in *His Dark Materials*, Pullman’s Daemon can be classified into and examined in terms of two major groups, and four categories. These latter, from the superficial to the deeper are: a) the matter of animality and animacy, b) the hierarchical system constructed upon the symbolism of the daemon, c) the personal/interpersonal relationship and d) the psychology that can be treated as the soul of the daemons’ human hosts.

### **3.1.2 Animality, animacy and psychological conflicts**

As I have suggested, Pullman’s Daemon cannot just be viewed as one single entity; it is actually combined with the author’s theology, philosophy, and ideal worldviews, especially when it is highly relevant to Dust. Therefore, selecting a “proper term” to classify the first category of Pullman’s Daemon - one that can stand out and accurately label its animal-like figure - is significant. Describing the daemon as an animal is logically improper due to the fact that the daemon is not, biologically, animal since it lacks several characters that a “living animal” has, namely animality and animacy. Lacking both these will place daemons in a rather ambiguous area of ghost-like existence, neither human nor animal. The words animality and animacy are used to address different things in different disciplines, yet in my research, I try to

---

<sup>246</sup> Markman, “Science, Technology and the Danger of Daemons,” in Yeffeth (ed.), 62.

state that the integration of these two terms may be best to sketch the physicality of daemons in *His Dark Materials*. Animality, in the *OED*, implies either a) the state or fact of being an animal; animal nature of life. Or b) The qualities and characteristics of an animal as opposed to distinctively human qualities<sup>247</sup>. The word animacy, unlike animality, is focused on the status of “living” rather than the characteristics of any species. Animacy in the *OED* indicates “the quality or condition of being alive or animate”<sup>248</sup>. Both words suggest a quasi-animal characteristic within a non-human living being. However, it is observed from several pieces of evidence that daemons in *His Dark Materials* acquire only incomplete animality and animacy.

### **3.1.3 Animacy – the quality of being alive**

We must consider what may result in different logical dilemmas in this part of the discussion. Having animacy determines whether a creature can be qualified as “an animal.” If we try to obtain a more specific definition of the word animacy, at least more detailed than in the *OED*, we need to know how “a life” can be defined. In terms of this, studies of bacteriology and biology may provide a more scientific and descriptive methodology than the *OED*, to distinguish a physical entity from a living being. In order to ensure this, there are usually seven criteria that can help us: a) Homeostasis, b) Organizations, c) metabolism, d) growth, e) adaption, f) response to stimuli and g) reproduction. Normally, a living creature should exhibit all or most of these characteristics of life. I am not arguing in the dissertation whether daemon are made into real living beings, neither will I examine daemons with every single character of life, yet I aim to fuse this fantastic creation with realistic criteria and further demonstrate that there is still a distance from what Pullman originally

---

<sup>247</sup> "animality, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/7764?redirectedFrom=animality> (accessed 31 July 2016).

<sup>248</sup> "animacy, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/248721?redirectedFrom=animacy> (accessed 31 July 2016).

proclaimed and expected. Here I only take growth and reproduction of two most obvious characteristics to think about Pullman's Daemon in *His Dark Materials*.

Growth refers to the transformation that occurs by converting chemicals and energy into cellular components and decomposing organic matter. Physical growth will be shown in the increasing size of the creature in all of the parts. In *His Dark Materials*, daemons are born with their humans in mature animal forms in their infancy, without experiencing the processes of growing. In other words, even though the daemon initially has a bird form, physically has bird looks, feathers, all the organs and is capable of flying, what it can exhibit is only a "bird-like characteristic" as it has not been through a complete process from egg to nestling, to chick and eventually to mature bird. This incomplete process of growth removes the daemons' animacy and divides them from their living being, traps them in a gray area of being a thing, a toy, a ghost or perhaps none of the above. Essentially it echoes with Markman's "ghost-in-the-machine". Both indicate an abnormal relationship between humans and wild animals that is in some degrees strengthened and transformed into a master and slave relationship, between human and daemon, even lower than being a pet.

Reproduction concerns a different approach to life from growth; it psychologically suggests another complex group of biological behaviours that are related to continuation of any given species of animal. It refers to the ability to produce an individual organism. In *His Dark Materials* daemons are created to be a psychological mirror, therefore what they contribute is only reflection of their human's personality. They cannot feel affection for their own kind, nor have they the ability to produce any organism with other daemons, even though they are created in different genders. The existence of gender again is to reflect their humans; in *His Dark Materials* daemons are made opposite in gender from their humans, and that is simply everything about gender settings. Being male or female doesn't functionally mean anything in itself. There are two interesting plots that emphasise the lack of fertility in daemons, which I personally treat as the castration of daemons because they are biologically created with malfunctioning gender. With these two examples it can be observed that even though daemons are incapable of reproducing, they are simultaneously affected by the lust of their humans, without having any abilities to deal with the emotional shock caused when their humans have strong sexual impulses. The first example is in *The Northern Lights*, when Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter meet

in the North and are again attracted to each other. Though their daemons have different animal forms they are influenced by the lust shown by their human hosts:

His hands, still clasping her head, tensed suddenly and drew her towards him in a passionate kiss. Lyra thought it seemed more like cruelty than love, and looked at their daemons, to see a strange sight: the snow leopard tense, crouching with her claws just pressing in the golden monkey's flesh, and the monkey relaxed, blissful, and swooning on the snow... And their mouths were fastened together with a powerful greed. Their daemons were playing fiercely; the snow leopard rolled over on her back, and the monkey raked his claws in the soft fur of her neck, and she growled a deep rumble of pleasure.<sup>249</sup>

The deep rumble of pleasure that is used to describe the daemons' response to outside stimuli becomes controversial when it occurs in an "object that doesn't have its own ego"; where this stimulus does not originate from the monkey, but from the human who has a link with it. What has been demonstrated here shows the author's privilege to imagine and describe how a ghost-like being might be forced to display something that is originally not involved in its nature. As a writer, Pullman vividly demonstrates two humans' affection indirectly through their daemons' behaviour. However if we rethink these actions based on the definition of daemon, biologically, and psychologically, everything becomes quite scary: daemons here, without the abilities of reproduction and intercourse, are still flirting, simply because they are reflecting their humans. This clearly explains two things: that in *His Dark Materials* the reflection between human and daemon is a one-way projection, not a mutual reaction. Human emotional behaviour such as love and affection can also be felt and received by daemons, but not vice versa. And the other thing is that whilst treating a daemon as "physical manifestation of the human soul" is problematic in many circumstances, this "ghost-like" being is used as a "thing". The connection between the two can be abandoned by the one-sided free will of humans. Besides, there is even "privacy" within this relationship between oneself and one's inner voice; this is evidently observed in another example, when Lyra and Will are about to represent the

---

<sup>249</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 323.

Fall through sexual intercourse in the Mulefa world. Their respective daemons, Pan (male) and Will's cat daemon (female) follow them at a short distance to avoid "intervening" in their human "privacy". Interestingly, Lyra and Will also hide from their daemons intentionally. This must mean that humans and their daemons clearly develop a "subject and others relationship" in this strange moment, and that they can still feel each other's existence. In this harmoniously delightful yet also cruel context, Lyra, and Will are playing "hide and seek" with their own daemons, as if they can't feel each other:

This became a game. They found a pond and searched among the reeds and in the mud, saying loudly that the daemons were bound to be shaped like forges or water-beetles or slugs; they peeled off the bark of a long-fallen tree at the edge of a string-wood grove, pretending to have seen the two daemons creeping underneath in the form of earwigs; Lyra made a great fuss of an ant she claimed to have trodden on, sympathizing with its bruises, saying its face was just like Pan's, asking in mock-sorrow why it was refusing to speak to her.<sup>250</sup>

In this plot, it can be assumed that Pullman originally wanted to create a playful atmosphere. There is a children-oriented utter innocence, which seems a form of foreplay to the representation of Lyra's and Will's fall. However, it can also be observed that the plot is organized here to exclude the two daemons from Lyra's and Will's first sexual awakenings. Daemons are designed functionally by Pullman as the soul, the inner voice of humans and mental part of one's humanity in *His Dark Materials*. It remains questionable whether desire and sex can actually be separated from our spirituality or excluded from our inner-voice and psyche. Acts such as finding, saying things loudly, peeling off the bark and making a fuss collectively show a behaviour that is only applied to "third-party others." In the relationship between a subject and the subject itself, actions as such don't happen in this way without concerning "the ego". This game is not logically problematic in *Paradise Lost* nor in Genesis, in both of which there isn't a "divided soul". However, in *His Dark Materials* the situation can be dramatically different; through this game, the daemons'

---

<sup>250</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 968.

connection to humans is halted and broken and their role as “souls” is denied by the protagonists, particularly in this significant sexualised moment. For Pullman, the Fall is the most centred thematic core of his work. Intertextuality that bridges texts from as different epochs in Western history as the book of Genesis from the Holy Bible, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and *His Dark Materials* is achieved. To distinguish Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* from those other two “original texts”, the role of daemons is symbolically significant. Pullman challenges the traditional perspective of human souls in Christian doctrine. In the previous two chapters, Dust is proven essential for undertaking the role of replacing the Christian God and creating (including self-creating) the physical world and, therefore, this dust-oriented cosmology can only be made on the premise of Dust’s supremacy. As one of the most important productions of Dust, the daemon’s role is equally important, as far as its raw material not with, but *within* the human subject that is its “host”, is concerned. However, by investigating the animacy of daemons, we have found that this othering process has existed long ago in the design of Daemon and was concretized in terms of lack of animacy. From a rather negative viewpoint, the incomplete experience of “becoming an animal-like-ghost” doesn’t actually exhibit Pullman’s ideal worldview. The same holds true in the world of mulefa, in which creatures and the whole environment maintain harmony to an extraordinary degree. This defective design of animacy again exposes a rather “human-centred worldview” and violates Pullman’s original “all things being equal world view” in terms of which everything is formed by the same basic atom, namely dust. The existence of Daemon is reversed from a supreme and creative position down to a lower level, as a tool that is only used to subordinate the really supreme subject-human. In the chapter “Broken Arrow” that is also the only chapter in which daemons display their own thinking, Pan firstly understands the “providence” of being a daemon from Pekkala.

“We are all learning new ways, even witches. But one thing hasn’t changed: you must help your humans, not hinder them. You must help them and guide them and encourage them toward wisdom. That’s what daemons are for,” said Pekkala.<sup>251</sup>

---

<sup>251</sup> Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 979.

Even though the verbs such as help, guide and encourage altogether suggest a mentoring role that daemons should play in supervising their humans actively, this doesn't actually upgrade the role of daemons. As mentor in this context, the daemon Pan has been abandoned by his human Lyra because of Lyra's one-sided will. This can be treated as a functional promotion, as it shows that daemons' roles are not necessarily a form of enslavement to their human masters. Tragically, while at the same time this providence updates daemons' importance, it also reemphasises the subordination of daemons with the pronoun used in this conversation. Within the quote it can be observed that a rooted division between "ego" and "other" has occurred, with the four-times-repeated use the pronoun "them" instead of "you." In this circumstance it becomes clear that daemons are treated independently from humans and as for being their "souls", daemons in this circumstance do not represent their human. This human-centrism in *His Dark Materials* is highly ambiguous because it confirms the identities of human and daemon as subject and object rather than subject and his hyper-subject (soul). It is continuously developed to explain what kind of role "soul" plays in *His Dark Materials* and how it interacts with humans, who in the trilogy are the only species that deserves to have souls and daemons.

With souls in animal companion forms and made materialized and intellectual, Pullman's ambition of demonstrating his ideal perspective on the harmonious relationship between humans and nature can be observed. The relation between the two is more than an emotional need or an ordinary friendship. It includes maintaining an inseparable life community of their own, likewise their bodily connection. This bodily connection not only determines whether an individual human can live, but also decides how this person can mature and who he/she can become in the society. In terms of this, the ability to change form is the key. The changes of form and the settlement that take place in human adolescence become significant to this relationship. Daemons do reflect humans and have abilities to demonstrate these reflections. However, in term of animacy, I suggest that these changes of form that are designed to show the harmony of humans and nature fail, on account of their incomplete animacies. If we try to find the association between changes and the role of souls, these changes show nothing more than Pullman's human-centrism, which is inherited from a Christian biblical worldview. In *His Dark Materials* this is made even more apparent. The argument is based on two reasons: the first is the imbalanced

relationship between the determining subject (human) and subordinate object (daemon). The second is the incomplete quasi-being that daemons have. The imbalanced relation can be shown in the motivation and meaning of the changes. In *His Dark Materials*, all the changes only serve one sublime goal: to reflect their human's character. Essentially and biologically, daemons' settlement does not depend upon their own emotions. For them, the final change is never a choice. In other words, the ability to change is not designed for the sake of daemons or their lifestyles. When the moment comes, they are passively forced to change into a fixed form and to lose any further ability to change. After the settlement, without any alternative, they will "become" an animal and live in that animal's way until the very end of "its human's" life. Belisaria for example, settles into a sea bird's form and acquires all the biological features of a sea bird, while at the same time, another old saidlor's daemon settles into a dolphin and will not be able to leave water again even though essentially **his** biological daemon is never aquatic. As with other living creatures, biological abilities and organs are made for survival of the species. However for daemons, made without complete animacies, the abilities they acquire are only benefit other species. For them is not biologically essential, but is only exhibited as a medal-like trophy and this trophy can even become a prison for a daemon that can become everything but can't be anything. From the viewpoint of writing a fantastic novel, the creation of Daemon does provide an interesting and fantastic literary element for Pullman's target reader: A loyal animal companion needs his/her beloved friend, they play together. When their humans eat, they keep company alongside, as well as when they sleep, work or even have sex. However in terms of creating an atheistic utopia and having daemons as their souls, things become horrible. This "anima-companion-like-figure" for daemons is meaningless and even ironical, because of the cruel fact that they don't have animacy, they are not living. This can be observed everywhere in *His Dark Materials*. When a human is satisfying his/her own basic biological needs such as eating, sleeping, or having sex, his/her daemon is presented alongside, in a rather Montage-like technique, clearly incompatible with the human context. But why is that? The reason is still their lack of animacy. When its human was eating, the daemon was waiting alongside, because daemons can't eat. Even when they "imitate" the human act of eating, the fact that daemons do not have digestion systems will make this behaviour a waste of time and food. Additionally, when humans are

sleeping, daemons don't sleep because they don't regenerate energy since they are only a concentration of atoms. They don't grow and develop and their only significant moment is the settlement. What daemons must do when their humans are reacting to basic biological needs is to stay aside and wait. They don't feel hunger, thirst, exhaustion or even sexual desire, because these are feelings that stimulate living creatures. Without animacy they don't have these needs. Serving their human masters is their only fate, from the first moment they are "born". Along with their humans, what they face and wait for is death; not their own death but that of their human hosts. They don't have and don't need a life, since they can't experience a complete process that a living creature goes through. A living animal's behaviour and biological needs mean nothing to daemons. Their behaviour is mostly altruistic and hence unnatural by comparison with that of a living being. The incomplete animacy and entirely altruistic behaviour of daemons cannot prevent them from becoming a "tool" for humans. Yet ironically, if we believe with Martin Heidegger that everything in the physical world has its own thinghood, which is a critical condition to identify itself by - specifically a "thinghood" that makes it recognizable, which Heideggerian philosophers describe as "Dasein<sup>252</sup>" - then the Dasein of daemons can be hard to define, other than that of a

<sup>252</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 22-24. See also Michael Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/heidegger/>> (accessed 28 July 2016). In my research Dasein is treated as a useful criterion to examine whether Pullman's invention of Daemon has violated the ontological foundation of his own cosmology. The reasons can be sourced to the definition of Dasein and the functionality of Daemon as the human soul. These two concepts share a significant commonality, namely they are both human-centered. Dasein, influenced by Aristotle's ontology, is the notion to describe the noumenon (thing-in-itself) of an entity. Yet this entity does not refer to just anything, but to a thing that is meaningful to humans, with fixed thinghood and materiality. The term is composed of two German words da (there) and sein (being) and altogether "being-there" suggests a conceptual production projected onto a physical thing based on a human's intentionality and caring. An interesting question arises here: for humans, what is the Dasein of a daemon? In Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927), having Dasein means a thing also satisfies two premises: firstly it must be ontologically an entity. "Being is the 'most universal' concept. An understanding of Being is already included in conceiving anything which one apprehends as an entity" ( Heidegger, 22). Secondly, in order to have Dasein, the thing needs to be able to be

tool, because of lack of animacy and the very ambiguousness of their particular thinghood.

### **3.1.4 Animality- Between the Organ and Form.**

Unlike animacy, animality concerns the abilities and functions that animals that have evolved have acquired for their own survival. In other words, the compatibilities of living creatures' form and function is the thematic concern of this section. It follows that I will provide a detailed study of the relationship between daemons' animal figures and their instinctive use of their host humans' bodies. For daemons, animal forms can be changed cross-species before they are fully settled. They can change their forms from insects to mammals, reptiles, birds or even fish, which biologically belong to totally different taxonomic systems. Whenever daemons become an animal, they "earn" their animality as if they have "become" it. However, I would argue that the verb "change" should be replaced by "mimic" due to the fact that even though they imitate some animality from an animal, it doesn't mean this "mimicked animality" works or functions correctly as naturally designed. Two examples can be found in the different uses of animal instinct in the trilogy. One is in *Northern Lights*, when Lyra is hidden in the closet with Pan; the atmosphere of this scene is nervous. Pan at this moment changes into a gray moth. Pan's behaviour and Lyra's self-murmuring is interesting. Together they demonstrate Pullman's clever design, yet at the same time reveal an obvious paradox: the desynchronization between humans and Daemon.

"It's none of your business! If they want to enjoy their little secrets you should just feel superior and let them get on with it. Hiding and spying is for silly children." [Pan's advice]

"Exactly what I knew you'd say. Now stop nagging" [Lyra's response]

(1)

---



---

self-evident, with a concrete and stable thinghood. "Being is of all concepts the one that is self-evident [to humans]" (Heidegger, 23).

The two of them sat in silence for a while, Lyra uncomfortable on the hard floor of the wardrobe and Pantalaimon self-righteously twitching his temporary antennae on one of the robes. Lyra felt a mixture of thoughts contending in her head, and she would have liked nothing better than to share them with her daemon, but she was proud too. Perhaps she should try to clear them up without his help<sup>253</sup>.

(2)

This “multivariate interior monologue” between humans and daemons becomes particularly interesting and meaningful when Lyra’s daemon is teaching her manners and “self-righteously twitching his temporary antennae”. It can be observed in zone 1 that the words Pan uses to advise Lyra - “you should” and “hiding and spying is for silly children” – are uttered in a mentoring tone rather than that of company or a friend. The phrase “silly children” suggests judgment, while Lyra’s response of “stop nagging” displays a childish rebellion against the adult. It shows that to some extent Pan and Lyra may not be of the same mental age, and that there is actually a standard in Pan’s mind to recognize whether one’s behaviour is silly or not. Apparently they have very different concepts in mind, and these minds cannot feel each other. According to Pullman’s original design, the daemon is the soul of its human. Lyra and Pan’s dialogue should be a form of inner voice in Lyra’s mind, presented by the author in a fantastic narrative. However, Lyra’s self-murmuring somehow expresses that there is more than one inner voice within the already existing inner voice. More than once, this outside intervention (to Pullman’s daemon system) has emerged in the trilogy and exposed the deficiency of Pullman’s design. The dividing line I draw in the quote doesn’t exist in the original text of the trilogy. Yet this quote is from the same context in which the two parts are unlikely to describe the relationship between the two parties. This line is used to distinguish the very different ways of “thinking”, so that the evidence of desynchronization can be shown. It can be seen clearly that even though Lyra and Pan, according to Pullman’s design, constitute the relation of body and soul, their behaviour and the way they express their opinion (or inner-opinion) in part 1 and part 2 are totally conflicting. As the external manifestation of one’s soul, Pan’s role in Pullman’s setting of the daemon is quite

---

<sup>253</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 14.

frustrating because it shows that a daemon and its human are psychologically independent, no matter how closely they are physically connected. In part one, Pan demonstrates his relatively higher maturity and judgement in the matter of “respecting privacy”. This part is only a common conversational plot in the trilogy, and can be interpreted as the interaction between different inner voices in one’s mind. However, it will be meaningful only when it is contrasted with part 2. In part 2, Pan’s relaxed emotion obviously shows that he doesn’t understand Lyra’s anxiety and danger. Even though Pan’s behaviour in part 2 displays his naïve character and haughtiness, the fact that his acts (those of the soul) conflict with the nervous context without “caring about” Lyra’s situation (that of the body) shows a high degree of “internal alienation” within a so-called “complete person” in the trilogy. In Lyra’s world, an individual may be seen as a “complete” person only when the daemon and the human are both living; and it is vice versa for those children whose daemon has been chopped off in the trilogy. They are described as soulless, zombie-like, and incomplete<sup>254</sup>. By combining two struggling emotions, “worrying about being found and one should solve the problem alone without her daemon’s help [Lyra],” and “just taught his human a lesson and now it’s relaxing and comfortable [Pan]”, Pullman accidentally creates a Montage scene as they (body and soul) are two independent individuals. This desynchronization highlights the problematic relation of soul and body. The struggle is enlarged when I try to study the settlement of daemons. Pullmanic soul (Daemon) in *His Dark Materials* is insufficient or functionally incomplete due to this desynchronization in a world where the first creator has been denied, particularly when the soul in the Christian Bible is the breath of God. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.”<sup>255</sup> Therefore, if Pullman wishes to create an atheistic

<sup>254</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 179. This part is particularly worth mentioning as it describes how a complete person is defined in *His Dark Materials*. This is when Lyra first encounters Tony Makarios, whose daemon has been taken in the Intercision Experiment in Bolvangar. “A human being with no daemon was like someone without a face, or with their ribs laid open and their heart torn out; something unnatural and uncanny that belongs to the world of night-ghast [ghost], not the waking world of sense” (179). Additionally, in the same chapter “half-boy” (181) is the term used to describe him, even after knowing his name.

<sup>255</sup> Genesis 2:7. KJV.

cosmology by denying the Authority as the first creator of the universe, he must also deny the notion of the soul. In terms of this, he needs to explain very well his version of human souls first, since the old one has been rejected along with its “maker”. The aspects of the soul are therefore important in Pullman’s parallel universes, especially what he presents to the reader as an atheistic cosmology. Technically, talking about the soul of an atheistic novel is never easy because the notion of soul – no matter whether it is called Daemon in many circumstances - is never atheistic. The soul is deeply rooted in theology and is combined with inseparable knowledge of philosophy, psychology, and even science. As an undogmatic writer whose responsibility is to suspend readers’ disbelief, Pullman needs to redefine carefully and perfectly his version of mind and soul, without taking on too much influence from Christianity. In fact Pullman has been influenced a lot, including by Cartesian Dualism and Atomism. Additionally, if the daemon is the only explanation of Pullman’s aspect of the soul, then the desynchronization of body and soul may result in the daemon being underestimated as an animal companion, or at best a communicative animal-like assistant. They are still functionally better than real animals since they have acquired communicative skills and the ability to reflect “part” of their humans’ character. Yet more evidence shows that this kind of daemon, compared to the complicated human soul, is far worse.

Apart from the metaphysical or theological issue that the daemon is facing, there are actually physical problems about the daemon’s animality that can be more easily questioned through reading *His Dark Materials*. If changing into an animal does make the daemon “become” it, Pan’s twitches of antennae violate the biological nature of moth’s animality and, therefore, become a disproof of the relationship between “being” and “having become similar”. Biologically, moth’s antennae are a radar-like instrument that allows moths to sense the temperature, air flows, or do other tactile activities. More importantly, the antennae for a moth are a very important courtship and hunting organ, and they will be “twisted” only when they are attracting partners or smelling food that is nearby. Back to the surreptitious context in the closet, it is impossible for Pan to feel the hunger for food or sex while his human Lyra is in such a dangerous circumstance. This distorted picture of a relaxed daemon and a worried, nervous human hidden in the same space may help us to conclude two important things: a) Through the act of changing, the daemon can “become like” a

creature, together with all the biological organs born with it. However a daemon can never gain the original animality that the creature possesses for living through this act of weak imitation; b) there is no need to examine the bodily connection between humans and daemons since they live and die together. Yet the misuse of moth's antennae emphasises my argument that in *His Dark Materials*, humans and daemons are psychologically treated as subject and object regardless of their bodily connection.

The theme of materializing human souls can be examined not only by biology, but also in terms of philosophy that is based on Teleology; that is to say, with concerns of nature, changes in form and matter, and evolution. Teleology concerns the purposes and goals of every living being created in the material world. It has always been an important subject that supports ontology. From the logical and philosophical point of view, philosophers such as Aristotle and Titus Lucretius Carus tend to believe that within normal conditions in nature, the change of forms and functions of organs in living creatures are subordinated to the particular needs of different species in certain environments, and not vice versa, which can be briefly concluded as "form follows function, change follows need." Aristotle in his *De Partibus Animalium* (On the parts of Animals) argues that "Nature adapts the organ to the function, and not the function to the organ."<sup>256</sup>

Nevertheless, this reasonable logic is found difficult to apply to *His Dark Materials*. In Lyra's world the existence of Daemon has fundamentally challenged the teleological cause of living beings. According to my observation, in the relationship between humans and daemons throughout the trilogy, Pullman on the one hand concretizes and materializes Daemon from an abstract and spiritual form into a touchable physical one, while on the other he constantly emphasises the daemon's passive servility to its human as an object. This simultaneous sublimation and othering of daemons has made their literary creation in this instance ambiguous on different levels: on the literary level, the daemon is a very noble and illuminating creation since it is the intellectual manifestation of the human soul. A human can interact with his/her own soul, and this interaction is a fabulous exhibition of one's "inner voice" in a work of fantasy literature. Yet if we try to treat Daemon as a "thing" and think together with Aristotle's account of teleology, then we have to conclude that on the philosophical level the creation of Daemon has ruined Aristotle's four

---

<sup>256</sup> Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium*. IV, xii, 694b; 13.

causes<sup>257</sup>, and thus, the existence of Daemon becomes "unnatural" and "absurd", for the meaning of its thinghood is lacking. Its material cause is Dust, it doesn't have an actual form, and it doesn't grow, nor develop, nor does it have any particular animality that can be used to define it. It has the ability to become anything, yet it never has the animality of the animal it becomes. For daemons that can only imitate the forms and function from random animals without any certain biological and evolutionary teleology, this exceptional incompatibility in shape and function reasonably explains how Pullman's cosmology is actually constructed on accidentalism rather than Aristotle's teleological causes. And indeed, if Pullman's cosmology derives from atomic Dust, in which everything is formed of Dust

---

<sup>257</sup> Aristotle's *De Animal in Focus*, ed. Michael Durrant (London: Routledge, 1993). See also Andrea Falcon, "Aristotle on Causality", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/aristotle-causality/>> (accessed 5 May 2016). Aristotle's Causality: The four causes or four because have been treated as one of the most important thematic cores of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Causes as a term originates from the Greek word "Aitia", which was later translated into "cause" and "explanation". Compared to Plato, Aristotle shows his stronger interest in ontological substances rather than the imaginative or conceptual existence of things. Much of the account of the four causes is initially used in Aristotle's *Physics* to look at the form and matter of everything that has physical presence in our world. In this account Aristotle classifies causes of everything into four levels, suggesting that everything in the physical world has been made upon these four "explanations" as a plan, or more accurately speaking, patterns. The four causes are material cause, formal cause, efficient cause and final cause. The first two causes concern what a thing is materially made of and how it essentially differs from others. The third and the forth cause concentrate on the "change" of things, including growing and development, as well as transformation of matters that take place in the living creature itself. For example: a cat is the embodiment of flesh and blood (the material cause), and the cat acts like a cat and this act differentiates it from other creatures: hence it would not be "misunderstood" as a dog. This is the formal cause, a cause to determine its form. The first two causes, also understood as "Form and Matter", become important foundations of the perspective of souls in Christianity. Aristotle's discourse of four courses therefore makes his philosophy both teleological and ontological.

arbitrarily, the creation of Daemon in terms of this is not problematic at all and the ideas of Dust and Daemon are hereby powerful enough to differentiate the cause of his own worlds from the Christian version, and furthermore deny the first creator, God, as if these two worlds were built upon different logics. However, can we at this point conclude that because of the creation of Daemon and its incompatibilities of form and function, Pullman's cosmology is thus not teleological and anti-Christian? The answer is no and we can only treat Daemon as an exception if several mistakes have taken place in Pullman's cosmology. The reason is that for Pullman, one of the most important motivations for writing *His Dark Materials* is to rewrite John Milton's *Paradise Lost* in prose. Milton's cosmology, however, shows the overwhelming influence of Christian versions of the creation in Genesis, particularly in Book Seven. On the fifth and sixth day of the creation of the world, animals such as birds and fish have been made by God and at the same time their forms and functions have been designed as compatible and suitable for their living, which perfectly echoes Aristotle's four causes. The creatures' instincts, abilities, and limits are made harmonious with their physical bodies and lifestyles. Birds, for example eagles, are made with powerful bodily forms and, soaring in the sky as the king of birds, have acquired the ability to build their own nest on cliffs. Migrant birds are experienced travelers; they follow their instinct to travel overseas or to other lands in the right direction. Swans are created with the ability to row on the water. Cocks, even though can't fly or swim, are yet made to announce the time with their sounds. In Milton's writing of *Paradise Lost*, he treats these animalities as God's ultimate fine art, something deserving of worship. It can be clearly observed, particularly in Book Seven in which Raphael tells Adam how the world has been created, that every creature is made with a particular teleological logic. Their bodily structures that mark them from other species are attributed totally to God. This is very different from Pullman's cosmology, in which the Authority has proven to be a fake God. Instead of having the first creator, Pullman adopts a rather mathematical and atomic cosmology. Here by contrast is how Milton records the avian world:

In prospect; there the eagle and the stork  
 On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build;  
 Part loosely wing the region, part move wise

In common, ranged in figure wedge their way.  
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth.  
 They airy caravan high over seas  
 Flying, and over lands with mutual wing  
 Easing their flights; so steers the prudent crane  
 Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air  
 Floats, as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes:  
 From branch to branch the smaller birds with song  
 Solaced the wood, and spread their painted wings  
 Till ev'n, nor then the solemn nightingale  
 Ceased warbling, but all night her soft lays:  
 Others on silver lakes and river bathed  
 Their downy breast; the swan arched neck.  
 Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows...  
 ...others on ground  
 Walked firm, the crested cock whose clarion sounds  
 The silent hours.<sup>258</sup>

Even though not mainly motivated to show God's teleology in his creation, Milton's poetic description of God's creations of birds in *Paradise Lost* technically demonstrates a teleological purpose of the creator's intentionality. We can contrast this with *His Dark Materials* where there is no such thing as a creator or any activity related to the universe being "created": everything is "formed" of Dust equally and arbitrarily. However, if at this moment we assume that Pullman's *His Dark Materials* is constructed on an arbitrary cosmology without teleological logic, and hence is anti-Aristotelian, this assumption may also be problematic because textual evidence in the trilogy shows that almost all living creatures, including imaginary ones, are teleological. In other words, by comparing *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost*, numerous and obvious similarities prove that these two worlds are fundamentally created under the same teleological logic. These similarities can be observed in *His Dark Materials* among those creatures that uniquely exist in this trilogy, including

---

<sup>258</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII. 423-44.

mulefa, witches, Gallivespians, or armoured bears. Even though in *His Dark Materials* they are made of Dust like daemons, it can be observed throughout that these creatures are carefully designed with their specific teleological form and function to survive in the different ecological system and maintain Pullman's "ideal harmony with nature." In term of this, the mulefa and witches are both excellent counterexamples to reveal that even for Pullman there are clearly theological causes in his creation of creatures.

While we need to talk about Pullman's ecological perspective in the harmonious relationship with animals and nature, we must not forget the mulefa and their seedpods trees and witches' pale white skin, which can bear thrilling coldness. Bodily, both Mulefa and witches are designed to survive in the marginal corners of Pullman's human-centred cosmology. Compared to the human world, theirs is relatively less easy to live. The mulefa for example dwell in an isolated world in which there is no human influence. The mulefa's biological structure in normal circumstances makes it difficult for them to survive. Their torsos are shaped like diamonds, with legs centred on each side, front and back. Their limbs have very tough, hornlike claws set at right angles to their legs, and they normally keep their short feet under them. With this description, it can be assumed from our biological common sense that the mulefa's bodily structure is ergonomically unsuitable for them to survive on our earth because their heavy backbone and short feet will slow them down when they escape from their enemies. They are like elephants but only in looks, not in size; their volume is slightly larger than an adult as well as their strength. As a result, their squat body shape can also make them more likely to become perfect targets for predators. If we try to analyse this creature with standards applied to the earth, the mulefa are technically no doubt a species without teleological purposes. They can even been treated as a failed work on the evolutionary pathway of biology that we are familiar with. However, in *His Dark Materials*, their situation is totally opposite from that of a disadvantaged group: the mulefa dominate and rule one of the universes, known as Pullman's version of the Garden of Eden in the trilogy. The reason is not that of that the mulefa are created with any extraordinary powers or extraordinary intelligence, but a plant, namely the seedpod tree, changes everything. By using the seedpods aright, the mulefa subvert their inherent disadvantage. Their torsos and hard spine become a wonderful vehicle for transporting seedpods that they

can use as wheels. The mulefa's tough hornlike claws can slip neatly into holes in the centre of seedpod wheels and stabilise their body. The short legs and squat body shape that were seen as signs of an adverse condition now provide the mulefa better balance in high-speed seedpod riding. This mutually beneficial relationship between the mulefa and seedpod trees perfectly exhibits Pullman's ideal ecological system. Yet it is also a counterexample to explain that even in *His Dark Materials* the creation of lives is also teleological. Witches in Lyra's world are another example to emphasise teleological features in *His Dark Materials*. Unlike the mulefa, witches live in a human world, and they are biologically women. They are always female and have more than a thousand years of life span. Even though they look the same as ordinary women, they are biologically different. Here I am not discussing their ability to fly or mind-read, but their biological figure that makes them different from human beings. Though witches have many clans, all of them come from the north of Lyra's world and hence their skin always has very high resistance to cold. They do feel the cold, yet they cannot be harmed by it nor let it stop them from feeling moon and stars. Unlike human beings, witches' skin has multiple functions; it helps them to "feel" Nature, which for them is a crucial source of life. By providing the conversation between Lyra and Pekkala the substantial difference between human and witches is also clearly revealed:

"Why en't you cold, Serafina Pekkala?" asked Lyra.

"We feel cold, but we don't mind it, because we will not come to harm. And if we wrapped up against the cold, we wouldn't feel other things, like the bright tingle of the stars, or the music of the Aurora, or best of all the silky feeling of moonlight on our skin. It's worth being cold for that."

"Could I feel them?"

"No, you would die if you took your furs off. Stay wrapped up."<sup>259</sup>

It becomes evident when we compare the function of skin respectively for human and witches that there is a sharp teleological difference between the two

---

<sup>259</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 258.

though they both live in the same space. As I have suggested, the priority between form and functions may explain how Pullman's atheistic, Dust-forming cosmology and Christian, God-making cosmologies are different. The point is that for a Christian version of the world-creating process, the teleology is an essential foundation, while for Pullman's atomistic version it is not, based on the existence of daemons. In other words, Pullman's cosmology is constructed from a probabilistic and mathematical logic in which there is no creator, and this is best to explain the existence of daemons in Lyra's world. More evidence and examples show that even in Pullman's arbitrary worlds there is still a main teleological principle for him as a writer to follow when he attempts to create new living creatures such as the mulefa, witches, and Gallivespians. In this section, I provide my research on why reason, animacy and animality are relevant to comparing animal and animal-like beings, and also explain why Daemon, after proving lacking both in complete animacy and animality, can be most interesting but also most dangerous as a literary fantasia at the same time. In the next section, the study will be continued into the meaning of soul and the social function and problems that Daemon have brought together with them.

### **3.2.0 The Meaning of Soul**

Inspecting the sense of soul is risky but necessary because essentially the existence of Daemon is the physical manifestation of human souls in Lyra's world and this can be seen as its most significant responsibility to be presented in *His Dark Materials*. The soul is never a taboo to discuss, yet it is still a serious theme since the soul has only a conceptual existence and is tough to examine scientifically. Additionally and more importantly, the idea of a soul is never exclusive to Christian religions. In many other religions such as Jainism and Hinduism the soul exists in every single biological organism and even some non-biological entities such as mountains or rivers. In Buddhism, there is a notion of *Samsāra* which means soul that can even transmigrate into another living being after death, as an endless cycle. Therefore, to make this section manageable and concrete, I shall start from the earliest related discourse, namely Aristotle's *De Anima*, and its far-reaching influence on Christianity, which is relevant to Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. In the following section, I wish to

discuss whether, as the author of a fantasy literary work, Pullman can present existing theological entities in an atheistic novel and, how far his invented physical soul can take him without a religious foundation.

### **3.2.1 The Matter-form Theory: the Uniqueness and Nobility of the Soul**

It is crucial to note that, even if we start from Aristotle, that does not mean he is the earliest person who hypothesizes the soul. In fact, even for Aristotle, there is no such concrete concept as “soul”. Both *de anima* and *psyche* in Greek are often mistranslated as soul. This is actually what Aristotle defines as “form” in his *Metaphysics*. However, in philosophy, form and soul are fundamentally different.<sup>260</sup> The notion of “form and matter” is a key to Aristotle’s ontology as well as to what Thomas Aquinas has said about the soul. For Aristotelian philosophers, every entity in the material world has its form and matter as a co-principle to “compose” a “real thing”. A form of this principle is the determined structure that gives things their essential characteristics and attributes (whatever makes a thing different from other things), while matter is the physical substance that things materially are (whatever the thing is made of). The notion of form and matter later develops into hylomorphism, which asserts that all things in the physical world should have form and matter and for those things that have the same matter, their form can differentiate one from another.<sup>261</sup> Form here sketches a thing, expresses what it is as a unique individual. In this stage, form is the closest concept to the soul, which can give things unique identities, yet they are still different from Christian souls because even stones can have form. However, it is an interesting finding that in the same work Aristotle claims that the human mind is a crucial faculty of *psyche*, which is the only word translated as “soul” in the New Testament and occurs 105 times in the text. Even though in ancient Greek there is not yet a fully developed idea of soul, we can still

---

<sup>260</sup> J.M. Moravcsik, “Philosophic Background of Aristotle’s *Aitia*,” *The Crossroads of Norm and Nature: Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics and Metaphysics* (Boston: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995). See also Thomas Ainsworth, "Form vs. Matter," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition), ed. Zalta (accessed 25 July 2016).

<sup>261</sup> Christopher Shields, "Aristotle", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Zalta, (accessed 28 July 2016).

assume that Aristotle, partially inheriting from Plato's idea of upper forms, has treated human mind as an important characteristic and hence enclosed it as an inseparable part of a human's form: "It is not unclear that the soul – or certain parts of it, if it naturally has parts – is not separable from the body."<sup>262</sup> This is the most crucial and earliest written evidence of binding consciousness to life. If anything is important in this quote, Aristotle's discourse of form and matter does provide two important features to the idea of a soul, namely the uniqueness of individuals and nobility of the soul, which makes it superior to other senses. Aristotle's idea of the psyche can be thus concluded as, without psyche/form, things are nothing more than their material substance and this form is a collective image of everything that juxtaposes together as a thing. It should be unique to a certain thing and that thing only. However, if we examine Pullman's Daemon with "uniqueness" and a methodology of "grasping experience" as two standards of the soul, it can be found that Markman in his essay describing daemons as "ghost-in-the-machine-like" beings is accurate. For him, the human soul can also be understood as a "Cartesian Theater" that can transfer experience into an inner voice through a form of homunculus:

We have a coherent experience of the world around as if we are watching a movie consisting of visual images, accompanying sounds, tastes, smells and feelings. It comes with an internal monologue that speaks our inner voice. We can even have imagined dialogs with ourselves in which thoughts pop out at us as if something inside is answering back to our questions<sup>263</sup>.

Markman's description of the homunculus suggests that the soul for Cartesian thinkers is the experience and information grasped as the raw materials of our lives, which reforms them until they are comprehensible. In the process, the homunculus, which can be related to *His Dark Materials'* Daemon, is not the soul itself, but a medium that helps "the act of thinking" to be established. However for Markman, this kind of thinking incurred the same problem as that of the subject human, namely that

---

<sup>262</sup> Aristotle's *De Animal in Focus*, 413a 3–5. See also Max Hocutt, "Aristotle's Four Causes," *Philosophy*, 49, 1974:385-399.

<sup>263</sup> Markman, in Yeffeth (ed.), 62.

both of them rely on sensory organs. This methodology, on both a philosophical and scientific level, is imperfect and has been rejected by German philosopher Franz Brentano (1838-1917) who was also influenced by Descartes' Dualism. Brentano claims in his philosophical theory of perception that "Wahrnehmung ist Falschnehmung" (perception is misperception). For him, the external sensory organs are too imperfect to trust, hence the perceived experience of the world can be erroneous or even more problematic. This idea fundamentally questions the basic tool that we humans have relied upon to build civilization on earth. To some extent it revalues the balance of perception and truth while the idiom "seeing is believing" in this context has been overturned. In his work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* Brentano argues:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We could, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves<sup>264</sup>

Brentano's account of intentionality and descriptive psychology delivers relevant information: just because of the imperfection of our sensory organs, we should not stick to what we have sensed, but gather the actual essence of everything that cannot be easily reached by senses. Moreover, to do this, our intentionality is the key, and

---

<sup>264</sup> Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. Linda L. McAlister (London: Routledge, 1995), 88–89.

this is how humanity is to be distinguished from animals, that is, by reason of the soul. Brentano's theories state a rather phenomenological approach, "to grasp" external worlds rather than "to perceive" them, which renews the functionality of the human soul upon a metaphysical level. Even though it still remains arguable today, his theory of intentionality became influential to the twentieth-century's development of Existentialism, Phenomenology, and even Psychology<sup>265</sup>. In *His Dark Materials*, the human soul, philosophically known as intentionality, is made a physical daemon. However, by examining the physicality of Daemon, it is surprising to find that the methodologies by which daemons gather information from the external world are identically the same as those of their humans: they imitate the biological form from a real animal and use these mimicked sensory organs to understand the world. Before the settlement, daemons keep shifting from one animal to many countless others. As I have shown in the discussion of animality, this form changing on the part of daemons features animal abilities. But the problem is that they might not have experience of using them. Consequently, it is very likely for them to make mistakes and use their "borrowed" organs wrongly. In the sense of this, we can thus far assume that for the daemon, the possibilities of what Husserl means by "*Falschnehmung*," compared to humans, is much higher. In brief, Daemon, from a philosophical and psychological point of view, is never the soul.

By adopting Brentano's descriptive psychology, it can be further suggested that Pullman's Daemon in *His Dark Materials* does have an imperfect Cartesian Theater. Having thoughts, minds, and a Cartesian Theater indicates that daemons, very like their human hosts, have independent thoughts, complicated emotions, and sensory illusion can cheat psychological reactions in both of them. These varieties of "thinking minds", according to Aristotle's matter-form theory, are not separable from one's "psyche" or "form." On the theological level, the relationship between body and soul are a subject and an object that belongs to the subject; in terms of this, the daemons' physical settings perfectly accord with a Christian version of the soul; they reflect each other, are tidily bounded and when any of them are damaged, both body and soul will be harmed. If we reevaluate the same pair - human and daemon - from a psychological approach, it can be inferred that the daemon in *His Dark Materials* does have a soul. The relationship between them is no more than between a subject

---

<sup>265</sup> Moran Dermot. *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

and its object, but two subjects that respectively have their souls. As a consequence, the uniqueness of the soul in *His Dark Materials* is hard to maintain. The ensuing problem with the ruin of uniqueness of the soul is that if in *His Dark Materials* both a human and his/her daemon can have a soul, the identity of the daemon will be questioned. It can be argued that Pullman's aspect of the soul becomes a huge confusion in his cosmology, if the identity of the outside manifestation of the human soul and the physical evidence of original sin has been proven wrong.

In this section, we have been concerned with three issues that related to the daemon's physicality and spirituality, namely animacy, animality, and form. By examining animacy and animality, we found that Daemon combines the idea of outward manifestation of the human soul and original sin. Pullman's ideal relationship between human and nature, and man's best friend, is made logically uncertain and chaotic. It has also been observed that that the ontological worldview may cause a problem for Pullman: once the soul has materialized as a touchable entity to the absolute, only subject human, the daemon will inevitably be marginalized and othered as an object, an outsider in the world. This subject, namely the human has been too isolated and has left no space for others, even though the daemon here is the soul; it still becomes "a thing." Pekkala's and Pan's conversations not only show the daemon's panic: more importantly, they also address the idea that the daemon has "the ability to panic". This ability expresses that the daemon can produce a complicated psychological reaction to its human host without letting him/her know, and this is clear evidence to say that the daemon, in this circumstance, is an independent subject. Obviously, Pullman did not recognize this ambiguity between human and the soul and it does bring him problems when the relationship extends from the personal realm into the social. In the next section of this chapter, I will show how the human and demon relationship is revised in the societies of *His Dark Materials*.

### **3.2.2 Symbolism and Labeling - animal settlement as a fixed social hierarchical ranking**

The importance of Daemon is not merely for researching aspects of the soul, but also for observing Pullmanic society as it exists in *His Dark Materials*. To be more

precise, calling it Pullmanic society is because of the existence of Daemon and Pullman's Affect Linking writing strategy. Societies in *His Dark Materials* become very different from what we are familiar with. In this section, I will be concentrating on the impact that the setting of Daemon has brought and further argue that due to the setting of settlement, the societies in Lyra's world lack social class mobilization. Indeed people in her world are actively restricted.

If animacy and animality are criteria to examine the system inside the daemon, then the symbols and labels of settled daemons are best to examine the interpersonal relationships between humans, whose daemons determine the social structure and hierarchy. In Pullman's setting, the settlement usually takes place in adolescence. Once a daemon encounters its settlement, it will reflect its human for the very last time and change into a fixed animal forever. After the settlement, the daemon will eternally lose its shifting ability. Originally, the meaning of settlement is for Pullman to organize a literary plot to demonstrate to his target readers, namely teenagers, the important moment of forming one's character in adolescence and even recalling the innocence of childhood. Yet it also reveals a problem that Pullman obviously didn't consider about the world after adolescence; that is, the world of adults, who form the very group of people that can provide society with real productive capabilities. To show this, I organize a chart in which some important characters in the trilogy are arranged with their daemons and occupations as follows:

| person             | daemon's name | daemon's form | occupation   |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Lyra               | Pan           | Marten        | N/A          |
| Will               | Kirjava       | Cat           | N/A          |
| Lee Scoresby       | Hester        | Hare          | explorer     |
| Jerry              | Belisaria     | Seagull       | sailor       |
| Stanislaus Grumman | Sayan Korter  | Osprey        | witch doctor |
| Lord Asriel        | Stelmaria     | snow leopard  | duke         |
| Mrs. Coulter       | N/A           | golden monkey | agent        |

|                   |       |            |             |
|-------------------|-------|------------|-------------|
| Stuart            | N/A   | red setter | housekeeper |
| Serafina Pekkala  | Kaisa | Goose      | witch       |
| Swiss Guardsman   | N/A   | wolf-dogs  | guards      |
| Starminster Adele | N/A   | Butterfly  | journalist  |
| Sentry Trollesund | N/A   | Husky      | guards      |
| Oguew King        | N/A   | Cheetah    | king        |
| Tartar Guardsman  | N/A   | Wolves     | guards      |

By looking at the chart, it is interesting to note that apart from personality, daemons also decide humans' social hierarchical status and the occupation the human has "arranged." For example Starminster Adele whose daemon is a butterfly has excellent societal *savoir-faire*, she uses her appearance well, knows how to deploy her advantage to gain the information she needs. These characteristics of Starminster will produce a projection effect on her daemon, and thus, a link between butterfly and Starminster will be bridged. However, if we add one more condition in this link, namely her occupation, it can be found that the stereotype image of journalist somehow matches Starminster's behaviour and the image of the butterfly. The same results can be seen by comparing among daemons of Swiss Guardsman (wolf-dogs), Sentry Trollesund (husky), the housekeeper of Jordan College, Stuart (red setter), and Tartar guardsman (wolves); in the trilogy, these people are given canine daemons rather than other species. It is not surprising at all that the humans with dog daemons are either guardians or housekeepers. In many cultures, the stereotype image of canine animals is that of a servant to humankind: they do not provide labors, but they help humans either to take care of their property (shepherd dog) or as bodyguard security (wolf-dog). In *His Dark Materials*, Pullman concretizes a firmed connection between animal functionality and human personalities within his Daemon system, juxtaposing one's character, social hierarchy, personality and one's daemon's settled form in the setting, and exhibiting thereby a very Pullmanic form of the social identification system. To make this clearer, a quote at the beginning of *Northern Lights* can very well express this system and show how it has become a social consensus in Lyra's

world:

He was a servant, so she was a dog; but a superior servant, so a superior dog. In fact, she had the form of a red setter. The dæmon seemed suspicious, and cast around as if she'd sensed an intruder, but didn't make for the wardrobe, to Lyra's intense relief.<sup>266</sup>

This quote comes from the first scene when Lyra was hiding in the wardrobe at the beginning of *Northern Lights*, and Stuart, who is the housekeeper of the college, was walking by. The quote contains three important messages that are useful to my research: the first is the basic setting of Pullman's settlement in the creation of Daemon, which connects Stuart's daemon form to his personality and occupation. The second, expanded from the first, yet much more complicated, is the double social hierarchical devising which is the central theme of this section. The third concerns people's agreement about the setting, and hence a stable societal consensus, from which a high social collective induction among humans and animals can be formed. By critiquing these three messages, I aim to exhibit how Pullman's Daemon has been ultimately materialized through the act of settling, as well as its relation to other people and their daemons as a community.

The first message reveals the close relationship between a human's character and the stereotype image of animals, which in the previous paragraph I exemplified in terms of humans in the trilogy who also have dog daemons. In *His Dark Materials*, this system is applied not only to people who were born in Lyra's world but also to those who enter her world such as Will and his father, Stanislaus Grumman. It suggests a territorial characteristic of the Pullmanic world, where the daemon for a human is not merely a trophy pet or something that can provide it with extra human values, but a compulsory, identification-card-like label, which is not removable. In systematic surface term, having a daemon is important and not optional: everyone who physically enters Lyra's world will be arranged with a daemon regardless of his or her preference. And if this outsider is already adult, the daemon will be directly a settled one.

---

<sup>266</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 12.

The second message concerns the interpersonal relationship among people whose social identities are determined by their daemon, which can be seen as a unique social stratification. In the quote, Stuart has encountered a double social stratification. Interestingly, the arranged social stratum is not categorized by his economic status, nor by his talent or skill, but by his daemon's settled form, which is fixed upon in adolescence. Calling it a double social stratification is because it has two layers. The first layer can be adduced from the cause and effect sentence: "He was a servant, so she was a dog." This sentence suggests that a daemon not only reflects its human's personality but also labeling its human with an occupation that is most suitably matched with the host's character. The second layer is observed from the other cause-and-effect clause, "but a superior servant, so a superior dog", which furthermore suggests that in the division there are still more subdivisions that classify people into different hierarchical layers. In this sense, Daemon becomes more than just the physical manifestation of the human soul. Its physicality for Pullman becomes practically useful to classify one's social value into different ranks among other humans. By comparing the characters, occupations, and their daemons, it shows that in *His Dark Materials* the existence of daemons provides Pullman a convenience for characterizing each person in the trilogy, by linking the stereotype image of certain animals such as dogs for servants and fish/sea birds for the sailors. For the society, this setting is economically significant and convenient because it mandatorily determines everyone's actual value to others as a whole. In this context daemons are ultimately materialized as trophy-like beings, similar to expensive cars or designer clothes. Through the types of animals that are settled, Daemon is manipulated as a label to identify one's social and hierarchical status in Pullman's fictional world. To some extent this label, namely the form of one's daemon, has replaced human social identity. It is a polygraph-machine-like process that honestly shows one's character, and the human can only passively accept it and become even more attuned to it. Even though both an expensive car and a rare daemon with beautiful furs can equally demonstrate one's social level, it can be seen that the difference between a daemon as a trophy and a real trophy is whether the owner of the trophy can choose. Unlike owning an expensive Mercedes, the ownership of a daemon is never voluntary. In other words, despite the fact that the relationship of the two is that of a human and a daemon, at a social level it cannot be said that the human "has" the daemon because

the act of “having” in this context is void and lacking autonomy. The problem of this is not in the equivalence of the values, but the freedom of exchanging. When the owner of a Mercedes no more agrees that the car can symbolize his social status, he then has the absolute freedom to sell or to exchange the trophy car with another trophy, such as a big house in central London or a more expensive car. He can even choose not to have any trophy if he likes. However, if a daemon is settled, no one, including the human host, has a chance to exchange it. One’s daemon at a social level is like an unmovable tattoo, deeply bronzed on its human. In the previous part of the chapter I have argued that in the physical setting of the daemon, the human is of course the Subject and masters this master-slave relationship, as if he owns the daemon, and the daemon, vice versa, is unconditionally subordinate to its human host. It is clear that in the interpersonal aspect the daemon recaptures autonomy and masters it, quite as if it were a human subject (which it isn’t). Stuart’s example may not be perfect because it can be argued that he can still have the right to choose not to be a servant of Jordan College, and this choice will do no harm to either himself or his daemon. However, there is another example to express that the influence of settlement can be overwhelming when the settled animal is restricted to live where a human cannot, for instance, in the sea. The conversation between Jerry and Lyra, sharing his experience with the settlement of an old sailorman’s daemon, whose settled form is a dolphin, shows that when a human faces this big moment of settlement, perhaps the greatest moment - not of the daemon, but of the human himself - then what Jerry demonstrates to Lyra is anxiety and helplessness:

I remember when I first went to sea, my Belisaria hadn’t settled on one form; I was that young, and she loved being a porpoise. I was afraid she’d settle like that. There was one old sailorman on my first vessel that could never share at all because his dæmon had settled as a dolphin, and he could never leave the water. He was a wonderful sailor; best navigator you ever knew; could have made a fortune at fishing. But he wasn’t happy like it. He was never quite happy till he died and he could be buried at sea<sup>267</sup>.

---

<sup>267</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 142.

The old sailorman's case is worthy of discussion because it is based on the physical presumption that a daemon must stay within a limited distance around its human. Having a dolphin daemon essentially means that the sailorman has to give up the freedom of movement and can only live at sea. The sailorman's intention to live on land in this context is suicidal because his dolphin daemon has copied all the animality of dolphins, and settled, and once the sailorman decides to live away from the sea, the result will be identically the same to that of a real dolphin that lives on land. This conversation not only echoes what I have said about identities and social class, but also shows a significant fact that this psychological reaction is typical in most circumstances between two persons, or one person with an entity that becomes quite strange when it interferes between someone and his soul. Feelings such as anxiety and worry suggest a psychological reaction projected from the subject toward an object, because the anxiety appears only when the incident is out of one's control. According to Pullman's primary setting, the settlement will directly influence one's entire life in society after adolescence. Yet in the sailorman's case it is observed that the human, as a subject in the relationship between human and daemon here, is sidelined and weak. Additionally, by juxtaposing "I was afraid", "he could never leave the water", "He was never quite happy till he died and he could be buried at sea" and "could have big fortune at fishing", it can be deduced that the daemon's settlement is not a random selection: it does receive great influence from its human's economic background, knowledge/skills and the conventional social expectation. Settling into having a dolphin as his daemon, the old sailorman does well to consider his maximum socio-economic value. For Pullman as author, catering to the common social value and maximizing the individual's potential economic force to the society is mutually beneficial to both humans and society, while for humans their talent can be fully realised. For society, this arrangement can ensure that "people resources" are best used. This design greatly exercises the daemons' practical functionality, from the personal and religious as well as social and economic aspects. Yet it is also clear that this arrangement ignores human will and freedom of choice. The old sailorman's unhappiness and Stuart's nobility among servants express that the settlement is a one-side-determined process, designed for society rather than for individuals. This again reemphasises the ultimate materialization and othering of Daemon. However, unhappiness and anxiety are never the most significant impacts of settlement; to the

society itself, this kind of hierarchical division is harmful, too. It is important to acknowledge that the settlement also rejects the possibilities of change and mobilization. Quite apart from the question of changing one's character after adolescence, the problem is partly caused by the excessive, but not universal standards that are used to match certain people with certain animals. Even though in the meantime only a limited group of persons and daemons agree with this standard, it can be meaningful. In other words, this "universal" settlement is only meaningful to a "minority" of people. These multiple and complicated standards narrow and delimit the possible options that daemons can change. In other words, even though compared to human helplessness, daemons seem to determine the settlement, it is still influenced and limited by the cultural background of its human. Stuart's red setter daemon is the typical example, promoted by culture into hierarchical layers as a symbol. The red setter - also called Irish Setter - was originally bred for hunting. Because of its silky coat and slender body shape, since the seventeenth century the red setter has been commonly bred as a household dog and, in many European countries, its elegant image has become the symbol of wealth. When Lyra comments, "He was a servant, so she was a dog; but a superior servant, so a superior dog. In fact, she had the form of a red setter. The dæmon seemed suspicious, and cast around as if she'd sensed an intruder", she has already shown a substantial agreement from a particular culture as an inarguable social consensus. This agreement shows that for Lyra and other people in the same country the red setter is relatively superior to other species of dogs, and at the same time Stuart's identity also perfectly matches the red setter's supremacy. Under this agreement, the social/economic value and functionality of the red setter and of Stuart have combined as one. Apparently, Stuart's daemon has accepted this agreement and, from observing its behaviour, it can be found that this supremacy has been applied to its manner and profoundly influenced the daemon's behaviour. However, the same dogs for people in a different culture may have different values. For example, in China and India people treat the Tibetan Mastiff as the symbol of power and wealth. Unlike the red setter, the Tibetan mastiff was initially bred as a pitbull. It does not have a beautiful body type nor silky coat, but its brutal nature and overwhelming fighting ability endow this dog with a stereotype image of a warrior and a conqueror. Also since the Qing Dynasty of the seventeenth century, the Tibetan Mastiff has become one of the most prized dogs and symbol of

wealth in the ruling elite. The red setter in this cultural background does not have an agreed reference, and as a result in China the servants' daemon will never be a red setter.

By comparing the symbols of the red setter and Tibetan Mastiff respectively in different cultures, we find that the problem of the daemons' social symbolism is that for Pullman, what connects human and the soul in *His Dark Materials* is "the demand of society" (functionality) rather than "the wish of individuals" (intentionality). Also, and because of this, when demand is increased, the daemon inevitably becomes more materialized and detached from its original subject. However, catering to the demands of society is not purely harmful; in many circumstances, it makes a daemon an efficient helper of its human. Tartar guardsmen in the Bolvangar research base, for example, have a uniformed daemon in wolf form. This daemon form provides humans faster movement in hunting and alertness in their garrison, and as a kind of gregarious animal, the wolves' image precisely labels and matches with all the Tartar guardsmen in Bolvangar as an army. In this context, humans and daemons maintain a harmony and Pullman's Daemon system here demonstrates not only its human's character but also that of its human's community. In *His Dark Materials* this harmony is vividly shown:

Mrs. Coulter shrieked a high command in the language of the northern Tartars. The snow swirled open, and there they were, a squad of them, armed with rifles, and the wolf-daemons snarled beside them.<sup>268</sup>

Wolves' daemons express the bravery and sturdiness of the Tartar people. The rise of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century has well demonstrated their racial character to the world. This stereotype connection between Tartars and wolves is rooted in Chinese literature. In many literary works wolves are treated as a symbol of this race. In 2004, Mongol-based writer Ron-Jiang published his Chinese semi-

---

<sup>268</sup> Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 245.

autobiographical novel *Wolf Totem*<sup>269</sup>, in which he shared his experience of a Beijing student who discovered his real self in penal servitude in Inner Mongolia in 1967's Chinese Cultural Revolution. This novel features the nomadic Tartar culture from the Han point of view and reflects the Tartars' wolf-like character in contrast to China's sheep-like figure, thereby further criticizing the servility within conventional Chinese culture. By March 2006, the book had sold over four million copies in China, and later, in 2008, Penguin Books published the international English version of the novel. Until then, *Wolf Totem* held the record for the highest paid translation rights for any Chinese book. If *Wolf Totem* provides me any useful message to my research, it is that both Pullman and Jian Rong have applied a similar symbolization and connected the stereotype of wolves to Tartars. This message consists of a valuable piece of information and one arguable question. The information is that by observing this coincidental analogy, of wolves and Tartars, it can be assumed that the connection between the two has been agreed worldwide. However, the question is: how can both Pullman and Jian Rong be so confident that connecting wolves with Tartars is not a false analogy? In February 2015, Mongolian writer Guo Xuebo, who is an expert on Mongolian literature and history, openly claimed that for Tartars, wolves are natural enemies; for thousands of years wolves have attacked Tartar livestock, even their children, and caused considerable damage to their lives and property. Calling Mongolians "descendents of wolves" is essentially a humiliation. In the same year, German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin also argued that the depiction of wolves and Tartars in *Wolf Totem* is a malicious misunderstanding of Mongolian culture, and the novel itself a typical representation of fascism.<sup>270</sup>

We can thus far assume that even though the design of settlement is universal to people in Lyra's world, its rules are never universal; on the contrary, it is very subjective to any individual culture and full of restriction and rules. The more these restrictions and influences have emerged, the fewer freedoms both humans and daemons can have. A problem lies behind all these issues; namely the stagnation of social mobilization.

Based on the restrictions of culture, social expectations, and Pullman's basic

<sup>269</sup> Rong Jiang, *Wolf Totem* [2004], trans. Howard Goldblatt (London: Penguin, 2008).

<sup>270</sup> Píng Xīn, "Interview: Authoritative German sinologist looks at contemporary Chinese literature with a different eye," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 November 2006.

setting of the settlement, it can be argued that social mobilization in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* has reached a stagnation point. After the settlement, a daemon will then lose its ability to change and, as I have shown above, one of the most significant functions of settlement is to symbolize one's wealth and, further, to endow social status upon talent or potential economic forces. After adolescence, people in Lyra's world have no chance to promote their social hierarchy through hard work or personal wealth accumulation, because the labels of their status have been predestined in their daemons. I assume that Stuart's daemon settled in his fourteen-year-old self as a red setter. At that moment, Stuart was determined to be a) a servant, b) a superior servant, c) a superior servant who serves in European countries. Once these conditions have been set, Stuart has been assigned a fixed place in society. The red setter won't change into another breed of dog, even though Stuart no longer wishes to be a servant of Jordan College. The same is the case with the old sailorman and Jerry. Their personal preferences and career plans will not affect their daemons' settled forms: the dolphin will always be a dolphin until the sailorman dies. For the governor, this system can ensure place in the ruling elite since the social hierarchy is jammed. However, for those who are classified as the lower class, discrimination makes it impossible for them to upgrade to the upper social stratification, since it is fixed with the settlement. Interestingly and ironically, Pullman's Daemon predestines everyone's class not at birth, but in adolescence which suggest that people in Lyra's world have no chance to change their hierarchical status because it is rigidly predestined.

Societies need a clear and stable social stratification and class mobility because these are what produce the division of labor and provide each with motivation to achieve; whatever directly influences societies' competitiveness and productive capability, and benefits the individual, should decide what portion of resources individuals can be allocated and further enlarge their influence. In typical capitalist societies, social stratification is produced through the competition for economic benefits and the ownership of private property which in Lyra's world is not very likely to exercise.

Pullman in *His Dark Materials* demonstrates his actual abomination of absolutism. In his version of *Paradise Lost* he tries so hard to fight against John Calvin's predestination based on a rigid interpretation of original sin. Yet ironically, in my research it can be seen that Pullman's design of Daemon, very similar to original

sin, proves another kind predestination and absolutism.

### **3.3.0 Conclusion**

If Worlds in *His Dark Materials* are Pullman's platform for comparing among different ideologies, and Dust is his tool to manifest his atheistic origin of the cosmology; Daemon, then, is his medium to demonstrate his ideas of the soul in a Dusty World. Institutionally speaking, the whole of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy is Pullman's exhibition of worlds. Dust and Daemon are fused in an atheistic context and with the help of these three elements, Pullman can deliver his anti-religious agenda through his talented storytelling. It is always worth reemphasizing that rejecting the Christian God as an atheist is never like being a nihilist who denies every metaphysical means, and Pullman, as both Bradley and Tate precisely suggest, is indeed this kind of New Atheist. In this research I have tried to study these three elements and consider how they correlate as a complete system. Even though in each of them there are still problems, Pullman's ultimate goal of rewriting Milton's *Paradise Lost* for his target readers, namely teenagers, is successfully achieved. As a Fantasy Literature writer, or more specifically speaking a New-Atheist novelist, Pullman does provide an excellent role model in organizing an atheistic framework with ironical tones, in the puzzles of the twenty-first century's twisted context of symbioses of securitization and insecutirization.

## Conclusion

Researching the three elements - Worlds, Dust, and Daemon - which correlate to exhibit Philip Pullman's literary ambition as well as his atheistic agenda in *His Dark Materials*, provides this research with an opportunity to explore the very core of the New Atheistic Novel, as Arthur Bradley termed it. Accordingly, what for Pullman, Bradley, and Tate is essential to construct a stereotyped "New Atheistic narration" is not an entirely nihilistic narrative, but a deeply religious literary framework with an anti-religious rebellion ideology within. The 1,016 pages of *His Dark Materials* trilogy in this dissertation is treated as Pullman's performance of writing an anti-religious version of *Paradise Lost* in prose. Through combining Worlds, Dust, and Daemon, Pullman shows his concerns for the "physical home<sup>271</sup>" in which we live. In the introduction, the research started with a quote from Parson's interview with Pullman in 1999, with a goal to find out his writing ambition, which is considered very significant to the following chapters. To do this, the research discusses the limit and privilege of the adolescent fantasy fiction genre. By so doing, Pullman's methodologies to fulfil his ambition can thus be revealed. In this conclusion, the focus will also be upon some discoveries and limitation that the study encountered in each chapter during the process of research.

Stylistically and structurally, Pullman's literary medium to display his subject matter is that of a high fantasy trilogy. This for Pullman as writer proves a double-edged sword because, in contemporary literature reviews, fantasy literature is often categorized (or even marginalized) as a sub-genre. Its literary characteristics for critics are usually associated with escapism or even absurdity due to its "difficulties of interpreting events/things as objects or as images, thus disorientating the reader's categorization of the 'real'"<sup>272</sup>. The combination of marvellousness, irrationality, and fantastic non-signification is not purely a negative barrier for Pullman. Significant figures of the fantasy genre endow him with privileges of creating and parodying his

---

<sup>271</sup> Hatlen, in Lenz (ed.), 78. In this essay, Hatlen quotes Pullman's critical perspective on Tolkien's escapism in which Pullman describes reality as "home".

<sup>272</sup> Rosemary Jackson, "The Fantastic As A Mode," *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (Methuen: New York, 1981), 21.

atheistic multiverses, in which his power of storytelling can be best used with imagination. This characteristic, in the meantime, pulls fantasy further away from typical realistic novels and closer to tales. Although there are masters in the genre such as Tolkien and Lewis, their works are still inevitably categorized as children's literature or tales, regardless of the thematic core, which often concerns meaningful metanoia and serious issues such as the yearning for peace in World War II and recalling of Christian honour. In terms of this, Rosemary Jackson cites Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky's redefinition of "The Fantastic" and argues that tales and fantasy have an entirely different foundation for interpreting events, the key to which is hesitation. The kind of hesitation involved is unstable because it is not merely controlled by the author, but also relies upon the readers' responses and their suspension of disbelief, which makes reading fantasy literature complex and difficult. Therefore, for these critics, categorizing fantasy literature as children's tales is a humiliation for the reason that it concerns a much more complicated mutual interaction between the author and the readers, while tales don't:

True fantasy, according to Dostoevsky, must not break the hesitation experienced by the reader in interpreting events. Tales, which are too incredible to be introduced as 'real', break this convention... 'The Fantasy,' must be so close to the real that you almost have to believe in it<sup>273</sup>.

Jackson brings up the important concept here that fantasy literature as a sub-genre should be proportionally realistic and therefore divided from that of tales. This may best describe the work of Pullman, which contains many more ingredients than an ordinary bedtime story. However, by observing Pullman's award history, it can be found that *His Dark Materials* has so far not escaped from being categorized in the softer sub-genre. His trilogy has been very often contrasted with Tolkien's *Lord of Rings* and Lewis's *Narnia* books, which tend to be classified as the classics in the particular fantasy genre of children's literature. Although for many writers being equivalent with Tolkien and Lewis is indeed an honour, it can be assumed that being as famous as Tolkien and Lewis was never Pullman's ambition. In fact, in order to differ from these two writers, Pullman has openly displayed his abomination of

---

<sup>273</sup> Jackson, 27.

Tolkien's and Lewis's overt escapism, and claimed that unlike both of them, what he has been trying to do was "writing a fantasy fiction realistically." It is interesting to note that Pullman was aware of the dilemma of fantasy literature, that of being often too incredible to relate to the real events in the physical world. However the genre does not trap him. On the contrary, he uses it well. Writing fantasy fiction realistically is a paradox within the basic Platonic escapism of the fantasy genre. This authenticity for Pullman is crucial, because what his work deals with is issues that take place on the physical earth, as he has repeatedly emphasised. Much of his writing<sup>274</sup> is proven to serve this goal; with the help of storytelling and the rewriting of *Paradise Lost*, Pullman inspects and criticizes the absolutism of Christian religion in *His Dark Materials*, as well as other issues such as ecology, education, and politics.

My dissertation does not directly study *His Dark Materials* as a complete literary work, but respectively focuses on themes of Worlds, Dust, and Daemon in its three main chapters. These elements have huge significance, and they are designed for differing purposes. The Worlds show Pullman's ideal cosmology. He concretizes his worries and wishes in these worlds and represents them in a rather exaggerated way. In Lyra's world, for example, religious absolutism is demonstrated by the Magisterium's domination. In Will's world, which is more like our world, political power intervenes in scientific researches and prevents people from knowing the truth. And in the Mulefa world Pullman sketches a non-human utopia in which creatures and nature maintain a great harmony. Dust, which is a mystery author-oriented element, connects these worlds and explains Pullman's anti-Christian or New-atheistic, but not atheistic worldview. In my research Dust has also been a main theme. Yet before treating it as one of the thematic cores I had to remind readers of an essential premise: Pullman's atheism is never nihilism. In *His Dark Materials*

---

<sup>274</sup> The correlation of "power of storytelling" and our "physical real life" can be shown in many other Pullman's works such as *Grimm Tales For Young and Old*(2012), *Clockwork or All Wound Up*(1997), and *The Firework-Maker's Daughter* (1995). An outstanding commonality of these books is shown through Pullman's talent for rewriting already existing works and transforming them from "story body" into "fable body". With the transformation a rather close relationship between real life and story is made. It can be argued that Pullman's writing habit is never purely imaginative: "metanoia" can always easily found in his works.

Pullman does not reject the existence of a Christian God. On the contrary he concretizes God and his armies. By replacing God with Dust, evidence shows that what Pullman demonstrates is a world without a “real” God, but not one without influences caused by God. In other words, even though Dust is the very core of Pullman’s atheism, this deeply religious and historical world cannot be termed atheistic. The very existence of Dust becomes an interesting literary contradiction, intended by Pullman, in which it must be assumed that his intention is to create a greater metanoia. The literary attribute of Daemon, compared to the previous two themes is narrower. In the trilogy its functionality is clear. As the production of Dust, on the literary level Daemon underpins the role of “Fantasia”. What it presents to readers is the joyful and playful fun of childish innocence. However, on the theological level, the creation of Daemon is significant as it expresses Pullman’s perception of the human soul. Unlike Tolkien’s or Lewis’s creation, Pullman’s cosmology is constructed in an atheistic context in which God and Genesis are both proven to be lies, and therefore the concept of “the soul” loses its theological (biblical) origin. As a result, “being the soul” in *His Dark Materials* becomes the most crucial work for Daemon. As a writer, Pullman also needs to provide a more comprehensive replacement.

Even though these three thematic cores concern great and ranging issues that are important to reality, they also cause problems, not all of which Pullman even recognizes. In the thesis I display detailed studies in each chapter, researching these elements from their etymological surfaces to their literary and religious implications. The research goal is to have a complete and comprehensive analysis of these items including their functionality, potential risks, and paradoxes.

The first chapter investigates Pullman’s atheistic worldview, which is crucial to build the heterocosm as the framework of *His Dark Materials*, as well as intertextuality among other texts including *Lord of Rings*, *Paradise Lost*, and the Holy Bible. Even though the title of the chapter is World, the study concerns not only the world setting of *His Dark Materials*, but also the different metanoia hidden within, and the relationship between the fictional worlds and reality. The value of studying “Worlds” in *His Dark Materials* is high and relevant to the other two chosen themes. In a narrative based on atheism, this physical world is a womb to everything. It is a fundamental condition for all ideologies and agendas, particularly for Dust, which

Pullman uses to replace the Christian version of the creator and make his cosmology work. By quoting Milton's "His Dark Materials to create more worlds<sup>275</sup>" on the first page of his trilogy, Pullman signals a rewriting of *Paradise Lost*, in which the big picture of Pullman's multiverse and the functionality of Dust become clear. Along the narrative Pullman gradually updates Dust from an entity to an intellectual being and ultimately connects it with his cosmology. To introduce this relation and export Dust from its old context, Mary Malone, an ex-nun but now a scholar in Oxford University, plays a significant role as Pullman's narrator. Without knowing her role, researching Pullman's cosmology would be difficult. Because of her, at the moment when she in Oxford communicates to Dust through a machine called Cave<sup>276</sup>, "Dark Materials" have been transferred from their original Miltonic meaning into a God-like being in Pullman's novel. With her special background, Pullman's cosmology has a more scientific and rational endorsement. One of the best examples is her first entry into Mulefa world, which I also mention in the first chapter. With Mary's fearless journey into different heterocosms, her responsibilities are even clearer. Her role in *His Dark Materials* is more like doing an advertisement for Pullman's cosmology, actively rather than passively. Mary becomes an adventurer, relying upon the knowledge and security that Pullman as a writer endows and guarantees. It can be noted that such confidence pleasantly surprises for anyone entering so entirely unfamiliar a world, and is abnormal. I consider Mary's worldview a helpful aid, which makes it easier to sort out some important commonalities among different worlds.

Researching Pullman's world is interesting, yet there isn't any unified standard that can systematically classify his seemingly chaotic multiverse. To decode this exclusive platform for storytelling, in chapter one, I make an organic, tuber-like model in which the seven mentioned worlds have been divided into two groups of clustered worlds. The first two criteria used are the cognition of time and the primary species that dominates the majority of the natural resource of the world. Unlike setting the main narrative in an independent space, Pullman constructs his complicated multiverse in uncountable billions of parallel worlds with a hypothesized purpose of comparing and contrasting these dystopias, utopias and seemingly realistic worlds. However, this cosmology also leaves room for skepticism when the word

---

<sup>275</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 912-913.

<sup>276</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 526.

“parallel” is not quite accurate and the most prominent figure “parallelity” is proven non-existent in the overlapping worlds. This “unparallelity” can be observed from either natural or artificial conditions of these worlds. Natural condition refers to the physical, or environmental structure of the world and how it supports the living creatures that dwell in it. Significant discoveries are gained by comparing Mr. Scoresby's escape in Lyra's world and Mary's experience of traveling into Mulefa world. Although worlds in Pullman's cosmology follow the same physical rules, their geographical structure, ecological system, and path of movement are all very different. The creation of Adam and Eve is exclusive to some worlds. This to some extent rejects the very foundation of Christian absolutism, that Genesis is the only truth of the world's origin and God created everything. Alternative worlds for Pullman are not just zoo-like spaces in which there are different views or creatures. Many are relevant to Pullman's concerns over various serious issues, hence ideologically significant. The Mulefa world has been taken as the example. This non-human world, which for many critics is Pullman's utopia in *His Dark Materials*, is proven an anti-Christian counterexample, parodying the Garden of Eden. In this world, the ecological system and food chain are very simple. To survive, creatures in the Mulefa world are designed for symbiosis with another living being. Essentially, the Mulefa world is not constructed upon high technology, widespread religions or efficient government, but on uncountable mutual correlation and cooperation among different species, which maintain it in a great harmony. With this world, Pullman provides his reader with a possibility of an ideal that is not populated and polluted by humans and their cultures. Functionally, the space of worlds in this trilogy does not only help Pullman to demonstrate his concerns over critical issues; it is repeatedly used to produce multiple similar cosmoses that structurally overlap each other. The reason for doing so is not merely to make his fiction complicated and fantastic but to earn the reader's trust. By using Affect Linking, parodying heterocosms and “making strange” to engage world-building in *His Dark Materials*, Pullman builds up a framework of his fictional worlds that is accepted by both the readers and the author. This agreement is significant: for readers, by suspending disbelief, and simultaneously recognizing that they are reading a fantasy literary text, they can more easily gain metanoia from their act of reading. For Pullman, this style of “writing fantasy literature realistically” can differentiate his work from that of Tolkien or

Lewis,' whose secondary worlds are designed as isolated and, relatively speaking, leave no room for skepticism. Compared to theirs, readers in Pullman's world-building context have more freedom to think about whether these issues are literary puns and related to the reality that we live. It is a totally different experience reading Tolkien's *Lord of Rings*, more like accepting a standard contract; when one decides to read, one has to take unconditionally all the conditions (the Middle Earth) enclosed in the novel.

The evidence of Pullman's difference can be found in the changes of writing style in the second volume of his trilogy. In the first volume *Northern Lights*, world-building is substantially settled. Then in the following two books of the trilogy, Pullman starts to quote increasingly from William Blake, John Milton, T. S. Eliot and even the Holy Bible at the beginning of every chapter. This would not be a success without the assurance that readers will believe that the fantasy text is partially realistic.

The second cause of the non-parallelity is more artificial and human-centred; namely, the setting of time and the Pullman's methodology. Pullman demonstrates a remaking of human history in alternative worlds, but not through time itself. In the thesis, I attempt to suggest that unlike typical rules of secondary worlds (for example, the Middle Earth and Narnia), time flow in the multiverse is uniform. It is proven that the majority worlds (Will's world, Cittàgazze, Lyra's world and even the world of the dead) experience the same time flow and calendar system. Even in the non-human Mulefa world, the uniform time flow is proven by Mary Malone's description of day and night. An interesting question is: since the time flow is uniform, why is this universe accounted to be non-parallel? Through Lord Asriel, Pullman introduces a time setting rule that he applies in his multiverse, namely the Tossing Coin Principle. With this, Pullman creates many different historical branches in each world and allows them to develop into the various forms of government. Some are theocratic, some are democratic, and some are even anarchic. In my thesis, the study takes Lyra's world as an example, which is proven a purposeful dystopia that Pullman intends to compare with others. In this world, the religious organization, the Magisterium, dominates the majority of resources on the earth and the well-known radical reformist John Calvin becomes the political and religious leader of the world. In this circumstance, the role of John Calvin is made an historical branch. In consequence the

sixteenth century religious reformation never takes place in this world. The Magisterium, in this historical context, becomes an overwhelming theocratic hegemony; it gathers altogether the political, economic, and religious and even the military power and resources. This religious absolutism exaggerates the possible limitation that a religious organization can approach. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. Based on this absolute divine right, the Magisterium then legally poisons, kidnaps, and even murders its enemy with destructive weaponry. This is the dystopia Pullman tends to present in *His Dark Materials*. Yet to understand how this historical placing John Calvin at the religious centre of time may result in such extreme tyranny, it is necessary to study why his theology is problematic to Pullman. In the thesis, I discuss the two central concepts of Calvinistic theology, namely the redefinition of Original Sin and Double Predestination. In the research I found Calvin's theology, very similar to that of St. Augustine, suggests a non-Adamic sinfulness. What causes this sin was born with us. For Calvinists, everything including salvation and damnation is long predestinated before we were born. Under this sole and absolute premise, human free will is meaningless. Even to a murderer, his conviction for killing has been decided before he chooses to commit the act; and this decision is determined by the almighty God, not his free will. Logically these two concepts maximize the Christian God's omniscience and omnipotence, and in the meantime minimize human free will and any possibilities for deciding one's fate. These logical and theological paradoxes remain arguable even today. In *His Dark Materials'* divergent history, John Calvin as well as his theology has been treated as the absolute truth, and this truth is endowed by the divine power. Therefore in this context, in order to expand John Calvin's study about original sin, the Magisterium can legally take other people's lives as they are serving a much greater purpose and these sacrifices are relatively small. To respond with this dystopia, Pullman provides his definition of original sin by demonstrating different versions of Genesis in *His Dark Materials*, including the story of the mulefa. By comparing these versions it can be found that Pullman does not change any plot of Genesis. What he has done in *His Dark Materials* is to modify the description of the fall and sin. Pullman takes an extremely optimistic perspective on original sin. His purification of original sin not only decriminalizes Adam and Eve, but also discharges Satan. It can be observed that in *His Dark Materials*, the images of Satan, as well related images - such as that of

the serpent in the mulefa's Genesis, Lord Asriel who wishes to overthrow the Authority and Mary Malone who guides Lyra and Will to engage in their first sexual experience to represent the Fall - become meaningful and crucial. These images of a good Satan have repeatedly been used and manipulated by teachers, instructors, and even enlighteners. It is significant to recognise that in *His Dark Materials*, original sin is treated as a gift that humans earn by themselves rather than a curse that is given by God. Through worlds and a divergent history in *His Dark Materials*, Satan as an originally prohibited and cursed intellectual becomes no more sinful. With these settings, Pullman can successfully display the actual meaning behind the fall by comparing multiple versions of Genesis.

In the last part of the first chapter, I investigated the unique world that can be treated as the only exception to Pullman's parallel multiverses, namely, the world of the dead. The reason for not calling this space a region is because the world of the dead is an independent realm that functions properly without relying upon any other worlds. Time flow in this world is identical the same with others; structurally this world is complete and functional. Whether it is called hell, the underworld, Hades, or the world of the dead, this world overtly displays Pullman's imagination of an afterlife heavily influenced by his Christian and humane educational backgrounds. Lots of images from Greek mythology and the Holy Bible have been borrowed and fused to juxtapose this world, including pictures of Acheron, Charon, the lake of fire, and the gate that separates life and death. In my research it was also found that the existence of this world has two significances: first of all, it is powerful evidence to assume that Pullman's atheistic worldview is rather closer to Bradley and Tate's New Atheism, while the concept of an afterlife is already religious and paradoxical within any typical definition of atheism. In this interesting conflict, by combining images of Greek mythology and biblical references, Pullman demonstrates a platform that is very similar to the Christian version of hell. There isn't any world in *His Dark Materials* that is similar to heaven, a fact that violates the basic antagonistic relationship between heaven and hell. In *His Dark Materials*, the closest concept or image to heaven is the clouded mountain, which is a parodied image of Mount Sion, where the Ten Commandments were given to Moses. However, in *His Dark Materials*, it can be found that the value and essence of this clouded mountain are no longer meaningful. Physically it is nothing more than a vehicle, or more accurately, a

portable fortress of the Authority's regent, Metatron. It can be argued that the meaning of heaven in *His Dark Materials* is inferior to that of hell. In terms of space, it is not an independent world. To some extent, it is evident that heaven in Pullman's cosmology is marginalized. Placing hell as the ultimate destination of living beings and in the meantime skipping physical heaven at a theological level expresses the very core of Pullman's anti-Christian agenda. Through the world of the dead, Pullman completes his cosmology and provides a Druidic circle of life for Dust. In this circle, souls are made in a reversed form from their raw materials, Dust, and become in everything as a great whole. This world results in a qualitative change of the tuber-like form. Uncountable billions of living beings in parallel universes all formed of Dust gather here eventually, return to their earliest origin, namely the world of dead. In a sense, this world is not only the final destination but also the womb of life. It is where everything ends and restarts, in an endless cycle. With this world, Pullman's Dusty cosmology perfectly echoes Milton's "womb of nature and perhaps her grave<sup>277</sup>" and becomes organic. Being treated as the main theme for sizeable researches related to *His Dark Materials*, Dust is very often placed in the centre of Pullman's anti-Christian agenda. Critics such as Katharine Cox and Anne-Marie Bird show their interests in criticizing Dust's functionality and its religious meaning, as Pullman designs it to replace the Christian God in his multiverse of *His Dark Materials*. Most of these studies are concerned with one main issue of Dust: that is, the excessiveness of Dust's functionality. However, while most of the critics have focused on and questioned whether Dust is an imperfect "imported new God" of an imperfect cosmology,<sup>278</sup> an obvious blind spot is also shown: can Dust can really be simply treated as a thing?

In the second chapter of the thesis, this question has been researched through a detailed study of "Dust"; that is, from its correlation with "dust" as a common noun, to its further metaphorical symbolism in the novel and finally the religious reevaluation of real life. The answer to the question is both yes and no. Even though in different contexts Dust is always a thing, it appears in different forms and with alternative meanings. Juxtaposing all these forms, a transformational model that I made in diagram 2-2 describes the process of Dust's becoming rather than its being.

---

<sup>277</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 907.

<sup>278</sup> Cox, in Barfield and Cox (eds.), 139.

With this model, I also argue that Dust in *His Dark Materials* is never a fixed-form status or entity, but an evolutionary progress. If we try to take any part of this process and treat it as a complete definition of Dust, we may easily make the logical mistake of taking the part for the whole. For example, in phase two of the model, Dust is the collective name of uncountable rebellious angels.<sup>279</sup> However, if we use the term “rebellious angels” to define Dust collectively, their extreme personalities, negative emotions and strong desires for vengeance will make Dust an imperfect God. This kind of emotional Dust is full of hatred and what, collectively, is claimed about the Authority remains controversial. It is thus very difficult to relate to the Dust of phase three in which it becomes the symbol of love, creativity, and mercy. Therefore, it can be noted that only by zoning out and taking a distanced view can the complete picture and importance of Dust be accurately shown.

Etymological studies and literature reviews have both emphasised that the word dust is usually treated negatively in contemporary literature. In many different literary works, the images of dust are often described either as a dirty substance or dangerous virus<sup>280</sup>, as unimportant messages dropped unintentionally by passengers<sup>281</sup>, or as the penalty God gave to the fallen Adam and the serpent<sup>282</sup>. Therefore, starting from the meaning as a common noun it is easier to address that Dust was not as important as it becomes in the second and third volume of the trilogy. Because of this, the transformed Dust can be clearly contrasted with that in previous phases, and its revolutionary path becomes rather obvious.

The model is a useful tool to understand Pullman’s methodology of

<sup>279</sup> Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 528.

<sup>280</sup> Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*, (New York: Night Shade Books, 2009.)

<sup>281</sup> Karen Duve, *Taxi* ( Frankfurt: Eichborn, 2008.) These two novels are mentioned in Sullivan’s essay as examples in which dust and dirt can be differently interpreted through literature. Even though Sullivan’s writing about angels is Ecocriticism, her perspective on dust became useful for me to construct the first phase of my transformational model of Dust. See also Heather Isle Sullivan, “Dirt and Material Ecocriticism,” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19.3 (Summer 2012). 515-531.

<sup>282</sup> Genesis 3:14 KJV. God condemns the serpent for Adam and Eve’s fall by removing its legs and curses him: “You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life”. It is clear that the word dust here is demoted.

transforming Dust. Indeed, my pyramid-like model can be divided into three layers. On the bottom layer (which is also the first phase of the progress) Dust transfers from a common noun into a physical particle. Even though in this stage Dust is still silent and passive, it gains its physicality and becomes a “thing”. However, the situation of Dust in phase one is far worse than being treated like dirt or a virus; it is sentenced by the Magisterium with the same crime as the root of all evil because it is the most concentrated Dust that for the Magisterium churches is the physical evidence of original sin. This sinful physical particle is even weaker than before, however its physicality for the whole narrative is even more important. Only by having a physical existence, the scientific search of the Magisterium in Bolvangar, Mary Malone’s decriminalization of Dust and Lyra’s representation of the fall can thus be meaningful.

In the second phase a dramatic qualitative change takes place to Dust; besides becoming much more intellectual, emotional and complicated; the pronoun to describe Dust transforms from singular Dust into plural uncountable billions. “They” claim to be angels, revengers, and more significantly, the real creator of the multiverses. Unlike in phase one, these originally silent and passive particles actively and vehemently grasp the initiative and right to speak. By using different types of tools, such as the Alethiometer, the Cave, and the Amber Spyglass, Dust intervenes and dominates the narrative with a mentor-like lofty tone to humans, who had suppressed them in the previous phase. It can be observed from their interaction with protagonists and repeated uses of imperative sentences that all the changes take place at the moment when Dust starts to be associated with the Holy Bible. By gaining a new “vehicle”, namely “angels”, they also gain superiority. These legendary creatures are endowed by the Holy Bible. With this vehicle, Dust becomes active and reverses the master-slave relationship in the first phase. Human beings in this phase are demoted to tools, and the whole narrative of *His Dark Materials* becomes a stereotype of a Proxy War<sup>283</sup> between two parties of Dust; namely the Authority who plays the

---

<sup>283</sup> "proxy, n.". OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.serlib0.essex.ac.uk/view/Entry/153573?redirectedFrom=Proxy+war> (accessed 30 July 2016). See definition and compounds. (a) = *proxy fight* n.; (b) a war instigated by or fought on behalf of a power which does not itself become directly involved. This type of war usually occurs physically in the third party’s territory, usually in the form of two opposite

role of Christian God and Lord Asriel, who in this context is a representation of Satan. This is typically a biblical way of describing a war between two extreme authorities. Even in the Bible, Jehovah never directly conflicts with Satan and in Genesis; their proxy is Adam and Eve. With the war, Pullman brings up his atheistic/atomic cosmology and Dust here becomes his most powerful weapon to reject the Christian version of the origin of the universe and replace God. Dust in this phase has two functions: first, it plays the core of Pullman's anti-Christian agenda in *His Dark Materials*; second, it provides a possible alternative cosmology after rejecting the original creator. However, these two functions are established in a deeply Christian context, and this becomes another evidence of Pullman's new-atheistic stance in its close correlation with Christianity.

Structurally, the second phase is not perfect because compared to the status in the first phase Dust has changed too dramatically. Although the essence of Dust in the two contexts is the same, it can hardly be recognized by relating between the two. The images of rebels, radical reformers, omnipotence and extreme personalities render Dust a non-neutral and unstable new God. It is assumed that Pullman does recognize this potential risk and according to my observation, the third phase is the adjustment with which Pullman wishes to rebalance the overloaded Dust and make it more amiable and approachable. In this phase, Dust has been again abstracted back into a concept, or more accurately a symbol that exists in almost everything in the world. With these changes, Dust becomes silent again and starts to connect itself with many important issues. In this phase it can be physically damaged. This being-in-everything God is found physically more similar to Dust in the first phase, yet its functionality is more complicated than an atom or natural element. Also because of this being-in-everything feature, theologically Dust becomes more like how Christian God is

---

allies. A classic example of proxy war is the Vietnam War (1955-1975), in which the USA and the USSR engaged in war through the South and North Vietnam governments. Proxy war usually causes huge impact in the local area, and in *His Dark Materials* the battlefield is Lyra's world. Armies of the Magisterium and Lord Asriel, which are representative/proxies of God and Satan, represent the epic warfare between Heaven and Hell in this world. This war results in the death of both Metatron and Lord Asriel and creates a huge, bottomless abyss into which uncountable amounts of Dust vanishes.

described in the Bible<sup>284</sup>. Damaging Dust thus equates with damaging the whole world. In a sense, the Magisterium's research on Dust has been upgraded from a religious experiment to an environmental issue. In the thesis, I took the chain reaction of the abyss as an example, caused by the Magisterium's nuclear tracking missile. The fact that the abyss in Lyra's world destroys a great amount of Dust and directly causes great damage to the ecological system in Mulefa world explains Dust's importance in *His Dark Materials*. Lyra and Mulefa world in Pullman's cosmology are two independent universes, the ecology and geography of which are totally different. However, both these worlds simultaneously respond to the loss of Dust. This synchronized reaction to the vanishing of Dust leads us to ask whether these worlds are really parallel? Dust is unconditionally the sole foundation of Pullman's cosmology. Once this foundation collapses, so does every world in *His Dark Materials*. To some extent, Pullman fulfils Milton's notion of "His Dark Materials (Dust) to create more worlds."

The exaggeration of Dust's functionality in Pullman has always been one of the key criticisms by commentators on the trilogy. However, if we rethink this excessiveness in terms of my pyramid-like model, the main cause, as I have observed, is overconcentration on phase two. In this phase, Dust indeed has been actively involved in fulfilling ideologies of an anti-Christian agenda and parodying images such as the clouded mountain, the crystal cell, and Garden of Eden. Altogether its deployment emphasises the purposeful goal of Pullman. Because its ultimate goal is to replace the Christian God, inevitably Dust will be placed in the same position as God, and evaluated with the same standard. In this sense, the controversy over Dust is not too surprising. What Pullman, as a writer, wishes to express is the possibility of an atomic, atheistic cosmology. In his universe there could still be an influence of religious absolutism that would allow a counter-cosmology to survive. With Dust, Pullman realizes this, and his dusty cosmology certainly echoes with Bradley's definition of New-Atheism and Tate's observation of Pullman's Republic of Heaven.

Unlike the other two elements, Daemon, as the thematic core of the third chapter, can only be constructed on the premises of the comprehensive design of World and Dust. For Daemon, World is the framework and Dust the raw material.

---

<sup>284</sup> Ephesians 4:6 KJV. "One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."

Pullman's world setting in *His Dark Materials* not only provides Daemon the physical platform to show his literary fantasia, but also specifies it with a territorial limit. Only in Lyra's world can Daemon be produced as the physical manifestation of the human soul. Given the high concentration on Dust, Daemon in my research is treated as Pullman's ultimate demonstration of Dust. Like World and Dust, Daemon has a literary significance in the trilogy that concerns its materiality and functionality as a thing. In the trilogy the concept of Daemon is the physical evidence of original sin and the soul, it symbolizes and categorizes its human host's bodily characteristics, personality, and even talent in terms of the conventional images of animal forms. These animalistic combinations of human nature and animal nature are manipulated by the Magisterium with a religious purpose and are accused of being the cause of the fall. Compared to its raw material Dust, Daemon is more like a form of superglue that connects Dust to the primary narrative because its materiality is much more stable and thus easier to be studied. Its shifting rules are also relatively more regular and predictable.

Just as in the case of the other two elements focused upon in the thesis, the Daemon chapter starts with an etymological study of the word daemon. It is not frustrating but on the contrary quite exciting to find that in the *OED* there is neither a definition nor source of the morphological root of the word daemon. Further enquiry shows that it is related to Pullman's use of spirit, the human soul in mythological approaches. Moreover and surprisingly, more and closer information was found when I started to look up the word "demon" in the *OED* and recognised that the conventional image of a demon is not its earliest meaning within Greek mythology, but a holy, and pure spiritual guardian that is translated from a Golden Age race of beings. I suggest that under the influence of Christian history, the word daemon is developed and was mistranslated. The words daemon, demon, and the devil in this religious context are therefore blended through the act of translation, and this holy species in Greek mythology gradually become horned, winged, and cunning creatures in common with the development of Christianity. The same situation takes place in the process of translating *His Dark Materials* from English into a further linguistic system, namely Chinese. The word daemon encounters a very similar situation to that from which it was initially translated into English. The translated word 靈 (ling) is even a more matched signifier, since this in the target (Chinese) culture its meaning is

much closer to the original meaning of daemon in Greek Mythology. In this chapter I took the example of one of the most well known Chinese fantasy novels, *The Journey to the West*, to explain how the mistranslation occurs and why it is essential to *His Dark Materials* as an anti-Christian fiction. More evidence shows that it is a tendency, or a habit of Pullman to use certain words that are treated negatively in Christianity, and endow them with an opposite new meaning in *His Dark Materials*. Such becomes one of the writing methodologies to fulfil his rebel ideology to Christianity. All sorts of terms such as dark, shadow, dust and the fall are reversed in meaning. It can be observed that accuracy is never Pullman's writing goal, rather intentional confusion, which can stimulate more metanoia from the word games he plays.

The main body of the third chapter contains two sections, which respectively discuss Daemon's physicality and its sociality. Physicality concerns a physical entity that can be measured and weighed as well as being a sensible, emotional living creature with a human soul, by what mean can daemons interact with their human hosts. Do they function as the soul, as companion animals, or neither? Are they independent, ghost-in-the-machine-like beings as Markman suggests? In the first section, the research focuses on examining daemon's animality and animacy that for daemon are both important criteria to examine the true meaning and value of daemons' ability to change forms. In order to do this, I took psychoanalytical and biological approaches. In the psychoanalytical part, some important contexts are discussed in which daemon exhibit totally asymmetrical behaviour from their human hosts. With this analysis I tend to suggest that daemon are never the soul to humans because even though they are bodily associated, they have respectively independent thoughts and emotions. As the container of the soul, their human hosts in the meantime demonstrate their anxieties and worries overtly about daemons' settlement without letting them know. In the thesis, I reexamine this asynchronous psyche of the human being and his soul, contrasting it with Markman's criticism that takes a rather more philosophical approach than my own. For Markman, the human soul is the fulfilment of a Cartesian-theatre that suggests that mind functions as a mythological inner voice named "homunculus." By interacting with one's homunculus, a person can preset questions in mind and create a platform for an ego-debate. This is not only the concretized demonstration of how the act of thinking works for Greek philosophers but also the best underpinning of Aristotle's matter-form theory. This

theory explains the earliest idea of human cognition. Its influence is proven significant to the development of Christian theology, psychology, and philosophy in later centuries. However, even though we use this most original and rough idea of the soul to test Pullman's Daemon in *His Dark Materials*, it can be easily found that daemons in his fiction are frequently paradoxical to the what "form" is defined as in the relationship between matter and form, or even specifically, body and soul. With this, it can be further argued that even inside daemons there is a homunculus, with which they can establish their own independent value judgments, moral standards and even decide whether they shall betray their human hosts. These complex emotional and thinking behaviours within daemons again emphasise the fact that daemons and their human hosts are psychologically apart.

Biologically, daemons are never actual animals due to lacking the most important animal attributes. Without having all of the seven major conditions of animality and animacy, namely homeostasis, organization, metabolism, growth, adaption, response to stimuli and reproduction, daemons nonetheless in *His Dark Materials* directly acquire multiple mature animal forms as well as their skill in using their physical body. This is expressed in many circumstances; daemons misuse their imitated organs in an anthropomorphic way, without considering the natural purpose or design and this again reemphasises that even though daemons have mimicked seemingly real form from animals, they can never be one of them. Essentially, they are high concentrated Dust from first to last and because of their functionality as the soul, they never have their own, accurate, original appearance, even if they become settled during their human hosts' adolescence. What they present in the physical world is a mask that they have borrowed as a pretense from other creatures. At the last second of their existence in the world, namely when their human host dies, they vanish in the air as if they never existed physically in this world. Such factors altogether give Daemon a humble, slave-like existence to humankind. Their only purpose is to serve their human hosts as companions when they are needed, yet once their hosts need privacy, daemons can be abandoned if human hosts decide to<sup>285</sup>.

---

<sup>285</sup> This happens at least twice in *His Dark Materials*: when Lyra decides to rescue Roger's soul from the world of the dead, she leaves Pan in the physical world and this decision is one-sided on the part of Lyra. Also, when Lyra and Will represent the fall in the Mulefas' world, both of their daemons are kept away because of "privacies". It is quite interesting and

Based on this observation, it can be stated that in the interaction between humans and daemons there is a clear master and slave feature in which humans fully dominate and Daemons are subordinate.

Daemons' sociality concerns their interaction with other daemons collectively as a unique hierarchical system in *His Dark Materials*. In my research, I found that the master-slave relationship that I discussed in the previous section was totally reversed when daemons in the society were treated as symbols of their human hosts. Without recognizing this, Pullman in *His Dark Materials* designs daemons as a semifinished product until the settlement in their human hosts' adolescence. The reason, if anything, is that the target readers of *His Dark Materials* are teenagers and in this sense adulthood, in which everyone's personality has become settled, holds relatively less value. In the thesis I attempt to argue, based on the fact that adults support a stable and efficient society, that their doing so ignored an important group of people in terms of the operation of the society and allocation of resources. Therefore, a well-designed concept of Daemon should also consider these primary social supporters, particularly because the significance of Daemon is not limited to the relationship of body and soul but is expanded into interposal, intergroup, or even international aspects of human relations. In this part of the research, the focuses are upon Daemons' symbolism in the post-settlement period. Through the symbol of settlement individuals in Lyra's world are divided into different hierarchical ranks referring the final form of their daemons. Daemons in Lyra's world not only show their hosts' personalities, but also their aptitude talent, and potential economic contribution to the society. In term of this, I have provided several examples that show the close relationship between one's career, social status, and daemon's settled form. It is crucial to notice, because of the settlement, the hierarchical status and labor division in the society of Lyra's world has been determined very early in one's adolescence and this ultimate, and final change becomes fixed for one's entire life. This phenomenon can be a convenient means to describe one's character and for Pullman as a novelist the settlement of Daemon is the best tool to divide innocence and experience, which is important for him in rewriting the fall and redefining original sin. If we take this setting into the social system that Pullman provides, the situation

---

paradoxical to maintain privacy with one's own soul since soul at a psychological level is the inner voice and intentionality of humans.

will be very different. In *His Dark Materials*, the societies in Lyra's world are constructed by billions of this kind of individual, and it can be therefore argued that due to the design of settlement, societies in Lyra's world reject the possibilities of social mobilization. In short, the creations of Daemon directly result in the ossification of social hierarchy. In order to prove this, my research studies many examples from the trilogy. I have taken a close look at protagonists' anxiety at the upcoming settlement and the strong level of resistance when the settlement is approaching. These anxieties and helplessness express that as a human host who physically owns the daemon, his fate and future will be determined by this trophy-like symbol, regardless of wishes and career planning by the individual in question. This is a representation of John Calvin's predestination that fulfils another absolutism that Pullman personally creates in his work. Apparently, Pullman is not aware of this and in many circumstances this setting is used by him as a prop that bring to the narrative a sense of shock, or more accurately a powerful Hollywood effect. For example, hundreds of Tartars and their wolf daemons in Bolvangar are manifested to express that the Magisterium's influence is mighty and overwhelming. Moreover, the lack of social mobilization is not the only problem Daemon causes; the false analogy that connects humans with an erroneous symbol is also a problem of animalization of human characters. Regarding this, I mention the controversies of Jiang Rong's novel *Wolf Totem*, which also associates Tartar people with the symbol of wolves. This offensive analogy was confirmed as racial humiliation by the Inner Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences in February 2016.

Pullman's concept of Dust is fully operated in the complicated world system he designs. In the novel World and Dust underpin this atheistic cosmology of *His Dark Materials* in a relationship as of frame to raw material. Daemon, as one of Dust's most outstanding products, ultimately extends the functionality of Dust and then explains the aspect of soul uniquely in the fictional dystopia, namely Lyra's world, which is useful to be contrasted with other universes in the framework. In my thesis the research respectively analyses each of these three elements with their materiality and meanings and by studying their functionality and the methodologies that Pullman uses to realise them, their inseparable correlation and cooperation become rather obvious. I attempt to provide an alternative angle to Pullman's *His Dark Materials* as a complex, New-atheistic, semi-realistic fantasy novel. Even though the over

concentration on the adolescence's settlement and ignorance of adulthood reveal the design deficiency of Daemon and to some extent this imperfect Daemon may result in imperfect Dust, Pullman does contribute significantly to contemporary fantasy writing. *His Dark Materials* is a successful demonstration of his significance to the power of storytelling. There is obviously still room for my research to be extended, not least in studies of Pullman's fiction published since the three novels of *His Dark Materials*. In particular, I look forward to his planned work *The Book of Dust*, in which many of my questions may be answered, and the ultimate conceptualisation of Pullman's New-atheistic heterocosm revealed.

## Bibliography

- Ankarloo, Bengt and Stuart Clark. *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Ainsworth, Thomas. "Form vs. Matter." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition). Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/form-matter/>>.
- Aristotle. *Metaphysics Book Theta*. Trans. Stephen Makin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Michael Pakaluk. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Aristotle. *Aristotle's De Animal in Focus*. Ed. Michael Durrant. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Augustine. *The City of God against the Pagans*. Ed. R.W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Windup Girl*. New York: Night Shade Books, 2009.
- Barfield, Steven and Katherine Cox, Eds. *Critical Perspectives on Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*. London: McFarland & Company, 2011.
- Barfield, Steven. "Dark Materials to Create More Worlds: Considering His Dark Materials as Science Fiction." In Barfield and Cox, eds. 57-73.
- Barfield, Steven and Martyn Colebrook. "Revitalizing the Old Machines of a Neo Victorian London: Reading the Cultural Transformations of Steampunk and Victoriana." In Barfield and Cox, eds. 75-91.
- Barth, John. *Lost in the Fun House*. New York: Anchor Books, 1988.
- Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 1980.
- Berry, Adrian, "How to Swap Universes," *Sunday Telegraph*, 12 June, 1994.
- Bird, Anne-Marie. "Circumventing the Grand Narrative: Dust as an Alternative Theological Vision in Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." In Lenz, ed. 188-199.
- Bird, Anne-Marie. "Without Contraries there Is No Progression: Dust as an All-Inclusive, Multifunctional Metaphor in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." *Children's Literature in Education*. 32.2(2001): 111-123.
- Blake, William. *America a Prophecy*[1794], copy F: electronic edition. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Blakearchive,

- < <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive> >
- Blake, William. *Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion [1821], copy E: electronic edition.* Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Blakearchive,
- < <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive> >
- Blake, William. *The Marriage between Heaven and Hell[1793], copy B: electronic edition.* Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Blakearchive,
- < <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive> >
- Blake, William. *Songs of Innocence, copy L: electronic edition.* Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Blakearchive,
- < <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive> >
- Blake, William. "The Everlasting Gospel." *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* Ed. Nicholson & Lee. Oxford: Clarendon, 1917.
- Blocher, Henri. *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle.* Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1997.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Bradley, Arthur and Andrew Tate. *The New Atheist Novel: Fiction, Philosophy and Polemic after 9/11.* London: Continuum, 2010.
- Bradley, Arthur. "Introduction." In Bradley and Tate. 1-15.
- Brentano, Franz. *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint.* Ed. Linda L. McAlister London: Routledge, 1995.
- Brown, Dan. *The Da Vinci Code.* New York: Corgi, 2009.
- Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion.* Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Buker, Derek M. "The Long and Longer of It: Epic Fantasy". *The Science Fiction and Fantasy Readers' Advisory.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2002.
- Cooper, David E. *World Philosophies: An Historical Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Calvino, Italo. *If on a Winter's Night, a Traveller.* Trans. William Weaver. Orlando: Harcourt, 1979.
- Chabon, Michael. "Dust & Daemons." *The New York Review of Books.* New York: Mary Evans, 2004.
- Chrisafis, Angelique. "Fiction becoming trivial and worthless, says top author." *The*

- Guardian*. 12 August, 2002.
- Colas, Santiago. "Telling True Stories, or the Immanent Ethics of Material Spirit (and the Spiritual Matter) in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." *Discourse* 27.1. 34–66. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner [1797-1798]." *The Rime of Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan, Christabel, and the Conversation Poems*. London: Digireads, 2009.
- Copleston, F. C. "Early Middle Ages." *A History of Medieval Philosophy*. 57-72. London: Methuen, 1972.
- Cox, Katharine. "Imagine Dust with a Capital Letter: Interpreting the Social and Cultural Context for Philip Pullman's Transformation of Dust." In Barfield and Cox, Eds. 126-142.
- Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. London: Transworld, 2006.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology* (1967). Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Douglas, Mary. "Ritual Cleanliness." *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Rutledge, 2003.
- Duve, Karen. *Taxi*. Frankfurt: Eichborn, 2008.
- Ezard, John. "Narnia Books Attacked as Racist and Sexist." *The Guardian*. 3 June, 2002.
- Falconer, Richard. "Recasting John Milton's *Paradise Lost*: Intertextuality, Storytelling and Music." In Barfield and Cox, Eds. 11-27.
- Falcon, Andrea. "Aristotle on Causality." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition). Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/aristotle-causality/>>.
- Fitzsimmons, Rebekah. "Dialectical 'Complexifications': The Centrality of Mary Malone, Dust, and the Mulefa in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*". *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, (22:2 [81]), 2011, 212-233.
- Freitas, Donna. "Confusing God with 'Authority'". *Killing The Imposter God: Philip Pullman's Spiritual Imagination*. San Francisco: Josseybass, 2007.7-23.
- Frost, Laurie. "Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology" *The Elements of His Dark Materials: A Guide to Philip Pullman's Trilogy*. 311-25. Buffalo: The Feel Press, 2001.

- Fuller C. Robert. *Spiritual, but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Gallacher, J. Patrick. Ed. *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Michigan: 1997).
- Gamble, Nikki and Sally Yates. "Fantasy and Realism." *Exploring Children's Literature*. 117-137. London: SAGE books, 2008.
- Garrahy, Jessica. "His Controversial Materials: Philip Pullman and Religious Narrative Identity." *Literature & Aesthetics*, 19 (2) December 2009, 105-122.
- Garth, John. *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle Earth*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.
- Gotthelf, Allan. "Aristotle's Conception of Final Causality." *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology*. Ed. A. Gotthelf and J. G. Lennox. London: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Gray, William. "Pullman, Lewis, Macdonald, and the Anxiety of Influence." *Mythlore* ,25:3/4 Spring/Summer( 2007), 117-129.
- Gruner, Elisabeth Rose. "Wresting with Religion: Pullman, Pratchett, and the use of Story". *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 36:3 (2011): 276-295.
- Guenther, Nick. "Reason, Passion, Nature, Utopia, Dystopia in *Gulliver's Travels*." Paper presented at the EGSA's second annual Spring Conference. Chicago, US, 15 April, 2011.
- Habib, M.A.R. "Greek Rhetoric" *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory*. 65-79. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.
- Halsdorf, Tommy. "Walking into Mortal Sin : Lyra, the Fall and Sexuality." In Barfield and Cox, eds. 172-186.
- Hatlen, Burton. "Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, a Challenge to the Fantasies of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, with an Epilogue on Pullmans' Neo-Romantic Reading of *Paradise Lost*." In Lenz, ed. 75-91.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time* [1927]. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.
- Hitchens, Christopher. *The Portable Atheist*. Philadelphia: DaCapo, 2007.
- Hitchens, Peter. "This Is the Most Dangerous Author in Britain." *Mail on Sunday*, 27 January 2002, 63.
- Houston, Jean. *Jump Time: Shaping Your Future in a World of Radical Change*. New York: Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam, 2000.

- Hocutt, Max. "Aristotle's Four Because." *Philosophy*, 49, 1974:385-399.
- Holmes, Hannah. *The Secret Life of Dust: From the Cosmos to the Kitchen Counter, the Big Consequence of Little Things*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2001.
- Hunt, Peter. *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction*. London: Continuum, 2001.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "The Language of Fiction: Creating the Heterocosm of Fictive Referents." *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. 87-103. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1985.
- . *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. New York: Methuen, 1984.
- Jackson, Rosemary. "The Fantastic as Mode." *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. Methuen: London, 1981.
- Johnston, William and Huston Smith. Eds. *The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counseling*. New York: Image Books, 1996.
- Jiang, Rong. *Wolf Totem*. Trans. Howard Goldblatt. London: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Jobling, J'annie. "The Republic of Heaven: East, West and Eclecticism in Pullman's Religious Vision". In Barfield and Cox, eds. 154-71.
- Johnston, William. *The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counseling*. New York: Image Books, 1996. 98-101.
- Keats, John. "To Honor[1818]." *The Poems of John Keats*. Ed. Jack Stillinger. Cambridge MASS: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Lederman, Leon. *The God Practical: If the Universe Is the Answer, What Is the Question?* New York: Delta, 1994.
- Lenz, Millicent. Ed. *His Dark Materials Illuminated: Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy*. Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* [1950]. New York: Collier, 1972.
- Lewis, C.S. *A Preface To Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.
- Mackey, Margaret. "Playing in the Phase Space: Contemporary Forms of Fictional Pleasure." *Signal* 88 (1 January, 1999): 16-33.
- Mackey, Margaret. "Northern Lights and Northern Readers: Background Knowledge, Affect Linking and Literary Understanding." *His Dark Materials Illuminated: Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy*. Ed. Millicent Lenz. Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005. 57-67.
- Markman, Arthur B. "Science, Technology and the Danger of Daemons." In Yeffeth,

- ed. 61–69.
- Marr, Andrew. "Pullman does for atheism what C.S. Lewis did for God." *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 January, 2002.
- Maughan, Shannon. "Whose Dark Materials?: The Culmination of Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials Trilogy Raises Theological Questions." *Publishers Weekly* 18 December, 2000:25.
- Mendelson, Michael, "Saint Augustine", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/augustine/>>.
- Metzger A. Robert. "Philip Pullman, Research Scientist." In Yeffeth, ed. 49-61.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost* [1667]. Ed. John Leonard. London: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Moran, Dermot. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Moran, Dermot, "John Scottus Eriugena", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/scottus-eriusgena/>>.
- Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Moravcsik, J.M. "Philosophic Background of Aristotle's Aitia." *The Crossroads of Norm and Nature: Essays on Aristotle's Ethics and Metaphysics*. 237-246. Boston: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.
- Munslow, Alun. *Narrative and History: Theory and History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy* [1872]. Trans. Shaun Whiteside. London: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power* [1887] Trans. and Ed. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage, 1967.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ* [1889]. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Oziewicz, Marek and Daniel Hade. "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell? Philip Pullman, C. S. Lewis, and the Fantasy Tradition." *Mythlore: A Journal of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*, (28:3-4 [109-110]), 2010 Spring-Summer, 39-54.

- Parsons, Wendy, Catriona Nicholson and Philip Pullman. "Talking to Philip Pullman: An Interview." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 23 ,1 January 1999:116-134.
- Pullman, Philip. *The Amber Spyglass*. London: Scholastic, 2000.
- , *Northern Lights*. London: Scholastic, 1995.
- , *The Subtle Knife*. London: Scholastic, 1997.
- *The Making and Faking of Lyra's Oxford*. The Lion and the Unicorn. Baltimore: Jan 2005. Vol. 29, 6-9.
- *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*. London: Doubleday, 1995.
- *Clock Work or All Wound Up*. London: Doubleday, 1995.
- *Grim Tales for Young and Old*. London: Doubleday, 2012.
- *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*. London: Cannongate, 2011.
- Plato. *The Republic*. In *Plato: Complete Works*. Ed. Cooper M. John. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.
- Rayment-Pickard, Hugh. *The Devil's Account - Philip Pullman & Christianity*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004.
- Ricoeur, Paul. "Defilement." *Symbolism of Evil*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- Roberts, Adam. *Science Fiction: the New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Rogers, John. *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Rustin, Margaret, and Michael Rustin. "Learning to Say Goodbye: An Essay on Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass*, Volume 3 of *His Dark Materials*." *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* 29.3 (2003): 415–28.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Trans. H. Barnes. London: Methuen, 1957.
- Sample, Ian. "Interview: the man behind the 'God particle'." *New Scientist*, <<https://www.newscientist.com/article>>.
- Schabel, Christopher. "Gregory of Rimini." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition). Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/gregory-rimini/>>.
- Scott, Carole. "Pullman's Enigmatic Ontology: Revamping Old Traditions in His Dark Materials." In Lenz, ed. 95-104.
- Sedley, David, "Plato's Cratylus." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Ed. Edward N. Zalta,

- <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/plato-cratylus/>>.
- Shields, Christopher, "Aristotle." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/aristotle/>>.
- Shippey, Tom. *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. London: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.
- Stang, Nicholas F. "Kant's Transcendental Idealism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition). Ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/kant-transcendental-idealism/>>.
- Steinmetz C., David. "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis." *Theology Today*, 37.1 (1980):27-36.
- Sullivan, Heather Isle. "Dirt and Material Ecocriticism." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19.3 (Summer 2012). 515-531.
- Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Ed. Robert DeMaria, Jr. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Tappert . G. Theodore. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959
- Tate, Andrew. " Philip Pullman's Republic of Heaven." In Bradley and Tate. 56-81.
- Tennant, F.R. "The Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin in the Fathers before Augustine." *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*. 273-306. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New York: Ballantine, 1973.
- . *The Hobbit*. New York: Ballantine , 1937.
- . "On Fairy-Stories." *Tree and Leaf*. 3-84. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.
- . *The Return of the King*. New York: Ballantine, 1973.
- . *The Two Towers*. New York: Ballantine, 1973.
- Traviss, Karen. "I Gotta Get Me One of Those: Why Daemons Might Make the World a Better Place?" In Yeffeth, ed. 81-88.
- Tucker, Nicholas. *Darkness Visible: Inside the World of Philip Pullman*. Cambridge: Wizard, 2003.
- Sinnott-Armstrong, Walter. "Moral Skepticism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta,

- <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/skepticism-moral/>>.
- Vassilopoulou, Panayiota and Ganeri, Jonardon. "The Geography of Shadows: Souls and Cities in P. Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." *Philosophy and Literature*, (35:2), October 2011, 269-281.
- Wartofsky, Alona. "The Last Wood: Phillip Pullman's Trilogy for Young Adults Ends with God's Death and Remarkably Few Critics." *Washington Post*, 19 February, 2001.
- Wheat F. Leonard. "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe Retold." *Phillip Pullman's His Dark Materials: A Multiple Allegory*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2008.
- Weich, Dave. "Interviews: Philip Pullman Reaches the Garden." Powell Books Blog, <<http://www.powells.com/post/interviews>>.
- Whyte, Lancelot Law. *Essay on Atomism: From Democritus to 1960*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961.
- Williams, N.P. *The Ideas Of The Fall And Of Original Sin*. London: Longmans, 1924.
- Wu, Cheng'en . *The Journey to the West*. Trans. and Ed. Anthony C. Yu. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 2012
- Wu, Cheng'en . *The Journey to the West[1500-1582]: Chinese electronic version*, GuoXue Comity, <<http://www.hygx.org/thread-585-1-1.html>>.
- Yeffeth, Glenn. Ed. *Navigating The Golden Compass: Religion, Science & Daemonology in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*. Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005.
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Ed. Wendy B. Faris. London: Duke University Press, 1995.