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'There are fates that even the most powerful have to submit to.'

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The Concepts of Free Will and Determinism in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*

Source: http://www.philip-pullman.com/images/media/hdm-covers.jpg

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I. Introduction

> 'We are all subjects to the fates. But we must all act as if we are not', said the witch, 'or die of despair. There is a curious prophecy about this child: she is destined to bring about the end of destiny. But she must do so without knowing what she is doing, as if it were her nature and not her destiny to do it. If she's told what she must do, it will all fail; death will sweep through all the worlds; it will be the triumph of despair, forever. The universes will all become nothing more than interlocking machines, blind and empty of thought, feeling, life…'
>
> Serafina Pekkala to Lee Scoresby in *Northern Lights* (255)

This quote by Serafina Pekkala, a character in Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*, touches upon the two highly significant, yet also immensely contrastive notions of destiny and free will, which are central to the trilogy. The novels' plot revolves around a prophecy which must be fulfilled in order to guarantee the future of life itself. Even though this prophecy must be fulfilled unknowingly and thus voluntarily, the concept of determinism is highly prominent in the trilogy. At the same time, however, several characters seem to clearly advocate free will as a counterforce to the belief in determinism and fate. Thus, a stark contrast is created between the two opposing concepts, which is seemingly resolved in the creation of a Republic of Heaven towards the end of the trilogy, in which free will and personal choice will reign to overcome the belief in destiny and divinely constructed plans.

Based on his outspoken criticism of organised religion, Philip Pullman is often described as an atheist author who goes against the idea of pre-determinism based on religious structures and the plan of an almighty maker. To those who praise the trilogy for its religious criticism, the novels seem to support the idea that a person's life should depend entirely on conscious decisions instead of on numbing fates a person must succumb to. Arthur Bradley, a highly acclaimed professor of Comparative Literature at Lancaster University, foregrounds Pullman's praise of 'a rebellious contempt for self-ordained authority' (66) which shifts the power from an almighty spiritual entity to the human being. However, the firm belief in prophecies remains throughout the trilogy and hovers over the actual plotline, in which free will and personal choice are advocated. As a result, the perception of the trilogy as a

rebellious act of personal authority cannot be thoroughly upheld.

This thesis is therefore intended to shed light on the concepts of determinism and free will in Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*. It argues that the proclaimed notion of free will in *His Dark Materials* can only work in a harmonious unity with determinism. Free will serves as an idealistic concept in the trilogy, but can never be thoroughly achieved by the characters. Even though some characters may feel as though they can make their own choices irrespective of their destiny, it is constantly clarified throughout the trilogy that a larger principle based on determinism and fate guides the events in the novels. However, this idea of determinism is not based on the plan of a divine maker, but rather rooted in the concept of biological determinism. This term will be clarified in detail throughout this paper but can be summarised as the belief that human behaviour is. determined by their genes and biological attributes, instead of being determined by free will and rational choice. With regard to his critical perception as an author of the New Atheist Movement, this thesis argues furthermore, that Philip Pullman must properly be termed a pantheist instead of an atheist. His trilogy places an immense value on nature and praises a close connection to one's natural surroundings. According to the trilogy, the innate human longing for unity can be overcome by means of love in the value and protection of nature. As a result, all beings can only find their true purpose when living in connection with nature and in accordance with their biologically determined habitat. Much like religion, a firm, loving belief in natural divinity to find one's true calling gives meaning to the characters' lives. Thus, religion is not clearly denounced in the trilogy, but rather transformed into a pantheistic belief based on interconnectedness with nature, which can only be achieved via love.

In order to thoroughly explore the contrasting notions of destiny and free will, as well as the concepts of biological determinism and pantheism in the trilogy, this paper is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with prominent themes and structural devices in Western Young Adult Fiction and defines the concepts of determinism and free will for further analysis. The second chapter then moves to the trilogy *His Dark Materials* itself by providing both a synopsis of the plot and central conflicts, as well as a brief overview of critical responses to the trilogy. The third and longest chapter then deals with different facets of free will and determinism in *His*

Dark Materials. Areas of investigation range from Western literary traditions, notions of intertextuality, the nature of storytelling, prominent adaptations of the concept of trinity throughout the novels and the unique nature of daemons to Pullman's complex reworking of institutionalised religion. Last but definitely not least, the broad range of religious substitutes in *His Dark Materials* is examined to lay bare how the author employs different concepts, ideas and entities to replace institutionalised religion at large. Especially in this chapter, the fusion of free will and determinism as seemingly contrastive notions will be of central concern. Afterwards, a summary of all findings will be provided in the fifth chapter, which leads to the final conclusion in the sixth chapter concerning Pullman's overall message for his readers, as well as his take on determinism and free wil. Revolving around the beliefs in biological determinism and pantheism, Pullman ultimately seems to have created quite a new religion in his trilogy. This religion emphasizes resurrection as a means of reuniting with nature, stresses the human longing for unity via love, celebrates the material as well as the spiritual, and – despite acknowledging that biological determinism does exist – favours an active striving for free will in a democratic society.

This paper is thus intended to shed light on the ongoing debate surrounding Philip Pullman and his controversial approach to the concepts which shape human existence, such as religion, love, free choice, determinism and life after death. Especially in light of the upcoming BBC version of *His Dark Materials*, the Pullmanian debate will most certainly be revisited. On the one hand, this paper may then serve to counter the arguments of Christians by laying bare how Pullman actually follows in their tradition of storytelling and highly acknowledges the contributions of the story of the Fall. On the other hand, anti-Christians and realists will also be reassured as it is shown how much Pullman is concerned with taking action and living in the here-and-now. While the idea of determinism is appreciated, the trilogy still stresses the importance of free choice. Lastly, the active approach to life is also closely connected to pressing issues in our world, such as global warming and mankind's continuous destruction of nature for the sake of technology's advancement. Taking this into account, even activists will find their voices in *His Dark Materials*, which then enables the trilogy to be singled out among other science

fiction and fantasy novels as a primary example of fusing a multitude of both traditional and innovative concepts to shape the readers' understanding of our purpose in life.

II. The Concept of Determinism in Young Adult Fantasy Novels

i. Definition of Central Concepts

Sparked by the immense commercial success of the *Harry Potter* novels by British author Joanne K. Rowling, the genre of Young Adult Fantasy experienced a great revival throughout the past two decades. A large number of other novels profited from *Harry Potter's* popularity and thus achieved a vast base of dedicated readers. Volumes such as *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin, *Percy Jackson* by Rick Riordan, *Un Lun Dun* by China Miéville or even the *Night Watch* volumes by Russian author Sergej Lukyanenko, among others, gained great recognition and played their part in contributing to the continuous success of the fantasy genre in Young Adult Fiction. Under close examination it becomes apparent, that many of these highly successful novels share certain characteristics, motifs and themes besides their ascription to the same genre.

Among those characteristics, one of the most prominent features is the idea of determinism based on ancient prophecies as well as the belief in a Chosen One. Determinism is described by Carl Hoefer in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* as "the idea that every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of nature", and stems from the common philosophical idea that everything can be explained and has a precise reason for being as it is (2016). In a looser understanding of the term, determinism is also closely connected to the ideas of destiny and fate. In many cases, determinism is even related to Theological Fatalism, which entails that "infallible foreknowledge of a human act makes the act necessary and hence unfree" (Hoefer 2011). In other words, if there is one conscious being who knows everything that will happen in the future, all other beings lose control of the future. Regarding free will as a core element of human nature, a dilemma is created between the belief of theological fatalists in a deity who knows the future and the capability of conscious beings to choose their own course of life.

According to Hoefer, the only way to maintain a belief in free will is thus a constant denial of determinism, destiny and fatalism (cf. ibid.). The debate surrounding determinism thereby shows that it is concerned with our status as free agents in the world and actually questions the existence of free will and choice (cf. Hoefer 2016). As a contrastive notion to determinism and destiny, free will is defined by Hoefer as the "capacity of rational agents to choose a course of action from among various alternatives" (ibid. 2010). Not only does free will then include the idea that conscious beings are capable of determining the course of their lives by themselves, but it also entails a responsibility for one's own actions and provides autonomy, as well as dignity.

Moving back to the idea of determinism in Young Adult Fantasy Literature, it seems to be the case that the reader is confronted with an abundance of novels and volumes in this specific genre which all include different versions of prophecies, characters who seem to be able to foretell the future, or the belief in a Chosen One who will possibly save the world. In addition to the aforementioned and relatively new volumes which all represent different adaptations of deterministic views, older volumes of the High Fantasy genre also revolve around prophecies and fatalist worldviews. However, volumes such as *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien or *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis mostly represent a world which is based on ancient forecasts and includes conscious beings who seem to be set above the plotline as indicators of higher powers (e.g. the Elves in *LotR*).

In the following paragraphs, the use of textual elements such as prophecies and forecasts will be explained in relation to the genre of Young Adult Fantasy. As it is rather difficult to define the term "Young Adult", the category of Young Adult Fiction needs further explanation. The term 'Young Adult' was first used by the Young Adult Library Services Association in the 1960s and referred to the age group between twelve and eighteen years. Even though the genre of Young Adult Literature reached its first peak during the 1970s, with books concerning the dramatic experience of being constantly misunderstood as a teenager, the genre experienced an even more dramatic boom during the early 2000s (cf. Strickland). During this time period, "the book world began marketing directly to teens for the first time" and invited teenagers "to discover their very own genre" (ibid.). Especially the *Harry*

Potter novels by Joanne K. Rowling contributed to the vast distribution of the genre and inspired numerous other series in both fantasy and general fiction. As teenagers are often struggling to find their own place in the world and feel torn between the worlds of childhood and adulthood, it is not surprising that Young Adult readers are highly interested in novels of fantasy and science-fiction. In many cases of fantastic literature, protagonists are also torn between two conflicting worlds and must grow to navigate them autonomously. In addition, Young Adult literature is nearly always concerned with transformation and connects readers to the stories via emotion (cf. ibid.). This emotive connection to a story can only be evoked when authors write about issues which concern teenagers. Therefore, "young adult novelists don't shy away from tackling the deepest and darkest issues that teens face" (ibid.), such as diffusion of identity, abuse, depression, or suicide. Since Young Adult literature tackles the idea of personal development and thus provides the opportunity for growth, the genre itself is constantly changing as well to explore different subjects and present ever new worlds to the reader.

Last but not least, it is also highly important to note that Young Adult literature is not only read by the intended age group, but ever so often consumed by adults. Strickland points out that in 2012, 55 per cent of Young Adult literature was purchased by adults between 18 and 44 years old (ibid.). As a result, not only is the genre in itself very diverse, but also includes far more readers from other age groups as could be assumed by its ascribed label. Jack Zipes, a retired professor of German at the University of Minnesota and well-known lecturer on the subject of fairy tales, even goes so far as to say that children's literature as such does not exist. He states that "literature intended for young readers is always written for the author him or herself and for editors. […] Most children's literature is read most of all by adults, especially by librarians, teachers, and mothers" (207), which furthers the problematic description of literary genres intended for younger readers. Nonetheless, Young Adult literature must be defined to narrow down the range of texts for which the following passages concerning themes and motifs hold true. Based on Strickland's categorization, Young Adult literature will therefore be defined here as literature intended for twelve to eighteen year-old readers, which is largely concerned with

younger protagonists who try to make sense of the world surrounding them and experience personal growth throughout the development of the story.

b. Key Characteristics of Young Adult Literature

In her work on *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (2010), Maria Nikolajeva describes several key characteristics of children's literature which can be expanded to Young Adult literature as it is also subsumed under the term 'Literature for young readers'. According to Nikolajeva, the first important premise of literature for young readers is the removal of parents, as

> the absence of parental authority allows the space that the fictive child needs for development and maturity, in order to test (and taste) his independence and to discover the world without adult protection. (16)

However, adult figures are necessary to enable the young protagonist's rebellion against them as a means of developing character and growing up. To ensure parental supervision, substitutes are introduced to "provide security, but also [to] maintain the rules that the adult world has set up" (ibid.). Presenting an orphaned protagonist necessarily means that the search for identity becomes even more difficult, as it is heightened due to his aloneness in the world. In order ensure that that the protagonists in texts for young readers are able to develop and transform their identity, "the overwhelming majority of fantasy novels feature ordinary children temporarily empowered through a magic agent" (ibid.). Even though the child is thus presented with a newfound power to overcome the difficulties it faces, the protagonist is still not in full control. As in most fantasy novels, the protagonist is usually part of a prophecy and presented as "the chosen one, the coming messiah" (ibid. 18). Popular versions of this prophetic frame of fantasy novels can be found in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis or the *Harry Potter* novels by J.K. Rowling. A young character who is introduced as the Chosen One often resembles the idea of romantic heroes, as they possess admirable qualities such as kindness, justness and loyalty, and can be connected to the idealisation of childhood in the Romantic era, during which children were believed to be innocent and thereby apt to defeat evil (cf. ibid. 18). Equipped with such admirable character traits, protagonists can then serve as role models for the readers, which may spark their

own character development.

Another important characteristic of literature for young readers presented by Nikolajeva is the idea of adventure in connection with chance: "the hero happens to overhear a complot or get important intelligence" (ibid. 19), which empowers him even further. Thus equipped, the hero can embark on his wondrous journey into unknown worlds and utilize his empowerment as a means of developing character by overcoming difficulties and passing several tests. These experiences will then shape the protagonist's personality. By describing the somewhat typical development of many heroes in fantastic or romantic literature, it becomes apparent that these stories not only follow the "master pattern of myth and folktale: home-away-home" (ibid. 20) but also represent adapted versions of initiation rites. The topic of initiation rites will be elaborated on more thoroughly in the following chapters of this thesis. At this point, it is most important to note that initiation rites consist of three stages: removal, transition, and return. Nikolajeva points out, that the return to the initial order is also an important device of romantic fiction (cf. 19). Applying this to the idea that even though the young protagonist is momentarily empowered, possibly through a magical device, the device of reestablishing the initial order would mean that adults and authorities will ultimately regain their power towards the end of a story. This line of thought is confirmed by the author, as she states that this plot structure is precisely the secret behind the success of literature for young readers. Those novels seem to solve the dilemma of "both empower[ing] the child and […] protect[ing] him from the dangers of adulthood, that is, to try, against common sense, to hold the child within the innocence of childhood" (ibid. 20) which will then reassure the adult's power. In a way, the underlying plotline is therefore already established before the initial story even begins. It may be justified to term this pre-determined structure monotonous, but at the same time it provides a sense of security to the reader. Applying this structure to a three-volume series of novels, the possibly inexperienced reader is then assured that his main protagonist will most likely survive until the end. This gives him the opportunity to fully engage in the plotline and develop his reading skills more thoroughly than if he were under constant fear of losing his beloved character in the story (cf. ibid. 21).

What is important to note in Nikolajeva's implementations is the idea of

childhood innocence in contrast with the world of adults. By using the term 'carnival', Nikolajeva describes the young hero's reversal of the existing order in the course of which he is elevated to the same level as or even a higher level than adults (cf. 22). On the one hand, this elevation may cause unrest among adults, since they are meant to encourage the growth of the child, while at the same time fearing to lose power over the child and thus threatening their own superior position. The idea of a highly powerful child can be traced back to the Romantic image of childhood as a time of pure innocence. Not until the acknowledgement of childhood as a distinctive and separate phase in life could literature for children actually emerge. The period of Romanticism was especially beneficial to the development of fantastic literature for young readers, because of its interest in folklore and fairy tales and its idea of the child as untouched by civilization (cf. ibid. 42). Due to the fact that the child was perceived as still unharmed by the cruelties and evilness of the increasingly industrialised and capitalised society, it was thought to have an imaginative capability which exceeded those of adults who were already touched by the wrongs of society. Taking these lines of thought into account, it is hardly surprising why the origin of fantastic literature for young readers lies in the period of Romanticism and still follows Romantic traditions.

As mentioned before, many fantasy novels include prophecies about a Chosen One, meaning a child who will save the world from all evil. Remaining true to the idea of carnival in a children's story, the Chosen One is then often brought down again from their elevated position, while having at the same time undergone major changes with regard to personality development and maturation. Thus, the concept of determinism in connection with prophecies seems to be highly influential in fantasy novels for young readers, as it sparks the initiation process necessary for personal growth. This is precisely where many adult advocates of literature for young readers see its value: the employment of literature as a "socialisation vehicle" (ibid.). Even though young readers are transported into other worlds and socialise with characters who do not exist in our world, they are still forced to quarrel with different problems and questions concerning life in general, and also the psychological development of people. By choosing a setting different from our own world, writers of literature for young readers can deal with these questions from a certain distance, which has

proven to be more effective for young readers than tackling these issues straightforwardly in an utterly realistic setting. As a result, fantasy literature becomes a "subversive power" (ibid.) via its ability to ask fundamental questions about life and most importantly about power relationships between children and adults.

Last but not least, Nikolajeva also sheds light onto the dominant narrative structures in literature for young readers. She states that the narrator can be compared to the narrators in fairy tales. These narrators are omniscient and easily shift between characters (cf. 64). As the narrator is aware of all plotlines, he is also rendered omnipresent and almost assumes the strong presence of a character in the eyes of the reader. However, the narrators do not necessarily represent narrative voices the reader can identify with. Instead of choosing first person narratives from the perspective of the child hero, these stories are told from an omniscient perspective and ultimately written by adult writers. By granting the narrator this much control over the story and the tone in which it is told, a strong notion of subjectivity is created. The reader cannot help but take over the position of the narrator if he is to follow and ultimately enjoy the reading experience. On a meta-level, the "implied author [then] exercises power over the reader" (ibid. 204) by presenting his recollection of events as true while at the same time closing the storyline to recollections differing from his side of the story.

The results are unbalanced power relations between protagonist, narrator and author or, as Nikolajeva phrases it, simply between "adult-child, or the more intricate and psychologically complex: experience-innocence" (ibid. 62). This juxtaposition of experience and innocence in relation to adults and children is of the utmost importance in the analysis of literature for young readers. In voicing this opposition, Nikolajeva hints at the prevailing idea that children and adults are essentially different; this in turn gives rise to questions of power in connection with the issues of determinism and free will. The central question to be asked in the analysis of literature for young readers can then be phrased as follows: How can free will be exercised by young protagonists to develop into autonomous beings when the plotlines are already written out in ancient prophecies and ultimately reestablish the superiority of adults? This question provides a fruitful basis for the analysis of one specific work of literature for young readers which will be examined in the following

chapters. Especially the concepts of free will and determinism in connection with prominent themes and stylistic devices will be explored to determine whether this work of literature follows the same course as the majority of literature for young readers, or actually manages to promote free will as a counterforce to determinism and the ultimate superiority of authority.

III. His Dark Materials

1. Synopsis

The specific work of literature to be analysed in this paper is Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*. The novels are entitled *Northern Lights*, *The Subtle Knife*, and *The Amber Spyglass*, were published between 1995 and 2000 and can be ascribed to the literary genre of Young Adult Science-Fantasy. Elements of science-fiction and fantasy are artfully fused in the volumes to provide the reader with a unique reading experience. While some critics may argue that Pullman profited immensely from the popularity of Joanne K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, it is undeniable that *His Dark Materials* can now be considered one of the most famous Young Adult novels in Britain (cf. Garrahy 106).

The trilogy follows the twelve year-old orphan Lyra Belacqua and her adventures into fantastic worlds in her quest to defeat the Church's oppressive authority as a means of reestablishing power balance in the universe. Metaphorically structured by the multiple worlds theory of quantum physics (cf. Walsh 242), the trilogy's events are inspired by a mysterious substance referred to as Dust. This substance seems to be vanishing from all worlds at a rapid pace and must be stopped to guarantee the continuous existence of human life itself. According to an ancient prophecy, Lyra is the chosen child to save the worlds from the Authority's oppressive clutches. However, she must not be aware of this prophecy, as she must follow her quest unknowingly.

The title of the trilogy stems from a passage in the second book of John Milton's famous epic poem *Paradise Lost* in which the state after God's creation of the world is described. Chaotically floating in the wild abyss, the elements or materials used to create the world are waiting for the almighty maker to create

further worlds. In addition to this reference to the biblical creation of the world, the trilogy is strongly inspired by biblical themes; most importantly by the Fall. Fundamental themes connected with the Fall from grace are explored in the trilogy, such as "initiation and the passage from innocence to experience, the nature of good and evil, the consequences of knowledge, and the notion of free will or individual responsibility" (Bird 112). Instead of following the Christian tradition of perceiving the Fall as Original Sin, Pullman reevaluates the story and in fact presents it as the beginning of human consciousness. He favours the destruction of the Church's dominance and "justifies Satan's rebellion and Eve's actions while 'redeeming' sexuality and the emancipator passage from innocence to experience" (Butler et al. 7). Throughout his trilogy, Pullman thus establishes an alternative reading of the story of the Fall, in which Eve is seen as the igniting flame to human development. In order to guarantee the persistence of the multiple worlds in his universe, the aforementioned prophecy concerning the chosen child Lyra states that she is the second Eve and must be free to fall again. Only in Eve's second fall can the leaking of the mysterious Dust from their universe be stopped, which will then ensure the continuity of human existence.

2. Criticism

Philip Pullman's "alternative ideology and censure of the Judeo-Christian tradition" (Garrahy 109) was harshly criticised by many reviewers who perceive his inverted message of the biblical story as dangerous, especially to young and impressionable readers. Mark Ryan was among those who were most critical towards the trilogy. In his essay "Killing God: The Propaganda of His Dark Materials", Pullman's literary work is termed "antireligious propaganda" (Ryan 1) because of the trilogy's constant accusations towards the Catholic Church and Christianity at large. Ryan does not acknowledge Pullman's argumentation and refers to his criticism of the church as "tiresome tirades" (ibid.) which ignore essential parts of Christianity's history. Instead of acknowledging the immense accomplishments of the Catholic Church, such as having laid the groundwork for democracy and abolition, as well as granting women a new status in society as autonomous objects, Ryan criticises that Pullman simply chose to focus solely on the negative events throughout the history of the

Catholic Church (cf. ibid. 4). While Pullman himself criticises C.S. Lewis for utilizing his literary work as a vehicle to spread his Christian belief, Pullman is accused by Christians of doing the very same thing with regard to spreading anti-Christian sentiments in his novels. Referring to Pullman's message as "antireligious propaganda" (5), Ryan points out that His Dark Materials is not suitable for younger impressionable children due to its "violent hatred of God" (ibid.), which ranges from the intention to kill him off to the denial of His existence. As a result, metanarratives, and especially the basis of Christian belief are questioned, which may cause great disturbance among his young audience. Pullman promotes love as a means of connecting people and inspiring human growth, but illustrates how the Church in the name of the Authority pictures love as an extremely harmful concept which can throw off the established balance. To counter this accusation against Christianity, Ryan points out how Christianity actually rests on the idea of love. The need to experience love is

> "nowhere […] fully met except in Jesus Christ, who, literally, lived and died for us, has bodily gone to the abode of the dead and come back for us, and lives in and through us so that we […] can live with Him and those we love forever (ibid. 6).

In a pamphlet by the Catholic League in the United States of America, the trilogy is described as an attempt at a direct indoctrination of impressionable children. Pullman is depicted as an author whose goal it is "to seduce [children] into embracing atheism and rejecting Christianity" (CL 1). Their criticism stands in line with Ryan, as they voice concern with regard to the prominent atheistic virtues in Pullman's work. Christianity on the other hand, is seen as connected to evilness and "in each successive volume the hostility becomes more palpable" (ibid.). Not only do the members of the Catholic League criticise the trilogy for its outspokenness on the virtues of atheism and the cruelties of the Catholic Church, but they also accuse Pullman of attempting to crush childhood innocence (cf. ibid. 4). According to the Catholic League, this denial of the children's ultimate kindness and innocence by depicting several child characters as experienced and sometimes even cruel, is a direct attack against the nature of children in the name of atheism. To their mind, New Atheism is little more than a "dogmatic plundering of religion, especially

Christianity, done in the name of tolerance" (ibid. 20).

It can be argued that this harsh criticism influenced the public image of both work and author to a large extent. As the film adaptation of the first novel *Northern Lights* was to be produced and filmed in the United States of America, great concern was expressed due to the prominent criticism of Christianity and the alleged support of atheism. Even though going into detail on this discourse would be far too time and space consuming for the present paper, it must be noted that the producers recoiled from including direct references to the Catholic Church in their movie and altogether toned down the novel's proclaimed atheist message. Still, the Catholic League and other critics thought the film to be awfully misleading concerning the teachings of the Catholic Church and even called for a boycott of the film. To this day, the remaining two volumes have yet to be adapted for the big screen, and it is hardly difficult to understand why both directors and producers seem to shy away from navigating the controversial discourse and creating a film which satisfies all parties involved.

IV. Facets of Determinism and Free Will in *His Dark Materials*

The following subchapters will provide a closer look at different facets of determinism and free will in Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*. These facets are grouped into several categories in order to structure the investigative process and present a more thorough insight into the reworking of such fundamental topics of human life as the beliefs in determinism, fate, choice and free will.

1. Western Literary Traditions

a. Orphanage

The first category to be dealt with in this part of the paper is termed 'Western Literary Traditions' and intends to examine weather Pullman follows said traditions, and if so, what their effects are on both the reader and with regard to the ideas of free will and determinism. As it was stated by Nikolajeva in the first chapter of this thesis, the removal of parents and the consequential orphanage of the protagonist is a vital ingredient of Young Adult Literature, as it allows for the protagonist's development

and a questioning of the established system. However, many literary works introduce parental substitutes to guarantee the safety of the protagonists or the preservation of adult supremacy. In Pullman's trilogy, the removal of parents and the motif of orphanage are of a central concern. Both Lyra and Will, the trilogy's protagonists, are, in a way, orphaned. When the reader is introduced to Lyra Belacqua, she is described as a little girl in the care of the great Scholars of Jordan's college, who were "all she had for a family" (NL 21). Even though they provide for her and make sure to teach her about a broad range of topics, she does not feel as though she was part of their family. Apparently, "the Scholars had more important things to do than attend to the affections of a half-wild, half-civilized girl" (NL 22). As a result, Lyra does not have a sense of belonging with regard to the elderly Scholars, but feels more closely connected to the College servants, who "might even have felt like a family, if she knew what a family was" (NL 21). Due to the fact that Lyra has never had a mother or father in her life, she does not know the concept of 'family' too well, and is thus, beside the superficial care of the Scholars, alone in the world.

Even when it is finally revealed who her real parents are, and that they are, in fact, alive and well, her status as an orphan does not change. John Faa informs her, that her parents did not die in an airship accident, but that she was put in the Scholars' care because her father was poor and powerless, and her mother wanted nothing to do with her. In this scene, it is revealed that Lord Asriel, formerly known as Lyra's awe-inspiring expeditor uncle, and Mrs. Coulter, head of the Oblation Board which experiments on children by attempting to remove their daemons, are actually Lyra's parents (cf. NL 106f.). Given the fact that Lyra has just managed to flee from Mrs. Coulter after having learned the truth about her occupation, a peaceful reunion with her mother is out of the question. Even the thought of her metallic smell and her sadistic daemon (cf. NL 76ff.) install fear in Lyra and after she managed to run away from her mother, there is nothing she wants more than to stop her horrific experiments in the North. Lord Asriel on the other hand could be considered a more valuable candidate to resume the role of Lyra's parent, as he did not directly chose to abandon her, but was left poor and overruled by the court. Instead of following the court's ruling, he carried Lyra off to Jordan college and at least visited frequently, all the while pursuing his own interests as an explorer. In addition, his behaviour

towards his daughter can be described as indifferent and sometimes even hostile, as he threatens to kill her and underlines how she would be on her own, should she threaten the success of his request for funds at Jordan College (cf. NL 18f.). He installs great fear in her and while she admires his exotic expeditions and his ability to completely silence a room by his presence, there is no true relationship between them. It can be argued that Lord Asriel wanted to clear his conscience by providing Lyra with the care of Jordan's Scholars, just so that he can pursue his own research interests.

Will Parry, the second main protagonist in the trilogy, is not introduced until the second volume *The Subtle Knife*. In a way, he shares Lyra's fate, as he can also be considered an orphan. Despite his mother's physical presence and the lack of proof for his father's death, Will is also very much alone in the world. The narrator informs the reader that "Will had first realise d his mother was different from other people, and that he had to look after her, when he was seven" (SK 336). Due to a mental illness, his mother is unable to autonomously live her life and is therefore under constant care of Will. As a result, the roles of adult and child are reversed in their relationship, which has caused Will to grow up before his time. Not only does he need to care for his mother, he also has to hide her mental illness from the authorities who would otherwise take his mother away (cf. SK 339). Unlike other kids, he is not spending his days playing games and meeting friends; instead he leaves his childhood behind and puts his whole energy into his mother's protection. The thought which urges him to believe in a better future is his mother's prediction of his destiny. She is sure that one day, Will will follow in his father's footsteps as a great man who changes the world (cf. SK 338). This destiny gives Will's life a purpose and nourishes his dreams of reuniting with his father who has gone lost during an expedition many years ago.

Comparing the two main protagonists, it is obvious that they are both orphaned to a certain extent. Both their parents are unavailable to them, be it either mentally, physically, or emotionally, which enables them as protagonists to develop without immediate adult supervision. Will however is forced to assume the role of the adult in the relationship to his mother, since she is unable to look after herself. Unlike Lyra, who can live out her childhood largely unsupervised at Jordan College,

Will is constantly afraid that the authorities may catch hold of his mother and send her away. As Lyra thoroughly engages in childish plays, depicts the grand college as her playground and frequently lies to enhance her reputation among other kids (cf. NL 35 f.), she would fit Nikolajeva's description of a child protagonist who can experience the world without parental supervision quite well. However, both protagonists share a feeling of being alone in the world and are thus destined to develop their own distinct personality by being presented with various difficulties. In addition to parental substitutes, which are introduced in the novels and will be discussed in the following chapters, the two young protagonists are also momentarily empowered by magical devices to overcome said difficulties. Lyra is given the alethiometer, "a truth-telling symbol-reader that looks like a golden compass" (Lenz 143), by the Master of Jordan College, whereas Will emerges as the rightful bearer of the Subtle Knife, which can be used to cut windows into other worlds. These magical objects enable them to overcome difficulties without parental protection in a plot which is shaped by the "loss of one's accustomed world, one's familiar environs, governed by reliable, unswerving natural laws and protective adults: all is in flux, and to borrow Yeats' phrase, the center cannot hold" (Lenz 142). Equipped with the alethiometer and the knife, Lyra and Will are momentarily empowered and by uniting their forces in the fight against authority, they can overcome their fears of loneliness. Another aspect that is closely connected to the motif of orphanage is the "frequent disobedience of various authorities" as "a major driving force behind the narrative" (Bokne 10). Only in the questioning of adult authorities can young people negotiate their personality and place in the world, which is shown in various instances throughout the trilogy. To give examples, Lyra notices that adults rarely have to give reasons for their behaviour (cf. NL 58), use their superiority to silence children (cf. NL 77), or force children to defy the law (cf. SK 339), which leads her to use her rhetoric skills to maneuver confrontations with authoritarian characters (cf. NL 281). This defiance of adult authorities usually produces desirable outcomes for the protagonists which teaches them to believe in themselves and their own abilities, rather than depending on experienced adults (cf. Bokne 10).

It must be noted, however, that Lyra and Will are not thoroughly alone in their worlds and cannot, ultimately, be considered true orphans. Throughout the

course of the trilogy, at least Mrs. Coulter develops some parental feelings for Lyra (cf. AS 712, 758), and in their mutual sacrifice to kill the Lord Regent Metatron, she and Lord Asriel ultimately protect Lyra and allow her to fully grow up. Will on the other hand never stops thinking of his parents, which serves as a driving force behind his mission (cf. SK 575), but also largely complicates the process of cutting windows to other worlds (cf. AS 753). Only in the brief reunion with his father does he literally take on his mantle and accept his fate as the bearer of the Subtle Knife (cf. SK 585ff.). His father unambiguously explains to Will that it is his destiny to fight in the battle between good and evil as the knife's bearer. Even though Will initially perceives this truth as "heavy and painful" (ibid.), he ultimately accepts his fate and pledges allegiance to his dead father. This event indicates that adult authority does not always have to be questioned and fought against to develop character and find one's place in the world.

b. The Chosen One

The concept of the Chosen One is also highly prominent in the trilogy. As Nikolajeva points out, in most fantasy works, the protagonist is part of a prophecy and plays a major role in shaping the future of the narrative world (cf. 2010, 18). Will's destiny as the knife-bearer has already been hinted at, but Lyra's course of life is also shaped by a prophecy concerning her role as Eve in a second Fall from grace. At the beginning of the *Northern Lights*, a prophecy surrounding Lyra is already hinted at: The Master of Jordan College and the Librarian discuss the future of their world and give away that Lyra has a major part to play in saving said future. However, there are two complications: First, she must follow the path that has been laid out for her unknowingly, and second, she must commit a great betrayal with unforeseeable consequences (cf. NL 32f.). The prophecy is clarified further in the course of the trilogy, as the witch Serafina Pekkala points out that Lyra is "destined to bring about the end of destiny" (NL 255). This seemingly paradoxical expression actually proves to be indicatory for the entire point of the trilogy, as it touches upon the most fundamental questions of human nature; first and foremost the negotiation of free will versus destiny and determinism. As it turns out, Lyra is not just any chosen child who is destined to save the world, but actually an updated embodiment of Eve, who

will cause a second Fall from grace by yielding to a mysterious temptation (cf. AS 652). It is neither certain how, when, or where this mysterious temptation will unveil itself, nor is it clear how it can be ensured that Lyra follows the path of her destiny without actively doing so. As a matter of fact, despite being aware of said prophecy, other characters in the trilogy can do little more than to ensure Lyra's safety and enable her to make free choices according to her own will.

c. Parental substitutes

In order to ensure that the 'Chosen Two' follow their destined path and save the future of their multiverse despite their relative aloneness as quasi orphans, Pullman includes several characters in his trilogy who function as parental substitutes. By doing this, the author also communicates a "firm and convincing statement about tolerance and alliance" (Kevdeš 15), as he includes those figures as parental substitutes who live at the margins of society and put their personal needs aside for the greater good. In addition to that, parental substitutes are also employed to negotiate the seemingly contrastive notions of free will and determinism. Therefore it can be argued that they also function as moral compasses for the two protagonists in their development from innocent childhood to experienced adulthood. Among the most prominent characters who function as parental substitutes in the trilogy are the Texan balloonist Lee Scoresby, the witch queen Serafina Pekkala and Ma Costa with the Gyptians.

However, it can be argued that these characters mostly function as parental substitutes for Lyra and not so much for Will, as he was forced to grow up prematurely because of his mother's mental illness. Will could then be seen as a parental substitute for Lyra, based on his superior moral development and rational outlook on the world. His behaviour inspires Lyra to change her attitude and it seems as though she unknowingly aspires to be his equal. When Lyra and Will meet at the beginning of *The Subtle Knife*, Will is presented as a much more experienced child who acts as a teacher to Lyra (cf. 347ff.). He teaches her how to provide for herself in the town of Cittàgazze and insists that they "treat this place right" (SK 351) by washing the dishes and paying for food and clothing. His behaviour is entirely new to her, but as early as the next day, Lyra already aspires to become his equal by

imitating his cooking and following his orders (cf. SK 375ff.). Throughout the course of the trilogy, Lyra comes to admire his experience and truly respects him as a person. This respect can be seen in her new found honesty with which she treats Will (cf. SK 508), as it clearly counters her usual attraction to lying and storytelling. Last but not least, Will is very keen on being an autonomous human being who can choose his own path, instead of succumbing to fate and becoming an externally controlled, passive human shell. This character trait is expressed most prominently towards the end of the third novel, as Will refuses to have his destined path revealed to him (cf. AS 998). Even though he knows that his life may be pre-destined, he chooses to actively take part in the shaping of his future. It could be argued that this conscious decision inspires Lyra to ultimately assume an active role in the creation of the Republic of Heaven as well. While Lyra experiences personal growth through Will's adult-like sobriety and strong morality, Will is also inspired by Lyra's prominent character traits. He comes to admire her gift of storytelling (cf. SK 411) and her innocent sympathy provides emotional support in his darkest hours (cf. SK 476). Moreover, she teaches him how to make use of negative capability while working the Subtle Knife (cf. SK 479) and thus helps him to accept his destiny.

Of the aforementioned characters, the Texan balloonist Lee Scoresby is indisputably the one who most outspokenly assumes the role of Lyra's parental substitute. Conversing with the witch queen Ruta Skadi, Lee admits that even though he has no children himself, he would have always liked to be a father. Inspired by his great love and concern for Lyra, who he perceives as being basically parentless, he offers himself as a father substitute for Lyra to the witch queen (cf. SK 371). In order to ensure the smooth unfolding of Lyra's destiny, Lee takes up the difficult task of finding the shaman Grumman (also known as John Parry, Will's father) and seeking the bearer of the Subtle Knife together with him. Even though he expresses concern with regard to this dangerous undertaking, the balloonist is ready to do anything that may help Lyra, as he could not have asked for a better daughter substitute himself (cf. SK 502). He feels glad to be given a purpose because of his and Lyra's connection and is both ready to take lives and give his own for Lyra's success (cf. SK 570). Even after his death, the Texan is still keen on guiding Lyra and inspiring her to take action, despite her momentary entrapment in the land of the dead. Together with

Will's father, the two men ensure that Lyra survives the detonation of the bomb and are ultimately responsible for her continuous, yet unconscious pursuit of her destined path (cf. AS 881f.).

Despite Lee's constant emphasis on free will and conscious choices, it becomes apparent throughout the trilogy, that he is in fact aware of the power of destiny and determinism. In the first novel *Northern Lights*, he is engaged in a lively dispute with Serafina Pekkala about the power of determinism and free will. Here, he clearly advocates the importance of free choice, be it in matters of warfare or employment. He defends his employment as a balloonist and describes it as a conscious choice, instead of a submission to biological determinism (NL 254f.). The reader could then assume that his defense of free will and choice inspires both Lyra and Will to go against boundaries set by adults and to stand up to them in order to defend their own opinions and choices. However, Lee's defense of free will crumbles under close examination, as he admits that being a balloonist was only partly a conscious choice. To him, there is nothing better in life than "soaring upwards, with a fair wind behind and a new world in front" (SK 506) and a life in the air means a great deal more to him than a mere job ever would. As a result, it can be argued that Lee is both perfectly aware of biological determinism, as he admits that his job may actually be in his nature. In addition to that, he is also aware of the power of destiny, as he sees the significance of Lyra's mission, despite knowing exactly what it is, and still decides to help her with all his might, because she is part of something bigger than life. This firm belief in her cause and his constant support, irrespective of the fact that she herself does not know exactly what she is doing, provides immense emotional support for Lyra. This helps her to ultimately accept the consequences of her destined path. John Parry's support has extreme value as well, as he hints at the importance of building the Republic of Heaven right where they are (cf. AS 889). Having heard this from his father's mouth makes it easier for Will to accept the ultimate truth that people can only live in their own world and can only work towards a better future from where they are supposed to be. In consequence, the transition towards an acceptance of their final separation may be difficult, but was eased beforehand by John Parry's clear assessment of the situation.

While John Parry slowly reassumes his role as Will's father and Lee Scoresby

directly offers himself as a father substitute for Lyra, the witch queen Serafina Pekkala may then be considered a mother substitute for Lyra, even though she never offers herself as directly as the Texan balloonist. As a witch, Serafina Pekkala represents a group which lives on the margins of society and is closely connected to nature, as it is said that "their business is with the wild" (NL 140). They also live far longer than the average human being and therefore have greater insight into the workings of the multiverse (cf. NL 139). According to the Consul, their residence in remote places and their wisdom of the ages have enabled the witches to understand the purpose of destiny and foresee what the future holds. Because of their existence outside society, "they hear immortal whispers from time to time, in the voices of those beings who pass between the worlds" (NL 149). This explains why the witches have known of Lyra and her destiny for centuries and offer their support, as they are aware that "without this child, [they] shall all die" (ibid.). They know that Lyra is destined to end all destiny and that she is the reincarnation of Eve, whose betrayal will bring about a second Fall from grace and thereby save the multiverse. It can be argued that Lyra perceives Serafina as a goddess of nature, as she compares her voice to the "high wild singing of the Aurora itself" (NL 249) and she admires the witch for her ability to separate from her daemon, even though it also scares her. Lyra attentively listens to her stories about the goddess of the dead, the witches' ability to truly feel nature, and especially about her story concerning love. Serafina is among the first characters in the novel to translate the notions of free will and biological determinism into a story of love, and thereby lays the foundation for Lyra's later understanding of her destiny. Also, in her description of Yambe-Akka, death loses its terror, which may have subconsciously supported Lyra in her decision to go to the land of the dead (cf. NL 258f.).

The last character to be described as a parental substitute is Ma Costa, a gyptian woman. As a member of the gyptian families, she exists on the margins of society as well. These families live in canal-boats and regularly visit Lyra's Oxford during fairs, for they are mostly travelers and traders. Among the gyptians, Ma Costa and her family are considered princes and they are "noted for the grandeur and sumptuousness of their boat" (NL 50). Ma Costa is described as both a mighty and powerful, yet also gentle woman who inspires great respect in others. In contrast to

the aristocratic world of Jordan College, where children are seen as still unfit for the complex study of various subjects, the "tight-knit gyptian boat-world" perceives them as "precious" and treats them with unconditional love (NL 51). After Lyra has escaped from Mrs. Coulter, she is taken in by Ma Costa like her own daughter. She hugs her tightly and her daemon even licks Pantalaimon's head, which is seen as an expression of deep emotional connection and motherly care (cf. NL 92). Despite the great risk of helping Lyra, the Costas nonetheless take her in and hide her from Mrs. Coulter's search parties. For the first time since her escape from her mother's clutches Lyra actually feels safe, and she almost feels as though she was born a gyptian (cf. NL 97).

Her immediate sense of security in Ma Costa's presence is not solely based on the welcoming nature of the gyptian family. As the reader learns in the course of the first novel, Lyra was actually put in Ma Costa's care when she was a baby, since she was born as the illegitimate child of the then-married Mrs. Coulter and her lover Lord Asriel. Ma Costa nursed her in one of Lord Asriel's cottages and witnessed how Lyra's father killed Mrs. Coulter's husband in order to prevent him from killing both child and father. In the course of the consequential lawsuit, Ma Costa begged to keep Lyra as her own child, but since the gyptians cannot use the law to their advantage based on their lower social standing, young Lyra was taken from her care and sent to Jordan College (cf. NL 106f.). Knowing the back story of Lyra and Ma Costa, it is obvious how closely connected the gyptian woman feels to the child. In Lyra's earliest childhood, she actually assumed the role of a mother substitute and never let Lyra completely out of her sight throughout the course of her life. When they are reunited, Ma Costa acts "as if nothing had happened since Lyra was born" (NL 112), and treats her like a daughter. Among the gyptians, Lyra learns the value of unity and learns how important it is to never put the satisfaction of one's own feelings above the community's need (cf. NL 119). Last but not least, Ma Costa also teaches Lyra to accept her own nature by assigning people to different groups of the elements. To Ma Costa, the gyptians are "water people all through", and no matter how hard Lyra would try, she could never pass as a gyptian. She is "a fire person" with "witch-oil in [her] soul" (NL 99). In her examination of Lyra's character, Ma Costa thereby teaches Lyra to accept her biologically determined nature and to value her

personality. This ties in with the overall controversy about determinism and free will, as Ma Costa voices that a person cannot simply assume another identity and completely change who they are. According to her people are guided by "strong currents" which shape and define their nature, and thus their place in life (ibid.).

Before closing on the topic of parental substitutes, it ought to be mentioned that a companion in form of an animal can also be employed as a parental substitute, since "a nonhuman companion has no social obligations and can be loyal toward the protagonist without reservations" (Nikolajeva 2002 126). Even though it could be argued that Iorek Byrnison also fits this description to a certain degree, it is obvious that Lyra's daemon Pantalaimon serves as an embodiment of a thoroughly loyal nonhuman companion – at least until their hurtful separation. The relationship between Lyra and Pantalaimon will be analyzed more thoroughly in the chapter on 'Daemons'.

d. Initiation Cycles

Another highly prominent Western literary tradition with regard to Young Adult literature is the structuring of the plot according to the pattern of initiation cycles. These initiation cycles can be connected to the typical pattern of folktales and are often used in Coming of Age Stories, as they describe the development from childhood to puberty and young adulthood. Based on the idea that initiation cycles pre-structure the unfolding of the plot, they are ultimately connected to the notions of determinism and destiny, as well as choice and free will.

Markus May and Hans Richard Brittnacher, two professors for German philology based in Munich and Berlin, describe the pattern of initiation cycles in their work on *Phantastik* (2013). According to them, the root of initiation cycles as a pattern for Coming of Age Stories can be traced back to the term 'rites de passage' which was coined by Arnold van Gennep in 1909. Van Gennep uses this term to describe transitions in the life-cycle, or passages between two stages in a person's life and divides them into three distinctive parts: *'rites de separation'*, *'rites de marge'*, and *'rites d'agrégation'*, which translates to rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of affiliation (cf. Brittnacher/May 445). The idea behind this concept is that important changes in a person's identity are always accompanied by

certain actions which are firmly established in the tradition and culture of a specific society (cf. ibid.). In order to anchor the structural device of initiation cycles to the unfolding of the plot in Young Adult literature, said cycles are often connected to the transition from one world into another, possibly fantastic world. During this transition and the consequential character development of the main protagonist, rites of separation are narrated in the detachment or removal from familiar surroundings, whereas rites of transition are symbolized by the passage over the threshold between the worlds. Lastly, rites of affiliation are worked into the plot by the entering of a new world and the process of integration into the new system. In many cases, rites of transition are emphasized, as they depict the actual character development and can be prolonged into an entire process as the driving force behind the unfolding of a narration (cf. ibid.). The experiences in the new world can be described as liminal experiences which present the protagonist with various challenges. As Brittnacher und May point out, a quest is usually employed as a trigger, which works as a catalyst for the entire plot (cf. 446). In connection with Nikolajeva's remarks on initiation cycles, it can be concluded that the protagonist's liminal condition during the transition opens the possibility of self-experiences and development away from society and the omnipresent rules and forces of adults. However, the reintegration into the protagonist's own world is inevitable, as it is the only way in which rites of passage can actually be completed (cf. Brittnacher/May 446).

Relating this idea of initiation rites to Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*, it is fairly easy to note that a call to adventure as a plot catalyst is already employed in the very beginning of the first novel: the attempted murderer of Lord Asriel (cf. NL 11) and the presentation of his discoveries in the North (cf. NL 23ff.) spark a drive in Lyra to find out more about the mysterious substance called Dust. These thoughts never leave her mind and inspire her to bring the alethiometer to Lord Asriel, in order to support his fight against the Church. Accepting this task as her quest, Lyra's decision sets the plot in motion and thereby initiates her personal development. As she travels to London to become Mrs. Coulter's assistant, Lyra crosses the first threshold into a new world, since she leaves the familiar world of her Oxford and Jordan College behind (cf. NL 67f.). It can be argued that in this crossing of the first threshold, the onset of Lyra's puberty is also hinted at, for she describes

Mrs. Coulter as being "accompanied by a scent of grown-upness", which is both "disturbing but enticing" for her (NL 68). This claim can be supported by the fact that Pantalaimon starts to imitate the form of Mrs. Coulter's daemon, which indicates both his and Lyra's admiration of her and her daemon, as well as their attempt to develop a similar personality (cf. NL 68).

Throughout the trilogy, Lyra enters, leaves, and reenters a multitude of different worlds, and in each world she faces new challenges encouraging her personal growth. Examples of these challenges are the rescue mission of the entrapped children in Bolvangar (cf. NL 192ff.), the war with the children in Cittàgazze in their struggle for the Subtle Knife (cf. SK 513ff.), or the dangerous journey into the land of the dead, including the hurtful separation from her beloved daemon and the clever pact with the harpies (cf. AS 801ff.). All those major challenges, as well as the numerous smaller ones, can be considered rites of transition. Her personality is shaped by these experiences and she learns to believe in her own strength, as well as to accept people for what or who they are. She even learns how to use her talents for the greater good, for example telling colourful but true stories to the harpies instead of lying to their faces (cf. AS 850f.).

The end of the trilogy clearly fulfills the demand of the rites of affiliation, that the return to one's own world is necessary to complete the process of transition. The young protagonists Will and Lyra are forced to return to their own worlds, as these are the only ones they can properly live in (here, the idea of biological determinism is already hinted at, which will be discussed towards the end of this work). Therefore, Lyra and Will must separate because every window between worlds must be closed (cf. AS 988ff.). As one would expect, this disillusioning truth causes immense sadness among the protagonists, but even this sadness inspires personal growth. Farder Coram and John Faa now perceive Lyra as a teenage woman who is marked by experiences, love, and pain (cf. AS 1002). The peak of the protagonists' personal development can then be seen in Lyra's and Will's sacrifice of their love for the greater good, as they accept their fates and decide to build the republic in their respective worlds to achieve their overall goal (cf. AS 991).

Taking the trilogy's overall plot structure into consideration, it can then be argued that by Pullman's employment of van Gennep's *rites de passage,* the attentive

reader could foresee that a relationship between Lyra and Will in any one of the multiple worlds cannot work out. Both protagonists must return to their place of origin in order to complete their transition. Arguably, as the trilogy is generally ascribed to the category of Young Adult fiction, a teenage reader will possibly be unaware of van Gennep's rites of passage and still be shaken by the emotionally disturbing ending. Still, Pullman's use of the concept creates a notion of circularity, which is used in many modern fantasy works "as an image of the preservation of things as they are, and thus one expression of fantasy's delight in 'being'" (Manlove 70). This author, however, does not leave things as they are, even though his protagonists must return to their starting point. They now have a clear task in mind and are well equipped to fulfill this task by the character traits they acquired on their complex journey. Based on the understanding, that Lyra and Will must make this difficult decision in the end, it is apparent that their coming-of-age is presented by the author as "a balancing act between the resignation that springs from regret over unfulfilled ideals and the affirmation of the power to make decisions that affect others and thereby the well-being of society" (Daemmrich 72).

In conclusion, the employment of van Gennep's *rites de passage* on the one hand already hints at the plot's circularity and supports the overall idea of a predestined narrative world, in which paths are already laid out and fates are inevitable. On the other hand, Pullman's take on van Gennep's structural device shows how notions of destiny and circularity can be overcome by equipping the protagonists with personality features which enable them to shape the future according to their own will. Nevertheless, the idea of destiny and determination is still highly valued, as it is a necessary prerequisite to inspire personal growth, moral advancement, and thereby also free will and the ability to make conscious choices.

2. Intertextuality

The next area of investigation with regard to notions of determinism and free will is the area of intertextuality. Concerning the employment of intertextual references, it must be noted that even though they are a fairly prominent tool for many authors of different genres, they can also "challenge any claim to textual originality or discrete readings" as readers are led to "make sense of them only in relation to the already

embedded codes which dwell in texts and readers" (Wilkie 131). As a result, many texts can only be understood in relation to other texts, and may even rely on their readers' knowledge of said texts. However, if the focus is moved to children's literature, questions may arise concerning the feasibility of using intertextual references in texts for children and young adults, since their textual knowledge may still be fairly narrow. It could then be argued that intertextual approaches in literature for young readers produce too many challenges for them and may hinder their understanding of the text. Pat Pinsent, senior research fellow at Roehampton University, counters this idea by stating that intertextual references, even though young readers may not fully comprehend them at the time, may provide them "with what serves as a pre-text for later readings" (26). Her statement thus entails the idea of the educative purpose of children's literature, as it opens up the young readers' perspective towards a multitude of texts which all stand in relation to one another and influence themselves reciprocally. Christine Wilkie adds a rather critical notion to the tradition of intertextuality, as she highlights that the 'focused texts', meaning the ones that are produced by authors in relation to already familiar texts, "purport to be more authoritative than the texts they are quoting and are thereby undermining the 'truth' of their pre-texts" (132). On the one hand, this constant reference to other specific texts can actually foreground the referenced texts by depicting them as essential for the understanding of the new text. This may in turn restrict the readers' free interpretation of the new text, as it can only thoroughly be understood in relation to the old text. On the other hand, intertextuality may also offer an entirely new understanding of old texts and actually reverse or expand their meaning. Thereby, readers are challenged to create new interpretations of familiar texts and to renegotiate their meaning in "free intertextual interplay" (Wilkie 135).

Moving to the text of choice, Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials* uses intertextual references to a large extent. Undeniably, the most obvious intertextual reference is the reworking of the biblical Fall from grace. As it is stated in the prophecy surrounding the main protagonist, Lyra is "in the position of Eve, the wife of Adam, the mother of us all, and the cause of all sin" (AS 652), who will disobey and thereby cause a second Fall from grace (cf. SK 580). Due to the fact that the trilogy is based on this mysterious prophecy, Pullman could not have used

intertextual references to the Bible more openly. The reference to a great disobedience strongly reminds the attentive reader of Eve's disobedience, as the serpent tempts her to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil which God had previously forbidden.

The idea of Paradise as the Garden of Eden is also reworked in the trilogy. In the world of the mulefa, a perfect harmony is created between nature and creatures, so one could hardly imagine a more peaceful scenery. Even though this garden of Eden rather resembles a "wide golden prairie" (AS 933), the resemblance to Paradise is uncanny: intense colours, beautiful nature, soft breezes and curious animals shape the design of Pullman's version of Eden. In contrast to the tumultuous events in other worlds, characters can actually rest and feel safe in the world of the mulefa for the first time. Supporting the idea of the mulefa world as the Garden of Eden, Mary, a scientist who plays a very distinctive role in the trilogy, describes it as otherworldly and finds herself speechless as she marvels at the beautiful scenery (cf. AS 665ff.). Mary is actually the first human being in the trilogy to enter the magical world of the mulefa, and in entering, she resembles the first humans on earth, as she perceives the religious power not of God himself, but of the prairie. When she enters a grove, she compares it to a cathedral, as "there was the same stillness, the same sense of upwardness in the structures, [and] the same awe in herself" (AS 666), which hints at the religious charge of the mulefa's world.

The female scientist is not only employed in the trilogy to marvel at the religiously charged nature in the mulefa's paradisial world, but she also works as a temptress, or serpent, who causes Lyra's Fall. In an almost prophetical revelation, Mary understands her true calling and realise s that the multiverse can only be saved and the disappearance of the mysterious Dust can only be stopped by telling truthful stories (AS 944). As a result, she does not hesitate to tell her life and love story to Lyra and Will who eagerly listen. While listening to her story, Lyra feels a change in her body, which is both "exciting and frightening" at the same time (AS 953). Hearing about Mary's first kiss truly causes the onset of Lyra's puberty and she feels as though "she had been handed the key to a great house she hadn't known was there" (ibid.). It can therefore be argued that Mary is the reincarnation of the biblical serpent, whose apple is transformed into a love story. Excited by Mary's story and

assured of their feelings, Lyra and Will then kiss and thereby both cause Lyra's fall from grace and the fulfillment of her prophecy (cf. AS 972). In a way, this kiss symbolizes their loss of innocence, as they enter puberty and develop from innocent children into experienced teenagers. However, it could be argued that their experiences already changed their personalities, so that their final kiss is only the metaphorical climax of their transitions. Contrastive to the Catholic idea of perceiving experience as harmful and depicting the Fall as Original Sin, Lyra's second Fall is presented as something inherently good. This idea will be examined further in the passage on 'Religion in *HDM'*.

In addition to being perceived as a second Eve, the protagonist Lyra can also be interpreted as a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, since she is metaphorically reborn and functions as a saviour of the entire multiverse, much like Jesus did for his world. By leaving her daemon, and thereby her soul, behind and descending into the land of the dead (cf. AS 823ff.), Lyra figuratively dies and is reborn after she led the dead out into the open air of the paradisial mulefa world (cf. AS. 888ff.). Thus freeing the dead and proving them with a chance for a harmonious and joyful afterlife in a reunion with nature and the universe, Lyra saves them as she allows the dead to be reborn in "the night, the starlight, [and] the air" surrounding them (AS 889).

The image of the serpent is presented rather ambiguously. While Mary functions as the serpent temptress and causes the salvation of the multiverse, the serpent is also both highly worshipped in the world of the mulefa, and employed to symbolize evil in character descriptions. Not unlike other worlds in the trilogy, the mulefa have their own creation story in which a female snake tempted one of their own to use seed-pods as wheels and thereby inspired the awakening of the mulefa's consciousness (cf. AS 777). Even though their conscious awakening resulted in a division between simple grazers and intelligent mulefa, the elephant-like beings view the snake's temptation as the beginning of their "memory and wakefulness" (AS 777) , which made them "see more clearly than before" (AS 778). They were now able to see the mysterious Dust, which they call sraf, named themselves and the things surrounding them, and found their true destiny by using the seed-pods to live in perfect unity and interdependence with nature. In summary, it is striking that their creation story also includes a female temptress in form of a snake and a distinctive

transition from the state of an innocent grazer into a conscious mulefa. On the other hand, the snake or serpent is also connected to embodiments of evil, as can be seen in the description of the malicious Lord Boreal or Charles Latrom. Lord Boreal is a power-hungry nobleman who wants to acquire both the Subtle Knife and Lyra's alethiometer for himself, so he tries to ambush the two main protagonists. In order to depict his evilness, his outward appearance resembles a snake, as he has a "smooth, tanned, barely wrinkled forehead", "large, dark and long-lashed and intense" eyes, and a "sharp, dark-pointed tongue" which flicks across his lips every other minute (SK 392). Not only does his appearance resemble a snake, but his daemon also has the form of an emerald snake with "gold-rimmed black eyes" whose black tongue resembles Lord Boreal's (SK 461). Here, the image of the snake is not used to symbolize a temptation and thus the beginning of consciousness, but rather as an embodiment of satanic evil. Arguably, Lord Boreal is certainly not the most satanic figure in the trilogy, but the description of him and his daemon suggest an air of untrustworthiness and malice. The attentive reader is thereby made aware of Lord Boreal's true nature and may derive clues from his depiction as to how his personality will influence the course of the plot.

In addition to biblical references, Pullman also uses intertextuality with regard to other literary works such as John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* and William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Milton's epic poem and Pullman's trilogy bear an uncanny resemblance since they can both be considered reworkings of the story of the Fall. As Bulgarian author Ludmilla Miteva-Russanova points out, both works depict Adam and Eve as innocent and experienced at the same time. She states that even though Milton's Adam and Eve are depicted as naked and seemingly innocent, Milton also clearly gives away that they make love before the fall and can therefore also be considered experienced adults (cf. Miteva-Roussanova 3). Thinking of Will as the equivalent of Adam, at least with regard to his role in the second Fall, Pullman's Adam and Eve are also both childish, yet grown-up. Throughout the trilogy, "they have witnessed suffering, they have suffered themselves […], they have been to the world of the dead, they have met their deaths. Yet they know nothing of love. They are children, yet experienced like grown-ups" (ibid. 3f.). Bibiche van Heumen also describes Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Pullman's

HDM as relatively similar with regard to their ideas of conscious choice and activism. According to her, both Pullman and Milton challenge the "Calvinist notion of predestination", as they believe in the freedom of the fall, meaning that all creatures can make the conscious choice to fall and must decide whether or not to accept salvation (cf. Heumen 12). Moreover, Pullman's Republic of Heaven is comparable to Milton's idea of 'Paradise within thee' (PL 12.586) as both seem to "refer to the idea that people should build their happiness in the here and now, thereby making the world a better place for everyone" (ibid. 15f.). Of course, there are also striking differences between Milton's and Pullman's work, for example regarding the figure of God and the serpent. In *Paradise Lost*, God is still omnipotent and almighty, whereas Pullman's God, also known as the Authority, is a weak and powerless figure, who has handed over the reins to his Lord Regent Metatron. Also, Pullman reverses the idea of the serpent as a male character and ascribes a more wholesomely good notion to the transition from innocence to experience.

The third case of intertextuality to be discussed in this work is the reference to William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, and especially the two poems "Little Girl Lost" and "Little Girl Found". First and foremost, it is uncanny how much the names of the protagonists in the two works resemble each other (Lyca versus Lyra). Secondly, Pullman's narrator often refers to Lyra as being 'lost' (cf. SK 589) and her aloneness is constantly emphasized (cf. NL 191, 317, AS 728), which enhances her resemblance to Blake's "Little Girl Lost". The passage in which Lyra is described as an "enchanted sleeper" as she is held captive by her mother in a cave must be emphasized here (AS 597). Not only does the chapter begin with a quote from Blake's "Little Girl Lost", but the narrator also describes a scene which is not unlike the setting described in Blake's poem. In the beginning of this chapter, Lyra is fast asleep in a cave which is located in a southern climate (cf. ibid.). Even though Lyra's surroundings may resemble a rainforest, it can still be related to Blake, as in both cases a little girl is sleeping in a cave surrounded by nature and animals. Admittedly, the animals are keeping considerable distance in Pullman's text, but they are nonetheless there and thus complete the similarity of both images. Another similarity is the usage of lion-figures as images of protection. In Blake's poem, Lyca is protected by a lion and clothed in the fur of a lioness, who both seem to be taken

over the roles of Lyca's parental protectors. Mrs. Coulter, despite her arguably malicious intentions, is also connected to the image of a protective lioness, as a little village girl describes Mrs. Coulter's hair as being of "a tawny fairness like a lion's" (AS 599). Furthermore, the scene is very peaceful in both cases and is only disrupted by the presence of parental figures. In Blake's poem, Lyca is perfectly happy among the wild beasts and does not consider them as terrifying. The only disturbance is the thought of her parents, especially of her mother, who weeps because of Lyca's absence and her encountering of wild animals (Verse 6). In Pullman's trilogy, the image of the sleeping Lyra in a protecting cave amidst beautiful nature could be perceived as thoroughly positive, if were it not for the fact that her mother Mrs. Coulter poisoned her to keep her asleep, and thereby in her captivity (cf. AS 598ff.). Lastly, the ideas of innocence and experience play a major role in Pullman's trilogy, so the intertextual relation to Blake's poem collection is uncanny. Especially in "Little Girl Lost" and "Little Girl Found", the central conflict is the binary opposition between the innocence of children and the experience of adults. Blake seems to depict "childhood as the golden age lost in adulthood" (Daemmrich 204) and Pullman reworks this idea in his trilogy by concerning himself with general questions of innocence and experience in connection with determinism and free will.

Last but not least, Pullman also makes several other intertextual references to significant texts in *HDM* which add to the diversity of Pullman's textual sources and inspirations. Clear reference is made to J.R.R. Tolkien's fragment *Tal Elmar* (1997) as the attacking birds in the world of the mulefa are described as "a fleet of tall white sails" (AS 702). Greek mythology is also included in Pullman's web of intertextuality; the first example can be seen in the suburbs of the dead in the persona of the ferryman (cf. AS 823). In Pullman's land of the dead, his version of the Greek underworld Hades, a boat must deliver the dead from the shore in the suburbs across a river to the endless plains of the underworld. The river is comparable to the Greek river Styx which signifies the border between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Secondly, Pullman also makes use of the harpy, a female monster in Greek mythology. In the trilogy, they guide the entrance into the land of the dead and torment the ghosts of the living (cf. AS 830ff.), whereas in Greek mythology, they both torment the blinded Phineus by stealing his food and torment those who pass

into Tartarus, the deep abyss-like prison for the evil. Last but not least, the onset of the entire plot of the trilogy is also inspired by an intertextual reference: Much like the children in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950), Lyra is also hiding in a wardrobe while overhearing the conversation between her father Lord Asriel and the scholars of Jordan College. In consequence, Lyra is inspired to learn more about Lord Asriel's expeditions in the North which sets the entire plot in motion.

In summary, the conscious integration of Greco-roman and Judeo-Christian mythological themes and traditional archetypes adds to the overall prominence of intertextuality and can therefore be considered a "mythopoesis" (Tóth 291), as Pullman derives his own fictional mythology from his intertextual references. Connecting the employment of intertextuality to the discourse concerning free will and determinism, the following conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, the overwhelming presence of biblical references and the structuring of the plot in accordance with the story of the Fall add to the idea that Pullman acknowledges the power of determinism, destiny, and fate. In referring to Lyra as a second Eve and talking of a second Fall including a great betrayal, the attentive reader is already aware of the consequential unfolding of the plot. As Lyra is destined to take over the role of Eve, a reader who is familiar with the biblical story of the Fall knows that the novel will include a tempter, possibly connected to the image of a snake or serpent, a disobedience which challenges a divine ruler, and possibly an expulsion from a paradisial setting. As a result, the idea of determinism and destiny is highlighted and given a prominent status in the trilogy. It is the driving force behind the plot and provides the backdrop of its unfolding. In the paradisial description of the mulefa's world, it is obvious that Pullman employs their prairie as his version of the Garden of Eden; a somewhat sacred and holy space in which the Fall can occur without interruptions. Again, the attentive reader will recognise the narrator's paradisial description and may thus expect the culmination of the plot in the second Fall from grace.

Other intertextual references, such as the employment of Greek mythology, and references to William Blake, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis may on the one hand contribute to the perception of Pullman as an accomplished author who is aware

of successful and influential texts. On the other hand, these intertextual references could have also been included by the author to hint at the "complex discussion of crucial questions pertaining to the *conditio humana*" (Sedlmayr 1) around which the trilogy revolves. This can most strongly be seen in Pullman's intertextual references to William Blake. Borrowing the image of aloneness, as well as the binary opposition between innocent children and experienced adults from William Blake's "Little Girl Lost" and "Little Girl Found", Pullman seems to agree with Blake's idea that "perspective decides upon being" (ibid. 3). Lyra's innocent and open-minded outlook on the world, which enables her to befriend seemingly dangerous beasts such as Iofur Raknison or to appreciate and love those who live on the margins of society, bears strong resemblance to Blake's Lyca. In "Little Girl Lost", Lyca wanders the desert and despite the presence of dangerous animals, she "faces the wilderness in an unbiased manner" (ibid.). Only her childhood innocence enables her to do so, whereas her parents' experience inspires them to "look upon the untamed animals through a prejudiced lens" (ibid.) and perceive them as dangerous. Pullman portrays a similar opposition between innocent children and experienced adults in his novel, even though he ultimately comes to the conclusion that the two states must always go together, as there cannot be innocence without experience. This hints at his belief in free will, as he sees human beings as 'free to fall', which means that they ought make experiences, as well as their own choices, even though they may be bad and lead to undesirable outcomes. Only through experiences can rightful decisions be made and ultimately inspire desirable outcomes for everybody.

First and foremost, Pullman uses intertextual references to provide the attentive reader with a backdrop against which the trilogy's plot is meant to be understood. However, he manages to go beyond the mere rewriting of other texts. He uses them as inspiration and shapes his plot according to their dictation, but adds crucial turns which challenge, reshape, and complement the message of his intertextual references. While the acknowledgment of destiny and determinism is certainly perceivable, Pullman's reshaping of his intertextual resources give away, that he believes there to be more than determinism, and that individuals may actually have a say in the unfolding of their destiny.

3. Storytelling

The third larger area to be analyzed in Pullman's trilogy with regard to the concepts of determinism and free will is the topic of storytelling. Due to the fact that analyzing the vast multitude of all different facets of said concepts in *HDM* would go beyond the scope of this thesis, the focus will lie on the narrative perspective and the overall power of storytelling.

a. Narrative Perspective

The narrative perspective employed in HDM functions as a basis for the portrayed nature of storytelling, as it gives hints concerning the relationship between storyteller and listener, or producer and receiver. Furthermore, it lays the groundwork for the function of stories and the respective duties of those who are on the receiving end of the narration.

In *HDM*, Pullman introduces a third person omniscient narrator, who is able to switch between places and people, as well as to get insight into their private thoughts and feelings. As a result, several storylines are entangled and motives of different characters are contrasted. This creates a balancing act between providing readers with sufficient information to lead them through the story and giving them the freedom to evaluate or judge the characters' sentimental motives on their own. It can be argued that the insecurity of readers is furthered by the general employment of the past tense, as well as by remarks of the narrator which clearly indicate that he obtains definite knowledge concerning the future development of the story. Therefore, it may seem as though the story has already been decided and the narrator deliberately keeps information from his readers to make the story seem interesting.

As Naomi Wood points out, Pullman's narrator cannot be compared to a comforting uncle narrating a fairy story, "for it is uncomfortable, indeed, not to know who will prevail and suspect as well that we might encounter another past-tense episode in which the future has already been decided against the heroes" (245). Her statement underlines that Pullman's readers are, in fact, not led by their narrator, but must learn to evaluate the characters and their actions themselves. In several different episodes of the narration, the reader feels as though the narrator is aware of the

ultimate outcome of the story, and could actually already give away the unfolding of the plot. As early as in the third chapter of the first book, the narrator uses the technique of foreshadowing to underline his knowledge of the narration's development. By stating that "eventually [Lyra] would know more about Dust than anyone in the world" (NL 39) at a point in the story in which the true nature of Dust has not even been clarified yet, a gap between narrator and reader is created. The idea of knowledge being withheld by the narrator is furthered in expressions such as "but she wasn't to learn that for a few days yet" (NL 97) or "she soon forgot it, and only remembered it much later" (NL 155). These expressions create a feeling of being on the rack with regard to the reader, who may feel as though the narrator deliberately keeps his readers in a state of ignorance while at the same time making it very clear that he knows the outcome of the story. It could be argued that this gap between narrator and reader may resemble the gap between adult and child, as portrayed in essentialism. To their minds, children may be largely ignorant of the world and rely on experienced adults to teach them right from wrong; much like an omniscient narrator would do in a story. However, another interpretation of the gap between narrator and reader can also be perceived as highly convincing: By expanding the picture of the narration's status via foreshadowing, the narrator inspires his readers to search for hints in the story, interpret them, and thereby read the story far more closely. Especially because the narrator is not a comforting uncle to be trusted that he tells his readers everything he knows and guides them smoothly through the narrative, young readers are enabled to judge the story and arrive at their very own interpretations. To answer Naomi Wood's question, children can actually become narrators of their own lives and are not "fated simply to occupy narratives already written for them" (237). The prerequisite is that they are confronted with a narrator who challenges them to evaluate the narration, judge the characters' actions (cf. NL 45) and look for hints in the story which may foreshadow its development.

In his close reading of Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, Gerold Sedlmayr also explains the author's use of omniscient narration with the intertextual nature of the trilogy (cf. 14), as it reworks different texts which all have their distinctive voices. This employment of different textual voices opens Pullman's story even further and enables its readers to arrive at their own actualization of said intertextual sources.

Even though Pullman deliberately draws on different texts, he does not present them as ultimately true. He rather gives his readers the opportunity to view them from a different angle, in the case of his take on the story of the Fall, or to use them in order to support their understanding of the story's essential message, as in the case of William Blake's poetry, Greek mythology, or the idea of eucatastrophe as presented in Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" (1997). Connecting the multi-voiced nature of the text with its unreliable narrator who challenges his readers, it can be argued that despite the text's obvious sense of prophecy and destiny, the narrative situation enables the reader to overcome the constraints of these ideas. Free will, therefore, becomes effective when readers are challenged by narrators who do not provide them with an infallible truth as to how the story, its characters, its events and its prophetical basis must be understood. Despite the presentation of several fundamental elements of proper human behaviour as infallibly correct, the reader is still enabled to challenge prevailing notions of wrong and right or true and false, and reevaluate commonly accepted interpretations of stories concerning human nature.

b. The Power of Stories

The second facet to be analyzed in this section is the power of storytelling and the performative power of language as presented in Pullman's trilogy. Here, stories seem to be a life-giving force which may even help to overcome death, and thus fulfill a primordial human desire (cf. Tolkien "On Fairy Stories" 116). In addition, Pullman also stresses the pragmatic character of language, which inspires human beings to take action and to improve their lives in the here and now. These conceptions concerning storytelling are most prominently reworked in the character of Lyra and her development in the course of the story.

Lyra Belacqua, the twelve year-old main protagonist, can be described as a chronic liar. She frequently uses storytelling to enhance her adventures or familial background, and to escape from uncomfortable situations. For example, Lyra weaves a web of lies around the mystical adventures of her uncle/father Lord Asriel, in order to maintain her reputation as leader of the kitchen and servant boys and girls of Jordan College (cf. NL 44). Even though some of her stories are less believable than others, the children nonetheless readily believe them, as they are simply "too good to

waste" (ibid.). Children admire Lyra for her talent of storytelling and attentively listen to her tales, whether they fully believe in them, or not. This idea that it does not matter whether one believes a story to be true or not, but that it is actually the quality of the story itself that matters, can be related to J.R.R. Tolkien's lecture "On Fairy Stories". Here, Tolkien remarks that it is actually not the often quoted 'willing suspension of disbelief' which induces the appetite for stories, but rather an enchanted state called Secondary Belief (cf. 132). According to Tolkien, the enjoyment of fairy stories is not dependent on the belief that the events could actually be true, but dependent on their evocation of human desires (cf. 134). In the case of Lyra's lies, it can be assumed that the children do not question her stories because it is both a pleasure to listen to her as an accomplished storyteller, and because the children arguably wish their lives to be just as exciting and adventurous as Lyra's life allegedly is.

In other instances throughout the trilogy, Lyra uses her talent of storytelling to maneuver challenging situations, for example during her escape from Mrs. Coulter's apartment (cf. NL 89). Here, she invents a father who is a murderer by profession to scare off strangers. This shows that her talent for lying is presented as worthwhile, as she uses it to protect herself. Moreover, inventing stories also provides her with strength and courage when facing difficulties, as the mastery of words equips her with "the same sense of complexity and control that the alethiometer gave her" (NL 233). This feeling hints at the idea of language as performative, as her stories seem to have "the power to transform and even create reality" (Sedlmayr 11). It is very striking that throughout the trilogy lies are in fact presented as rather helpful and positive, at least when used to achieve something good. Arguably contrasting the prevailing perceptions of lies as negative, Pullman's protagonist is rewarded for her lies and the ability to invent new realities is cherished. Not only is Lyra given a new surname based on her essential quality ("Silvertongue" cf. NL 285), but her insight into the minds of storytellers is also singled out as a desirable protection against lying enemies (cf. SK 447). Even though it is acknowledged that stories and the creation of new realities via storytelling may have an overpowering and "intoxicating" effect (NL 281) on Lyra as their narrator, she still prides herself with her ability and is greatly admired for it. Pullman seems to

erase the boundaries between lying and storytelling, and subsumes the two under the positive umbrella term 'storytelling'. He does not seem to focus on the idea of telling false stories by lying, but rather on the pragmatic aspect of storytelling as the creation of new realities which inspire those who listen. This idea may harshly contrast with what young readers are taught to perceive as proper behaviour, and thereby challenge their established outlook on both good and bad, and true and false. As Sedlmayr convincingly argues, the novels therefore not only "investigate the status of lies [or] of untruth", but also "implicitly and simultaneously inquire about the flipside of the coin, the nature of truth" (11).

In how far the trilogy investigates the status of lies and the nature of truth can be described best by referring to one of the trilogy's central scenes, namely Lyra and Will's passage through the land of the dead (AS 820-855). Up until this scene, it was constantly highlighted throughout the trilogy how one of Lyra's most essential qualities served to guide her through challenging experiences and ensured the fulfillment of her prophecy. In their passage through the land of the dead, however, the metaphysical question concerning truth is examined by exploring the power and limitations of lying and storytelling. Lyra's special ability is called into question right at the beginning of their passage, as she must tell the harpies who guide the entrance a story to calm them down and to request admittance (cf. AS 832). Throughout the entire trilogy, Lyra was always perfectly able to enchant other people with her fictive life stories, but this time her trick does not work. The harpies detect her lies and their screams ("Liar!" ibid.) reflect off the walls, making it sound as though they are "screaming Lyra's name, so that *Lyra* and *liar* were one and the same thing" (ibid.). By fusing her name and the word 'liar', one of the central essences of the trilogy's main protagonist is called into question. Unlike other characters in the book, who willingly believed in her stories, the harpies see through Lyra's lies and attack her. Even though Lyra had felt "that she'd just been dealt the ace of trumps" (ibid.), it becomes apparent that the power of her lies is only limited. Going against the aforementioned idea that Pullman includes the term 'lying' under the more positive umbrella term 'storytelling', this passage shows that both terms are still essentially different. Both may be able to enchant some listeners and inspire them, but only truthful storytelling works in all cases.

Realizing this, Lyra is first thrown into self-doubt, as she perceives lying and storytelling as one of her essential personality traits (cf. AS 834). Thus, she is forced to rethink her personality; a process which occurs most prominently during crucial phases of puberty. When Lyra finally resolves to telling her actual story, not only do the harpies listen closely to her story, but the ghosts also gather around her (cf. AS 849f.). Even though she tells her own story, the ghosts make it their story by feeding on her description of familiar places, scents, noises and emotions. This enables them to reconnect with a life they had almost forgotten. Storytelling is presented as a live-giving force and a weapon against the agents of death and the Authority. Arguably, stories may even help to overcome death to a certain extent, and thereby fulfill one of mankind's most prominent primordial desires, namely the desire to overcome death (cf. Tolkien 153). Of course, the ghosts cannot resume their lives simply by listening to her story, since life is always connected to physicality. This stresses the importance of bodily sensations promoted in the trilogy; an idea that will be investigated further in the course of this thesis. Still, the ghosts are reminded of the lives they left behind and gain new strength to endure the great wasteland that is the land of the dead. Towards the end of this episode, a bargain is made with the harpies: every ghost who wants to leave the land of the dead first needs to tell its life story to the harpies. Only by telling their true story with all its highs and lows can the dead happily dissolve into the universe and leave their deadening existence behind. Pullman accordingly conveys that life should be experienced with all senses, explored, questioned, and lived to the fullest, in order to enter a happy afterlife sans regrets.

Another passage in the book which must be discussed in relation to storytelling and the aforementioned performative power of words is the forerun to Lyra-as-second-Eve's Fall. Dr. Mary Malone, the scientist who first enters the world of the mulefa, is assigned a central role in the second Fall, for she is to function as the serpent, or temptress. When the first ghosts leave the land of the dead to dissolve into the clear air of the mulefa world, Mary overhears them recapturing their experience with Lyra and the idea, that storytelling may be the ultimate key to happiness (cf. AS 944). At this point, Mary is utterly aware of the role she is to play in the prophecy, namely to accept her true calling as a storyteller to inspire Lyra's

transition from innocent child to experienced young adult. Of course, Mary does not consciously know which story she is to tell, but the "sweetness" that she was left with after her experience with the ghosts is enough to assure her of the importance of storytelling (ibid.). When Mary finally tells the two stories of her first kiss after having fed the boy with a piece of marzipan, and of how she decided to give up her life as a nun after another man presented her with a piece of marzipan later on, her words inspire great changes in Lyra as listener: language functions inherently performative here, as Mary's words, both "exciting and frightening" at the same time, shake Lyra to the core and make her feel as though "she had been handed the key to a great house she hadn't known was there" (AS 953). In other words, Lyra's sexuality is awakened and her transition from child to young adult via puberty truly sets off. It is not so much the story itself which is relevant here, but rather the changes it inspires in Lyra and the actions it causes in the aftermath. Stimulated by Mary's story, Lyra reenacts her actions and proceeds to feed Will in a similar fashion (cf. AS 972). This scene then functions as both a second Fall and the ultimate eucatastrophe, as "there was nothing but silence, as if all the world were holding its breath" (ibid.). Tolkien defines the term 'eucatastrophe' as a "good catastrophe, the sudden joyous 'turn'" which must be included in every good fairy story (153). Even though the discussed scene is not quite the ending of the story yet, it seems as though at this precise moment, everything falls into place and the leaking of the mysterious substance Dust is finally stopped.

Due to the fact that Will and Lyra are not only passive recipients of Mary's story, but are actually involved in the process of storytelling by drawing performative action from her words, it can be argued that Pullman essentially stresses the power of words and storytelling. As much as it is up to Will and Lyra to transform their newly obtained knowledge into action, Pullman may similarly desire his reader to derive inspiration for change from his trilogy, instead of solely taking in the story without further reflection. As Wood points out,

> "Pullman advocates repeatedly the disobedient pursuit of knowledge as the key to maturity, and his heroine Lyra is called 'Eve again' to reinforce her role as disobedient liberator of humanity through knowledge and the creation of new stories" (239).

The young and arguably likeable protagonist of the trilogy offers great potential for identification to the readers and may thereby inspire them to both question established stories and create new ones. Given the fact that Pullman's narrative is 'just a story', the young reader is provided with a "risk free kind of moral playground" (Garrahy 117) in which different moral beliefs, attitudes, and takes on different stories can be juxtaposed to engage the reader in finding his own interpretation of the narrative. Pullman's narrative manages to engage the reader by calling for action and demanding change, especially with regard to its ending. Here, it is emphasized that the Republic of Heaven, as the embodiment of a better future without oppressive religion, can only be built in the here and now (AS 991) and that each person must do their share of work to achieve it (AS 1015).

Relating these ideas to the concepts of determinism and free will, it becomes apparent that even though the narrative is based on a prophecy which accompanies all events and ultimately comes true, free will does play an important role with regard to storytelling. Only through the conscious and free choice of the story's recipient can language unfold its performative power and inspire action and progress. Moreover, the harpies' demand to tell real stories about lives that have been lived to the fullest can also be seen as an advice Pullman gives to his young readers: embrace the world, challenge yourself, and enjoy your life to become an active part in the creation of a desirable world for all. By stressing that storytelling and storymaking should not be used as an escape from this world but rather as a way of reshaping the world by thinking about possible changes, Pullman seems to counter the prevailing notion of fantasy stories as a means of escapism. Much like Tolkien, Pullman seems to acknowledge the power of stories to momentarily transport its recipients to different times and places, in order to offer "a kind of satisfaction and consolation" from "ancient limitations" and "old ambitions and desires" (Tolkien 151). The satisfaction of these desires may then inspire the willingness to achieve change and to transform the world which the recipient inhabits.

Despite the fact that the plotline is pre-structured by a prophecy, Lyra does not learn the entirety of her story and is thereby enabled to make conscious choices and influence the narrative. In taking action, "Lyra becomes part of that evolutionary process, recognising ultimately that her own moral choices, her compassion, and her

sense of responsibility do in fact impact the universe" (Wood 253). As a result, Lyra becomes the author of her own narrative, at least to the amount the underlying prophecy allows it. In becoming the author of her own narrative, Lyra also comes to realise that there is not only one omnipotent truth, but that there are different nuances and versions of the truth. Especially by linking her to the alethiometer as a truth-teller, the binary opposition between lies and truth is fused, simply because Lyra as an accomplished liar is destined to make sense of the multilayered predictions of future events the alethiometer provides. Only by entering a state of "passive receptiveness" which is linked to John Keats' concept of 'negative capability' can she make sense of "larger truths beyond" and take action to shape her own narrative (Sedlmayr 12). Pullman's narrative aims at inspiring his readers to realise that there is more than just one truth, that the different sides of stories are fairly important, and that they as readers are able to shape their world just the same, even if they feel as though they are powerless in the face of the workings of the world. To conclude the chapter of storytelling with Zipes' words: "the essential quality of all great fantasy work is linked to their capacity to subvert accepted standards and to provoke readers to re-think their state of being and the institutions that determine the nature of existence" (230).

4. Trinity

After having discussed the topic of storytelling, it seems only natural to look at the actual narration more closely and discuss one of the most prominent motifs employed in the trilogy, namely the motif of trinity. This motif closely relates to the idea of determinism, as it gives away that elements on both the level of the plotline and on the metalevel often times consist of three parts. Thus, the reader is provided with a sense of security and superficial knowledge, as he may be able to follow the storyline and the massage of the narrative more easily or predict the unfolding of certain events. With regard to the overall intention of the trilogy, the motif of trinity may hint at "Pullman's yearning for oneness" (Tóth 295), as his narrative seems to convey that even though something consists of several different parts, said parts can form a consistent whole and actually work best in their unified form.

The most prominent reworking of trinity lies in the construction of human

beings, as they consist of body, daemon, and ghost. As it was stated in the chapter on intertextuality, Pullman frequently draws on Christian imagery, and it can be argued that the threefold nature of his characters stems from the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as presented in the Bible. Even though the nature of daemons will be inquired in detail throughout the next chapter, it must be registered that "the energy that links body and daemon is immensely powerful" (NL 307). Daemons function as external representations of the soul and it is thereby highlighted, that the soul is an essential part of the human being without which it could never feel complete. However, when Lyra and Will depart for the land of the dead, they are forced to leave their daemons – and thus their souls – behind. Lyra remembers seeing daemons fade away when people die, which leads Will to assume that human beings must be composed of three parts. Only the third part enters the land of the dead after the decay of both body and daemon, and it must also be the part "to do the thinking", as humans can think about both body and daemon, but not about the ghost (AS 733). As a result, it is highlighted how every single part has a very unique significance for the human being and that people can only function properly if all three parts are united.

Mary, in her function as narrator and explainer, links the trinity of body, daemon, and ghost to the trinity promoted by St.Paul, as body, spirit, and soul (AS 949). A person's ghost can thus be related to the spirit, which bridges the trinity of body, daemon, and ghost with the trinity of mind, matter, and spirit. Anne-Marie Bird points in her analysis of HDM to the common assumption that angels are "disembodied beings composed entirely of spirit – representative of the 'gap' between the human and God" (119). This idea is adopted in the trilogy (SK 367, 439) and as a result, angels are located above the plot. As beings of spirit, they are said to have different concerns than mortal beings of flesh, even though they used to come down to earth in the ancient days and had both dealings and even offspring with men and women (cf. SK 439). Due to the fact that angels are composed entirely of spirit, they are presented as weaker than men (cf. AS 606) and jealous of their body. Especially Metatron, the self-proclaimed Lord Regent of the Church and thriving force behind the Church's attempts to prevent Lyra's Fall, is described as a "lover of the flesh" (AS 648), which hints at his jealousy of humans and their bodies. In order to ensure the superiority of angelic beings, "the Authority through the Church ruled

that material bodies were inherently evil [and] that angelic bodies were superior" (Wood 243). Given the fact that the Church and its teachings are challenged in the trilogy, it is obvious that Pullman's narrative celebrates the physical and attaches significant value to it. Certainly, the spiritual world also plays an important role, but the focus clearly lies on the connection between soul and body, which can be seen in the strong bond between body and daemon. Every different part is given its due and this "complex paradox of simultaneous unity and difference", even of such binary oppositions as mind and body or matter and spirit, depicts that "what makes two concepts polar opposites is what actually unites them and creates a powerful psychic force" (Bird 118). This psychic force can and should then be used to take action and shape society so that the individual can not only find inner unity, but also live in unity with its environment.

In addition to the trinity of body, daemon, and ghost, and matter, spirit, and soul, there are numerous other threefold elements employed on the textual level. Most importantly, there are three different stories of the Fall depicted in the trilogy, which exist independently of one another in their respective worlds, but can be fused in order to form a cohesive whole. While Mary and Will's world is connected to our Catholic story of the Fall, Lyra's world believes in a story of the Fall as causing man and woman to know their own daemons (cf. NL 304). Both, however, share the aspect of shame stemming from experience and knowing the difference between the creatures of the earth. These two stories create a stark contrast to the story of the Fall as presented in the world of the mulefa. Here, the Fall is seen as entirely positive, for it brought consciousness and memory to their world and enabled them to discover how to use the seed-pods as wheels (cf. AS 777). Similar to the depiction of human beings as a threefold entities, each story of the Fall is also given its due in the trilogy. Only by acknowledging and understanding each separate part can the stories be fused to derive sensible conclusions with regard to the discourses of innocence and experience, and determinism and free will.

The constant employment of the number three is also highly relevant in this regard. Mulefa, as admirable beings living in perfect unity with their environment, have existed for thirty-three thousand years (cf. AS 777), the Royal Society as the first true scientific society was set up three hundred years ago (cf. AS 890), Spectres

entered the world at precisely the same time and the trees in the mulefa world began to sicken due to changes in the flow of Dust (cf. AS 785). Moreover, there are three magical objects employed in the trilogy, namely the Golden Compass, the Subtle Knife, and the Amber Spyglass, and Mary names precisely three criteria which transform creatures into people, namely language, fire, and society (cf. AS 697). Above all, it is also obvious but nonetheless important that *His Dark Materials* is a trilogy, which ties in with the overall focus on the number three and the idea of trinity reworked in this motif.

On a metalevel, this fusion of seemingly contrastive entities in trinities points towards the idea that even though the different entities can function on their own, they can only reach their full potential in a harmonious unity. Despite the fact that entities such as spirit and matter appear as binary opposites, Pullman argues that each element can only reach its peak in the fusion with contrastive elements. The author seems to hint at "the conflict or struggle between opposites that is imperative for human development" (Bird 119), which ties in with his belief in the industrious nature of human beings and their ability to shape the world. Especially because this idea of human trinity furthers the possibility of harboring both good and evil character traits, Bird argues that "Pullman appears to share Blake's acceptance and appreciation of the human being as a dynamic, inclusive being comprising body and soul, good and evil, the notion being that opposites are inadequate unless synthesized" (122). It can be argued that the fusion of contrastive elements creates the potential for new inspirations and a thriving for an active involvement in shaping one's own destiny. Furthermore, the threefoldness of unities provides readers with a framework which enables them to make assumptions about the story's further development. As a result, readers will be more invested in the story, as they may feel aware of the story's superstructure. This approach is supported by the constant employment of the number three to offer a sense of security for the reader and to give an overall sense of coherence to the text. Readers will thus feel the power to guide themselves in their reading experience, rather than being confronted with a narrator who seemingly knows more than he would like to tell his readers. Consequently, notions of free will versus a passive submission to fate, or in this case, to a heteronomous reading experience, are resolved in the interplay of textual and metatextual levels.

5. The Concept of Daemons

In the preceding chapter, the idea of daemons as external representations of the soul and thus as an essential part of human nature has already been addressed. However, the concept of daemons must be considered separately in the negotiation of determinism and free will in Pullman's narrative, due to the daemons' involvement in the struggle between innocence and experience, childhood and adulthood, and the nature of love.

Not only can it be argued that the daemon "enrich[es] individual identity through a connection to a 'totem animal'" (Lenz 144), but also that the daemons in Lyra's world also function as a representation of the soul, and therefore as Carl Gustav Jung's *anima* and *animus*. Given the fact that a person's daemon is nearly always of the other sex and frequently takes over the role of both the subconscious and the super-ego, it can be argued that daemons function as the male or female aspect of a person, which needs to be acknowledged and dealt with in order to form an identity (cf. Boeree 7). According to Jung, our nature is inherently bisexual, so our personality is not only determined by our physical gender, but also by the collective unconscious of men, if the person is female, or by the collective unconscious of women, if the person is male. These collective unconscious identities are termed animus (male) and anima (female), and Jung expresses that human beings can only form their social identity in a complex negotiation with these unconscious aspects (cf. ibid.). Arguably, daemons are therefore the embodiment of Jung's anima and animus and transcend the boundaries of the self, in order to visualize the complex relationship to one's unconsciousness. However, the understanding of daemons as the simple embodiment of the unconscious would be too narrow. Based on the fact that especially Lyra's daemon Pantalaimon frequently functions as her conscience, it suggests itself to understand daemons as both the super-ego and the subconscious. In the beginning of the first novel, Pantalaimon is introduced as Lyra's daemon and it is visualized how Lyra's personality is shaped and transformed in the negotiation with her daemon (cf. NL 13). While deciding whether or not to investigate the attempted murder of her uncle/father Lord Asriel, Pantalaimon reminds Lyra that the affairs of Lord Asriel and the masters are none of their business. He even goes so far as to say that "it would be the silliest thing [Lyra has]

ever done in a lifetime of silly things" (ibid.) which underlines his function as a super-ego. Based on their contrastive approaches to risky undertakings it becomes apparent that Lyra as the body and Pantalaimon as the soul – even though they are essentially part of one single human being – think independently of one another. Consequently, Lyra is not forced to give in to the demands of her super-ego, as she accuses her daemon of being a coward and reminds him of his role as her consciousness (cf. NL 14). According to Lyra, it should be rather obvious to her daemon that she would no longer have a clear conscience if she left the scene and did nothing to protect Lord Asriel. On a metalevel, this exchange between Lyra and her daemon can be interpreted as a negotiation between conflicting passions which helps to create and form one's personality.

In Pullman's trilogy, daemons also function as indicators of the essential difference between children and adults, as children's daemons can change their forms, whereas adults' daemons cannot. Resembling the "fluidity of the child's nature" (Lenz 140) and their mind as a tabula rasa, children's daemons are able to change their forms whenever necessary, be it to express emotions, give comfort, protect their human being, or to aid them with their current appearance (cf. NL 87). Children love their daemons' ability to change forms and it is therefore only natural how Lyra laments the fact that her daemon will have to settle into its final form in the future (cf. NL 142). John Pridmore's interpretation of Pullman's daemons goes into the same direction, as he credits the author for having "succeeded where definitions fail in conveying the fluid and dynamic character of spiritual growth" (49) by creating the daemon as an external representation of a person's nature. A child's personality is not fully developed yet, which gives children the ultimate freedom to decide who they want to become. This creates a stark contrast to the adult whose daemon has already settled and, in a way, can give away the adult's personality even before entering a conversation. Despite the fact that the possibility of change and growth seemingly diminishes as a child grows up and its daemon settles, there is an immense compensation for the settled form, namely "knowing what kind of person you are" (NL 142). As her newfound friend Jerry the Able-Seaman explains to Lyra, there is really no point in denying or fighting the daemon's final shape, as every daemon is ultimately going to settle in a form which represents their person best.

Jerry then adds, that especially those people who wish to have a lion for a daemon will end up with a poodle and must "learn to be satisfied with what they are" (ibid.).

In addition to the symbolizing of a child's fluid character, daemons are also employed in the narrative to depict sexuality and love. As it is stated in *Northern Lights*, touching another person's daemon is strictly prohibited and deeply inscribed into the collective mind of Lyra's world, for it would mean to touch another person's soul (cf. NL 123). Daemons are thus seen as sacred and an essential part of a human's nature which must not be invaded by outsiders. In Bolvangar, Lyra is spying on Mrs. Coulter and her accomplices when she utters a little cry and is thus spotted by the group. One of the men then proceeds to grab Pantalaimon and despite her eagerness to fight, "suddenly all the strength went out of her" (NL 228). To Lyra,

> it was as if an alien hand had reached right inside where no hand had a right to be, and wrenched at something deep and precious. She felt faint, dizzy, sick, disgusted, limp with shock. (ibid.)

Although there is no clear evidence for this, it can be argued that touching another person's daemon without permission resembles rape in our world, as this passage shows what a horrendous experience this event is for Lyra.

However, daemons are not only connected to sexuality in an essentially negative way. During puberty, they are also representative of a person's developing relationship to its own body and the onset of feelings like love and shame. Irrespective of the fact that Lyra and Pantalaimon are the best of friends and have bathed together multiple times, this behaviour is questioned during their stay at Mrs. Coulter's apartment. Here, Lyra is to be shaped into a fine young woman, which is why Mrs. Coulter sends Pantalaimon away when Lyra is in the bath (cf. NL 70). According to the Church, daemons must never watch their naked human, for they are of the opposite gender. This scene clearly indicates how puberty is connected to the onset of sexual shame, which is then personified in the shameful retreat of the daemon. Instead of curiously experiencing one's own sexuality, as Pantalaimon intended to do, this behaviour is rejected by the Church. As a result, children at the onset of puberty are burdened with the idea of sexual shame and are taught to view their own sexuality as something inherently sinful.

Luckily, this idea of sexual shame is overcome in the trilogy and a love

relationship blossoms between the main protagonists Lyra and Will. However, even before the two young teenagers are fully aware of their own feelings, Pantalaimon functions as an embodiment of said confusing emotions. While Lyra is still too shy to touch Will when he needs comfort, the boy suddenly "find[s] Pantalaimon's head on his knee" as he starts to lick his wounded hand for support (SK 476). Not only does Pantalaimon express Lyra's confused feelings for Will on a physical level, but he also voices her affection for Will while thinking that Lyra is fast asleep (cf. SK 543). From this scene can be gathered that daemons are able to counter the impulses of their human to engage in scary and risky undertakings which cross the boundaries of what their human normally feels able to do. Instead of being cross with Pantalaimon, Lyra pretends to be asleep while she nervously processes her daemon's daring confession. Daemons can therefore function as catalysts for human action and driving forces behind emotional development, especially in matters of love during puberty.

The first instance of sexual contact between Lyra and Will is also resolved in their touching of the other person's daemon (cf. AS 931). Without realizing what they are doing, both protagonists simply seize the nearest daemon and feel "the same little shock of excitement" when they find themselves holding the other person's daemon (ibid.). Here, the image of touching another person's daemon and thereby essentially touching their soul is used to depict how first love usually comes as a surprise during puberty. Towards the end of the trilogy, Lyra and Will are more aware and sure of their love for each other, so they even deliberately touch their lover's daemon (cf. AS 1000). At first, Lyra is shocked because of the unfamiliar feeling, but then "her surprise [is] mixed with a pleasure so like the joy that flooded through her when she had put the fruit to his lips that she couldn't protest, because she was breathless" (ibid.). In referencing their first sexual encounter and thus Lyra-as-Eve's second Fall, Pullman gives their mutual affection a positive connotation. Due to their expression of mutual affection via touching the other person's daemon, both protagonists become aware of the fact that their daemons will not change their forms anymore, after "having felt a lover's hands on them" (ibid.). Only in their acceptance of their feelings and their expression of said emotions were the protagonists able to integrate them into their personality and develop their character.

Love is thus presented as a catalyst which is needed to understand who you are and to truly settle into your character, as it is expressed in their daemons' settling into their final forms.

Connecting the idea of daemons to questions of innocence, experience, determinism and free will, it is undeniable that the trilogy counters the Romantic ideal of childhood as a time of innocence, which must be preserved by all means. As Bokne argues, Pullman exposes childhood innocence "as a means to silence and control children, and the wish to preserve innocence and deny children the right to growth is shown to have catastrophic consequences" (3). According to the Church in *HDM*, children should be kept from entering a stage of experience, also known as puberty, because feelings of love and sexuality must be suppressed to preserve their innocence. Consequently, their daemons are not allowed to settle into their final form and are even tried to be cut away via the horrific process of intercision (cf. NL 306ff.). To keep children in the state of innocence means to deny them the possibility of developing their own distinctive character and of coming to terms with what sort of person they truly are. As can be seen in the trilogy, children who have undergone the process of intercision are spiritless without their daemons, since they do not express their emotions anymore and appear to be lost souls (cf. NL 180). Another form of threat to a person's daemon are the so called Spectres who "snatch and devour the daemons of any hapless adults who fall into their clutches" (Lenz 140). This idea of soul-eaters who threaten the spirits and characters of adults can be interpreted as Pullman's appreciation of the soul as an essential – if not the most essential – part of the human being.

In his appreciation of the soul and the depiction of experience, love, and sexuality as necessary means of developing a distinctive character, Pullman seems to champion free choices and an active approach to human life. Only in the negotiation with one's conscience, soul, or daemon can one's character fully develop. This means that mistakes must be made and conflicts must be argued out, in order to become an autonomous human being. True autonomy can only be achieved by a pragmatic outlook on life and the belief in personal growth. Pre-determinism and destiny are thus removed from the spotlight, at least with regard to the development of the human soul and the human self. Daemons inherently function as

representations of human development and the fluidity of their form during puberty signifies Pullman's belief in free choices and autonomous development of character, irrespective of divine plans or pre-determined paths. However, it can be argued that this belief in free will is questioned by the author's choice of presenting adults' daemons as fixed in form. Once settled into their final form, daemons depict their human's character which conveys an air of stagnation, for their character development seems completed. Even though they may have developed based on free choices and irrespective of deterministic notions during childhood and puberty, the idea of being presented with a fixed representation of your personality may cause notions of determinism to reappear. In a circular reasoning, a daemon's form may subconsciously influence personal choices and thereby determine the course of a person's life, simply because someone might feel as though an action or decision might suit her personality-as-daemon's form or not. On the other hand, the daemon is not silenced alongside with its settling into a final form. Therefore, personal growth still seems possible in the negotiation with the daemon, but arguably not as extensive as during puberty.

In summary, Pullman clearly utilizes the external representation of a person's soul to depict his approach to the oppositions of innocence and experience, and determinism and free choice. A daemon's change of shape is caused by emotions and experiences and while the daemon's fluidity expresses the still unsettled character of a child, it also represents the value of experience as a means of developing character and realizing who you truly are. Free choice and takings risks are therefore presented as necessary means to shape human beings. This challenges the idea of life as pre-determined by either an omnipotent creator or powerful fates. Still, it remains a matter of interpretation whether this belief in human potential for development via free will can be transferred to the adult, based on their fixed character in the shape of their settled daemon. Deterministic notions may arise, as the adult's decisions may be influenced by their daemon's form and their lives may be shaped accordingly. At last, it can be argued that the promotion and advancement of free will is presented as far more difficult in adulthood, as it requires constant effort to challenge yourself when your character is already settled.

6. Religion in *His Dark Materials*

As presented in the previous chapter, the binary opposition of innocence and experience is closely tied to religious issues and the teachings of the Church in Lyra's world. This Church practices a distorted variety of catholic Christianity and is strongly opposed to experience and sexuality. Its spiritual leader is technically a ghastly being referred to as the 'Authority', but due to its old age and frailty power was given to the Lord Regent Metatron, an immensely powerful angel. Throughout the narrative, the reader however learns that despite the fact that the Authority has given himself multiple names such as God, Yahweh, the Father, or the Almighty, "he was never the creator" (AS 622). He may have been "the first angel, true, the most powerful" (ibid.), but he was formed of Dust, comparable to all other beings, and merely told all those who came after him that he was the rightful creator of all. Consequently, the Authority can be considered a usurper who founded his kingdom on lies and banished those who questioned his authority. His Lord Regent now reigns in his name with immense force and plans to "set up a permanent inquisition in every world, run directly from the kingdom" (AS 647). In order to suppress those who question the Church's authority, its members do not refrain from using torture (cf. SK 358), installing censors to "suppress the news of any heretical discoveries" (ibid. 428), and trying to "destroy the joys and the truthfulness of life" (SK 546).

Lyra-as-second-Eve poses a dangerous threat to Metatron and his Church, for she symbolizes the re-awakening of knowledge, curiosity, and sexuality. Her Fall must be prevented at all costs to keep humanity in a state of innocence and ignorance. Not only does the Church attempt to cut daemons away from their humans via intercision, but they also take on drastic measures to ensure Lyra's downfall. Because they were not able to prevent Eve's first Fall from grace, the members of the Church are now bound to kill her before she is tempted and plan to create a bomb with a lock of Lyra's hair to destroy her when it detonates (cf. AS 864f.).

Due to the fact that Church is founded upon a text which despises experience and sexuality and attempts to subjugate humanity, those who oppose the Church refer to its basis as "corrupt" (NL 306). However, not only is the Church in Lyra's world termed corrupt, but the criticism is extended by the witch queen Ruta Skadi to every

other church in the world. According to her, "every church is the same: control, destroy, obliterate every good feeling" (SK 370). It cannot be ultimately decided whether Pullman shares this rejection of every church, but it must be taken into account that he uses characters such as Ruta Skadi to point out the oppressive forms many churches in our world have taken over the past centuries. An example for these oppressive churches is mentioned by the witch queen in the same paragraph, as she refers to churches in the south lands where cult members cut the sexual organs of boys and girls in order to prevent sexual feelings (cf. ibid.). This strongly resembles the practice of intercision used to separate daemon and human to suppress experience and sexual maturity. Furthermore, the Church is connected to sexual assaults and preemptive penance as a means of justification for sins to be committed in the name of the Church. Men in the Church are described as having a "feverish obsession with sexuality, men with dirty fingernails, reeking of ancient sweat, men whose furtive imaginations would crawl over [a girl's] body like cockroaches" (AS 859), which inspires associations with recent sexual offenses in the Catholic church. Said offenses are not explicitly mentioned in the books, but this description of male Church members in relation to the idea of preemptive penance to justify sins supports the overall hint at sexual offenses committed by Church members. Preemptive penance is then used by those Church members to build up "a store of credit" for an inevitable sin (AS 655). By committing to preemptive penance for an extended period of time, a person is said to be able to even murder another human being without losing their state of grace (cf. ibid.).

Another textual motif which illustrates the oppressiveness of the Church and its prevention of all happiness is the idea of the afterlife as a frightening dump for the dead (cf. AS 835). Here, ghosts are forced to lead a miserable existence without any chance of escape. Despite the fact that their deaths come to them kindly and usher them to join the ferry to the land of the dead, the ghosts are depicted as "shivering and frightened and full of pain" (ibid.). By depicting the afterlife as the most inhuman existence possible, Pullman clearly creates a contrast with Christianity's description of the afterlife, where people travel to heaven and delight in the presence of God. Admittedly, two interpretations of this contrast must be taken into account. It seems plausible that Pullman uses the land of the dead as yet another affront against

organized religion by revealing that Christianity cannot uphold its promise of a pleasant afterlife in heaven. Instead, churches lead their members to believe in the idea of heaven, despite the fact that eternal salvation is never a true option. While this line of argumentation appears convincing, another approach to Pullman's idea of the afterlife should not be dismissed. From a rather positive point of view, the author could also employ the idea of the land of the dead in order to distance his depiction of the Church from the Christian church. As a result, Pullman's criticism of organized religion cannot be ascribed solely to the Christian church due to striking differences such as the depiction of the afterlife.

On the one hand, religion – when it is understood in terms of organized institutions – is depicted as immensely negative in Pullman's narrative. The oppressive Church sees the Fall as a true fall from grace, because Adam and especially Eve rebelled against God, acquired knowledge, became aware of their sexuality, and where therefore expulsed from Paradise. In consequence, Eve is the embodiment of Original Sin and her second Fall in the persona of Lyra must be prevented at all costs to ensure the continuing dominance of the Church. Pullman's narrative on the other hand, counters this idea of the Fall as a fall from grace. According to the author, it should rather be considered a fall *into* grace, as the story is "not about a primal sin and its calamitous consequences", but instead "all about growing up" (Pridmore 25). The Fall is depicted as a *felix culpa*, a happy sin, and can be considered the ultimate eucatastrophe, for after Will and Lyra's kiss "there was nothing but silence [around them], as if all the world were holding its breath" (AS 972). In contrast to the teachings of the Church, knowledge of good and evil, as well as experience are highly valued in Pullman's trilogy, as they are necessary to transcend the state of innocent childhood and emerge as a reasonable human being. Human consciousness is based on experience and knowledge, "for only with that knowledge comes our capacity to choose" (Pridmore 52). As hinted at by Pridmore, growing up must include different, and necessarily challenging and difficult experiences, as well as sexual encounters, inner struggles, and negotiations between good and evil, in order to develop consciousness. Only via human consciousness are human beings able to use rational thought and make decisions based on free will.

According to Pullman, the Church ties in with a restriction of free will and the

development of rational thought. In consequence, it seems only logical that the Authority is euthanised and his Lord Regent Metatron killed while being consumed by his suppressed lust for the human body (cf. AS 924f.). In his final moments, the Authority as the source of the Church's oppression is described as a "poor thing" which arouses pity in Will and Lyra (AS 925). Lyra tries to comfort him, as he is "terrified, crying like a baby and cowering away" into the furthest corner of the litter in which he was kept; far away from the war between Church members and those who oppose them (ibid.). Being thus removed from the actual storyline, the Authority seems to have lost its significance and is now nothing more than a "demented and powerless" being begging to be freed from the pain of its reality (ibid.). When he is taken out of his litter, he simply dissolves into thin air and Will and Lyra's last impression of the authority is of his eyes "blinking in wonder, and a sigh of the most profound and exhausted relief" (AS 926). The fact that the Authority is euthanised by Will and Lyra raises issues of atheism and deism. While atheism rejects the belief in deities and denies that they even exist, deism is concerned with the idea that God created the world but then left it on its own. Deistic notions in the trilogy can therefore be connected to the depiction of the Authority as a powerless and aged being who was removed from any relevant events on earth and left to himself. However, the Authority is – as the reader is made aware throughout the story – not the actual divine creator, which is why the argument does not seem to add up. The same goes for the idea of Pullman as an atheist: the author deliberately includes deities in his narrative and does not deny their existence. Arguably, the Authority and Metatron are not deities in the strictest sense. Still, the author only disposes of them instead of defeating the actual deity in the narrative, the mysterious substance called Dust. The idea of Dust as a deity will be explored in the next chapter.

As the Authority is thus removed from the unfolding of the plot, the evilness of the Church is embodied in his Lord Regent Metatron. First, he is described as the most powerful of all angels and seems omnipotent. Then, however, the reader is made aware of his weakness for the human body, which he longingly seeks to possess (cf. AS 917). The climax of his lust for human flesh is embodied in Mrs. Coulter, for she lures him in with her beauty and seductive body as she pretends to fall for him to protect her daughter. Only by playing on his weakness are Mrs.

Coulter and Lord Asriel able to defeat Metatron. This in turn shows how highly the body is valued in Pullman's trilogy, as it represents experience, sexuality, and deliberate choices.

Last but not least, it must be stated that even though the Church and its Lord Regent function as the ultimate embodiments of evil in the trilogy, almost all other characters also display satanic character traits. On a metalevel, Pullman paints a more nuanced picture in his trilogy, instead of presenting the reader with a black-and-white image in which characters are either good or bad. Our heroine Lyra is presented as a chronic liar who often acts childish and stubborn, Lord Asriel is both an egomaniacal rebel and driven protector of his world, Mrs. Coulter is torn between her lust for power and the caring defense of her child, and even the seemingly evil Lord Boreal/Sir Charles Latrom inspires good and necessary events for the further development of the plot as he challenges Lyra and Will to find the Subtle Knife in exchange for Lyra's alethiometer (cf. SK 461f.). In addition to the nuanced characterizations of his protagonists, Pullman also shows how Lyra's Fall does not only have positive consequences. Despite it being the ultimate eucatastrophe for the multiverse, the flow of Dust can only be thoroughly stopped when nearly all windows cut by the Subtle Knife are closed. This means that Lyra and Will cannot visit each other through windows in their worlds, so they are forced to assume separate lives (cf. AS 988).

All in all, *His Dark Materials* blurs the boundaries of good and evil in order to show that both sides can exist in one person and that certain events have positive, as well as negative consequences. Realizing that the world is not a black-and-white picture is mandatory to ensure that moral conscience and free will are developed. The idea that due to free will "people have the potential for both good and evil" (Nilsen 60) is highly valued in the trilogy and is thought of as essential for the development of the young reader as well. Only by realizing that actions are often inspired by conflicting impulses and their re-negotiation can a person, and especially a teenager, grow into an autonomous human being capable of rational thought and the exercise of free will.

Religion is used in *HDM* as a stepping stone for the evaluation of free will and determinism in connection with innocence and experience, as well as sexual

development. Moreover, Pullman appears to question institutionalised religion and its presentation of only one true interpretation of the Bible. Not only do characters such as Xaphania embody satanic values in their questioning of the Authority's dominance (cf. Heumen 20), which supports Pullman's praise of knowledge and strive for truth, but the author also "deliberately merges conflicting biblical figures into his own characters" (ibid. 42). This process can first and foremost be seen in the character of Lyra who is both a second Eve and an embodiment of Christ in her defeat of Death. Much like Jesus Christ who descended into hell to free the souls of the dead does Lyra descend into the land of the dead to bring salvation to the ghosts who have been trapped by the Authority. Dr. Mary Malone can then be considered a fusion of the snake as a temptress, arguably another version of Eve, and the Virgin Mary, based on her telling name. As a storyteller, she functions as the biblical serpent whose actions inspire the Fall. Moreover, her arrival in the world of the mulefa resembles the awakening of the first people in the Garden of Eden (cf. AS 665f.) and her driven exploration of their world and society reminds the attentive reader of Eve's pursuit of knowledge which led to her expulsion from Paradise. Yet in the case of Pullman's narrative, the curious Mary-as-Eve is not expulsed from Paradise but rather deeply integrated in the wondrous workings of the mulefa people. The use of his characters as fused embodiments of different biblical figures is representative of Pullman's ideology and supports the negotiation of free will and determinism. Freed from the suppressive boundaries of institutionalised religion are characters presented with "the freedom to fulfill the role they want to assume" (Heumen 43), independent of predestined paths and oppressive fates.

7. Religious Substitutes

Even though Philip Pullman's trilogy is clearly opposed to institutionalised religion and suppressive beliefs, a religious undertone remains. Not only because of the vast allusions to religious themes and motifs, as well as the story of the Fall and the Harrowing of Hell, but also because the unity of several other entities in the novels creates a new deity and furthers the both spiritual and highly religious undercurrent.

a. The New Atheist Novel

Still, the rejection of institutionalised religion remains very prominent in *HDM*, which is the reason why authors such as Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate termed the trilogy, and especially its last volume *The Amber Spyglass*, a 'New Atheist Novel'. Bradley and Tate define New Atheism as an ideology which "constitutes a new and powerful creation mythology that – like all mythologies – performs an implicit anthropological service" (7). With regard to Pullman's trilogy, it can be stated that the author creates a new mythology revolving around the mysterious substance of Dust in order to liberate his narrative from the mythology defining the Western world. Narratives of Greek mythology and biblical stories must be overcome in order to transform the human race "from the immaturity of our self-imposed childhood […] into the adulthood of reason, truth and freedom of thought" (ibid.). As can be gathered from the preceding chapters, said attributes are of the highest value for Pullman and must be supported to create experiences via free will. The fact that Pullman's narrative remains rooted in its intertextual sources it tries to overcome is actually necessary to reveal the clash of determinism and free will. Even though the trilogy may appear to critics as a self-conscious re-telling of the Fall, Bradley and Tate state that this re-telling is inevitable in order to truly appeal to "Christian concepts of grace, redemption and personal sacrifice" (13). Basing the storyline on a well-known Christian narrative simplifies the allusion to Christian values which are – despite Pullman's outspoken rejection of institutionalised Christianity – vigorously lauded in *HDM*. Furthermore, the appreciation of preexisting mythologies also simplifies the creation of his "counter-myth" (Bradley/Tate 58), which develops as an alternative draft to the well known story of the Fall from grace and the expulsion from Paradise due to Adam and Eve's knowledge of good and evil.

It can therefore be argued by those in favour of the trilogy's assignment to the group of New Atheist novels that in our Western society, in which the role of institutionalised religion has been diminished, the novel can become the space in which the influence of religion and deities can be tested. Due to Pullman's confident use of intertextuality, he creates a literary space in which he explores "the dialectics of human freedom and divine rule or free will and determinism; and, ultimately, the very Nietzschean question of whether human beings will ever leave behind their faith

in an invisible, ethereal, but all-powerful creator" (Bradley/Tate 56).

Authority and autonomy are presented as desirable in the trilogy, and this idea can be explained best in reference to those characters in *HDM* who exist on the margins of society. The witches serve as possibly the most striking example here, for they do not practice religion in the strictest sense. Nature is highly valued among them and although they believe in deities such as Yambe-Akke, the goddess of death, they are depicted as "merry and lighthearted", making their visits "gifts of joy" (SK 361). In his presentation of precisely these characters as loveable individuals, Pullman seems to support the idea of lives lived either independent from religion or in a healthy and well-balanced relationship with religion on an equal footing. In order to offer the same harmonious life to other characters, institutionalised religion personified by the Authority must be overcome. As the author then kills off the Authority-as-usurper, a new space is created for another, more open, loving, and accepting deity in the form of the mysterious substance called Dust. This substance, however, is closely connected to a pantheistic outlook on the trilogy's multiverse, which then questions the ascription of Pullman's novels to the group of New Atheist literature. Based on the trilogy's focus on a harmonious unity with the environment and the way in which the dead are reunited with nature and the universe in their dissolving into the night sky (cf. AS 889), the trilogy obtains a strong pantheistic notion which counters the idea of New Atheism (cf. Bradley/Tate 78). In conclusion, the employment of an atheistic approach to the trilogy is justified on a superficial level, but must then be discarded in favour of Dust's pantheistic potential which will be clarified in the following chapter.

b. Dust

This chapter explores the concept of Dust as a link between spirit and matter and a representative entity for Pullman's substitution of institutionalised religion with a pantheistic worldview based on harmonious unity. Dust is described as a mysterious substance resembling "a fountain of glowing particles" coming down from the sky (NL 24). It cannot be seen with the naked eye, but with the help of special mechanisms such as Lord Asriel's "specially prepared emulsion" (ibid. 23) or Mary's Amber Spyglass (cf. AS 890ff.) it becomes apparent that Dust only settles on

adults and not on children. The reason for this is that "children have not yet awakened sexually" (Sedlmayr 5), whereas adults are already shaped by experiences, have gathered knowledge of good and evil, and act as autonomous beings driven by free will. Based on the knowledge that the Church in Lyra's world is strictly opposed to experience and sexuality, it can be argued that Dust also avoids Church members. This hypothesis can be supported by the fact that the daemon/soul-eating Spectres do not attack clergymen either (cf. AS 696). Dust is not only linked to experience and sexuality, but also to the quality of the human soul. To the Church then, Dust ultimately "symbolizes the awakening of sexual awareness, humanity's rejection of the heavenly for the earthly, and thus, a descent from spirit to matter" (Bird 116).

Strikingly, one of Dust's most fundamental characteristics is that it is neither spirit nor matter, which allows it to communicate via mechanisms operated by negative capability. The poet Keats first described this concept, which allows a person to be "confident and relaxed at the same time" (SK 400) and open to "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (ibid. 401). Mary masters this ability and in her exchange with the mysterious entity it is revealed that Dust has a variety of names such as Shadows or dark matter. Moreover, it actually intervened in human evolution to seek vengeance for the Church's oppression and the lies of the Authority (cf. AS 527ff.). Dust refers to itself in the plural and its particles explain that they can be compared to angels as beings of spirit, while their acts are actually acts of matter and thus connect them to the body as a distinct force in Pullman's trilogy. In this fusion of spirit and matter, Dust shows that the two are "intricately linked [as] two aspects of the same substance" and thereby function as a deconstruction of "the hierarchical structure of binary oppositions" (Nielsen 13). Consequently, Dust symbolizes the challenging of traditional Christian concepts in its unity of binary oppositions and the praise of both body and spirit, or soul. The acknowledgement of the body's importance is also represented in the accumulation of Dust around objects which have been shaped by "human workmanship and human thought" (SK 401). This, in turn, leads to Dust's association with the development of human societies furthered by knowledge, understanding, and experience. As pointed out by the angel Balthamos, "Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself" (AS 622), which

means that Dust is both dependent on human beings and a necessary tool for the harmonious advancement of human societies. However, Dust is more than just understanding. It is human consciousness based on free will and peaceful unity with nature, as "Dust's mode of existence can be associated with pantheism […], the belief in oneness with all living things" (Tóth 292). Pantheism expresses the belief that God can be found in the entire universe, especially in nature, and is not connected to one single deity. Dust embodies this idea, for it can be found in nature and all natural entities cling to it for they are presented as dependent on its settling on them.

While this offering of Dust as an arguably more approachable and all-embracing deity would offer a convincing option for those who oppose institutionalised religion and aim to defeat the Church, the acceptance of this new belief is complicated throughout the trilogy. Roughly 300 years ago and therefore interestingly during the age of Enlightenment, Dust started to leave the multiverse which caused great damage to nature and those living in harmony with it. The vanishing of Dust may have been caused by the invention of the Subtle Knife, a magical object which cuts windows to other worlds inside the multiverse (cf. SK 437). Dust then leaks through these openings and finally vanishes from the multiverse altogether. During the age of Enlightenment rationality and knowledge were celebrated, which would lead the attentive reader to assume that this period of time would be the peak of Dust's formation. The fact that Dust started to leave the multiverse during this age can be explained with its close connection to nature and the spiritual world. Especially in the course of the Industrial Revolution, nature was largely replaced by factories and machines, causing a decline of the spiritual world's importance. As a result, "people became increasingly alienated from nature" (Nilsen 75) and closed their minds to other forms of understanding than pure rationality. Dust cannot be explained by pure rationality, which is why its decline was inevitable. In addition, the fact that the Subtle Knife and its windows also cause Dust to leak from the multiverse is very striking, since the delicate blade of the Subtle Knife is made almost entirely of Shadows or Dust (cf. SK 475).

The fusion of binary opposites and the conflict this can cause is thus embodied in the object, as it both represents the desire for human consciousness in its

opening of other worlds and the necessity to close these openings to stop the outflow of Dust. Obtaining the knowledge that the outflow of Dust can only be stopped by finding new connections to the spiritual in nature, as well as by finally closing the windows to other worlds in the multiverse, has two important consequences for the narrative.

First, as Mary understands while she observes the dead vanishing into the night sky of the mulefa world (cf. AS 944), the outflow of Dust must be stopped immediately and can only be stopped via storytelling. Even though she is not quite sure how to interpret her epiphany she does feel as if she knows what her true calling is. She gathers that "the only way to partially divert the current of Dust is to give yourself up to the sensual" (Miteva 5), which will then release such an immense energy, that the terrible outflow is at least momentarily stopped. In order to serve as a catalyst and create an immense power in the transition from innocence to experience, Mary uses her stories to inspire sexual and sensual awareness in Will and Lyra. Their bodies are thus linked to the spiritual via Dust and the fusion of the former binary oppositions of innocence and experience in body and spirit creates the ultimate eucatastrophe (cf. AS 972). Suddenly, nature seems able to breathe again and Dust's particles are "falling like snowflakes" to the ground (AS 975). Will and Lyra's unity in love and their awakening of sexuality seems to pierce the broken pieces of the multiverse back together and offers peace and harmony to their starved surroundings.

Nonetheless, and this is the second necessary endeavor to ultimately break the rapid outflow of Dust, Will and Lyra's unity must be broken off again, in order to provide continuous unity and harmony for the multiverse. Each time a window to another world is opened, soul-eating Spectres are created which endanger all live on earth, for they "grow by feeding on Dust" and eventually erase human curiosity and happiness (AS 990). Will and Lyra are thereby forced to acknowledge that true unity and heaven on earth represented by the Republic of Heaven can only be created in one's own world (cf. AS 991). By deeming this painful parting of the young lovers an inevitable prerequisite for perfect unity, Pullman once more fuses binary oppositions to highlight that a negotiation of contrasts inspires great events, even though said events require immense sacrifices.

Taken as a whole, Dust is representative of the human longing for unity on

several levels: a unity with nature and one's own environment, a sensual and sexual unity via love, and a harmonious unity of contrastive poles, such as experience and innocence, body and soul, or the material and spiritual, to inspire pragmatism and human curiosity. The mysterious particles can be seen as "both the condition and the product of consciousness, curiosity and knowledge" (Tóth 292) which are essential for human development. This development then inspires the disentanglement from oppressive institutionalised religion based on determinism and rigid fates in order to pave the way for the execution of free will in one's own world. Love is presented as the driving force behind Dust and is actually so strong, that it can even overcome death as unity with nature and the universe is provided to the dead. Dust is thereby inherently connected with notions of pantheism, biological determinism, love, and free will which play distinctive parts in the overcoming of suppressive fates and institutionalised religion. The way in which each of these entities and their interplay is presented in the trilogy to create a harmonious multiverse will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

c. Pantheism and the Idea of Biological Determinism

In *HDM*, Pantheism and Dust as an alternative deity are explicitly linked, as Dust is not personified in one single being or object, but rather in an accumulation of particles which can be found anywhere in the universe where there is human consciousness and development. Dust as a deity seems to support the belief in human improvement and potential, with only one slight limitation: People can only live to their full potential and create a better place on earth in their own world. Even though they are technically able to travel between worlds, they cannot stay in another world permanently. Settling in another world would lead to the deamon's death and thereby to the decay of one's soul, because it "can only live its full life in the world it was born in" (AS 888). Since happiness and a unity with one's environment are the ultimate goals in Pullman's trilogy, people cannot disregard their roots and risk the decay of their soul simply to live somewhere they do not truly belong. Here, the idea of biological determinism comes into play.

Throughout the trilogy, various passages can be found in which the striving for anything outside of one's natural habitat or one's natural characteristics is

presented as pointless and self-destructive. Iofur Raknison, the usurper-king of the bears, forces his subjects to leave their natural behaviour behind in favour of imitating human ways. As a result, they are not quite sure what they are, so their actions express "a constant pull of uncertainty" (NL 283). In contrast to Iorek Byrnison, their rightful king who is described as "pure and certain and absolute" (ibid.), the other bears seem to have lost their sense of unity and belonging due to Iofur Raknison's hypocrisy. They are neither bears nor humans which causes a feeling of "torturing inferiority" (NL 290) and it is not until Iorek Byrnison reassumes power that they feel content with what they are again. Pullman uses this depiction of the two opposing kinds of beardom with two different futures or destinies for the bear-kingdom (cf. NL 286) to point out that if beings aspire to be something other than they truly are, they will never feel whole or be at peace with themselves. This idea of biologically determined behaviour is furthered in the bears' decision to become "bears of the mountains" (AS 688) until the world is resettled. The rationality of this decision shows that other beings than humans are capable of rational thought, even though it was not made based on pure free will. However, this decision also implies that the bears must soon return to their natural habitat, for they are away that they can only lead their lives somewhere else for so long.

In other cases, even the concept of Othering is employed to underline Pullman's support of biological determinism. In the first example it is depicted how Mary, unlike the mulefa, can use two arms for special tasks which, while making her valuable for their community, also cuts her off from the others (cf. AS 701). Her behaviour may be natural for her, but cannot be considered natural in the universe of the mulefa. Here, community and harmony are valued above all, arguably also above efficiency and the greatest quality/quantity ratio. The second example is connected to Lyra's experiences among the gyptians. Similar to the mulefa, the gyptians are living in harmony with their surroundings and value nature and its forces. They refer to themselves as "water people" (NL 99) which gives away how much they identify with their natural habitat and their biologically determined nature. Lyra on the other hand – even though she loves their lifestyle and "might pass for gyptian with practice" (ibid.) – is described as a "fire person" with "witch-oil in [her] soul" (ibid.). Consequently, Lyra is dissociated from the gyptians based on their different

biological natures and innermost characteristics. Furthermore, this passage underlines the idea that a person may well try to be someone they are not, and may even suppress the longing of one's daemon/soul for a period of time, but eventually that person must accept their personality and listen to the desires of the soul/daemon in order to live in harmony and unity.

These examples of biological determinism closely tie in with Pullman's depiction of the external human soul as daemon. In the chapter on the nature of daemons it was already pointed out that the compensation for the daemon's loss of fluidity is "knowing what kind of person you are" (NL 142). A settled daemon will therefore represent a person's character and most natural behaviour, which may already hint at the person's role in life. As a matter of fact, even though a person may not particularly like its daemon's settled form, it is of no use to wish for another form. The daemon represents your true personality shaped by experiences in a specific environment, in order to ensure the most harmonious interconnection with the universe. Only by accepting one's true nature can happiness arise and unity with nature and the world be ensured. As pointed out by Jordan Arellano, the settled daemon's form "matches completely with the nature of that person's biological, and consequently, social history" which demonstrates how Pullman uses daemons to hint at "a person's subjective relationship to him or herself, and also how they are biologically determined to behave within their society" (21).

Whenever this subjective relationship to the self and the person's surroundings is accepted and made an integral part of the soul, true freedom in harmonious unity will follow. It is very striking how Pullman connects freedom to the acceptance of one's biologically determined nature, and it could be argued that free will therefore does not exist at all. In fact, it is precisely this dependence on one's biologically determined nature which allows for free will to develop. By coming to terms with one's nature and listening to the desires of one's soul, Pullman's characters become self-determined beings instead of externally governed subjects. Freedom thus comes from within and can only be developed when the self is accepted in all its forms; shaped by experiences and the environment.

The mulefa function as the quintessential example of societies living in harmonious unity with their biologically determined nature for they "offer the least

resistance to their inherent biological determinism and social construction" (Arellano 24). Even the constitution of their bodies expresses perfect harmony with nature (cf. AS 668) from which a true society arises, making them people instead of creatures (cf. ibid. 697). Mary, as the first human being to explore the paradisal world of the mulefa, is unable to tell whether wheel or claw, rider or tree came first and so she finally arrives at the insight that in the mulefa's society, everything is linked to create a perfect harmony between people and nature (cf. ibid. 700). As a side note, it is extremely relevant for Pullman's overall take on innocence and experience that only grown-up mulefa are able to use the seed-pods to their advantage. Younger mulefa "long for the day when the wheels would fit" (ibid. 699) and appear as though they are in the wrong element without the seed-pods. Only with the help of experience, originally initiated by a snake curling through a seed-pod, have the mulefa found their true calling and fully established their harmonious interconnectedness with nature. As a result, experience and biological determinism are connected on yet another level and form an "unsophisticated yet biologically determined near-utopia" (Arellano 25) in which free will can be practiced unrestrictedly.

With regard to the overall unfolding of the trilogy's plot, it seems only natural that Will and Lyra learn about their biological nature and true self via their expression of mutual love in the safe space of the mulefa world. Inspired by Mary's story, Will and Lyra's kiss causes a eucatastrophe symbolized in the response of the entire universe. Moreover, it is at this point that their daemons settle into their final shape, for the expression of love caused experiences which changed their personalities and souls forever. Not even death is presented as a destructive force to this love and the harmony it causes, but rather as a catalyst for the "happy annihilation of the self" (Tóth 297) which is also representative of Pullman's appreciation of a pantheistic worldview. In his trilogy, all creatures crave to be reunited with the universe after death and "be out in the open, part of everything alive again" (AS 854). For as long as the Authority was in charge, this annihilation was denied to them as the ghosts were forced to lead a terrible life in the dreary land of the dead. After Will cut a window from the land of the dead into the world of the mulefa, however, the dead are finally able to leave their death behind and re-enter the cosmos as a million different particles. To the dead, this annihilation of the self does

not appear as a defeat and a loss of their autonomous self, but as the opportunity to "be alive again in a thousand blades of grass, and a million leaves, […] glittering in the dew under the stars and the moon out there in the physical world where is [their] true home and always was" (AS 854). In their peaceful death, the dead are thus reunited with the universe and become part of a cosmos driven by love and appreciation of the self. This prospect of a unity in death also functions as a means of consolation to the two young lovers who are forced to acknowledge the impossibility of a shared life in either of their worlds.

Last but not least, the issue of global warming as presented in the trilogy must be included in the analysis of Pullman's belief in pantheism and biological determinism. As it was pointed out beforehand, nature plays an immense part in the trilogy as it is inherently connected to Dust as an alternative deity, represents the dead's happy reunion with the cosmos, and functions as a determining force of a person's self. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the protection of and care for nature gains center stage throughout the trilogy in the author's call for attention to global warming. In various instances, nature is presented as almost holy and capable of both incredible force and beauty (cf. NL 98, 155, AS 664f.), which underlines its power and importance for the provision of harmonious unity. Tragically, nature suffers under the rapid outflow of Dust and the multiverse's consequential disturbance which causes effects similar to global warming. The world is described as deeply confused; both animals and people have been thrown into panic "not only by the fog and the magnetic variations but by unseasonal crackings of ice and stirrings in the soil" (SK 364). Even the permafrost seems to be melting, which strongly reminds the attentive reader of the melting ice-caps in our world. Icebergs have melted, forests are flooded and it seems as though "the whole of nature was overturned" (AS 627). Especially to characters in the trilogy like the witch Serafina Pekkala is this turmoil in nature highly disturbing, for as a witch, she is arguably part of those beings which are closest connected to nature. It does therefore not come as a surprise that she feels "heartsick" (ibid.) at the sight of the decaying nature and senses its need for salvation. Only Lyra and Will's kiss as the ultimate eucatastrophe in the creation of "the true image of what human beings always could be, once they had come into their inheritance" (AS 976) manages to avert the environmental and

thereby universal crisis. This illustrates Pullman's belief "that the fate of human beings and the fate of the Earth are inextricably linked" (Walsh 243). Nature must be protected in order to allow for a harmonious unity of all creatures and the universe driven by Dust as a pantheistic deity, shaped by the concept of biological determinism and inspired by the largest human force: love.

d. From Kingdom to Republic via Love

Throughout the trilogy, love is presented as the strongest and most important human force, as it functions as a catalyst for free will and is thus a vital component for a harmonious unity of all living creatures and the establishment of the Republic of Heaven. Even though this republic is never established, it nonetheless functions as an alternative draft to the oppressive Kingdom of Heaven ruled by Metatron on behalf of the Church and the Authority.

Unlike the Kingdom of Heaven, the Republic will be based on a non-hierarchical society in which free will reigns, so that all creatures can live in unity with the cosmos and their biologically determined natures. The world of the mulefa functions as an example for the outline of the Republic of Heaven, for the mulefa live in perfect harmony with each other, are dependent on mutual help, and praise the environment and nature as essential elements of their culture (cf. Boffy 32). Instead of a personified, omnipresent and omnipotent deity, their world is governed by Dust which simultaneously furthers consciousness, knowledge and experience, and is also nurtured by it. As expressed by Mary, the universe would be empty without at least a replacement of God. However, she does not lament the absence of a personified deity, but rather misses "the sense of being connected to the whole of the universe" (AS 955). Dust is presented as the perfect fit to fill the empty hole created after the end of the Church, as it enables all creatures in the universe to reconnect with the universe in both life and death. Religion is consequently not negated and in fact depicted as essential for mankind, but what Pullman seems to be doing throughout his trilogy is to question whether "virtues like patience, sympathy, kindness and so on are Christian values" (Nilsen 79), or whether they should actually be seen as innate qualities of conscious creatures. This idea that valuable qualities can be found in the human being itself instead of in organized religions is furthered by the

juxtaposition of the biblical story of the Fall and the mulefa's discovery of knowledge and consciousness. The Bible does not present the Fall as a means of mankind's emancipation from oppressive religious structures but as Original Sin and thereby mankind's greatest mistake. In the world of the mulefa, on the other hand, the discovery of knowledge and experience is highly valued for it enabled them to arrive at their true destiny and live in accordance with their biologically determined natures. Shame does not play a part in their enlightened world, simply because a life in unity and harmony does not evoke shame among conscious beings. Thus, the world of the mulefa again functions as a role model for the Republic of Heaven.

Pullman aims to communicate that "the moment of the fall of man was a movement away from vague universalism toward individual subjectivity (Arellano 19), meaning that experience and consciousness enabled people to realise who they are and what the qualities of their souls were. In order to establish a multiverse in which free will reigns and unity and harmony for all beings are provided, institutionalised religion must be defeated via the reenactment of the Fall. Taking the entire unfolding of the plot into account, it can be noticed that not only Lyra-as-Eve plays a central role in the future of mankind, but that several women are highly valued in the trilogy. Lyra and her love for Will cause the second Fall from grace, Mary functions as a female version of the serpent as temptress, Serafina Pekkala and her witch clan are introduced as wise and fierce women who achieve power through mutual support and acknowledging of nature, and Xephania is presented as the first rebel angel to question the dominance of the Authority (cf. AS 983). It can therefore be argued that Pullman values female wisdom and power, since he presents the future of mankind as a matter of women. Certainly, male help is needed which is embodied in characters such as Lee Scoresby or the fearless polar bear Iorek Byrnison, but the female ability to question established structures and to inspire change through love is glorified above all.

In addition to the value of women and harmonious unity, Xaphanaia voices two other important requirements for the establishment of the Republic of Heaven: fate must be acknowledged as a powerful force and true grace can only be gained through hard work (cf. AS 994). The consequence of her utterances mutually entail that Lyra and Will are implicitly forced to follow their forged path and must now

succumb to their fate of leading lives in different worlds. Even though this might seem disastrous to the young lovers, the idea of living in the here and now and accepting one's self only highlights Pullman's belief in the human being and presents himself as a true humanist (cf. Halsdorf/Butler 7). Instead of founding one's life on a path which has been laid out by destiny and religion, people must focus on the present and accept their true self, so that they can exercise free will and build a better life for themselves and for those to come. Dust and the consciousness it brings "allows people to forge their own path" (Nilsen 65) as they confront their fate and use the knowledge of their biologically determined nature to forge their own paths.

When people grow up, they may lose their innocence and innate grace, but, as Xaphania points out, they can regain it through hard work. This may take "a lifetime of thought and effort" but will eventually be even better, "because it will come from conscious understanding" (AS 994), turning this newly acquired grace into something even deeper and fuller for it will be truly connected to the person. Acknowledging these prerequisites for the Republic of Heaven also entails Pullman's demand for placing the community above the individual. Working to regain one's grace means to place the satisfaction of one's own feelings below the improvement of society and the creation of a better multiverse for everyone (cf. NL 119). The author therefore seems to solve the age-old conflict of individual versus society with a clear support of society, as it is essential to enable the continuous pursuit of happiness.

e. The End of Destiny

Of all the prerequisites necessary for the establishment of the Republic of Heaven, the end of destiny is arguably the most important one. Lyra-as-second-Eve embodies this idea, as she is "destined to bring about the end of destiny" (NL 255). Certainly, the part she plays in the Authority's death and the second Fall contribute to the overall aim of ending destiny. However, the way in which she ties in with Will's destiny and how she contributes to free him of this burden truly show how Lyra functions as a means of defeating oppressive notions of determinism and fate.

Will, as pointed out in the preceding chapters, is destined to be the bearer of the Subtle Knife, a mystical object which cuts windows to other worlds. The knife is

presented as extremely powerful and capable of conscious thought, for it "knows when to leave one hand and settle into another" (SK 474), meaning that it chooses its own bearer. Moreover, it is described as "shadow-coloured" (SK 475), which indicates that it consists of Dust and thereby conscious particles furthering experience. Even though Will does not feel ready to take on the immense burden of becoming the knife-bearer, he cannot free himself of his destiny. Free will and personal choice are not an option in this case, forcing Will to succumb to his fate without being able to foresee its consequences. Throughout the course of the trilogy, both Lyra and Will experience personal growth, gather knowledge of good and evil and slowly develop into autonomous beings capable of both rational thought and conscious decision making. Experience inspires Will to question the ever so oppressive ideas of determinism and fate, causing him to even go against his father's advice to not argue with his own nature (cf. AS 932). While Will has learnt that he cannot choose his nature, as it is biologically determined and thereby fixed, he still expresses a firm belief in free will when connected to choosing one's own actions (cf. ibid.). As a result, destiny does in fact exist in the form of biological determinism, but free will plays a significant role nonetheless, for people may not be able to choose where to live their life, but they may choose how to live it. Towards the very end of the trilogy, Will once more expresses how this fusion of determinism and free will can actually work out. Deeply shaped by the momentous experiences in the multiverse, Will understands how free choice can exist alongside paths which have been laid out by destiny. As Xaphania points out, Will has "already taken the first steps towards wisdom" (AS 998), as he is aware that wisdom means to accept one's destiny, while at the same time pursuing one's own goals and consciously deciding what to do and who to become.

Nonetheless, Will could never be truly free and open for conscious decision-making, if he was still under the influence of the Subtle Knife as a determining force. Therefore, his bond with the Subtle Knife must be broken – much like Lyra must lose her ability to read the alethiometer – in order to provide him with the opportunity of personal growth in a harmonious unity with his environment. The only way in which the Subtle Knife can be broken is by thinking about loved ones for then negative capability is distracted and the subtle focus shattered. While it

always used to be the thought of his mother which distorted his focus (cf. AS 722), it is now simply the thought of Lyra as the embodiment of his purest love and innermost feelings which is required to break the Subtle Knife (cf. AS 1009).

In this passage, one of Pullman's central messages is revealed: Love as the strongest human force can overcome destiny and inspire free will as conscious decision making to actively and autonomously shape a person's life. While destiny is acknowledged as a powerful force, especially in connection with biological determinism, it is also presented as a construct which can be overcome via love. Philip Pullman seems to view love and the bonds it weaves between creatures as both sacred and forceful, because it enables his characters to free themselves from the oppressive burdens of laid out paths by destiny. Through love, experience is gathered and the self is shaped, causing a person to develop autonomously and independent of prophecies. For Pullman's trilogy, the common phrase 'love conquers all' really does hold true, for love enables people to overcome their fears, conquer death, defeat seemingly omnipotent opponents and found their lives on a harmonious unity between one's biologically determined nature and the inner drive to consciously make decisions based on free will.

VI. Summary

After various aspects of Philip Pullman's Young Adult fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials* have been analyzed, this chapter is intended to function as a summary of all findings. The present paper provided a discussion of different facets of determinism and free will in *His Dark Materials*, as those two concepts are central to the trilogy and inherently connected to the vast conglomeration of criticism the novels and their author received, especially with regard to religious issues. It was of the greatest interest to find out how Philip Pullman interweaves established ingredients of YA fantasy and philosophically challenging ideas to create a trilogy in which the most fundamental questions of human life can be asked without overwhelming its young readers. In addition, the criticism brought forward by both Christians and Anti-Christians was to be revisited, in order to point to Pullman's appreciation and reworking of Christian narratives, as well as his overall emphasis on an active approach to life in the here-and-now. While Christian narratives naturally

stress the importance of determinism and fate, Pullman's idea of human beings as autonomous creatures capable of free can be seen as an immense contrast to the Christian point of view. Therefore, this paper was also intended to highlight how the author fuses the concepts of free will and determinism in a harmonious unity to inspire his readership. Last but not least, Philip Pullman's word of warning with regard to global warming and his endorsement of nature's protection was also of a certain interest, as it once more bridges the gap between the narrative world and that of his readers to serve as a wake-up call in environmental matters.

In order to first and foremost create a basis for the discussion of free will and determinism, the idea of determinism in YA fantasy literature and its juxtaposition with free will was described. In YA fantasy literature, the concept of determinism is often represented via prophecies and the belief in a Chosen One, as they go hand in hand with ideas of destiny and fate, commonly associated with a broader interpretation of determinism. Destiny and fate appear to be opposing forces to free will which is defined as the ability to consciously make autonomous choices. Consequently, it seems surprising that various YA fantasy novels massively rely on such reactionary concepts instead of using their content to inspire personal growth and autonomy. Nonetheless, as it was pointed out in the second half of the chapter, many YA fantasy novels do in fact use different motifs and structures which allow for personal growth despite oppressive notions of fate. These premises of YA literature include but are not limited to: the removal of parents, as it allows for independent development of the protagonist, parental substitutes as an embodiment of security and the rules of the adult world, an adventure brought forward by chance as a catalyst for the protagonist's growth, the pattern of initiation rites as a narrative structure, and the introduction of omniscient narrators who independently comment on the protagonists' actions to relativize their choices. Especially this juxtaposition of experienced narrator and innocent, childish protagonist inspires interesting possibilities for a negotiation of free will and determinism. With regard to the trilogy in question, *His Dark Materials*, this chapter then provided the starting point for the following discussion, as it was asked how free will can truly be exercised by protagonists despite confining prophecies. In addition, it was enquired how readers of YA literature can be encouraged to believe in their capability of conscious

decision-making to create a better world for themselves with the help of Pullman's trilogy.

As it was pointed out in the second chapter, the trilogy and its author received harsh criticism, most significantly for their drastic take on institutionalised religion. The trilogy's alternative interpretation of the biblical story of the Fall was thought of as a danger to its impressionable readers and an undignified perversion of the achievements of the Catholic Church. Some critics even describe the trilogy as antireligious propaganda and wish to have the novels banned from schools. Based on this vast array of criticism it is understandable why a closer examination of the trilogy appears intriguing, not least to support those critics who celebrate Philip Pullman's trilogy for its inspirational view on religion, its skillful reworking of both determinism and free will, and its belief in love as the strongest human force. The third and largest chapter of this thesis served as an examination of different facets of free will and determinism in *His Dark Materials*. In this paper, the areas of investigation were reduced to seven central fields, in order to avoid thematic overlap. The first field was Pullman's use of Western literary traditions, which included the motif of orphanage, the Chosen One, parental substitutes, and initiation rites. Orphanage was presented as a central concern of Pullman's trilogy with regard to its main protagonists Will and Lyra which allows them to develop largely independent from immediate adult supervision. A stark contrast between childhood and adulthood is formed which is heightened by the adult roles Will has to assume, as well as by Lyra's childish behaviour and their mutual feeling of being alone in the world. However, both protagonists are equipped with magical objects providing them with a feeling of power and self-determination, for only they are able to use them. With the help of these objects, Will and Lyra can overcome their feelings of helplessness and even defy adult authority. The motif of orphanage therefore shows how abandoned children can be empowered to overcome adult superiority and determinism to take action and shape their own fates.

In a second step, the concept of the Chosen One and its connection to determinism, destiny, and fate was highlighted by revealing the prophecies surrounding the protagonists and the way in which said prophecies shape the overall course of action. Lyra's situation must be singled out here, for she functions as both

the embodiment of a second Eve, and is thereby ultimately controlled by a prophecy, and as the one to end all destiny, which seems rather paradoxical. However, it is precisely this fusion of seemingly opposed ideas which makes Pullman's trilogy so intriguing. The author seems to hint at a possible prevailing of determinism in harmonious unity with free will. Lyra must be free to make her own choices, but is also supposed to unintentionally follow the path of her destiny.

To ensure that destiny's paths are followed and the protagonists are protected despite their orphanage, parental substitutes are introduced in the novel. As it was pointed out in this thesis, parental substitutes include characters such as Ma Costa, Lee Scoresby, Serafina Pekkala, or Iorek Byrnison, who function as catalysts for the negotiation of free will and determinism's contrastive notions. Because they live on the margins of society, these parental substitutes developed their moral consciousness largely independent from the Church and can therefore serve as role models for Will and Lyra. Especially Lee Scoresby outspokenly addresses the discourse of free will and determinism in his acknowledgement of destiny's power and his strong belief in Lyra's mission as part of the prophecy. Parental substitutes help Lyra and Will to accept their destiny, teach them the value of unity and show them the importance of love and fellow feeling. Pullman therefore introduces these characters to provide security to the protagonists, to give them guidelines as they function as moral compasses, and to transform the black-and-white picture of determinism versus free will into a more nuanced and multilayered image.

The fourth aspect of Western literary traditions to be examined in this thesis was the structural device of initiation cycles based on Arnold van Gennep's *rites de passage*. These rites describe transitions in a person's life cycle and can be transferred to the trilogy's overall structure, as well as to Lyra's character development. Rites of separation are depicted in Lyra's removal from Jordan College as she leaves her familiar surroundings behind. The numerous challenges she and Will face throughout the trilogy function as rites of transition, as their characters are shaped and their personalities greatly influenced. Experiences are created which ultimately culminate in the discovery of their mutual love. As it was pointed out, the young lovers must separate again to complete the process of transition as rites of affiliation in the re-entering of their own world. Initiation cycles thereby provide the

readers with security, for they hint at the plot's circularity and support the idea of a predestined narrative world. However, the importance of rites of transition, especially in connection with puberty and the development of experience, is clearly hinted at. This underlines Pullman's belief in the human being's ability to develop character traits which enable them to overcome notions of destiny and determinism. Nonetheless, these notions are still seen as essential to the plot since they challenge the protagonists and inspire personal growth.

Security is not only provided to Pullman's readers via the employment of initiation cycles, but also via the usage of intertextual sources. The author uses a broad variety of intertextual references, among which allusions to biblical narratives and Greek mythology are the most prominent. These references provide a backdrop against which the trilogy is meant to be understood. Even though especially younger readers may not fully comprehend every intertextual reference, reworkings of other narratives can provide them with pre-texts for later readings and thereby serve as educational material. With regard to Pullman's reworking of the biblical story of the Fall, security is established by presenting Lyra as a reincarnation of Eve. Readers who are familiar with the story of the Fall can conclude that a second Fall from grace including a betrayal and possible expulsion from the Garden of Eden is inevitable. Consequently, intertextual sources can function as safety nets to suggest a feeling of power over the narrative to the reader. At the same time, however, Pullman's reworkings also challenge his readers, as he adds crucial turns to them which reshape or complement the message of his intertextual sources. Most prominently with regard to his reworking of the Fall, Pullman presents established narratives from different angles and thereby manages to question oppressive notions of destiny and fate. Even though readers may perceive his intertextual sources as inherently true, the author aspires to overcome them by highlighting how free will and conscious decision making create even greater versions of well-known stories.

Pullman's use of different textual sources is closely connected to the idea of storytelling as presented in his trilogy. Storytelling serves as a central motif and to thoroughly understand its connection to determinism and free will, the author's selected narrative perspectives were outlined. The narrative perspective in which Pullman presents his reworking of intertextual sources is central to the understanding

of his overall message, as it lays the groundwork for the relationship between storyteller and listener and alludes to the concepts of innocence and experience. Due to his employment of a third person omniscient narrator who is anything but a comforting uncle, a stark contrast is created with regard to the security established via the employment of Western literary traditions in YA fiction and intertextual sources. On the other hand, it is especially this inclusion of different textual voices in his trilogy which requires omniscient narration. As a result, readers are forced to arrive at their own actualization of said narratives. Texts are not presented as ultimately true, which offers great potential for interpretation and inspires personal growth on the part of the reader. Despite the trilogy's overall sense of determinism, the narrative perspective requires readers to use free will and conscious thought to make sense of the narrative and question commonly accepted interpretations of established stories to become actively involved in the process of storytelling (cf. Sedlmayr 12).

In consequence, it is hardly surprising that stories are presented as immensely powerful in *HDM*. Stories symbolize the performative power of language and function as a life-giving force to fulfill human desires such as immortality and harmonious unity with the universe. The power of storytelling is reworked in the character of Lyra who is introduced as an accomplished liar whose talent is challenged throughout the course of the narration. Pullman uses her to depict how truthful storytelling can unfold language's performative power and urge listeners to become active participants in the reshaping of society. Storytelling is not presented as a means of escapism, but rather as a source of inspiration to listeners who can draw important conclusions for their own lives by relating the narrative to the real world. Central to the presentation of stories as powerful catalysts is Mary's retelling of her first sexual encounters which inspires Will and Lyra to act on their mutual love and thereby bring forth the ultimate eucatastrophe for the multiverse. As pointed out by Sedlmayr, "performative language becomes the apple of the original temptation scene" (12) which shows how Pullman elegantly fuses notions of determinism and free will. Since Lyra is unaware of the prophecy surrounding her, she consciously makes all the right choices based on free will and driven by desires created via the retelling of personal and truthful experiences. In the end, Lyra as an

accomplished liar learns that there are more than only one dominant version of the truth, which allows her to become the author of her own narrative. Pullman would like his readers to feel the same way about their lives: even though one's own path may appear as set in stone, personal experiences inspired by narratives may still create the possibility of challenging precast futures and will ultimately lead to rightful choices. This in turn brings forth yet another sense of security for the readers, as Pullman seems to support a belief in a narrative's ability to evoke all the right feelings so that listeners feel driven to make their world a better place.

Moving from the topic of storytelling and the metastructure of the narrative to the actual plotline, it was pointed out in the chapter on 'Trinity' how entities are presented as threefold in order to highlight the human desire for unity as a driving force in the creation of a better future for the multiverse. The idea of determinism is reworked here, for the presentation of entities as threefold provides knowledge of the narrative's superstructure to the reader. Knowing that entities usually consist of three parts and can only truly work when all three parts are united equips the attentive reader with foreknowledge and hints at Pullman's appreciation of harmonious unity. Constantly employing the number three offers a more autonomous reading experience to the readers, as they are enabled to guide themselves through the narrative and form assumption about its development instead of relying on an omniscient narrator who constantly highlights the supremacy of his knowledge. The author's presentation of unity was singled out as very striking, since it highlights that especially contrastive ideas, concepts or entities must be fused to create power and new inspirations. Not only opposites as good and evil or spirit and matter are fused, but it is also implied that free will and determinism can be fused in order to create an even better future for the multiverse.

In addition to the motif of trinity, the idea of daemons as external representations of the soul in accordance with Jung's *animus* and *anima* was also depicted as connected to Pullman's longing for unity, especially in matters of free will and determinism. The fluidity of a child's daemon was juxtaposed with the settled form of an adult's daemon to illustrate Pullman's approach to innocence and experience. A daemon's changing shape is inspired by emotions and experiences which are presented as necessary to shape character and understand one's own

personality. While free choice is thus highly valued, deterministic notions are nonetheless similarly appreciated. It was highlighted that a refusal of the daemon's settled form is redundant, as the daemon will ultimately settle in a form which suits the person's character in accordance with their natural surroundings best. Lastly, love was singled out as the most powerful agent behind the settling of one's daemon for expressions of mutual love create powerful emotions which shape a person's character forever and thereby support the understanding and appreciation of one's personality.

The penultimate facet to be considered in the analysis of free will and determinism in Pullman's trilogy was his take on institutionalised religion. This topic ties in with the aforementioned facets of intertextuality, storytelling, and daemons, as the author reworks biblical stories, discusses ideas of sexuality and shame in relation to storytelling and presents the body with its daemon as more powerful than angelic beings composed entirely of spirit. From an overall perspective, religion is used in *HDM* to evaluate free will and determinism in connection with innocence, experience and sexuality. Pullman presents his readers with an oppressive Church which institutionalizes religion, denies sexuality and love to its members, and sees the Fall as mankind's Original Sin. As *His Dark Materials* employs the story of the Fall to highlight its necessity as a prerequisite for the development of conscious thought and free will, the biblical story is both appreciated and modified to convey Pullman's criticism of institutionalised religion and his belief in human consciousness. Characters like Lyra or Xaphania who challenge the Church's teachings in the trilogy are praised, as they embody the striving for truth which Pullman aims to inspire in his readers. By euthanizing the Authority, institutionalised religion is destroyed which allows free will to develop independently of predestined paths, yet in accordance with one's true nature.

Given the fact that institutionalised religion was thus removed, it is hardly surprising that Pullman offers a broad range of religious substitutes. These substitutes were discussed in the last part of the analysis to highlight alternative versions of faith which create a harmonious unity with nature and the multiverse. Special attention was paid to the influence of New Atheism, Dust as a mysterious alternative deity, Pullman's belief in pantheism and biological determinism, as well

as the development from kingdom to republic via love. Based on the trilogy's harsh criticism of institutionalised religion and the absence of one single spiritual entity as a God-figure, the idea of ascribing the trilogy to the category of New Atheist novels was considered. The idea of atheism, however, was shown to be incongruous with regard to the novel, as religion and deities are not negated, but rather overcome to create a space for another all-encompassing and loving deity. This deity is referred to as Dust, consists of millions of shadow particles and is both based on and necessary for human consciousness. As it was laid bare in the respective chapter, Dust is representative of the human longing for unity with regard to one's environment, sexuality or the fusion of contrastive poles such as experience/innocence or spirit/matter. In its unification of contrastive elements, curiosity and a desire for knowledge are furthered to inspire the disentanglement from institutionalised religion as an oppressive force. Consequently, fates can be overcome and free will can be executed. Love was then presented as the driving force behind Dust causing people to even overcome death as they reunite with nature and dissolve into the sky of the mulefa world. As deduced from prominent passages in the trilogy, Dust is inherently connected to the idea of pantheism as it can be found anywhere in the universe where there is human consciousness. In a peaceful unity with nature, Dust enables human beings to exercise free will and make conscious decisions to improve their lives independent from oppressive religious forces. However, – and this was singled out as highly relevant in the chapter –, people are only enabled to act on their free will inside their own world, for this is the only world in which the soul-as-daemon can survive. Happiness and a life in harmonious unity with nature are of the utmost importance in Pullman's novel; therefore people cannot disregard their roots and take up a life in a world different from their own. Biological determinism is thus connected to the idea of accepting one's personality as represented by the daemon's form, shaped by a person's social and biological history. Only by coming to terms with one's nature can free will truly arise as freedom from within via the acceptance of the self. The importance of natural surroundings and the overall belief in pantheism can also be connected to Pullman's call for attention to global warming as presented in the trilogy. Nature suffers from the rapid outflow of Dust, as it causes temperatures to

rise which creates panic among animals and humans. In the end, Will and Lyra's kiss as eucatastrophe manages to stop the outflow of Dust and it is evident how Pullman links the fates of both earth and human beings. Towards the end of the analysis, love was once more singled out as the driving force to inspire free will. Consequently, it is a vital component for harmony amongst all beings and the establishment of the Republic of Heaven. Values formerly thought of as Christian in origin are now located in the human being itself which explains Pullman's reinterpretation of the Fall as the beginning of human consciousness. The second Fall is then caused by love as the strongest of all human forces to lay a groundwork for the establishment of the Republic of Heaven. In this republic, oppressive notions of destiny can no longer prevail, for it will be based on the harmonious acceptance of biological determinism to enable free will and conscious decision making. Lyra and Will's mutual love then serves as the key to ending destiny, as it is love which ultimately destroys the Subtle Knife and consequently eliminates any possibility of a life in worlds different from their own. In order to support this idea of love as the most important means of destroying destiny, it was pointed out how the mere thought of Lyra breaks the Subtle Knife, for she is now representative of his innermost feelings. Love is presented by Pullman as an immense force, even capable of overcoming death, which can inspire personal growth and enable conscious thought. Destiny is still acknowledged, yet it was illustrated how laid out paths can be overcome via love.

VII. Conclusion

The preceding chapter served as a summary of all findings in the close analysis of Pullman's narrative with regard to the topics of literary traditions, storytelling, intertextuality, the motifs of daemons and trinity, as well as religion and religious substitutes to replace institutionalised religion. The summary revealed that the different facets in which free will and determinism are reworked in the trilogy can be united to form a wholesome outline of Pullman's approach to said concepts. In *HDM*, Pullman relates free will and determinism to other juxtapositioned ideas such as innocence and experience, good and evil, or spirit and matter and considers them as central to the narrative. Instead of giving preference to either one of the concepts, *His*

Dark Materials shows that neither determinism nor free will can exist independently of one another. Opposing poles must be fused to generate a positive power which inspires action and a desire for change throughout the multiverse. Love is seen as the strongest human force, for it combines body and spirit, and serves as the most prominent catalyst for the fusion of opposing poles and the inspiration of change. As such, it is an essential ingredient for the development of humanity and the deliverance from oppressive versions of institutionalised religion. Love in turn is furthered by Dust as human consciousness which relies on experiences and the courage to autonomously make influential decisions to shape one's own path. Pullman stresses that life must be lived to the fullest and experienced with all senses to create true experiences which shape character and cause personal growth. Only in a negotiation with one's own body and its feelings, as well as with one's soul and super ego, can true greatness be achieved as the self is accepted as representative of one's experiences and social history.

The courage to collect said experiences is often times inspired by stories, as can be seen in Pullman's narrative. Stories function as catalysts based on language's performative power and momentarily fulfill desires in their readers. Said readers may then feel inspired to relate experiences in the narrative world to their own, so that they influence their world to create a better future as presented in the narrative. As pointed out by Butler and Halsdorf, "*His Dark Materials* is a text celebrating humanism and the power of important stories: they, not religion, renew our human faith" (7). At the same time, religion is not negated in the trilogy. According to the author, it is institutionalised religion which destroys our faith and prevents human development and not religion as such. Arguably, Pullman supports the idea that "humans are better off if they are allowed to control their own lives without being told what to to do or what not to do by religious institutions" (Nilsen 67). Free will and conscious decision making based on experiences must be enabled to present human beings with the possibility of forging their own path instead of succumbing to oppressive notions of fate. Human consciousness, however, is presented as generated by Dust as a natural and all-encompassing deity. In fact, deities do exist in Pullman, but they are far more open than the Authority or other oppressive deities in their striving for harmony as they encompass notions of love, sexuality and experiences.

Harmony is presented as the ultimate ambition and can be understood as a life in unity with the environment and an acceptance of one's own personality, so that the soul is free to develop.

However, *His Dark Materials* stresses that the soul can only unfold in its very own world, indicating that determinism in the form of biological determinism still plays an important role in the trilogy. Only those who live in harmony with their biologically determined nature and accept themselves for who they are can actually cause changes in their own world and create their own version of the Republic of Heaven. In this republic, "the oneness of the sacred and the profane is realise d […] because of the fact that humans are responsible for themselves. […] By realisation of the Republic of Heaven, each human being can become the middle of his own world" (Tóth 294). Admittedly, the realisation of the Republic of Heaven does imply several compromises and immense sacrifices for the individual. Still, the author manages to show how power can develop from said sacrifices which may inspire people to achieve even bigger changes in their world. The loss of childish innocence and the concomitant intuition as negative capability is not presented as negative either. Pullman shows how this ability can be regained during adulthood via constant work at the service of the community. In this way, the ability will even be improved, as it will then be thoroughly pervaded by the self instead of being solely based on the subconscious.

Taken as a whole, the Republic of Heaven is representative of Pullman's belief that "life can only be fulfilling and true if it is acknowledged as happening not at some stage in the vague, hoped-for future, but in the here and now" (Sedlmayr 15). Biological determinism must indeed by acknowledged and experiences from the past must be taken into account, but according to the author it is of no use to give in to burdening thoughts of the future and seemingly oppressive notions of fate. Based on love, fellow feeling and the harmonious unity with the universe can true greatness be achieved which is essential for the creation of a better world in which nature is protected and the individual is accepted with all its strengths and weaknesses. All in all, it is neither the concept of determinism nor the concept of free will which is clearly preferred by Philip Pullman. Only in the fusion and acceptance of both concepts can the possibility of developing a better future based on human

consciousness actually evolve. As Lenz points out, the multiverse requires intellect, competence, mutual support and sexuality to inspire greatness and harmony (143). Love is presented as the strongest human force which ought to be protected at all costs and encouraged by the individual's freedom to gather experiences. An immense power is created in the loving unity of two individuals which moves people far beyond the scope of institutionalised religion. This power is depicted as so strong that even death can both be overcome and transformed into a positively connoted experience in the harmonious reintegration with the cosmos.

From an overall perspective, the trilogy can therefore be considered immensely educational and inspiring to its readers, irrespective of their age. Pullman's aim is to

> challenge his readers into confronting themselves in […] individual subjectivity. This term sums up the climax of his novels – when Lyra takes the fruit offered to her, and when both she and Will choose to eternally separate themselves for the sake of the universe, they are enforcing the individual subjectivity that they have striven for throughout their physical and emotional journeys in the series (Arellano 16).

First and foremost, he intends to spread courage among his readers in the face of possibly overwhelming predestined life plans and demanding expectations. Especially younger readers should be supported in their ability to take matters in their own hands and shape their own lives to be regarded as autonomous members of society. At the same time, however, the trilogy also conveys how important it is to listen to one's inner voice or soul instead of trying to be different for the sake of others. Similar to the necessary acceptance of the daemon's settled form must young people also learn to accept their character traits and talents for what they are, even though they may not feel comfortable or agree with them at first. As illustrated in the novels, it is of no use to break away from one's own nature. Instead, people must form their character in a constant negotiation of their super-ego, society's demands and their innermost desires and feelings shaped by experiences.

In consequence, inspiration can be derived to shape the own world according to society's needs, instead of eloping to another world. Especially love and shared experiences support maturity and the overall transformation during puberty. Said

experiences can then inspire pragmatism and the desire to take matters into one's own hands. Still, childish innocence is not devalued, but is used to show the readers that there is a time and place for it. Puberty on the other hand, as a phase of transition in which teenagers are immensely impressionable, is singled out and should be appreciated as one of the most important phases in human life. Only by being allowed to make mistakes or wrong decisions during puberty, irrespective of adulthood's strict regulations, can teenagers engage in lively disputes with their own self and grow into self-determined individuals.

As it was hinted at beforehand, the trilogy is not only relevant for young and rather impressionable readers, but also for adult readers. Based on the idea that a person's daemon does not fall silent once it settles into its final form, it survives as a constant companion. This leads to the assumption that an adult's personality may be more settled than a child's personality, but the possibility of change and constant negotiation with the soul-as-daemon remains. It is precisely the trilogy's adult readers to whom Pullman intents to convey that they should refrain from being paralyzed by past events or grave thoughts about the future. Instead, their aim should be to live in the here and now and make the most of their time on earth. Adult readers should feel inspired to enjoy life and gather experiences irrespective of age, in order to derive inspiration for the improvement of one's surroundings.

In summary, Pullman seems to overcome the concepts of determinism and free will in his multilayered trilogy *His Dark Materials* via a harmonious negotiation with the self, catalyzed by stories and love and influenced by experiences. According to the author, a better life on earth can only be achieved in the protection of nature and the acceptance of one's own socially and biologically determined nature. The best way to accept one's nature – as presented in the trilogy – is embodied in the freedom to make mistakes and to live life to the fullest, so that others can, in turn, derive inspiration from one's own stories.

VII. Works Cited

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