Horizons of Innocence and Experience: Philip Pullman's Inversion of *Paradise Lost* in the *His Dark Materials* Trilogy

Author: Jesse Koops

S1124250

Educational institution: Leiden University

MA: Literary Studies: English Literature and Culture

Thesis supervisor: Dr. J. F. van Dijkhuizen

Second reader: Prof. Dr. P. T. M. G. Liebregts

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Preface

Before you lies the result of one of the most important and interesting periods of my life. I want to thank all the people without whom this entire crowning achievement of a significant portion of my life would not have existed. You are too many to mention by name, but, in the next few paragraphs, I would like to single out those especially important people connected to the writing of this thesis in particular.

Firstly, my parents who have done their absolute best to raise me to be a proper human being. Whether they have been successful is a matter of debate, but their efforts have not gone unappreciated. Thank you for giving me the freedom and support to chase my dreams. For your love for someone who is not always easily loved, the words 'thank you' are not even near sufficient.

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Thank you for indulging me in this preamble. I hope you will enjoy reading my thesis.

Jesse Koops

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Contents

Contents

Introduction

The opening lines of *Paradise Lost* express John Milton's desire to "justify the ways of God to man" (1. 26). Milton's work has a dual nature: it is both a theodicy; a defence of God's justice, and an epic poem. *Paradise Lost* is a work of literature that has inspired many interpretations both by scholars of literature and by literary writers who have adapted it. One of the most recent adaptations of Milton's classic epic poem is the trilogy of fantasy novels *His Dark Materials* written by Philip Pullman, which attempts to overturn the theodicy inherent in Milton's poem and inverts both the focus of the narrative and its theological message.

In this thesis I will use Reception Theory, in particular Hans Robert Jauss' notion of the horizon of expectation, to examine the process of Philip Pullman's (mis-)reading of *Paradise Lost*. I will also look at the relevant aspects of the technical ordering of Pullman's universe in respect to *Paradise Lost* and how it reflects his horizon. By technical ordering I mean the range of technical aspects of a created universe which define what is physically possible in such a universe. Such a technical ordering also denotes the moral implications of certain actions and decisions in the context of the wider narrative universe of the literary work. This dual strategy will enable me to show in what ways the *His Dark Materials* trilogy inverts the theodicy of *Paradise Lost*. As a result of the difference in interpretive horizons between John Milton and Philip Pullman, caused by cultural-historical changes in the centuries dividing them, the latter subverts and partly ignores the theodicy present in *Paradise Lost* in his *His Dark Material* trilogy. In a technical sense, Pullman incorporates what he sees as supernatural elements into a fantastical, but nonetheless materialistic world conception and infuses it with his own anti-religious views, which differ widely from Milton's puritanical ones. I will show that the cultural-historical and interpretive horizons of

John Milton and Philip Pullman differ to such an extent that the latter inverts both Milton's moral stance and characterisation in his adaptation of *Paradise Lost*.

In this thesis I will propose a theoretical framework on the basis of Reception Theory. The foundation of the Reception Theory presented in this theoretical framework will be the research of Hans Robert Jauss and his concept of interpretive horizons. After establishing the theoretical framework, the argument will be structured on the basis of a four-step argumentation. First, I will establish the horizons of interpretation of both Milton and Pullman in order to explain the manner in which Pullman (mis-)reads *Paradise Lost* and how this led to his adaptation's inverted nature concerning characterisation and message. The second section examines how Pullman demystifies the supernatural aspects present in *Paradise Lost* through the inclusion of Dust, an element which allows him to incorporate the traditionally supernatural into an exclusively materialistic world conception. Thirdly, I will test the assertions made on the translation of characters from *Paradise Lost* into Pullman's trilogy. This section will focus on the reversal of the thematic roles assigned to the characters which inhabit the adaptation's world. The fourth step in my argumentation will be to examine the way in which the entire moral signification of 'the Fall narrative' present in Milton's work is inverted by Pullman as a result of his antireligious, materialistic horizon. This section establishes how this inversion is brought about through his novels' re-enactment of the Fall event, the cause of it, and its consequences. Following this, I will draw conclusions based on the research from the viewpoint of Jauss's Reception Theory.

This thesis attempts to fill a gap in current scholarly debate as there has not been a comparative study of *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost* in its own right. The particularities of Pullman's reception of *Paradise Lost* have been treated as merely an element of larger studies, not as the subject of an entire study. Scholarly literature has focused on the particularities of Dust, the roles of characters in the trilogy, and, to a great

extent, the antireligious elements in the novel. Through this thesis, I will establish a full comparison between *His Dark Materials* and the poem it adapts in order to better understand the ways in which the adaptation has come about.

Theoretical Framework

On the basis of Reception Theory, and the concept of the interpretive horizon theorised by Hans Robert Jauss, I will focus on how the difference in horizons between John Milton and Philip Pullman affect the latter's adaptation of *Paradise Lost* in his *His Dark Materials* series. Reception Theory is particularly suited to this type of comparative study as it is concerned with "the historical dimension and communicative aspects of the literary text" (Lernout 799). As such, the theory takes into account both chronological differences and the active communication between text and reader. It postulates a reader who fashions meaning on the basis of both the text's and their own interpretive horizon. As such, Reception Theory forms the basis of my interpretation of the literary relation between John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Philip Pullman's adaptation of his epic poem in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

I have chosen Hans Robert Jauss' interpretation of Reception Theory as my starting point, taking from it the aforementioned concept of interpretive horizons. These horizons are "the subjective models, paradigms, beliefs, and values" of an individual reader's 'necessarily limited background'" (James Machor 2), which, according to Jauss, "constitute all creation of meaning in human behaviour and in our primary understanding of the world both as historical limitation and as the condition of possibility of any experience" (Jauss 7). It is important to recognise the difference in horizons, especially in respect to such a long period of time that has passed between John Milton's publication of *Paradise Lost* and Pullman's adaptation of it. Keeping the peculiarities of the other horizon in mind is important because "literary understanding becomes dialogical only when the otherness of the text is sought and recognized from the horizon of our own expectations, when no naïve fusion of horizons is considered, and when one's own expectations are corrected and extended by the experience of the other" (Jauss 9). In order to understand the reception of a work of the past one has "to take both [the author's and the reader's] horizons into account through conscious effort"

(Jauss 7).

Jauss' work on the reception of classic works in contemporary theatre provides insight into what constitutes "a rejuvenating reception" (Jauss 25). Such a reception "requires that the fusion of horizons not be silently presupposed but be consciously received as a dialectic mediation of the past and present horizons in a new actualization of meaning" (25). The success of such a rejuvenating reception depends on the fact that it does not fall victim to the processes of "naïve actualization or rigorous historicization". This means that adaptation should not try to stay too close to the horizon it has first been authored in, nor should it try to reinvent itself only according to the horizon of contemporary audiences. Instead, it should attempt a balance palatable to both horizons of understanding.

Reception Theory will only be used extensively in two sections of this thesis. It will feature heavily in the first chapter, to help establish the horizons of both Pullman and Milton respectively. The theory will be revisited in the conclusion, helping us to gain meaningful insights from the thesis as a whole. It will also be used to establish the causes of certain adaptive changes that occur over Pullman's inversion of Milton's work, but it cannot describe them as needed in the three chapters on the processes of the inversion itself. As such, Reception Theory will not directly influence every aspect of this research, but it will be essential in its production of meaning.

Chapter One
Adaptive Horizon: Pullman's Reading and Adaptation of *Paradise Lost*

In this chapter I will analyse Pullman's treatment of Milton's epic in terms of the difference in cultural-historical horizons between these two authors. Pullman is attracted to Milton's treatment and expansion of the Genesis account; praising it for its increased psychological depth. He feels a particular fondness for the "extraordinary majesty of [Milton's] language" (Hatlen 86) which echoes the language intoned by his grandfather, an Anglican vicar. Pullman admires characters like Milton's Satan and Eve for what he sees as their struggle for freedom against an oppressive deity. At the same time, he resists Milton's Christian interpretation of the Fall, his subsequent treatment of these characters, and how their struggles culminate in the poem. I will discuss the political environment in which Milton conceived of his ideas and wrote *Paradise Lost*. I will then move on to the authors' shared anti-tyrannical stance which nonetheless leads to widely diverging thoughts on the role of religion in society. At the end of this chapter I will examine Pullman's reading of *Paradise Lost* and how his view on this work is to a degree shaped by his appreciation for the authors of the Romantic period. Having established the way in which Pullman approaches Milton's work, the cultural-historical influences and viewpoints contained in his interpretive horizon will form the basis for understanding the way in which he adapts and inverts *Paradise Lost* in *His Dark Materials*.

Milton's politico-historical period was defined by a struggle against what he himself saw as tyranny. In Milton's time, even the most secular issues were cast in a religious light. His response to these issues was therefore similarly religious in nature. In England the defining political issue was Charles I's adherence to the idea of the divine right of kings and his manoeuvring towards personal rule. Which parliament, in turn, saw as monarchical overreach. These differing views regarding the division of power and the role of the king

culminated in the English Civil War (1642-1651). Milton participated in this political struggle by writing polemical pamphlets in defence of Parliament. In the seventeenth century, pamphlets were used to wage a war of propaganda with men's loyalties as its object. As Christopher Hill remarks "Pamphlets and newspapers were of crucial importance in the struggle for men's minds during the forties" (40). In Milton's polemic *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* he describes kingship as an entirely post-lapsarian phenomenon, born out of the expulsion from Eden. Milton gives an account of the social contract which binds kings to certain limitations. If they abuse their power and turn to tyranny, "they may be as lawfully opposed as they were at first elected" (*EP* 276). Mainly as a result of the prominence he gained in this political debate through these tracts, Milton became Secretary of Foreign tongues for the Republican government. In 1660, this government was abolished and the monarchy was restored.

The Restoration meant that Milton, as an advocate for the death of Charles I and a widely-known supporter of the commonwealth "was forced into hiding for three months, his books were publicly burned, and narrowly escaping execution, he was briefly imprisoned and fined" (Dobranski 19). While he himself escaped this fate, he had to "[witness] the disinterment, hanging, and mutilation of many of his friends and collaborators" (Dobranski 19). The revolution had failed and seemingly everything that the regime and Milton himself had worked for was destroyed. Milton vanished from active political life and focused more than ever on his literary aspirations. It is during this period that he wrote *Paradise Lost*.

Apart from the war within his own country, Milton's era was also marked by a broader European conflict between Catholic and Protestant Christianity. The effects of this conflict were felt throughout Europe with wars in the Netherlands and Germany taking on sectarian aspects. There was also widespread persecution of alternately Catholics and Protestants in many other regions. Milton himself was staunchly anti-Catholic. He did not

only consider Catholicism to be wrong in its interpretation of the Bible, but also as tyrannical in its suppression of alternate religious views. Traces of his condemnation of Catholicism can be found throughout his pamphlets. In the *Areopagitica*, Milton argues for the abolition of pre-publication censorship for any religious group and individual on the grounds that the exploration of different ideas and abstaining from the wicked ones is essential to the intent of temptation and true obedience to God. He remarks:

> When God gave [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions. We ourselves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force. God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue? (*EP* 192)

Milton denies exemption from pre-publication censorship to Catholics. He argues that to extend this freedom to them is to give them a right which they have previously denied and still deny to others. This attitude puts this struggle in strictly anti-tyrannical terms.

For both Milton and Pullman the main political concern is the opposition to tyranny and authoritarianism. In the case of Milton, this is evident from his active participation in the political issues of his time as a polemicist and member of the Commonwealth government. Pullman's engagement with the opposition to tyranny only clearly establishes itself when his literary works and criticism are taken into consideration. Though both authors are opposed to tyranny, the way in which they address it in their writings reveals diametrically opposed positions on religion and its role in both history and society. Milton responded to what he perceived as evil by turning to the Bible for explanations and solutions. His religious views were formed at a time when politics and religion were firmly intertwined. Indeed, as

previously stated, the political issues of his era were never completely secular. Pullman, on the other hand, regards organised religion as a source of tyranny instead of its solution.

As a Puritan, Milton was actively engaged in the religious controversies of his time. The Puritan tradition is hallmarked by an emphasis on active engagement with the Bible as the only way to arrive at sound theological conclusions. Correspondingly, Milton's writings reveal a profound engagement with the Bible. In Milton's attack on pre-publication censorship in his *Areopagitica*, he reveals another, distinctly Miltonic, mode of thought. Milton argues that people should actively engage with differing religious views in order to arrive at theologically sound conclusions. In this respect Milton goes against the Puritan consensus. He argues that a man who would refuse to engage with others' religious views is no "true warfaring Christian", but a man who only possesses "a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat" (*EP* 187). Milton encourages a critical engagement with theological literature that will ultimately lead people closer to the truth and, as a result, to God.

Paradise Lost and several of his prose polemics reveal Milton's focus on the fallen state of humanity. Milton identifies many undesirable behaviours and concepts as aspects of the fallen nature of humanity. As a result, he turns to Genesis and other biblical writings to discover and illustrate the ideal pre-lapsarian manner in which the world should operate. However, Milton acknowledges that this undertaking is ultimately doomed to fail as the consequences of the Fall continue to affect lapsed humanity. This active engagement with the contrast between pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian human nature is a central theme in *Paradise Lost*. Milton accounts for the differences which occurred as a result of the Fall and the way in which a semblance of unity with God might be restored. In doing so, Milton is suggesting a way "to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and

out of that knowledge to love him to imitate him, to be like him as we may be nearest possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection" (*EP* 219). According to Milton, engagement with biblical learning is the way to improve society and to come as close to unity with God as is possible for fallen humanity. However, even though the attempt is valuable and society should always strive to get as close as it can to according with God's will, perfect unity with him cannot exist "till one greater man / Restore us" (1. ll.4-5).

In the very opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes his poem as an attempt to "justify the ways of God to men" (1. l.26). With this statement of intent Milton announces that he is attempting a theodicy: a defence of God's justice. Milton bases the justification of God's actions and the nature of His creation on what Dennis Danielson calls "the Free Will Defence" (148). The free will defence holds that God, in his creation of free will, which ultimately enables the Fall, has also created the opportunity for any genuine good to exist in the first place. The possibility for goodness to exist is ultimately of more importance than the evil that arises as a consequence of the abuse of free will: "the amount of goodness that presupposes the exercise of freedom ultimately outweighs the total amount of evil" (Danielson 148). By putting the focus of the first lines of his poem on the announcement of attempting a theodicy Milton indicates that he is writing a thoroughly theological work.

The source of the Fall narrative is Genesis. However, the account it gives is relatively brief. As a result of the concise way in which the story is related and the sparseness of detail in the biblical account, Milton had to incorporate many elements from other sources and of his own invention into his poetic adaptation. William Kerrigan praises Milton's ability to create such an elaborate story and world-conception from the relatively brief account: "Other poems take place against the backdrop of a universe. Milton's makes one, producing rather than presupposing its structuring principles: his is an intellectual universe composed of

theories, causes, explanations, arguments" (255). Even so, unlike what Kerrigan seems to suggest, while Milton's additions add to the narrative depth and are theologically consistent, it is not the case that he creates a world. Milton's ability to adapt and add to the Genesis account in a meaningful manner is dependent on his vast understanding of theological matters. According to Joseph Wittreich, Milton engages critically and creatively with biblical myths to the extent that "*Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes* form a trilogy of poems, each wrapped around a different myth and each transforming, as well as reinterpreting, the myth it appropriates [...] each of these poems pressing towards a heightened understanding of the myth it inscribes" (691). This 'heightened understanding' is also applicable to the universe in which the adapted myth is set. Milton gives us a sense of how he understands the world and how it works. And so, even though Milton had to incorporate a great deal into his adaptation of the Genesis account, I concur with Joad Raymond's understanding that "Milton did not think that *Paradise Lost* was fiction in any limited sense of the word" (149). In Milton's view, he was not creating a world, but rather describing the world in which he lived. It is because the Genesis account was central to Milton's understanding of the world that he was able to incorporate so much of his theological knowledge into the poem.

Many of Milton's additions to the Genesis account reflect his monistic belief. This belief is also expressed in *De Doctrina Christiana* on which he worked concurrently with *Paradise Lost*, though his authorship of the first is still somewhat disputed. Monism is the belief that all created things ultimately derive from the same divine substance. This in opposition to the dualist position which saw a firm division between corporeal and incorporeal substances. Milton went as far as to apply the monistic principle to the angels; the most ethereal beings in the Christian faith: "[Milton's] Angels are material beings, composed of a tenuous form of matter. They are incorporeal, but assume bodies at will as their purposes

necessitate" (Raymond 144). Milton places many traditionally supernatural elements of the Christian Fall narrative in a more thoroughly physical reality than the one described by the rivalling dualist position. He does so by integrating his monistic belief with his poetry. Pullman derives his exclusively physical universe in part from Milton's incorporation of his monistic belief into *Paradise Lost*. Pullman takes this increased materialism to its ultimate conclusion by giving every single entity and phenomenon a basis in material reality.

Going beyond Milton's monistic substance, ultimately derived from God, Pullman's creation of an exclusively material universe is a reflection of the difference in religious outlook between him and Milton. Pullman considers the modern world as post-religious and claims that God has long been dead in his essay "the Republic of Heaven" where he writes that "the idea that God is dead has been familiar, and has felt true, to many of us for a long time now. [...] I take it that there really is no God anymore; the old assumptions have all withered away. That's my starting point: the idea of God with which I was brought up is now perfectly incredible" (655). Pullman's use of the term 'many of us' has to be qualified if we are to gain an understanding of his particular cultural horizon. Pullman's assertion may very well hold for the Britain and wider Western Europe which form his most direct cultural sphere. Religiosity has definitely declined in this part of the world, especially among the well-educated, a sphere Pullman occupies. However, globally there is no indication that these sentiments constitute a dominant view. In light of such statements, Pullman has been identified by many as a part of the 'New Atheist' movement. Pullman does not regard himself as an atheist: "Atheism suggests a degree of certainty that I'm not quite willing to accede to. I suppose technically you'd have to put me down as an agnostic. But if there is a God and he is as the Christians describe him, then he deserves to be put down and rebelled against" (Pullman, "DP"). Ironically, the remarks Pullman makes in "The Republic of Heaven" are notably similar to the New Atheism he resists being grouped with, with its almost teleological

approach to the decline of religiosity in Western Europe and the wider world.

Leaving aside the finer points of the differences between agnosticism and atheism, Pullman is regarded as a prominent opponent of organised religion and has been praised by such polemical and prominent atheists as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens: "Philip Pullman has written a fabulously subversive trilogy that blurs the line between adult and children's fiction. He's been condemned by the Catholic press, while readers find heaven in his pages" (Hitchens). Hitchens is here referring to the considerable outrage of orthodox Christian organisations in reaction to Pullman's subversive trilogy. Paradoxically, it has also received praise from leading religious figures such as Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. Williams has even suggested that the trilogy should be incorporated into the religious education classes in British schools; a remarkable recommendation given the antagonistic relationship between Pullman and Christianity in particular.

Pullman bases his antagonism towards organised religion's behaviour throughout history: "It comes from history. It comes from the record of the Inquisition, persecuting heretics and torturing Jews and all that sort of stuff [...]. Every single religion that has a monotheistic god ends up by persecuting other people and killing them because they don't accept him" ("H&D"22). According to Hugh Rayment-Pickard "this is, rightly or wrongly, one of the popular tenets of our age: a prejudice against organised religion. Pullman dramatises this prejudice, showing how the good instincts and courage of a young heroine can expose a barbaric church and a pathetic God" (32). Pullman is in this regard an exemplar of an expressly modern, and decidedly Western, view on organised religion.

In the case of Pullman's literary output, his antipathy towards organised religion manifests itself most expressly in regard to Christianity. This prevalence of Christian references in his works is not surprising as he grew up surrounded by this religion with its

enduring cultural power in Western Europe. Pullman condemns what he considers to be the true Christian message. He describes the Christian mentality as essentially life-denying in its preference of a spiritual world after death over the physical one we occupy at present. He condemns the suspicious attitude towards worldly things that can be found in the Bible. He sees this attitude reflected in the (fantastical) fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Pullman calls the latter's *Narnia* cycle "propaganda in the service of a life-hating ideology" ("DSoN"). This distaste for the insistence of religion on forsaking the physical world for the world promised to exist beyond the veil of death has led Pullman to adapt Milton's *Paradise Lost* in a way that inverts its Christian values and affirms love for the world we occupy at present

Like his literary hero William Blake, Pullman is attracted to presenting the Christian God as an evil entity. One of the earliest portrayals of the Christian God as an evil entity can be found in the Gnostic tradition. According to A. D. Nuttal, Blake was heavily influenced by this religion's ideas: "If anachronistically, we were to show our puzzle to St Augustine, he would answer without hesitation, 'Blake is a heretical Christian; his heresy is Gnostic'. The idea that the power that made the world is wicked, not good, is the central proposition of Gnosticism" (7). Blake's influence on Pullman has extended the reach of Gnosticism as well and made it a presence in *His Dark Materials*. Gnosticism is a religious tradition which started as a heretical variant of Christianity. Its most significant feature in the context of the works of Pullman and Milton is its dissident reading of the Fall event. As Mary Russel explains "Not all Gnostic texts agree, but they can frequently be seen seeking a different explanation for the events in Eden" (214). Even though there is no absolute agreement among the Gnostic texts, a summary of the foundation of the Gnostic point of view is provided by Nuttal:

> The Gnostics revere knowledge. In Genesis Jehova forbids Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge; therefore Jehova is wicked. [...] this joins seamlessly to the prior Gnostic idea that Jehova [...] is already wicked, in any case, as the creator of this world. The serpent, on the other hand, who in defiance of the tyrant conducts Adam and Eve to *gnosis*, is clearly good (10-11)

Gnosis is alternately described as knowledge, salvation, or oneness with the true God, not Jehovah. In "The Republic of Heaven", Pullman reveals a conversant relationship with this tradition. Even so, Pullman does not believe in the Gnostic narrative either: "The trouble is, it's not true. If we can't believe the story about the shepherds and the angels and the wise men and the star and the manger and so on, then it's even harder to believe in" (657). Having emphasised the invalidity of this world-conception, Pullman still incorporates Gnostic elements into his trilogy.

Particularly suitable to Pullman's purpose is the Gnostic interpretation of the Fall of Man, which lies closer to Pullman's own perception of the event. The central tenet of Gnosticism, as formulated by Nuttal, could as easily be used to describe the portrayal of the clashing factions in *His Dark Materials*: "the idea that the power that made the world is wicked, not good, is the central proposition of Gnosticism" (Nuttal 7). In Pullman's work this power, the Authority, has had no hand in creation, but it is undeniable that he, and the structures he has put in place are portrayed as wicked. In this presentation of events, the rebellion against such a tyrannical figure is just as justified as it is in the basic Gnostic conception of the Fall of Man.

Pullman's inclusion of multiple heretical notions on the Fall of Man and the incorporation of figures like Enoch in a non-Christian conception allows him to cast doubt on the Christian canonical narrative. Since the inclusion of differing viewpoints, which are then supported by the events as they transpire in his own narrative, casts doubt on the official

version of these events. Pullman's ability to do so is dependent on the time period in which he is writing. Throughout most of Western history, as in Milton's time, such an incorporation would have aroused suspicion and repression. Pullman incorporates Gnostic readings of the Fall, references to multiple diverging religious traditions such as "the Zoroastrian heresy" (*NL* 97), as well as a modified Metatron from the Enochic books to cast doubt on traditional exegesis of the Fall and the wider Christian worldview. In combination with the fact that his Authority is a proven liar, the inclusion of these textual echoes, with clear referents in real-world heresies, signal to the attenuated reader that the Christian reading of the Fall is called into question. Significant in this respect is that the church in Pullman's universe, depicted as wicked antagonist, suppresses these same heretical interpretations. As the church is clearly presented as wrong in its views in the novels, the only logical conclusion Pullman allows for is that these heresies are truthful. As such, the heretical reading of the Fall, both in the novel and the real world, is encouraged and the canonical teachings of the church are called into question.

As the Blakean echoes in Pullman's works and views illustrate, the authors of the Romantic period play a facilitating role in the connection between Pullman and Milton. Romanticism had a particular interest in *Paradise Lost* and has left its marks on the interpretation of the poem. Joseph Wittreich states that "Romanticism has been described as a 'new mythology' with an inward turn, an interiorizing and psychologizing impulse, which, as it shifts the inflection from the loss to the recovery of paradise, projects its redemption myth from God back to man" (688). The Romantic hero is not the classical martial hero, but a hero of the mind. It is therefore unsurprising that Milton appealed so strongly to the Romantic poets. His heroes, in particular Abdiel, are not defined by their martial feats, but by their mental fortitude and their loyalty to their Lord. However, the main interest of the Romantics lies with Milton's Satan, whom they saw as a heroic figure. Taking Milton's religious views

into account this Romantic reading is at the very least partly mistaken. To circumvent this problem, the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley remarked that "the distorted notions of invisible things which Dante and his rival Milton have idealized, are merely the mask and mantle in which these great poets walk through eternity enveloped and disguised" (612). In order to render the Miltonic epic susceptible to the Romantic reading of his Satan character, Milton has to be made disingenuous in his Christianity or unintentionally sympathetic to the Satanic cause as in William Blake's remark that Milton "was of the Devil's party without knowing it" (150).

There is no doubt that the romantic interpretation has left its mark on Pullman's reading and subsequent adaptation of *Paradise Lost*. As Burton Hatlen asserts "Pullman is, I believe, fully aware of the quarrel between the neo-Christian and the Romantic, Blakean view of Milton; and in the trilogy he has developed what I take to be a Blakean redaction of the Miltonic mythos, directed against the neo-Christian reading of Lewis and others" (86). In his introduction to the epic, Pullman hails Blake as "the greatest of Milton's interpreters" (Introduction 8). The heroism which the Romantics saw in Milton's Satan is echoed by Pullman in *His Dark Materials*. Blake's antagonism to God, whom Pullman calls 'The Authority', is reflected both in the character's name and in the fact that he and his forces are the antagonists of the trilogy. These echoes of the romantic in *His Dark Materials* are typical of Pullman's approach to *Paradise Lost*. He is less concerned with academic accuracy on Milton's own religious views than with the emotional appeal of certain characters on readers of *Paradise Lost*. It is choosing sides on personal, emotional criteria rather than academic accuracy that forms the starting point for his approach.

When Pullman's introduction to *Paradise Lost*, various interviews, and "The Republic of Heaven" are taken into account, it becomes apparent that the author has a preoccupation with psychology. As stated before, Milton gave the Genesis narrative

additional depth and characterisation. It is this increased depth of character that draws Pullman to the side of Satan and fuels his literary antagonism to Milton's God. The first time Pullman read *Paradise Lost* was when he was sixteen years old, under minimal supervision in a class on literature. He was told to read without regard for background information and to focus solely on the language. This approach allowed his love for Milton's language to flourish and his own preoccupation with psychology to lead him to an academically questionable reading of the opposing factions and characters in the narrative. It was the very introduction of Satan that drew Pullman to his side, as he states in his "Introduction". According to Pullman, "The opening governs the way you tell everything that follows, not only in terms of the organization of the events, but also in terms of the tone of voice that does the telling; and not least, it enlists the reader's sympathy in *this* cause rather than *that*" (Introduction 4). As his teacher had never informed him of the problems inherent in the Romantic reading of Satan, Pullman's own preoccupations and the structure of the poem led him to adopt this interpretation. In his trilogy he subsequently enlists the reader's sympathy to the side opposing Church and Authority. Moreover, *His Dark Materials* inverts the moral exegesis of Milton's Fall narrative and presents the Fall as a good thing in and of itself.

Pullman states another desire in "The Republic of Heaven" which informs his approach to fantasy literature. He indicates that good works of fantasy should reflect the (psychological) nature of this world and that the lessons contained in such works should be applicable to everyday situations. It is for this reason that Pullman, like Milton, incorporates his own understanding of our world into his narrative universe. Pullman's love of the world we inhabit now, as opposed to a heavenly realm after death, leads him to incorporate various scientific elements into the fantastical *His Dark Materials*, such as an understanding of evolution by natural selection. More importantly, this intention has led to a purely physical portrayal of elements which are considered spiritual both in Milton's treatment of them and

their everyday conception. This desire, as well as its effects and implications, will be discussed more elaborately in the following chapter.

Both *Paradise Lost* and *His Dark Materials* reflect the beliefs of their authors, as well as the concerns which defined their cultural-historical eras. Even though they have a shared anti-tyrannical stance, the authors come up with diametrically opposed solutions to the problem. This opposition is a direct result of the differences between their cultural circumstances. In Milton's time period, secular issues also had a religious dimension. To be an active participant in public discourse Milton had to be well-versed in religious arguments. The Puritan tradition to which he belonged also put emphasis on an active engagement with the Bible to arrive at sound theological conclusions. Pullman, on the other hand, views organised religion as the problem instead of a solution to the problem of tyranny. To him, Milton's ultimate judge is an uncompromising tyrant. In this view on organised religion, he displays a modern, Western (European) mode of thought. The thoroughgoing religious freedom granted by this modern society has allowed him to incorporate various heretical readings of the Fall myth and Christianity in general, which further facilitate his inversion of the traditional Christian view on, as well as Milton's theodical approach to, the Fall of Man. Both authors attempt to show the world as they understand it to work. Milton added theological elements in which he genuinely believed in his elaboration on Genesis, while Pullman incorporates scientific elements and what he sees as the human psychological universals to make his fantasy applicable to everyday life. The final link between these two authors is that both are thoroughly conversant with the authors of the Romantic period. These authors shaped the reception of Milton's work and directly influenced the way in which Pullman reads and adapts *Paradise Lost*. To fully understand the context in which Pullman's characters and ideas operate, the next chapter will examine how the universe he creates is in

line with Milton's increased physicality and continues this process to its ultimate conclusion: a world in which matter and spirit are interchangeable.

Chapter Two
Increasing Materialism: Monism, Science, and the Spiritual

Both Milton and Pullman create a new universe on the basis of existing narratives. The way in which they portray the physical nature of their universes directly influences their narratives and themes. It determines what is possible and what the implications of actions undertaken within these fictional worlds are. As stated in the previous chapter, the depiction of the physical universe in *Paradise Lost* is premised on monism. Quintessentially spiritual elements, which were commonly thought of as having no connection to physical matter, such as angels and heaven itself, are portrayed in *Paradise Lost* as being comprised of matter. While Pullman is not a monist, or any other kind of Christian, he further expands the materialism of spiritual elements in *His Dark Materials*. Taking this principle to its ultimate conclusion, Pullman ends up portraying an exclusively physical universe in which even his 'God' character, as well as 'Dust', the physical element most closely resembling spiritual qualities, are completely contained within the laws of nature and physical reality. This chapter will explore the differences and commonalities between Milton's and Pullman's fictional worlds with respect to their approach to (material) reality. After establishing the basic principles of Miltonic monism and Pullman's Dust, I will examine angels, dæmons, and the influence of physical spaces on Dust and physicality in *His Dark Materials*. This is a necessary step in illuminating the nature of Dust, and the implications these elements have for Pullman's universe in their own right. All of this will lead to a better understanding of the relationship between the universes of *His Dark Materials*and *Paradise Lost.*

Monism is the belief that all creatures are created out of a first matter, or *materia prima*, which originated in God Himself. He created this first matter before the creation of the visible universe. Diane McColley defines the belief as follows: "[Monism holds]that all things are made of the same matter, indivisible from spirit because spiritual and corporeal

creatures are different only in degree" (160). In *Paradise Lost*, the reader is confronted with two instances of this first matter. It is described both at the moment of creation of the visible universe, and the remnants of it which come to be known as Chaos. It is described as "eternal anarchy" (2. l.896), and as:

> The womb of nature, and perhaps her grave,
> Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
> But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
> Confusedly, and which must ever fight,
> Unless the almighty maker them ordain
> His dark materials to create more worlds (2. 911-16)

The first matter is restless and without order because the Creator has not given it form. Therefore, it is left in its original state of confusion. Creation is the act of imposing order on Chaos, as shown in Book VII when the Son calls out to the first matter: "Silence, yet troubled waves, and thou deep, peace, / said then the omnific word, your discord end" (216-17). Creation in *Paradise Lost* is characterised by the Son, as Word of God, imposing obedience and order on the monistic substance.

The most important implication of Milton's monism is that since all things share this same original matter, they are different only in degree; not in nature. This is reflected in the promise to the humans that they may ascend to the same level of substance as the angels. This advancement can be obtained by working hard to put themselves nearer to God. The essential difference between humans and angels is that the latter are beings who were closer to God at the point of creation.The differences between the position of creatures on the corporeal-incorporeal scale is determined by their closeness to the Deity:

> But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
> As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
> Each in their several active spheres assigned,
> Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
> Proportioned to each kind (5. ll.475-79).

By adhering to the will of God, Adam and Eve will become closer to Him, and by their closeness attain this new spiritual status. This transformation can only occur within a monistic context. Monism provides a material continuum in which both states, corporeal and incorporeal, are contained. It is this aspect of Milton's belief system that allows him to include the prospect of a progression of human nature into his Eden.

Because matter originated in God, the monist position holds that it can never truly be annihilated; while the form that it takes can be destroyed, the substance itself can never vanish. This is confusing to Moloch, one of the fallen angels, as becomes clear from his contribution to the demonic debate in the second book of *Paradise Lost*:

> More destroyed than thus
> We should be quite abolished and expire.
> What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
> His utmost ire? which to the height enraged,
> Will either quite consume us, and reduce
> To nothing this essential, happier far
> Than miserable to have eternal being:
> Or if our substance be indeed Divine,
> And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
> On this side nothing (2. ll. 92-101)

Moloch questions whether he and his fellow fallen angels can ever truly be destroyed if they were made out of divine substance. His questioning of the monist position, even though it mainly results from his fallen nature, is to an extent validated by the reduced splendour of the fallen angels which Satan laments in his address to Beelzebub: "O how fallen! how changed / From him, who in the happy realms of light / Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine / Myriads though bright" (1. ll. 84-87). The monist answer to Moloch's question would be that the fallen angels' form can be destroyed, or degraded as has been made terribly clear by that point in the narrative. However, the essence of the fallen angels, originating in God, can never vanish.

Pullman follows Milton's increased emphasis on the material nature of spiritual elements. In doing so, he continues a trend of increasing materialism that Milton started with his incorporation of monistic beliefs into *Paradise Lost*. Pullman's materialism is at once characteristic of a contemporary, scientific understanding of our own reality and an expression of his own poetics of fantasy literature. In "The Republic of Heaven", he states that "the fantasy and the realism must connect" (661). In other words, the fantastical elements in a fantasy novel should still reflect the nature of our own world if the work is to have relevance to its readers. Pullman's treatment of fantasy worlds, therefore, is a reflection of how he sees this world. Which, as becomes clear from his novels, he considers it to work on a purely physical basis, unaffected by spiritual elements. Of course, the inclusion of narrative elements such as angels, God, and the Land of the Dead, if not properly contextualised, creates problems for a purely physical understanding of the universe of *His Dark Materials*.

To assert the nonetheless exclusive materialist basis of his world, Pullman introduces 'Dust' into his trilogy. Dust comes closest to the status of spiritual element in *His Dark Materials*. However, it works on an exclusively physical basis. Paradoxically, all traditionally supernatural elements are rather smoothly contained within an exclusively materialist

universe through the introduction of this element, as I shall demonstrate. It therefore illustrates Pullman's approach to the conversion of the spiritual into the material in his works .Dust is intimately connected to the self-awareness of creatures and 'supernatural' elements in his narrative. As the mysterious basis of some aspects of material reality and the consciousness of beings, Dust figures in every element of the story in both a technical and narrative manner. As such, it sets up some of the main conditions for Pullman's inversion of Milton's version of the Fall-narrative.

Dust is first introduced into the narrative as a particle; Lord Asriel further defines it as "a new kind of elementary particle" (*NL* 368). However, unlike the absolutist monistic substance, Dust is not the only elementary particle in Pullman's reality. Therefore, it does not singly lie at the basis of matter. As such, it is not the monistic substance Anne-Marie Bird claims it to be: "the texts reflect Spinoza's monist doctrine that there exists one and only one substance" (Bird 190). Because Pullman states that the definition of elementary particles is that "you can't break them down any further" (*NL* 369) it becomes clear that as one of multiple elementary particles, Dust cannot be the sole basis for material reality. In this respect, Pullman's Dust is wholly different from Milton's monistic substance.

Even though it is not a monistic substance, Pullman's Dust does transcend the spirit-matter binary in a similar way. As a result, Pullman's narrative use of Dust is similar to the effect of Milton's monistic belief on *Paradise Lost*. Dust functions as a vehicle to increase the physicality of his universe. Dust is both a product of and condition for the self-awareness of sentient beings: it is formed when "matter begins to understand itself" (*AS* 31). The amount of Dust is not fixed. An initial amount of Dust set beings on the course to sentience. Through complex thought the particle is replenished. If the amount of Dust becomes insufficiently replenished it will no longer be able to serve as a facilitator of sentience.

As a material substance, or 'elementary particle', which has physical properties, Dust

can manifest itself in material forms and beings such as angels. As such, it transcends the boundaries between what are commonly known as the material and the spiritual. In this way, it is similar to an Einsteinian view of the relation between matter and energy, described in the equation $e=mc^2$. This equation holds that energy and matter are merely forms of one another. Pullman incorporates the same interchangeability into his metaphysical treatment of matter and spirit. Material and spiritual substance are forms of one another derived from the same elementary particle: Dust. In this manner, Dust is remarkably similar to the corporeal-spiritual continuum in *Paradise Lost*, as I shall illustrate shortly. The introduction of this physics-based model of reality is consistent with Pullman's aim of breaking down the boundary of perception between his understanding of our world and his fantasy worlds.

For a thorough understanding of Dust, it is necessary to look at multiple elements that are intimately connected to it. These elements are also important in their own right. They are essential building blocks of Pullman's physical universe and the way it is given narrative impact. Apart from their individual significance, I have chosen these elements because they represent larger categories of physical entities and phenomena in Pullman's worlds. Angels represent the category of non-human, sentient beings affected by Dust, or in their special case created out of it. Dæmons are markers of consciousness and psychological phenomena associated with the interaction between the human mind and Dust. Finally, the discussion on the Land of the Dead shows the impact of Dust on physical spaces.

Angels are the most important species in the novels in terms of their connection to Dust, which features heavily in the overturning of the moral of Milton's Fall narrative. To understand the nature of angels we first have to look at a passage in *The Amber Spyglass* in which the angels Balthamos and Baruch explain the nature of the Authority, Pullman's God character: "The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, The Almighty – those were all names he gave himself. He was never the creator. He

was an angel like ourselves – the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are" (31). Various Judeo-Christian names for God are used to describe the Authority. The inclusion of these names in Pullman's narrative ties the Authority firmly to the level of being ascribed to God by these religious traditions. This level of being and ontological basis of the universe are then undercut when it is revealed that his claims to creatorship are a malicious lie used to manipulate the other angels. As no other Creator-God is mentioned in the trilogy, the logical conclusion is that this concept has no referent in Pullman's narrative universe. With the removal of a creator and corresponding plane of existence, the status of Dust as the most important substance in Pullman's universe is reinforced. It is from Dust that the angels are formed, and as the most important condition for intelligent life to develop, it is connected to the origins of other creatures as well.

As beings formed exclusively out of Dust, angels occupy a special place in Pullman's universe. Nowhere are the introduction of the transcendence of the spirit-matter boundary and the incorporation of Miltonic echoes more explicit than in Pullman's treatment of them. Angels are "complexifications" of Dust (*SK* 249). As such, they consist purely of this one elementary particle, while other creatures have a mixed material basis. This difference in their physical composition is similar to the Miltonic conception in which angels are 'different in degree, not nature'. In Pullman's universe, the angels are not different in a supernatural manner, but because they lack all physical building blocks apart from Dust. Without these other elemental particles, angels only embody the properties of the Dust-particle. 'Degree' is now not the closeness of beings to God, but the degree to which beings are constituted out of Dust. Even though Dust is not a monistic substance when the entire universe of *His Dark Materials* is considered, it functions as a monistic substance in the constitution of angels. This exclusivity causes a physical difference that gives the angels their special abilities, such as the ability to remotely communicate through several special objects, and the ability to

freely travel between worlds.

Dust's similarity to Milton's substance leads to another clear Miltonic echo in Pullman's treatment of angels: the physical nature of the angels makes them diffuse. Their bodies are not made of flesh as those of the other creatures are. Their forms are tenuous and can transform according to their will. Raphael's metaphor of the progression of substance as a tree in book 5 of *Paradise Lost* is directly applicable to Pullman's angels: "So from the root / Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves / More airy, last the bright consummate flower / Spirits odorous breathes" (5. ll.479-82). This analogy which demonstrates the scale of beings from dense to diffuse according to their substance, progressing from bodily to spiritual substance, is applicable to Pullman's universe. In *His Dark Materials*, the progression is not from bodily to spiritual substance, but a scale with beings composed of several elemental particles on one end and beings only made up of Dust on the other. But, whereas their spiritual nature lends power to the angels of Milton's universe, the reverse is true, in bodily terms, for Pullman's angels. As Balthamos and Baruch explain to Will, angels, though beings of greater intellect, are weaker than humans and many other creatures in physical terms. Their lack of flesh in the general sense leaves them frail and easily susceptible to bodily harm, unlike the physical robustness of Milton's angels. When he is wounded by the forces of the Authority, Baruch simply cannot hold on to his form any longer and is swept away by the wind: "Lord Asriel turned back to see Baruch straining and quivering to hold his wounded form together. The effort was too much. A draught from the open door sent an eddy of air across the bed, and the particles of the angel's form, loosened by the waning of his strength, swirled upwards into randomness, and vanished" (*AS* 63). This is not death as we know it. The angels are extremely long-lived beings, and their 'death' results from the frailness of a body that requires effort to keep itself together. The weakened angel simply does not have the power to retain his form and falls apart; breaking down into

the Dust-particles from which he arose. This is a clear example of the physical organisation of Pullman's universe directly impacting his narrative.

The unique way in which angels, as manifestations of Dust, are able to communicate with other sentient beings reinforces the connection between Dust and consciousness. Sentient beings are able to communicate directly with the manifestations of Dust through the use of objects such as the alethiometer, a scientific supercomputer, and Chinese divination sticks. An important condition for this is the state of mind of the recipient characterised as "a way to make the mind go blank" (*SK* 96) in order to make these instruments effective in establishing a communicative link between angel and another sentient being. The communication therefore involves a double focus in which the mind is kept blank, while simultaneously retaining the ability to formulate questions. Due to the need for an object and the physical nature of Dust, both material in nature, there is a suggestion that the mental effort from the sentient mind is material as well as it is also essential to this mode of communication. This process is therefore an acknowledgement of the physical nature of the workings of the brain on the part of Pullman's narrative. By doing so, it reflects modern scientific notions on the chemical nature of emotions and thought. It reinforces the notion that Pullman is thoroughly engaged in incorporating his scientific understanding of his own world into the fantasy world he composes. Such Dust-based, communication between Dr. Malone and what she at first conceives as dark matter also shows the self-identification of angels with Dust:

> [Malone:]Angels are creatures of Shadow-matter? Of Dust?"
>
> [Response:] "Structures. Complexifications. Yes"
>
> [Malone:] "And Shadow-matter is what we have called spirit?"
>
> [Response:] "From what we are, spirit: from what we do, matter. Mater and spirit are one" (*SK* 249)

The frame of mind needed to communicate through devices suggests that not only are matter and spirit one, but matter and consciousness are one as well.

Even though the supercomputer reveals this self-identification of angels with Dust, the most important and influential case of Dust-based communication takes place through the alethiometer. The alethiometer which Lyra has in her possession is a compass-shaped device through which she can ask questions to, what later turns out to be, Dust. The questions she puts to the alethiometer will always reveal a perfectly accurate answer, even for events and choices that lie in the future. There are multiple of these devices in the world of *His Dark Materials*. However, Lyra's communication with the alethiometer is unique, as she is the only person capable of reading it by intuition. Other people have to spend years studying the device and hours of interpretation per answer the device relates to them to gain any knowledge through these interactions. As a means of getting completely accurate information and predictions, the alethiometer is an important aspect to the universe of *His Dark Materials* and an example of the influence of Dust on the actions of its characters.

Another major fantastical element in Pullman's trilogy is the dæmon. Like the angel it is intimately connected to Dust and consciousness. Dæmons are physical manifestations of the human soul. As such they are tied to human identity; representing it in animal form. Due to the psychological developmental differences between children and adults, their dæmons are different as well. A child's dæmon can change its shape, depending on the requirements of the situation or the mood of either child or dæmon. With maturity and the increased rigidity with which identity is established, the dæmon loses its ability to change. As a result,it becomes a permanent, fixed representation of the human's soul. The qualities associated with the animal are the qualities which are most prominent in their human's psyche, e.g. snakes are connected to guile and malevolence, dogs with loyalty and servility. Apart from these

animal archetypes, the individual form that a dæmon takes also says something about the human. I will illustrate this point by looking at Farder Coram's dæmon:

> [Lyra] could hardly take her eyes off Farder Coram's dæmon, who was the most beautiful dæmon she'd ever seen. When Pantalaimon was a cat he was lean and ragged and harsh, but Sophonax, for that was her name, was golden-eyed and elegant beyond measure, fully twice as large as a real cat and richly furred. When the sunlight touched her, it lit up more shades of tawny-brown-leaf-hazel-corn-gold-autumn-mahogany than Lyra could name. (*NL* 143)

The beauty and size of Sophonax complement, and enable, Coram's full life and intellect. Through later exposition we are presented with a view of his life which confirms his wisdom, resourcefulness, and his overall benevolent nature. His dæmon, who is ultimately a reflection of his own character, is extraordinarily beautiful because he himself is such a worthy and capable man; her physical qualities mirror his mental ones. Lyra, on the other hand, is still a somewhat scruffy child and when her dæmon takes on the form of a cat, he reflects this part of her nature. As a reflection of their human's soul, dæmons function as a way of establishing a character's identity in Pullman's universe and narrative; a physical reminder of their characterising traits.

Humans and dæmons are linked through Dust. This link has several consequences for their interdependency. They cannot be physically separated more than a few meters without being exposed to physical and mental pain, and if one of them dies the other dies along with them. However, even though they are manifestations of the human soul and linked to the human through Dust, they are not merely subservient manifestations, but semi-independent creatures in their own right. This is demonstrated by the numerous differences of opinion and arguments between humans and dæmons throughout the trilogy. These spoken dialogues and misunderstandings also indicate that Anne-Marie Bird's view of humans and dæmons as

"telepathically linked" is inaccurate: "the texts emphasise that human and dæmon are one being, linked by an invisible, telepathic bond, as is illustrated when Lyra tells her dæmon, Pantalaimon: 'I didn't have anything in mind and well you know it' (NL, p. 9). (Metaphor 115) Her assertion is also contradicted by the section she bases it on; at that point in the narrative Lyra and Pan are arguing about which approach to take and she has not yet formulated a plan. Because he understands her rash nature he 'knows it well'. There is no suggestion of a telepathic bond, rather humans and dæmons, through their closeness, gain a full understanding of each other. The seeming telepathy which Bird identifies in the passage comes from a thorough compatibility and familiarity established through an entire lifetime of being together and the obvious similarity between human and soul.

Dust is both a condition and a result of sentience. Sentient beings create Dust through their experiences and thoughts in life. Already existing Dust is attracted to sentient creatures, especially adults, and will gather in their vicinity. It is this already available Dust that starts a creature on the path to sentience. If this original Dust is not replenished, or if it is taken away, the cycle will be broken and sentient life will vanish from the universe. It is in the breaking of this cycle that it is revealed that Dust as a physical entity can be affected by multiple phenomena apart from living creatures and their consciousness. It can also be affected by spaces and other physical phenomena. A prime example of this is the entrapment of Dust in the Land of the Dead. The Land of the Dead is a world which has been transformed into an afterlife prison-camp by the Authority. As a result of imprisonment of the dead, the Dust they have accumulated is never returned to the cycle. The consequences of this are twofold: the amount of Dust in the universe is reduced, leading to unsustainable amounts, and the dead are indefinitely reduced to a half-life as 'Dust-ghosts'. The dead are unhappy in this condition and this once again reinforces both the influence of Dust on the sentient psyche, and the interdependency of matter and Dust captured in the phrase "matter loved Dust" (*AS* 440)

The exclusively materialist basis of all phenomena and characters in the *His Dark Materials* influences the manner in which his narrative operates. In many respects Pullman is following Milton's conception of the connection between bodily and spiritual substances. Because of this similarity, the completely material and the monistic universes of *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost*, respectively, show many similarities in their treatment of the nature of the 'supernatural'. Many fantastical elements are impacted by Pullman's understanding of physical reality and his invention of Dust to illuminate the link between the mental and the physical. The major difference between the universes of Milton and Pullman lies in their widely diverging treatments of God and the ontology of existence. The treatment of this character, and all others with clear referents in both texts, will be the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter Three
Importing Characters and Factions: Similarities and Changes in the Pursuit of Inversion

We have arrived at the final stepping stone needed to reach a thorough understanding of the mechanics of Pullman's adaptation of *Paradise Lost.* This level of understanding of the technical nature of the adaptation is required to analyse the way its inverted nature leads to an inversion of Milton's theodicy: affirming the Fall as a good thing in and of itself. In this chapter, I will demonstrate to what extent the central characters in *His Dark Materials* are counterparts to those in Milton's epic. This is not to say that Pullman has merely incorporated Milton's version of these characters. Pullman's characters reveal his own preoccupations, most notably his own point of view on the dichotomy between innocence and experience. This chapter will focus on what has changed and what has remained the same in the translation of these characters from Milton to Pullman and which factors played a defining role in shaping these changes. Central to the transformation of characters are the changed cultural context, Pullman's own (mis-)reading of *Paradise Lost*, the demands of the narrative and relationships between characters in the trilogy, Pullman's own poetics of (fantasy) literature, and the incorporation of other sources into his narrative. Because Pullman also incorporates the factions which fought out Milton's war in heaven, I will also outline these briefly. By identifying and accounting for the differences and similarities between major characters, both by using the texts themselves and the wider, changed cultural context, this section will prepare the way for the final chapter.

The main conflict in *His Dark Materials* mirrors itself in the enmity between heaven and hell in *Paradise Lost*. However, Pullman reverses what is presented truth and readers' sympathies to prepare the way for his inversion of the Fall. The heavenly faction and its God are now the essence of tyranny; trying to impose arbitrary boundaries on the behaviour of all sentient beings and to keep their own authority intact through repressive force. Its main

weapons are lies and brute force. Pullman transforms heaven's characters into what I will call the theocratic faction; a despotic force against which rebellion is justified. Satan's side, on the other hand, is now the side of which pursues knowledge and strives for individual freedom. In this case, Pullman echoes Satan's allegations against God, framing them as truth. One such allegation is that God is not the Creator, which turns out to be a significant aspect of Pullman's attack on the character. In Pullman's version, the words of the arch-liar become truth. This faction is characterised by cooperation, empathy, and the pursuit of truth, knowledge, and freedom.

Due to the nature of the work, we cannot discuss *Paradise Lost* in any significant detail without referring to the God portrayed in it. As Milton attempts a theodicy, any adaptation of the work will have to express a view on his God. Correspondingly, Pullman's God character 'the Authority' is central to his overturning of Milton's theodicy. Without addressing the question of the character and justice of the God figure, the conflict in *His Dark Materials* would lose much of its significance. The Authority is not as present in the narrative as Milton's God: the presence of the character is mostly conveyed through his role as the (nominal) head of the theocratic faction. Hence, the negativity surrounding this faction attaches itself to the figure behind its might and conduct. However, before we can reach any understanding of the Authority as a translated character in the trilogy we have to briefly examine Milton's God.

In terms of moral significance, God is the central character in *Paradise* Lost. Even though we may be persuaded by Satan's rhetoric or engrossed in the struggles of Adam and Eve and despair at the fate of our first parents, the character around which everything revolves is God. This is what it means for Milton to undertake to "justify the ways of God to men" (1. l.26). The central point of the theodicy is to defend God's justice and this is exactly what Milton attempts, as Danielson asserts "Milton never presents *his* God as if he is not

really God, the eternal and almighty Being who created the heavens and the earth [...] to whom all beings owe thanks and worship for his goodness and greatness" (144), as such, "the theological apologetic that *Paradise Lost* does undertake concerns not God's existence but his nature, or character" (144). The main argument of *Paradise Lost* is the "free will defence". As stated previously, this argument asserts that God, in his creation of free will, which enables evil, has also created the opportunity for any good to exist in the first place. The possibility for goodness to exist is ultimately of more importance than the evil that arises as a consequence of the abuse of free will.

Milton's characterisation of God in his epic poem, and readers' reactions to God as a character in *Paradise Lost* are not as straightforward as Milton's employment of the free will defence. The poem does not only have to be convincing as a theological argument: it also has to create empathy between reader and characters. The second of these requirements has not been met for some, as Stuart Curran comments that God is "a highly problematic [character] for many readers" (526). Readers' and critics' perceptions of God as a character in *Paradise Lost* can be divided into two camps. The first camp takes up Milton's theodicy, defending God's conduct in *Paradise Lost*. C.S. Lewis, who belonged to this camp, remarked that "Many of those who say they dislike Milton's God only mean that they dislike God" (126). Curran assents to this declaration stating that it is valid, "not because Milton's God is a traditional Anglican deity (far from it), but because he is the intentional embodiment of all the paradoxes, which to say seeming contradictions, of many centuries of Judaeo-Christian thought" (526). I would contend that their points are only valid when the theodical element is considered. Lewis was a famously orthodox Anglican Christian and would read the text mostly in the context of the theodicy. God is just because he is God seems to be the prevailing thought in his approach to the subject; it is more a question of cultural affiliation than a literary debate. This kind of thinking reveals a major condition on the success of the

theodicy: only if we accept the God in *Paradise Lost* as the Judaeo-Christian God can we accept arguments like the free will defence with its emphasis on creation. If God is not the Creator, what, then, is the justification for what some see as his authoritarian kingship? The second camp has criticised the character for his authoritarian rule, seeming callousness, and legalistic attitude. William Empson, in his vehemence, is a great exemplar of this tradition. He alleges that "The picture of God in the poem [...] is astonishingly like Uncle Joe Stalin; the same patience under an appearance of roughness, the same flashes of joviality, the same thorough unscrupulousness, the same real bad temper" (146). However, it must be noted that Empson is similar to Lewis as his outlook seems to be set a priori. Empson does not take God's divinity into account in his critique of the character. He chooses to approach God in the same manner as he would a human character, leaving out His divine status in his moral critique of the character. In general, there seems to be less emotional appeal to God than to the other characters, and the cause may lie in Curran's characterisation of God as a "logician, not a rhetorician. The operative principle of his universe in conception and operation is pure reason" (527). While this characteristic may be theologically consistent and supports the theodicy attempted in the work, it does not compel the reader like the emotional appeal of characters like Satan and Adam and Eve.

Pullman's reading of *Paradise Lost* is focussed on Satan: "This is a story about devils. It's not a story about God" (Introduction 5). Persuaded by Satan's rhetoric, Pullman, like Empson and his ilk, is dismissive of Milton's God. As such, Pullman's characterisation and setting up of events surrounding his Authority constitute a sustained attack on both this character and the Judaeo-Christian God of *Paradise Lost.* The most important technique by which Pullman discredits his Authority is establishing a clear link between him and the Christian God and then to undercut the supernatural aspects of both. The first step he takes is to refer to the Authority by biblical names for God. In *The Amber Spyglass,* the angels

Balthamos and Baruch relate their knowledge of the Authority's origins "The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, The Almighty – those were all names he gave himself" (*AS* 31). Notably, these are all names he gave *himself:* they are not earned, or ascribed by others. Since these are all biblical epithets for God, most of which are present in Milton's work, the two characters are tied together by these names. Through this link, the suspicion towards the one will also cast doubt on the other. The passage goes further: "He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves – the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are" (31). As stated in the previous chapter, this revelation undercuts both the character and his claims of higher status. Without the nature of creator and supreme being, the Authority can be judged by human standards, which leaves him open to attack. The biblical God, tied to the Authority by their duplicate names, loses much of the theodical justification given by Milton when he has to be judged without the good he has done in creation. By undercutting the reality of the god character Pullman has also undercut his moral character; if there is nothing to be grateful for, only the actions undertaken by him and his followers matter in a moral estimation. Significantly, Pullman reflects one of Satan's accusations towards God in this passage. In Book V of *Paradise Lost* Satan casts doubt on his own status as created being,

> That we were formed then say'st thou? [...]
>
> who saw
>
> When this creation was? remember'rest thou
>
> Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?
>
> We know no time when we were not as now;
>
> Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
>
> By our own quickening power (ll. 853; 856-861)

Pullman, lays the accusation of Satan to the feet of the Authority, accepting it as true in his version of events. This incorporation is a direct result of Pullman's romantic mis-reading of *Paradise Lost*. By doing so, Pullman lends credibility to the romantic reading by changing the events to match Satan's argument. In this sense he also legitimises Empson's approach which completely disregards the divine nature of the God character.

Making the Authority seem even more of a fraud, Pullman accords him no real power or influence. The presence of the Authority is felt through the religious faction he heads. However, he "no longer runs the daily affairs of the kingdom" (*AS* 61) and has appointed Metatron as his regent. In *The Amber Spyglass*, he is an enfeebled has-been, reflecting Pullman's contention in "The Republic of Heaven" that "the idea that God is dead has been familiar, and has felt true, to many of us for a long time now. [...] I take it that there really is no God anymore; the old assumptions have all withered away. That's my starting point: the idea of God with which I was brought up is now perfectly incredible" (655). Without his status as a god, and the dual characteristics as Creator and all-powerful Judge, the Authority has no protection against time or moral critique: he has become a relic of a darker time in history.

Pullman's attack is two-pronged: it focuses on the conduct and reality of the God figure. The explanation for the changes made is dual in nature as well. It can be found in the secularisation of both Pullman himself and Western European society, and the way he reads *Paradise Lost*. In Pullman's agnostic cultural sphere, the lack of belief in God found in modern times has resulted in a decrease in feasible apologetics: if a being claiming Godlike status were to exist without having created anything, he is open to critique and ridicule. That this sustained attack and ridicule actually occurs is due to the antipathy Pullman feels towards organised religion in general, and Milton's God in particular. Pullman characterises Milton's God as "petty and legalistic" (Introduction 137). As Curran discussed, God is a logician, so it

is understandable that an unsympathetic reader finds him petty and legalistic and casts his actions in a self-serving light. As such, it becomes clear that Pullman's translation and subsequent attack on the Judaeo-Christian God found in Milton's poem is fuelled by antipathy towards the character and that the way in which it occurs is consistent with the secularised cultural sphere in which Pullman writes.

The true leader of the theocratic faction is Metatron. In many ways he resembles Milton's Son; both from the sources surrounding this figure and his role in the narrative. Just as the Son is raised by his father in Book V of *Paradise Lost*, Metatron, too, was raised by the Authority to a divine status. Both Son and Metatron are the acting parts of their respective divinities. The Son is the physical manifestation of the Father: in this Milton follows "the Son's theological role as mediator between the pure essence who is God and the material creation he has substantiated" (Curran 527-28). It is the Son who is the direct creator of the world, putting action to his Father's desire (7. ll. 163-67). He is also the one physically overseeing the judgement of the fallen human pair. Likewise, Metatron is the entity actually effecting the shared plans of himself and the Authority. He even goes as far as to engage in physical combat at the end of *The Amber Spyglass*. Both figures embody the physical aspects of their respective divinities; effecting physical change in the narratives – the Son as actual Creator and Judge, Metatron as *de facto* head of the forces of the theocratic faction and main antagonist in *His Dark Materials.*

Apart from these similarities, there are many differences between the two characters. These differences arise from their functions within their respective narratives, but also from their conception. The Son is Milton's embodiment of Jesus Christ in poetic form, while Metatron is taken from a Jewish tradition laid down in the Enochic Books (1-3 *Enoch*), some sections of which "are the oldest known Jewish religious writings outside the Old Testament itself" (Olson 1). Consequently, Metatron has his own base characteristics out of which

Pullman fashions his own character. While many of these characteristics create a resemblance between the two figures, it is the diverging characteristics of the Metatron figure which fuel his vilification in Pullman's anti-religious trilogy.

Pullman follows the biblical and Enochic traditions in regard to the background of the character before being raised by God/the Authority: "'When I was a man I was known as Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mathalalel, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam. I lived for sixty-five years, and then the Authority took me to his kingdom'" (*AS* 400). This description of Enoch's genealogy is a condensed version of Genesis 5, the account of the sons of Adam in which it is also stated that: "Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him" (Gen 5:24). Enoch's transformation into Metatron is non-biblical, but only written down in the Enochic books. As Peter Schäfer summarises: "Enoch becomes the highest angel in heaven and is called Metatron [...] even assuming – in the Third Book of Enoch (3 Enoch) – the unique and unheard of epithet YHWH *ha-qatan*, that is, the "Lesser God" (103). As Schäfer remarks, "The similarities of Jesus' exalted position with Metatron's elevation are obvious" (143). Up to this point, Pullman's narrative follows the biblical and Enochic traditions. However, the two figures – the Jewish Metatron and the Metatron in *His Dark Materials* – start to diverge following Enoch's ascendance. As a result, many of the resemblances so prevalent between the Jewish Metatron and the Son are also lost.

Pullman transforms the Jewish Metatron into an ambitious schemer who raises himself above the Authority. Like the Judaic Metatron, he is a separate entity, transformed by the Authority, who is ultimately wholly independent. Therefore, the power dynamic between these figures is different from the relationship between Father and Son in *Paradise Lost*. Metatron is no 'Image of God', but instead uses the image of the Authority to establish his own authority as Regent to "dominate" (*AS* 380) the Kingdom of Heaven. His dominance

goes so far that he even gives orders directly to the Authority's personal guard. The distortion of the power dynamic is due to several factors: the instability of the relationship between Authority and Metatron, the contention contained in the term 'lesser YHWH', and the fact that the Enoch in *His Dark Materials* retains his human desires after being transformed into Metatron.

Burton Hatlen notes that the romantic critics of Milton "explored the ways in which within *Paradise Lost* God and Satan, Adam and Eve, are bound up with one another in relationships that are unstable because they are at once hierarchical and reciprocal" (86). In Pullman, the unstable relationship is not the one between these figures, but the one between the YHWH and lesser YHWH characters. Four thousand years before the events of the trilogy "The Authority chose [Metatron] [...] to be his Regent, and they laid their plans together" (61). Laying together their plans suggests a cooperative, and therefore reciprocal relationship. The relationship is also hierarchical because the Authority has claimed the status of supreme being for himself. In this unstable situation, a takeover by the junior partner occurs, and the roles are dramatically reversed.

One of the main reasons for Metatron's over-ambitiousness is that he has retained his human memories of the world of the flesh. As such, Metatron, though now an angel, can still be swayed by human lusts and desires. When Baruch reveals that Metatron is his brother, he characterises him as follows "Metatron was once Enoch [...] Enoch had many wives. He was a lover of the flesh" (*AS* 63). The clearest example of Metatron's continued susceptibility to human desires would be the success of Mrs Coulter's seduction attempt in *The Amber Spyglass* in which he unwittingly collaborates his brother's description: "When I was a man," he said, "I had wives in plenty, but none was as lovely as you.""When you were a man?""When I was a man I was known as Enoch [...]""And you had many wives?""I loved their flesh" (*AS* 400). This nostalgic longing for the touch of flesh is characteristic of those

few angels in *His Dark Materials* who were once human. Their relative lack of physicality is felt as a loss. As a result of his unfulfilled desires, Mrs Coulter's seduction of Metatron ultimately leads to his downfall.

Pullman ends up portraying a figure who bears striking resemblances to the Son in *Paradise Lost* in terms of their function within their respective divinities. However, from the characterisation of Metatron in the trilogy it becomes clear that Pullman uses the dissimilar origins of Metatron to cast the figure in an entirely insidious light. Pullman portrays Metatron in a manner in which his own sympathy for the Son does not shine through and which even distorts basic characteristics of the character. The defining quality of the Son in *Paradise Lost* is his subservience and loyalty to the Father in contrast to Satan's self-serving ambition. It is this quality that causes God to raise the Son above the other angels, including Satan, leading to the latter's prideful rebellion. In his portrayal of Metatron as over-ambitious and proud, Pullman creates a fusion between the function of the Son and some of the characteristics of Satan.

Driving this process is the inverted nature of Pullman's work combined with the unique origins of the Jewish Metatron figure, as well as Pullman's ideal portrayal of fictional gods laid out in "The Republic of Heaven". Pullman needs an unsympathetic lower divinity to fulfil his anti-theodical aims. Due to his sympathy for the Son, whom he calls "altogether more sympathetic"than Milton's God (Introduction 283), and the canonical characteristics of the character, he needs a different figure to play his part. The inversion cannot succeed if every aspect of a character is twisted to an extreme degree because they would not be recognisable. Since there is no basis for ambition in Milton's portrayal of the Son, Pullman introduces Metatron; similar in function, but different in personality and origin. It is the human origin of the character which Pullman exploits to complete his inversion of the divine characters. Juxtaposing Wagner and Tolkien in an attempt to illustrate his ideas on the

importance of human psychology in every entity in a fantastical work, Pullman writes: "Wagner's gods and heroes are exactly like human beings, on a grand scale: every human virtue and every human temptation is there. Tolkien leaves a good half of them out" ("RoH"662). The use of a figure resembling Christ, but purely human in origin allows Pullman to depict the heavenly drama in such a way that it reflects human nature to a greater degree than is possible with essentially non-human figures. Metatron is such a figure: a man elevated to angelic status.

The incorporation of Satan into Pullman's *His Dark Materials* is by far the most interesting and complex case of the translation of a character in the entire adaptation process. Due to the complexity of this particular adaptation of the character, there seem to be conflicting ideas about who qualify as satanically-inspired characters. Hugh Spanner's interview with Philip Pullman illustrates this confusion:

> [Spanner] So, your inversion of *Paradise Lost* is quite different in that, whatever Lord Asriel stands for, what emerges as the end is not in any way the triumph of self-will or self-interest. It's really quite Stoical...
>
> [Pullman] But of course, the Satan figure is Mary Malone, not Lord Asriel, and the temptation is wholly beneficent. (25)

I argue that neither interviewer nor author are right in this exchange. Apart from a few characteristics found in Metatron, Milton's Satan and glimpses of his character can be found in three separate characters in the trilogy. There is a precedent for this, as the manga *Angel Sanctuary* also splits up Satan's character into three separate beings to change readers' sympathies from heaven to hell. The reasons for this split will be made clear further along in this section. In *His Dark Materials*, Lord Asriel, the critics' leading contender for the role of Satan, is the classic (neo-)romantic hero; the rebel against tyranny. Mary Malone, Pullman's designated Satan, fulfils the role of the serpent in Pullman's inverted Fall of Man. Besides

these two, I will argue that Xaphania, the leader of the rebel angels, is also based on Satan. In this section, I will discuss all of these satanic figures to elucidate their roles, characteristics, and connection with Milton's Satan and the way in which his classic Satan has changed to fit Pullman's inverted narrative. Because there are three characters to address, in the process of which many characteristics of Milton's Satan will be discussed, I have foregone the pattern established so far and will mainly consider myself with the translation; foregoing a detailed description of Milton's Satan as his characteristics will come to the fore in the discussion of these characters. I will start with Mary Malone, Pullman's own pick for the Satan figure.

Mary Malone is a former nun turned scientist investigating the nature of Dust. By turning apostate and putting off her position as nun, she is a fallen one to the theocratic faction, not unlike Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Mary plays a major role in the Fall event by providing Will and Lyra with a narrative that ultimately leads them to fall. In this manner she fulfils the role of the Serpent. She is called "the tempter" (*AS* 76) by the priests attempting to kill Lyra to prevent the Fall, and by the narrator directly after (79). Her role is made explicit by the angels she communicates with through 'the Cave', a supercomputer attuned to Dust: "Waste no more time. You must play the serpent" (*SK* 249). This title is reinforced by the epigraph tothe chapter entitled "Oil and Lacquer" in *The Amber Spyglass*, taken from Genesis: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made" (221). As such, Mary's status as a satanically-inspired figure is confirmed by her role in the narrative and the epithets she is referred by.

Unlike Satan's seduction of Eve, there is no malicious dimension to Mary's role in the Fall. I concur with Chantal Oliver's estimation that "she is Pullman's positively re-imagined "serpent/tempter"" (298). Mary simply tells the story of her loss of faith by falling in love with a man. She does not cause the Fall through the seductive overpowering of an innocent, but by relating her life experiences to two children on the cusp of adulthood. Her role is

characterized by compassion and plain communication without ulterior motive, as opposed to Satan's guile, jealousy, and self-centredness. Pullman seems to be inspired by Gnosticism in his portrayal of the serpent as a female figure working out of benign motivations (Gray 166). In the Gnostic tradition, the serpent is actually the female figure of Wisdom who tries to free humanity from its subservience to the evil God of this world. Mary does not impose a narrative on the pair she relates her story to, but is prompted by their questions to give truthful information about her experience of love and life. This is in direct contrast to Milton's Satan, who invents a web of lies around the one commandment God imposed on Adam and Eve and whose seduction is characterised by his overpowering of Eve's mental defences.

Even though there is a clear similarity between Mary and Satan in their role as instigators of the Fall, Pullman's singular focus on her as the Satan figure is remarkable. In this estimation, he focuses solely on the Fall event and the Serpent's role in it. In doing so, Pullman ignores substantial aspects of the work and character he is adapting. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan is not only presented as the serpent; he is also the foremost fallen angel who "trusted to have equalled the most high" (1. l.40) and "Against the throne and monarchy of God / Raised impious war in heaven and battle proud / With vain attempt" (1. 42-44) "from a sense of injured merit" (l. 98); the defeated self-deluding figure bent on revenge. Pullman does explore Satan's roles as vengeful rebel, leader of a lost people, and antagonist to both heaven and humanity in *His Dark Materials*, but he refuses to acknowledge the status of any characters fulfilling these roles as satanically inspired. Why, then, this focus on Mary as the sole satanic figure in *His Dark Materials*? This exclusion of other satanic figures is the result of Pullman's most important objective: to present the Fall as a triumph of human experience over imposed innocence. I find support for this claim in Pullman's introduction to *Paradise Lost* in which he also discusses *His Dark Materials* as a reworking of the epic poem:

> Inevitably, the storyteller's own preoccupations becomes visible in the emphasis and the colouring they give to this or that aspect of the tale. In my case, I found that my interest was most vividly caught by the meaning of the temptation-and-fall theme. [...] As I played with it, my story resolved itself into an account of the necessity of growing up, and a refusal to lament the loss of innocence (9-10)

Because no other satanic figure is as prominent in Pullman's Fall of Man, he wants to keep the focus on Mary Malone and her role in any discussion of the work. In doing so, Pullman either overlooks the role of other satanic figures or even (disingenuously) corrects questioners on their nature as characters inspired by (the romantic conception of) Milton's Satan.

Literary critics[1] seem to flock to Lord Asriel as the principal candidate for the role of translated Satan. Like Pullman in his designation of Mary, they are right in pointing out the influence of Milton's Satan on the character. Lord Asriel embodies the more martial and rebellious aspects of the Satan character. Driven by pride and his hate for the overpowering control of the theocratic faction over his world and free thought in general, he attempts to overthrow it. That his motivations are partly self-serving is made explicit by a combination of his words and prideful nature: "'They'll never allow it -' [Asriel] said, 'Allow it? We've gone beyond being *allowed* as if we were children'" (*NL* 392). Child is always a slur to Asriel, as becomes clear from his conversations with Lyra. Being made to feel like a child is something his pride cannot stand. He leads a vast coalition of forces from many different worlds in battle against the theocratic faction. Lord Asriel is the Promethean rebel (Hatlen 86) of (neo-)Romanticism, resembling Satan in Burton Russel's description: "the Romantic Devil personified noble rebellion against autocracy or served at least as an ambivalent representative of both liberty and selfishness" (12). Asriel is willing to sacrifice all to pursue his goals, which are motivated by his own passions, but nonetheless serves the cause of

[1] Hatlen, Rayment-Pickard and Gray, among others.

freedom for all.

Lord Asriel's initial appearance in the narrative is already marked by strife as he nearly gets poisoned to stop him and his dangerous intentions. What drives this attempt is fear. Numerous times throughout the trilogy it becomes clear that others behold Asriel with a mixture of fear and awe. Even when he is held prisoner by armoured bears in *Northern Lights* and has no real power or influence, their king, Iofur Raknison, is still as afraid of him as of the representatives of the immensely powerful church: "'So he wouldn't let anyone go and see Lord Asriel?' 'No! Never! But he's afraid of Lord Asriel too, you know. Iofur's playing a difficult game. But he's clever. He's done what they both want. He's kept Lord Asriel isolated, to please Mrs Coulter; and he's let Lord Asriel have all the equipment he wants, to please *him*'" (330-31) The nature of this mixture of fear and awe lies in Asriel's passion, unpredictability, and tenacity in the pursuit of his goals. This aspect of Asriel's character is best described by his manservant Thorold:

> Lord Asriel is just a man, with human power, no more than that. But his ambition is limitless. He dares to do what men and women don't even dare to think. [...] So with one part of me[...] I say he's mad, wicked, deranged. Yet with another part I think, he's Lord Asriel, he's not like other men. Maybe . . . If it was ever going to be possible, it'd be done by him and by no one else (*SK* 47)

What becomes clear from Thorold's description is that there is an intense potential for danger in Lord Asriel because he dares to think and do what others will not. He follows his convictions with a passion and tenacity that makes others fear him. He even develops a special ability, which Pullman never fully explores, which acts as a manifestation of his strength of will: "Lord Asriel has a way special to himself of bringing about what he wants, he just has to call for something and –" (*NL* 377). It is his tenacity and passion that make Milton's Satan so formidable in his pursuit of vengeance against heaven, and it is these same

qualities which are so characteristic of Lord Asriel in *His Dark Materials* that lead others to fear and respect him.

Naturally, there are also many differences between the Satan of *Paradise Lost* and Lord Asriel. While Satan is intimately connected to heaven before his fall, Asriel suffers no such fall from grace. He has never belonged to the forces he opposes, standing as the truly free individual. Contrastingly, as Neil Forsyth points out, Satan can be pestered by Michael as "a toady to God who 'Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored/ Heav'n's awful Monarch' (4.959-60)" (18). Asriel is the true embodiment of the freedom-striving human, not bothered by his connections in the pursuit of his grand purpose. Most significantly, he is willing to sacrifice himself for his cause, something Satan with his self-centredness could never even contemplate. Even in his moments of doubt, Satan's thoughts are only for himself. Satan's cause *is* Satan and never more than a self-serving rebellion. Lord Asriel instigates the rebellion against the theocratic faction not only to serve the ambitions of one individual, but the needs of many. It is because of his humanity that Asriel can sacrifice himself, and thereby save his rebellion. Unlike Satan's insurgence, the rebellion does not revolve around Asriel alone, but serves the needs of the entire universe in its pursuit of freedom.

It is for his role as the romantic rebel, his ruthlessness in the pursuit of his goal, hateful motivations, and his martial aspects that Lord Asriel is pointed to as the satanic figure by literary critics. By doing so, and like Pullman himself, they focus on one character and thereby ignore the satanic dimensions of others. In the next section I will look at a character who is ontologically more like Satan than both Mary Malone and Lord Asriel, but has none of Satan's character traits and only a small resemblance to his role in *Paradise Lost*.

Xaphania, the leader of the rebel angels who join Asriel's coalition, is, boldly stated, an older version of Satan. *His Dark Materials* portrays a second rebellion leading to a second Fall in the climax of Pullman's trilogy. Thirty-thousand years before these events, Xaphania

led the angels in the first rebellion against the Authority. This rebellion failed, and since then she has led her people in exile. As such, she fulfils most of Satan's early career. However, Xaphania embodies none of Satan's character traits; where he is prideful, she is unassuming, wise where he is self-deluding, servile while he is bent on sovereignty, etc. She has a quiet dignity totally unlike Satan: "her expression was austere and compassionate, and both Will and Lyra felt as if she knew them to their hearts" (*AS* 495). As such, she plays a supporting role in the rebellion, taking orders from the human Lord Asriel. She describes her own role as follows: "since [the rebellion] I have been wandering between many worlds. Now I have pledged my allegiance to Lord Asriel, because I see in his great enterprise the best hope of destroying the tyranny at last" (*AS* 208). Xaphania does not need to be the leader to support the cause, unlike Satan's envy of heaven's monarch. Xaphania's supporting role reveals Pullman's enduring commitment to make the struggle an essentially human one, delegating the traditionally supernatural to the back bench.

Whereas all other characters discussed in this chapter have one clear referent in both texts, Satan's case is special. What drives this difference is a combination of factors. The first and foremost is the fact that Satan has many roles in *Paradise Lost*. He is avenger, leader, tempter; and the embodiment of evil and fallenness. To accurately reflect all of these roles without simply incorporating the Miltonic character into the narrative calls for a division of the character to fit multiple new characters with their own characteristics. Secondly, Pullman's interest in presenting the struggle against spiritual supervision as an entirely human one, celebrating the Fall as a triumph of humanity, means that an angelic figure such as Xaphania is not suitable to play a major part in either the struggle against tyranny or the events leading up to the fall. A third factor contributing to the emergence of multiple satanic figures is that the Fall portrayed in *His Dark Materials* is a second Fall, the first having already occurred. It calls for new characters to fulfil older roles and give new perspectives.

The final of these changes is that Pullman views Satan as the hero of the poem. His admiration for the character leads him to transpose his most negative qualities on the other side of the struggle into Metatron, as discussed earlier, leaving these qualities absent or softened in his portrayal of Lord Asriel, Mary Malone, and Xaphania.

In *His Dark Materials*, the human pair 'tempted' by the Satan figure consists of Will and Lyra. Unlike Adam and Eve, they are not without knowledge of good and evil, as this has already been gained in the first Fall, as Asriel quotes from their Bible "And they saw the difference, and they knew good and evil; and they were ashamed" (*NL* 370). Due to this difference, the point of the Fall is not simply experience over innocence, as Pullman would like to frame it. It is about the willingness to experience and refusing to submit to imposed innocence. Whereas Adam and Eve are fully formed, though cognitively unaware of good and evil, Lyra and Will are intimately familiar with the concepts of good and evil, but are not yet fully developed. Pullman uses the children to get as close to the state of Adam and Eve as is possible in a 'fallen' world. They are, however, old enough to learn the implications of their actions and to make their own informed choices. Both children have had unusual upbringings; Lyra growing up in a college full of scholars, and Will as a child of a mentally-ill mother who has had to provide for her. Because of these experiences they are able to converse with the adults they meet on a more-or-less equal footing. This is exemplified by Mary's first reaction upon meeting Will: "Mary first wanted to embrace him as well as Lyra. But Mary was grown up, and Will was nearly grown, and she could see that that response would have made a child of him" (*AS* 428). Because they are grown up enough both in age and experience, they are able to make their own informed decisions. As such, Will and Lyra are as close to a kind of Adam and Eve capable of passing their own judgement as Pullman can fashion them. Because one of the connections between Adam and Eve and Lyra and Willis the fact that they are a (romantically involved) pair of humans with roles in the Fall, I

will discuss the characters both in their own right and as pairs in the following section. I will start my discussion with the status of Will as a character inspired by Milton's Adam.

Because his mother is mentally unstable, Will, like Adam, becomes the head of a household. He looks out for their safety by insisting on being close to his mother, and by trying to avoid being noticed. In this manner he resembles Adam just before Eve's temptation in his emphatic insistence on staying together. Will has a caring role, providing both his mother, and later Lyra, with the sort of care traditionally associated with mothers. In her article "Sissy Boy Mothering", Danielle Bray argues that this is an upheaval of established gender norms, both in the novel and our own contemporary world. While this may be true in terms of the tasks performed by Will, he is also taking on responsibility and exerting his authority through his caring role: "I cooked," he said, "so you can wash the dishes." She looked incredulous. "Wash the dishes?" she scoffed. "There's millions of clean ones lying about! Anyway I'm not a servant. I'm not going to wash them""So I won't show you the way through" (*SK* 26). Willuses this caring role to contain Lyra's rashness, a characteristic she has in common with Eve, to keep her from harm.This aspect of his role reveals the basis of its nature. Lyra and Will have to survive together, beset by enemies, and both have their responsibilities in their cooperation. Using the skills acquired through his unusual upbringing,Will takes the lead in homely, caring aspects. He does so to provide for Lyra and keep her from harm. Unlike Bray's assertion, Will does not become a mother figure, but an equal partner in the pair's struggle for survival.

Adam and Eve clearly exist in a state of gender hierarchy expressed in the phrase "though both / Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed" (4. ll. 295-96). Contrastingly, Will and Lyra are equals. Moreover, in terms of the inversion of Milton's theodicy, Lyra is slightly more influential. She is presented one book earlier than Will and figures prominently in a prophecy of the Fall. She is "Eve! Mother of all! Eve, again! Mother Eve!" (*SK* 313) and

considered the greater threat by the theocratic faction. In this respect, Will is less central in the lead up to the Fall than Lyra. This lesser role is similar to Adam's role in the Fall in *Paradise Lost*. In the poem, it is Eve who is the prime target of Satan. Adam's fall comes later, wholly dependent on the first. Will, unlike Adam, participates fully in the Fall, while Adam's role remains secondary. He falls only out of love and loyalty to Eve: "he scrupled not to eat / Against his better knowledge, not deceived, / But fondly overcome with female charm" (9. ll. 997-99). The difference between the two may be because Adam lacks the fierceness of Eve, only gaining the ability to strongly confront her after the Fall, whereas Will's fierce nature is emphasized in Pullman's trilogy:

> Serafina watched from close by, and felt nothing but compassion until she looked at Will's dæmon [...]. She remembered talking to the witch Ruta Skadi, who had asked, after seeing Will only once, if Serafina had looked into his eyes; and Serafina had replied that she had not dared to. This little brown bird was radiating an implacable ferocity as palpable as heat, and Serafina was afraid of it (*AS* 478)

Since a dæmon is an integral part of the human it can be said that Will himself is ferocious enough to intimidate Serafina, a witch with centuries of life experience. As such, he is able to match Lyra's strong personality and counter her over-inquisitiveness in a way that Adam cannot overcome Eve's.

Lyra's connection to Eve is established from the very beginning of the trilogy, "Pullman's opening scene establishes a long-term parallel between Lyra and the biblical Eve, whose curiosity leads her to taste the forbidden fruit" (Hatlen 83). The focus of this long comparison is not only on their roles within their narratives, but more specifically on their character traits. In her innocent delight in discovery, Eve is childlike. Lyra possesses this same trait, with the difference that she is actually a child. Even so, Lyra is more aware of the possibility of dangerous consequences, but mainly chooses to ignore them. Both characters

take great delight in beauty, though Lyra learns quickly that it can hide danger, as Mrs Coulter, Lyra's mother and one of the main antagonists in the first two novels of the trilogy, is constantly associated with beauty. The possibility of masking danger with beauty is a crucial aspect Eve overlooks in her seduction by Satan, as he disguises himself "pleasing was his shape, / And lovely, never since of serpent kind / Lovelier" (9. ll. 503-5).

It is after the Fall that Eve starts lying, a defining activity for Lyra: "Wearily Lyra sighed [...] It was difficult to tell them the truth when a lie would have been so much easier for them to understand" (*SK* 85). She comes to appreciate telling the truth as Gray observes, "it seems that although Lyra is a liar, she *learns* the value of truth. She has to go on a great journey [...] in order to find this out" (Gray 181). In some respects, Lyra matures into being comfortable with telling the truth, while Eve learns to lie as a result of her Fall.

The main differences between Lyra and Eve, however, originate in Milton's portrayal of the latter as a perfect woman before the Fall. In this manner, he reveals his time-bound perception of the ideal womanly role in a union as "the apt and cheerful conversation of man with woman, to comfort and refresh him against the evil of solitary life" (*EP* 114). This conception results in a great deal of mental passivity on Eve's part. She leans on others for mental leadership such as in her rescue by Christ from her infatuation with her own reflection and her secondary role in the human-angelic communication. This lack of assertiveness on a mental level leaves her open to Satan's suggestions. Lyra, on the other hand, is an active shaper of her own destiny, seemingly based on Pullman's appreciation of Satan as a protagonist in *Paradise Lost* "who sets the action going, who takes the initiative [which] encourages our interest in the protagonist to develop into admiration" (Introduction 6). Lyra's assertiveness also reflects the changes in the perception of gender roles in our time period and especially fantasy literature, which abounds with female heroines. However, perfection to the contrary, Milton "must also make credible the Fall's possibility" (Danielson 152). Eve's

downfall is her self-adoration, bordering on narcissism. This becomes clear from her description of the discovery of her reflection: “there I had fixed / Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire, / Had not a voice thus warned me, What thou seest, / What there thou seest fair creature is thyself” (4. ll.465-68). Eve believes herself to be a creature worthy and capable of meeting Satan’s challenge alone. He seduces her using phrases such as “sole wonder” (9. l. 533) and “empress of this fair world” (l. 568) emphasising her beauty and importance, confirming her in her self-regard. Lyra on the other hand, comes to recognise her own vulnerability through experiencing grief over the course of her journey in a dangerous world. As a result, she is more guarded than Eve. As keeper of the alethiometer, she can satisfy her curiosity in safer ways than Eve. Because of her experience, Lyra learns to protect herself by not flaunting that power or her presence.

As the romantic pairs central in the Fall events, Adam and Eve, and Will and Lyra, resemble each other in their narrative roles. However, because the worlds they are placed in are radically different, one a supposedly safe garden, and the other a world filled with danger, much of it directly aimed at Lyra and Will, the personalities of the characters are fundamentally different. This difference results in a closer resemblance of the world of *His Dark Materials* to our own world. This close resemblance is in accordance with Pullman’s desire to write fantasy which resembles his experience of real life. Will is not the superior head of a gender hierarchy, but a child lending his strength and receiving support in a partnership between equals. Lyra shares many of the traits of Eve, such as her curiosity and delight in beauty. However, because of the drastically changed attitudes to gender she is not subservient to the man in the relationship and is more active in combating the perils besieging her. As children knowing of good and evil, they are only passingly similar to Adam and Eve as unfallen human beings, but they do reflect human psychology which Pullman puts such importance on in his work.

Pullman's translation of characters from *Paradise Lost* is characterized by cultural changes in the time period separating Pullman and Milton and Pullman's aim of inverting the latter's theodicy. As a result of the cultural changes in the years separating Milton from Pullman there are no checks on what the latter can incorporate in his trilogy. Pullman is able to incorporate insights from Gnostic and Enochic literature into his portrayal of Milton's characters to suit his inverted narrative, framing the Fall as a triumph of experience over innocence and respecting his own sympathy for the Son. It also allows Pullman to project Satan's negative qualities on Metatron. This means that Lord Asriel, Mary Malone, and Xaphania are all free to embody different roles of Satan without being hindered by his more alienating aspects. Free from Satan's most prominent failings, the inversion of qualities associated with the heavenly and hellish factions are marked by a clear division; placing the negative on the theocratic faction, and the positive on the rebel side. The changed cultural context also causes the gender division between Lyra and Will to be less strictly defined than the distinct hierarchy between Adam and Eve. As a result, both characters embody traditionally male and female qualities. The similarity between the pairs is undermined even further by the fact that the events of the trilogy occur after the first Fall of Man. Pullman places his human pair in a less sheltered environment than Eden. As such, the world they find themselves in has its dangerous elements which keep it in line with Pullman's views on our own world and his desire to have this reflected in his fantastical fiction. This desire also shapes his presentation of an almost completely human opposition to the theocratic faction. To accomplish this, he keeps Xaphania from fulfilling a leading role in the conflict and humanises the lower divinity by introducing Metatron. As such, he can present both the Father and Son characters as corrupt and authoritarian, making the opposition to them and their referents in *Paradise Lost* appear justified. The full implications of these changes in

characters will come to the fore in the next chapter as they shape the inversion contained in Pullman's adaptation of Milton's Fall of Man.

Chapter Four
Inversion of Moral Choice: the Processes and Problems to the Transference of Values

The previous chapters were mainly concerned with the technical ordering of the universes depicted in *Paradise Lost* and *His Dark Materials* and the way in which this permits two widely different versions of the same myth. In This chapter, on the other hand, concerns itself mainly with the values espoused throughout the narratives, especially in regard to their respective Fall events. Three aspects relating to the transference of values will be discussed: the assignment of values to factions in *His Dark Materials*, the concept of Dust as a substance with a moral direction, and a discussion of the respective Fall events. Through the analysis of these subjects, this chapter will illustrate the main differences and commonalities between Milton and Pullman on key concepts such as freedom and wisdom, sacrifice, responsibility, and how these relate to one another. It will become clear that Pullman colours the moral choices presented in the narrative in light of his own antireligious ideology and what he perceives to be Milton's moral stance on these subjects.

That the roles of the factions imported from Milton's poem are reversed in Pullman's narrative has already been established in the previous chapter. Pullman has shifted readers' sympathies in favour of the side fighting against celestial oppression. Important to the inversion of values discussed in this chapter is whether this is a clean reversal or whether alterations are made in the assignment of these values to the respective factions. It is my conviction that this process is one of mixing. Pullman does for the factions what he also does for characters such as Metatron. Similar to the author's mixing of the undesirable qualities of Satan and the function of the Son within the heavenly narrative, his factions are blends of either the most benign or malignant qualities of both Miltonic factions, as he sees them. In order to demonstrate this, I will briefly outline the processes at work in this inversion of values, moving on to establish the connection between freedom and knowledge as they

pertain to both texts and then examine which approach to these values ends up with which faction in Pullman's narrative.

The allocation of values to factions in *His Dark Materials* in respect to Milton's factions is dependent on three main processes: casting doubt on heaven and its intentions by perverting characterisation, actions, and motivations. Pullman romanticises Satan and his followers, reflecting the latter's dubious allegations in *Paradise Lost* as fact in the universe of *His Dark Materials*. The last process casts off either the positive or negative qualities of a faction in *Paradise Lost* and transposes them to the opposing side in *His Dark Materials*. In the following paragraphs, the processes described here will be elucidated in the context of the values of freedom and knowledge in both texts. I will begin by establishing the connection between freedom and wisdom, as these cannot be separated in a reading of the respective Fall events.

Pullman frames the issue as innocence versus experience in his introduction to *Paradise Lost*, and by extension in his own narrative: "The true end of human life, I found myself saying was not redemption by a nonexistent Son of God, but the gaining and transmission of wisdom. Innocence is not wise, and wisdom cannot be innocent, and if we are going to do any good in the world, we have to leave childhood behind" (10). I have already placed qualifiers on this presentation of the issue in the previous chapter. Pullman oversimplifies this conflict between innocence and experience, which is better characterised as a battle between imposed innocence and a freedom to experience. As is evident from this qualified frame, the contest between the factions pertains to both the realms of knowledge/wisdom and freedom, as well as to their intersection. In both texts, the Fall event and the lead-up to it have implications for both concepts. What to do with free will is central to Milton's theodicy, and Pullman accords it equal importance.

One of the most historically important contention grounds in exegesis of the Fall of

Man myth is which characters promote freedom, how should it be handled, and what it entails in practice. Is it a freedom to live in Paradise, unimpaired; to be and stay worthy of the care of a just God? Or does freedom mean to wrong-headedly decide matters for oneself, effectively self-harming in the process and falling away from God? Is it maybe even a rebellion against a celestial dictatorship intent on harming humanity, as the Gnostics see it? What is the knowledge one needs? If the knowledge of good and evil is so harmfully impactful, is it a knowledge worthy of pursuit? To most of these question Milton and Pullman seem to formulate diametrically opposed answers.

The perception of a link between the values of freedom and knowledge is enhanced by the actions that form the vehicles of moral choice in both *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost*. In the traditional account of the Fall of Man, a category in which I place Milton's version, the main question of obedience or disobedience towards God is concretised as an action that has no inherent moral weight: should one decide on one's own to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge (thereby going against God's wishes)? The nature of the action itself is merely a placeholder for larger implications. To eat the fruit of a tree has no moral direction in normal life; it is a mundane action. As a result, it is difficult to ethically place the action or knowledge gained through it. It is the broader implication of the action: disobeying God, which does matter. The Christian apologetic undertaken in the poem colours our understanding of which choice is the moral one with Raphael's admonishment to Adam: "be lowly wise: / think only what concerns thee and thy being" (8. ll.173-4). Do not reach beyond your station and accept the Divine word as ultimate arbiter. In *His Dark Materials*, by contrast, the actions undertaken by the theocratic faction against whom the protagonists' side rebels are more impactful in and of themselves. The larger implications are enhanced by the smaller actions, not merely illustrated by them. To control a person's thoughts, to sever them from parts of their identity, to impose authoritarian rule upon others: all of these actions carry

ethical implications. They leave the question of obedience to their originator a marked one in a way that justifies rebellion.

By altering the actions on which the struggle for freedom is predicated, as well as the motives and identity of the God character, Pullman clearly indicates which side of the struggle either faction is on; which is the one striving for freedom, which the one striving for control. This is a clear case of the perversion of heaven's motives and actions mentioned in the beginning of this section. As stated before, Pullman's heavenly faction is not divine, as Milton's is. There is no factual underpinning for the Authority's claims of supremacy. This sham-divinity allows Pullman to present the head of his theocratic faction as repressive and Stalinistic as Empson contended him to be. The other processes of allocation are at work as well. In his undercutting of godhead, Pullman reflects Satan's allegations and lies as factual reality. As a result, there are no available arguments pertaining to the divine, unknowable, authoritative nature of God which can be used to justify repressive actions undertaken by the theocratic faction. Whereas God's "one restraint" (1. l.32) is justifiable in *Paradise Lost*, taking his divine nature into account, this type of reasoning cannot be applied to the Authority of Pullman's trilogy. By reshaping the nature of the God character, Pullman precludes this type of apologetic. The third process, transposing the positive or negative qualities to the other side, is also at work in this case. In *Paradise Lost,* Satan propounds the cause of freedom for himself and his followers, which is decidedly a 'freedom from' God and license to assume his authority undeservedly. Samuel Taylor Coleridge characterised Satan as follows: "the character of Satan is pride and sensual indulgence, finding in the self the sole motive of action" (427). In other words, Satan's cause *is* Satan. The "synod of Gods" (2. l.391) is a lie, the debate in Book II is a lie, his talk of freedom is a lie. What is truly at the core of the 'freedom' proposed by Satan is not liberty, but license, as Northrop Frye explains: "liberty for Milton is not something that starts with man: it starts with God. It is not

something that man naturally wants for himself, but something that God is determined he shall have; man cannot want it unless he is in a regenerate state, prepared to accept the inner discipline and responsibility that go with it. Hence, as Milton says, none can love freedom but good men; the rest want not freedom but licence" (85). The Authority, while pretending to be God, is actually characterised by this license.

In an important sense, the Authority is a Miltonic Satan who has accomplished his goals. He is decidedly not the Romantic Satan, however, which is a result of Pullman casting off this part of the satanic identity to align it with the faction he vilifies. The Authority refuses responsibility and discipline, replacing them with carte blanche for himself and his followers, while repressing the freedom of all others. I have already identified this mix of Satanic and Heavenly qualities in Pullman's adaptation of Miltonic characters. I described Metatron as an amalgam of the function of the Son and some of the negative character traits of Satan. But, whereas the case of Metatron was more on the level of a singular character, the mix which makes up the authority has more institutional resonance. In the Authority's case, the tactics and selfishness of Satan are combined with the institutional power of the heavenly monarch. This power is then used to establish legitimacy, as Satan tries to do in Book 2 of *Paradise Lost*:

> High on a throne of royal state, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold
> Satan exalted sat (ll. 1-5)

Of course, this glorious throne is a sham. It only works to indicate Satan's fallen state, and is by its hellish nature only a pale imitation and bitter mockery of the throne Satan attempted to seize. Satan uses this throne to symbolically establish and retain his dominance over the other

fallen angels. Through the reversal of fortunes and the alignment of institutional power with the theocratic faction in *His Dark Materials*, the Authority is able to pursue his self-aggrandisement and need to control with the tools of the heavenly faction. Ultimately, both Milton's Satan and Pullman's Authority use lies to inspire complicity with their goals. Both lie about their identity and use a persona to further their goals and deceive their victims, whether they be minions or enemies.

If freedom in *Paradise Lost* is predicated on being unimpaired and devoting oneself to God's commands willingly, Satan expressly attempts to spread his non-freedom to prelapsarian humanity. His intentions are jealous and spiteful; he is not struggling for freedom, but to further his own standing and (later) to spread the misery of his fallen state. In the portrayal of the theocratic faction this lack of genuine freedom is also meant to be spread: "The Authority considers that conscious beings of every kind have become dangerously independent, so Metatron is going to intervene much more actively in human affairs [...] The churches in every world are corrupt and weak, he thinks, they compromise too readily ... He wants to set up a permanent inquisition in every world, run directly from the kingdom" (*AS* 61). The theocratic faction wants to create a world in which choice is not even an option, a world where the entire dilemma central to the use of free will is taken away. Pullman's theocratic faction intends to transform a dynamic universe into a completely static one. It is the authoritarian collective which is the ultimate goal, not the freedom of sentient beings. This goes against the sentiments of both Pullman and Milton. According to Pullman, the wrong choice is wrongfully imposed, while to Milton the path to obedience to God should be one of voluntariness. To take away the choice is to take away the validity of that choice. Without free will, the free will defence is abolished. Pullman's God character is antithetical to the dynamic prelapsarian Paradise of Milton's epic poem. In this sense, Pullman does not recognise Milton's otherness from what he views as the Christian position. To Milton, one

should obey God out of free will because it is what reason dictates, not out of blind faith. In this case, Pullman tries to invert something which is not there in the original text.

Like the lies espoused by the Authority, Satan's lies in his seduction of Eve are connected to freedom and wisdom: "ye shall be as gods, / Knowing both good and evil as they know" (9. ll. 708-9). While the word 'gods' implies power, it is decidedly a power of knowledge. As the knowledge of good and evil is a moral knowledge, it is ultimately connected to acting according to one's own judgement, indicating both freedom and wisdom. While I am not trying to suggest that Pullman's transposing of the qualities associated with this question is always deliberate (he has the romantic view of Satan after all), the process itself is at work. Significant in this regard is the fact that Pullman implicitly identifies these qualities as negative and transposes them unto the faction he despises, consciously or not. Even so, he does not explicitly define or identify them in his analysis of *Paradise Lost*. Pullman only identifies the aspects of the Miltonic Satan which he views positively. In the case of Milton's Satan and his treatment in *His Dark Materials*, it can be said that his negative characteristics are implicitly identified and transposed, though never acknowledged as originating in him.

In Pullman's portrayal of the rebel faction we can see the same processes at work: negative characteristics of the satanic side are cast off and some of the most prominent positive qualities of the heavenly faction are appropriated. The perversion of the infernal side is recast in a positive light to make it seem a genuine progressive cause. As such, the lies of Satan in *Paradise Lost* are represented as facts in *His Dark Materials*. In his approach to the questions of freedom and knowledge, Pullman takes a stand which aligns the pursuit of knowledge with freedom. He states in an interview that "Eve is my great heroine, she wondered what it would be like if she did as the serpent suggested and ate the fruit. Good for her. What a pompous little prig she would have been if she said, 'No, I mustn't'" (TDP).

Pullman admires Eve for her curiosity; the willingness to pursue knowledge and new experiences for their own sakes. He does not take the seductive overpowering by Satan into account, shifting these modes of coercion to the theocratic faction. Pullman suppresses Satan's coercive side, keeping such qualities from tainting the Miltonic character and those inspired by him.

Pullman's position is made less complex by the fact that he does not regard the choice to eat the fruit and disobey God as leading to harm, but to growth. Pullman does not respect God as a character, and therefore does not see the action of eating from the tree as rebellion against a creator who has his creations' best interests in mind and to whom one should be grateful. Instead, Pullman sees the Fall as a necessary and ethical act of dissent against a dictator imposing arbitrary rules. In response, in *His Dark Materials*, Pullman transforms the actions which constitute the ethical choices, making them more impactful in nature.

The rebel side in *His Dark Materials* is characterised by the free pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Dr Grumman, Will's father characterises its battle with the theocratic faction as follows: "Every little increase in human freedom has been fought over ferociously between those who want us to know more and be wiser and stronger, and those who want us to obey and be humble and submit" (*SK* 319). In this statement, Grumman directly connects the advances in freedom with acquiring wisdom. The protagonists' side combines the rebellious nature of the satanic faction in *Paradise Lost* with the goodwill towards the freedom of all creatures of the heavenly faction. What makes this blend interesting is that the nature of the pursuit of knowledge is transgressive, rather than obedient. Neither faction in *Paradise Lost* embodies this paradigm. Satan's side is transgressive, but not in pursuit of either real freedom or knowledge. The heavenly faction wants freedom for humanity, but by its nature does not need to pursue knowledge and cannot be transgressive. In *His Dark* Materials, by contrast, due to the power structure employed by the Authority and his forces, the quest for knowledge

and freedom is decidedly transgressive in, a freedom from heavenly oppression.

There are real problems with Pullman's portrayal of this pursuit. Pullman's portrayal of wisdom is highly moralistic. There are no gray areas in his portrayal of what wisdom actually is. Alternate views on morality and wisdom are not really explored in his trilogy. As Hugh Rayment-Pickard notes, this is evident from the journey Pullman's main character undertakes: "Lyra always makes the right choice based upon certain knowledge about how things will turn out. So there are no proper moral dilemmas for Lyra" (72). Pullman does direct his characters heavy-handedly in his setting up of the conditions of these moral choices as the alethiometer extends certain knowledge of the outcome of choices. He colours their choices, though they are still made freely. This direction of choice by the alethiometer does certainly occur in the context of a wide range of choices made by Lyra over the course of the trilogy. One of these is her separation from her dæmon, described as a 'betrayal' in the text. Even though the characters and alethiometer characterise it as a betrayal, Lyra has certain knowledge that it is a necessary action. Rayment-Pickard rightly asserts that the choice "requires *courage*, but Lyra is never in any doubt that it is the right thing to do" (73). At this point, Lyra basically follows an order, not making her own moral judgement. However, this kind of certain knowledge does not govern every moral choice made by her, as will become evident in the section on the Fall events. To state that there are no real moral choices is therefore not valid, though there are many potentially moral choices which are fixed through the interference of the alethiometer with its ability to predict outcomes. Even so, there is a moral choice involving the alethiometer which actually reflects the extent of Lyra's personal growth. After meeting Will and hiding her knowledge from him, she decides to share her control over what to ask it out of guilt. Lyra could have arrogantly held to her own judgement in deciding what to do with the device as she is the only person capable of reading it by intuition. Her choice to share control reflects a genuine progression from her domineering

and sometimes selfish ways prevalent in the earlier stages of the trilogy to a sense of shared purpose and responsibility towards others. Her nature becomes more inclusive and cooperative as the narrative progresses and this choice is one of the key turning points over the course of this development. In the Fall event, which I will discuss later, this increased sense of responsibility enables her to make the moral choice to sacrifice her own happiness to secure a free future for all.

This ability to act selflessly and sacrifice oneself is one of the most important factors which Pullman transfers between factions. In *Paradise Lost*, a sacrifice is needed to ultimately save humanity from the worst consequences of its disobedience. This important sacrifice is made by the Son, whom even Pullman regards as sympathetic. In *Paradise Lost*, this selflessness is appropriated by the rebel side. An important difference is that the sacrifice in *Paradise Lost* is not earned, it is granted through God's grace and effected by the Son in his love for humanity, despite its Fall. In Book III, the angels recognise not the worthiness of humanity to receive this gift, but the selflessness of the Son and celebrate it:

> His words here ended, but his meek aspect
> Silent yet spake, and breathed immoral love
> To mortal men above which only shone
> Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
> Glad to be offered, he attends the will
> Of his great father. Admiration seized
> All heaven (3. ll.266-272)

In *His Dark Materials* the sacrifice is thoroughly human, it is a reflection of the hard work and passion of those involved in the struggle against oppression and a sense of common cause. The sacrifice is made in the pursuit of knowledge and freedom and not a necessity because of the erroneous pursuit of it. It is an act of rebellion in an expressly human cause,

not a divine gift to humanity. It is the sacrifice Lyra makes which allows her to become the new 'Eve, mother of All', a positive title according to Pullman if ever there was one.

While the choices are not as starkly delineated as Rayment-Pickard asserts, he does voice a legitimate concern. Apart from the control of Dust over the direction of moral choices through the alethiometer, it becomes increasingly clear in *The Amber Spyglass* that Pullman's Dust steers the narrative in a definite moral direction. To understand the implications of characters' choices in the Fall event and the lead-up to it, one needs to understand the moral dimension Pullman accords to Dust. It is Dust which definitively binds the struggle for freedom to pursue knowledge and one's own life choices to wisdom itself. Through it, Pullman also qualifies what this wisdom actually entails. Just as the technical ordering of Pullman's universe and the incorporation of the traditionally supernatural within a physical framework are dependent on Dust, the moral inversion and main issue in the Fall event is also fundamentally connected to its existence.

Near the end of the final novel in Pullman's trilogy, Xaphania, the leader of the rebel angels, introduces a direction to the replenishment of Dust not previously discussed in the narrative which has extensive moral implications. In this conversation Xaphania states a guideline to replacing Dust. Lyra and Will are to teach others to replenish it by telling them to "learn and understand about themselves and each other and the way everything works, and by showing them how to be kind instead of cruel, and patient instead of hasty, and cheerful instead of surly, and above all to keep their minds open and free and curious ... Then they will be able to renew enough to replace what is lost" (*AS* 496). It turns out that Dust is not connected to all complex thought processes, as was asserted earlier in the trilogy, but only to those which Pullman finds attractive. "To be kind" or to be "cheerful" are not even categories of thought, they are emotional qualities. In this manner, Pullman violates his own intentions: "The aim was always to tell the story, but you don't set out to preach, you don't set out to

persuade or to give a lecture or to teach, heaven forbid, don't set out to teach" (F&F). By acknowledging only these kinds of actions and emotions as producing Dust, the author is adding a moral dimension to the already complex spirit-matter amalgam which is the Dust particle. This categorisation mirrors the imposition of qualities which makes one able to receive God's grace, not the over-arching emphasis on basic sentience established earlier. It defines the road through which sentience is 'earned' in moral terms, not technical ones. It ties morality and sentience together in a way that mirrors the connection between the right moral affiliation and the ability to receive grace in Paradise Lost.

To complicate matters further, the use of the name Dust for this particle is also a loaded one. In Genesis and *Paradise Lost*, man is made out of Dust. In Christian thought, the words "for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19) belittle the importance of human beings. Dust is tied to the sinful, material world, and the human relinquishes it in his or her spiritual journey to the afterlife. Corporality is connected to sinfulness, especially after the Fall of Man. In the context of *Paradise Lost*, this pronouncement also takes away the prospect of human progression from bodily to spiritual matter by their own merit. Instead, the only way for humanity to advance is through direct intervention from God in the form of the Son. No longer will humans be able to earn their place as creatures worthy of advancement by their own actions which place them nearer God: they now have to rely on his grace.

Like biblical dust, Pullman's Dust is also tied to materiality, however, it is also the substance allowing sentience to occur. What differentiates Pullman's Dust from Christian dust, apart from its metaphysical properties, is that Pullman's Dust has thoroughly positive connotations. The Church, antagonist in Pullman's universe, equates Dust with sin, and especially original sin. This is not surprising, as Dust plays a major part in both the first and second Fall Events in *His Dark Materials*. Rayment-Pickard describes this dynamic and the morals Pullman tries to convey through it: "Dust is a sign of experience, knowledge and

human development. But the church idolises innocence because it associates experience with error, and error with sin. [...] However, what the church calls 'sin' is in fact just the normal human experience of growing up. The church's fear of Dust is really just a fear of 'being human'" (65). Dust in *His Dark Materials* only has negative connotations in the Church's misguides views. In actuality, it is the material which enables the immaterial qualities such as beauty, wisdom, etc. Xaphania's message reinforces these positive associations, precluding the less attractive sentient thoughts to implicate Dust in any negative sense.

The moral dimension given to Dust boils down to the difference in worldview between Milton and Pullman. Whereas Milton saw the divine as the source of all freedom and wisdom, Pullman finds this aspect of life in material reality. In this manner, Pullman differentiates himself from the Gnostic perspective which his narrative elements follow to a large extent. While the Gnostic position is held up in the context of the tyrannical god-figure and the fortunate Fall, Pullman does not share Gnosticism's suspicion towards the material world; holding it up as the only one we have, which necessarily means that both 'good' and 'bad' are its own products. Milton's beliefs about the material world are to an extent ambivalent. One example of this attitude is his description of the soil of heaven holding up the kingdom while also containing the volatile materials out of which Satan fashions his weapons of war. Northrop Frye finds "that heaven should have ignitable mineral corresponds with the principle of *Areopagitica* that the *matter* of good and evil are the same. As in Eden, the same soil, depending on its use, can bring forth fruit or death" (170). I concur with his assessment. As Milton wanted to show that heaven is like earth in this regard, he necessarily must extend the same ambivalence to our material reality. As such, Milton did not adhere to hard-line Puritanism in this respect. He was open to the goodness of the material world while recognising its dangers. In this matter, Pullman has more in common with the work he adapts, and inverts to a significant degree, than with the Gnostic myth he calls upon numerous times

to establish this inversion.

The crises which come into play in Pullman's fortunate Fall are connected to Dust. The main problem facing Pullman's protagonists is that the cycle of Dust has been unbalanced. While the theocratic faction wants to further this calamity, their defeat does not mean that the cycle has been righted. Through the unscrupulous use of the Subtle Knife, a talisman capable of cutting even the fabric of worlds, portals have been created through which Dust seeps out of the universe. This problem is exacerbated by the Authority's Land of the Dead in which the dead are imprisoned as Dust-ghosts. As a result, the Dust they have accumulated is withheld from the cycle. These are major problems, as the renewal of Dust is a prerequisite for the continuation of sapient life. It is this crisis of Dust's renewal in which all of the previously mentioned values come into play. The crisis is solved through multiple actions, all having to do with knowledge, freedom, and sacrifice. The stand which Pullman takes in regard to the key players in Milton's Fall of Man is played out in his own Fall event. However, we cannot take Pullman's Fall as a single event, as several equally important, though less climactic, conditions have to be met to enable the Fall to finally rebalance the circle of replenishment. As the problems with the Dust cycle are manifold, the conditions that have to be met for a final rebalancing are manifold as well. I will discuss the problem's solution in a chronological manner corresponding to the actions undertaken in the narrative.

The first step on the way to balance is the liberation of the Land of the Dead. To free the captive dead who exist as Dust-ghosts Lyra strikes a bargain with the wardens of this afterlife prison: the harpies. When first encountering the harpies, Lyra lies to them at which point they attack her screaming "Liar, Liar!" (*AS* 293). Lyra strikes a bargain with the harpies: in exchange for leading the dead out of bondage and continuing to do so, the dead have to provide the harpies with 'true stories' about their lives. In Xaphania's words, the bargain entails that the beings "learn and understand about themselves and each other" (496). This

point of realisation, at which Lyra actively employs truth instead of falsehood reflects her growth as William Gray asserts: "It seems that although Lyra is a liar, she *learns* the value of truth. She has to go on a great journey, and specifically to the Underworld – the land of the dead – in order to find this out" (181). Pullman himself reflects on this bargain in one of his interviews "I discovered as I wrote it that it was something I had always believed and something that many of my books in their different ways were already saying. Every one of us has to have a story: if you go through life without curiosity, it's a terrible sin" (TDP). He ties the aspects of curiosity and sharing of tales together. This sharing of true stories is characteristic of Pullman's approach to fantasy literature revealed in "The Republic of Heaven" which is profoundly aimed at putting literary lessons into real life practice: "*This* world is where the things are that matter. If the Narnia stories had been composed in that spirit, the children who have passed through all these adventures and presumably learned great truths from them would be free to live and grow up in the world" (661). Instead of the grace of Milton's universe, salvation in *His Dark Materials* comes, in part, through sharing experiences.

In *His Dark Materials*, the Fall event itself is a process of maturation and acceptance. Inspired by Mary Malone's stories of love and attraction, the actual event is constituted by a sexual 'knowing' shared by Will and Lyra. After they (implicitly) gained this carnal knowledge, accepting each other and gaining knowledge in the process, the flow of Dust changes. Mary reflects on their appearance after this event: "they would seem to be made out of living gold. They would seem the true image of what human beings always could be, once they had come into their inheritance. The Dust pouring down from the stars had found a living home again, and these children-no-longer-children, saturated with love, were the cause of it all" (*AS* 473). The words with which this event is described are significant. It is explicitly named as a 'knowing', both in reference to this second Fall and the first one

mentioned by Lord Asriel when he quotes from the version of the Bible used in *His Dark Materials*:"but when the man and the woman knew their own dæmons, they knew a great change had come upon them" (*NL* 370). It is through their love's maturation and acceptance of one another that the Fall occurs. It also involves the touching of each others' dæmons, which is strictly taboo, which is characterised as acceptance of the other's soul.

Pullman does something very interesting in his characterisation of the Church's views as especially repressive in the case of sexuality. The moment at which Dust starts to be attracted more heavily towards the human is during puberty, and, as is made clear in the Fall Event, most explicitly after the experience of mature sexuality. In tying sexuality, Dust, and the church's views on sin together in this manner, Pullman ignores the distinctly Miltonic heterodox religious stances in his adaptation of *Paradise Lost* in favour of what he sees as the conventional Christian message. Pullman takes on an aspect of Christian culture, the nervousness the church has historically had surrounding the topic of sexuality. Milton had already explicitly addressed the topic of sexuality as a positive aspect of the pre-lapsarian state. Originating in the state which preceded all sin, Pullman's church can only view it as sinful if the distinctly Miltonic view is not taken into account, or even purposefully ignored. Pullman lets his pre-occupation with the opposition to what he views as the conduct of the church in the real world supersede his attempt to adapt *Paradise Lost*.

While the flow of Dust is halted by the Fall event, it is not enough to completely reverse the disappearance of Dust. To heal the world, it is necessary for all the portals made by the Subtle Knife to be closed. For the young couple this means that they will be separated forever. Because one cannot live in another world for prolonged periods of time without one's dæmon and body originating in a different one wasting away, the closure of all portals will mean a final goodbye. This also has consequences for the rebellion as a whole, as Will's father explains: "your dæmon can only live its full life in the world it was born in. Elsewhere

it will eventually sicken and die. [...] Lord Asriel's enterprise will fail in the end for the same reason: we have to build the republic of heaven where we are, because for us there is nowhere else " (*A*S 364). The couple is given a genuine moral choice to make: Xaphania reveals that by working hard to further the cause of wisdom and sentience, which will increase the amount of Dust, one portal can be kept open. However, the couple realises that the dead need a portal to continue to be released into the Dust cycle. This conflict of self-interest with a responsibility towards the world as a whole is a genuine one, belying Rayment-Pickard's assertions about the lack of genuine moral choice. There is no given answer to this problem and the choice is made freely. Will and Lyra decide to give up their future as a couple to secure a future for sentient life.

In his description of these events and the choices following from them, Pullman uses the term 'The Republic of Heaven'. The use of this phrase betrays Pullman's moralistic attitude towards the separation of his characters, both on its own and by the use of this term as the title of the aforementioned essay. The concept of literary relevance to the real world is reflected by this separation and the direction in which it directs the protagonists' lives. It is not the first usage of this term in the trilogy as Asriel's stronghold in a new world is also called "the republic of heaven", as opposed to the kingdom of heaven. This enterprise is ultimately doomed to fail due to the constraints upon habitation of a new world. As a result, the republic of heaven can only be established in one's own world. Lyra and Will have been given the task of championing Dust renewal and to establish this republic of heaven. The very last words of the narrative are dedicated to this cause: "We have to be all those difficult things like cheerful and kind and curious and brave and patient, and we've got to study and think, and work hard all of us, in all our different worlds, and then we'll build [...] "Build what?""The republic of heaven," said Lyra" (*AS* 522).

The allocation of values to particular factions in *His Dark Materials* is governed by

three processes: Pullman alters heaven's characterisation, actions and motivations. He romanticises Satan and his followers: turning his lies into facts. Finally, he transfers qualities from one faction to the other to align them with either the most benign or most malignant values he finds in *Paradise Lost*. In doing so, he goes as far as to portray the Authority as a mix of the institutional power of God with the morals and tactics of Satan. In such a way, the Authority becomes a Miltonic Satan who has accomplished his goals. To colour perceptions even further, Pullman accords a moral dimension to Dust, giving a direction to the kinds of thoughts and moral conduct which promote its renewal. Dust also influences the choices of his characters as, through the alethiometer, it gives perfect predictions of the outcome of actions undertaken. This moralistic dimension of Dust reveals a more sermonising attitude than Pullman would like to admit; an impression which is corroborated by his use of the term 'republic of heaven'. Even so, Dust does not control every action or decision of the characters in this manner. Some of the most impactful choices, such as those involved in solving the Dust crisis and the Fall event, are still made freely and reflect a maturation and responsibility in the characters making them. It is in his church's attack on this maturity and the sexuality that comes along with it that Pullman jarringly attacks orthodox nervousness surrounding this topic, rather than the Miltonic alternate, positive outlook on the topic. Through this ordering of the moral universe of *His Dark Materials*, Pullman justifies the human rebellion against the theocratic faction, which reflects his assessment of The Fall as a just rebellion in the context of *Paradise Lost*.

Conclusion
When Horizons Do Not Connect: Pullman's Productive Misreading of *Paradise Lost*

This thesis has dealt with two prominent aspects of Philip Pullman's adaptation of *Paradise Lost* in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy. Pullman does not merely undertake an adaptation of an epic poem into the form of the novel, but also an inversion of the theodicy central to Milton's epic poem. To better understand the roots of this inversion, I have looked at both the cultural-historical interpretive horizons of Pullman and Milton and the technical ordering of their narrative universes. In subsequent sections I attempted to fill a niche in scholarly debate by doing a full-length comparative study between these two works. In this last section, I will analyse the results of this study in light of the most prominent adaptive aspects of Pullman's inversion of *Paradise Lost*: Pullman's antireligious stance and how it is established in *His Dark Materials* through his 'productive misreading' of *Paradise Lost*.

The term productive misreading has not been used before this point, the reason being that it is not included in Jauss's interpretation of Reception Theory. However, in examining the results of this thesis, I have determined this concept accurately describes Pullman's modus operandi in his inversion of *Paradise Lost*. Harold Bloom's concept of productive misreading originally describes the relation between canonical poems and those that come after them: "In order to open imaginative free space for themselves in which to make new poems, poets deal with their precursors by acts of interpretative reduction, willful misprision, or productive misreading" (Payne). This concept can also be applied to texts with such a direct relation as *His Dark Materials* and *Paradise Lost*. Pullman opens up imaginative free space through interpretive reduction of the heterodoxical views which lie at the foundation of Milton's theodicy. This alteration of the views espoused by the original text allows Pullman to freely structure his own narrative on the basis of his own interpretation of the poem.

Productive misreading is an integral part of the *Nachleben* of *Paradise Lost.* The text

is kept alive for new readers through productive misreading and the adaptations it allows. The coloured interpretation of *Paradise Lost* by authors of the Romantic period is Pullman's starting point. It is this interpretation which influences the spirit in which he adapts the epic poem. To Pullman's own readers *His Dark Materials* ideological adaptation may be their own introduction to *Paradise Lost* and influence their subsequent reading of Milton's epic poem.

Pullman's productive misreading starts from the very premise of his reading of Milton's poem. To him, *Paradise Lost* is about an unjust, authoritarian God against whom the "hero" (Introduction 6), Satan, rebels. Pullman's adversarial relationship with organised religion has been well documented; both in this study and elsewhere. In the context of *Paradise Lost*, this comes most prominently into view in Pullman's high regard for the Miltonic Satan. Satan, the canonical antagonist against God and god-fearing humanity, is Pullman's hero. One can confidently state that the most important feature of Pullman's horizon which factors into his misreading and adaptation of *Paradise Lost* is his fondness for the Miltonic Satan as a character.

Pullman needs productive misreading to create the space he needs to have his own sympathy for the devil reflected in *His Dark Materials*. To invite sympathy for the Satanic cause in *Paradise Lost*, Pullman transposes qualities of both Miltonic sides onto the other to align what he sees as positive qualities with the rebel side in his own trilogy, and vice versa. The need to create such an inverted image stems from the Satanic side's malicious intent upon humanity. Even though he may consider Satan to be the hero of the poem, Pullman cannot deny the Fall of Man as a fall in its original context. He does not even attempt to do so in his commentary on *Paradise Lost*. As such, the side which he sees as the hero's side in Milton's poem is only after freedom for themselves. This goes directly against his search for a meaningful 'Heaven' in "The Republic of Heaven" in which he states that "connectedness is where meaning lies; the meaning of our lives is their connection with something other than

ourselves" (656). Milton's insistence on free will in choosing to obey God, a course which reason and not blind faith dictates, is strikingly similar to the responsible use of freedom advocated by Pullman. Responsibility is integral to both Milton's Free Will Defence, and Pullman's Fall of Man; both contrasting it with irresponsible use of free will or even the aim of destroying it altogether on the antagonists' parts. As such, the Miltonic heavenly faction's promotion of this responsible use of freedom needs to be co-opted by the protagonists' side in *His Dark Materials*.

In order to establish an anti-theodical adaptation, Pullman tends to misrepresent precisely those qualities which make *Paradise Lost* uniquely Miltonic. In doing so, Pullman does not perceive, at crucial moments, the otherness, in Jauss's terms, of the horizon of Milton's text from his own horizon, nor Milon's heterodoxy in relation to traditional Christianity. Pullman goes directly against Hans Robert Jauss's statements regarding the horizon as a means of reception. Jauss states that “literary understanding becomes dialogical only when the otherness of the text is sought and recognized from the horizon of our own expectations, when no naïve fusion of horizons is considered, and when one’s own expectations are corrected and extended by the experience of the other” (Jauss 9). In order to understand the reception of a work of the past one has “to take both [the author’s and the reader’s] horizons into account through conscious effort” (Jauss 7). In those cases where Pullman critiques something which is simply not there in the original text, he does not seek this otherness in *Paradise Lost* as a text, but in the Christian tradition as a whole.

Pullman's inability to place Milton in his time and recognise his heterodoxy in regard to Christianity does not stand on its own. The historian Diane Purkiss remarks that "the English Civil War also has some grim and stark lessons to teach us about the way ideals of freedom can be oddly entangled with religious fanaticism [...]. [T]he kindly liberalism on which we pride ourselves is an accidental byproduct of the religious fanaticism of the none-

too-distant -past" (14). This remark is corroborated by John Rogers' assertion that "Milton was essentially a left-wing political radical and it was widely feared by his more timid contemporaries that his writings would seduce his readers in to rejecting good, old-fashioned, traditional religious and social values. There was a lot of validity to that contemporary cultural fear. Milton was a revolutionary" (8:45 - 9:16). As time passes, the complexity of the debates in which Early Modern society was engaged is reduced in complexity by those not carefully looking back at it. It is precisely this revolutionary dimension of Milton's thought and literary work to which Pullman is oblivious. As a result, Milton, as a participant in this debate, can easily be erroneously represented as holding a position which he was antithetical to.

When the origins of what are seen as modern, secular values are not known, it becomes simple to classify diverging voices as belonging to the orthodoxy. In other words, by making Satan the centre of attention in his reading and adaptation of *Paradise Lost,* Pullman lends him all credibility in his pursuit of freedom. The poet, who stands on the side of God, trying to justify his ways, can therefore also be (subconsciously) misrepresented as belonging to the orthodoxy. In this process, Pullman suppresses the heterodoxy of Milton's views, which are in important respects closer to his own views than he may realise. Pullman ignores the divergent, liberal aspects of Milton's theodicy and directs his anti-authoritarian critique at the very deity Milton tried to vindicate.

In the adaptation of *Paradise Lost* in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy, we can see an approach to the adaptation of a classic work of literature characterised by productive misreading. This approach is severely selective in its use of the original work; taking only the major events along the narrative path, while remaining free to colour them through interpretive reduction. Pullman adapts only those aspects which suit his own antireligious narrative while inverting, ignoring other important facets of *Paradise Lost*. In some cases, he

creates a weaker opposition to his ideological stance by taking a generalised Christian element which Milton's heterodoxical narrative also discredits instead of Milton's own views. This approach allows Pullman to take full control over the adaptation without becoming mired in the theological sophistications of Early Modern political and cultural debate. As Hugh Rayment-Pickard asserts, "Pullman engages in a contest of *narratives*: he tries to 'out-narrate' Christianity, to tell a better story. Pullman tries to win readers with a myth that is simply more appealing, more powerful, and more convincing than the Christian narrative" (16). In this type of ideological adaptation, the purpose is not to win a rational argument. Pullman's antireligious narrative remains true to the basic form of narrative working through its story and character. No arguments are contributed to the debate as it is candidly ignored. This is the most important difference in approach between Milton and Pullman: one is engaged in a debate through his literature, the other merely expounds his views through a narrative which leaves out the aspect of debate altogether.

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