

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

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

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Genesis 3:5-7

In Judeo-Christian societies, the idea of rebellion begins with Eve, and this single disobedient act of a woman becomes the foundation of these religions. When Eve partook of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, she brought original sin upon the world and damned humans to the pains of mortal life. Philip Pullman follows in a long tradition of authors who have broached the subject of rebellion and original sin; however, he breaks from Biblical tradition with his reversal of the Fall. Pullman says that “the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the temptation of the serpent is for me the central myth of what it means to be a human being,” and he has often voiced his desire to overturn the core elements of this myth: to break it down, tear it apart, and allow for a new vision of the old story.

In his trilogy, called collectively His Dark Materials, Pullman crafts a universe in which the awareness of good and evil and self consciousness gained from the first Fall is in peril of being lost. In Pullman’s creation, creatures only can attain consciousness by association with Dust. Pullman describes Dust<sup>1</sup> as “consciousness” or “particles of consciousness” (SK 88), and it is a specialized form of dark matter. When Dust attaches itself to living creatures, those beings

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<sup>1</sup> In the trilogy, Dust is also referred to as elementary or shadow particles.

can attain high levels of self-awareness and wisdom.<sup>2</sup> In the trilogy Dust is disappearing and it is foretold that only an embrace of knowledge, a second Fall, can restore it. A second Eve must be tempted, and with her attainment of self-consciousness and the knowledge of love, will ensure the continuance of conscious thought in the universe.

In His Dark Materials a pre-pubescent girl named Lyra is destined to become the new Eve. Lyra, who mistakenly believes she is an orphan, is raised in a haphazard fashion at the fictional Jordan College, in a world that parallels our own. Lyra's world is dominated by the Church,<sup>3</sup> which has mysteriously started abducting children. When Lyra realizes that her friend Roger has been kidnapped, she sets out determined to save him. During her journey, Lyra unwittingly finds herself at the center of an epic battle. Rebel angels, led by Lord Asriel and his army, are once again trying to overthrow the "Authority," thereby ending the Machiavellian dominance of the Church. Along with her male companion Will, Lyra must help defeat the Authority and fulfill her destiny to stop the disappearance of Dust; it is during this journey that she discovers the knowledge that enables her to become the next Eve.

By re-imagining a second Fall, complete with a new Eve, Pullman strives to upset certain values of the original story. Instead of portraying the Fall as a sinful act because humans rebelled against God, Pullman believes that it is essential for humans to fall. In an interview with Kerry Fried, Pullman states:

Incidentally, this notion that the sin of Eve was actually a very fortunate thing was clearly a turning point in human evolution. *Felix culpa* they used to call it: the

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<sup>2</sup>For example, humans have high levels of Dust attached to them (therefore they are beings of higher consciousness), but animals do not. Similarly, children do not have Dust, but adults do, marking a distinct difference between children and adults.

<sup>3</sup>In the trilogy, the "Church" is a fictitious construction. The Church in Lyra's world mirrors Christianity closely, but has evolved differently. Instead of the Reformation causing a split from Catholicism, in Pullman's secondary world the Church is the result of a consolidating Reformation. Furthermore, the Church is domineering; no other churches or organized religions are mentioned in the trilogy.

happy sin. And I saw it as the point where human beings decided to become fully themselves instead of being the pets or creatures of another power. (2)

In Genesis mythology, Adam and Eve attain consciousness from the simple act of biting an apple. In contrast, Pullman believes consciousness is attained through human experience and the active attainment of knowledge; awareness of oneself and one's place in the world is not easily managed and takes time and sacrifice. In Pullman's world curiosity, self-consciousness and knowledge of the world are not shameful desires, but rather the preferred state of being.

Pullman's preoccupation with obedience and rebellion is particularly appropriate for children's literature, since these topics are often central issues in the genre. As children often cope with these issues, literature for children reflects their struggles, worries, and doubts about children's place in power and gender relationships. In the world of children's fantasy, a struggle of good battling evil is an integral element and driving force of the texts. As young characters journey to defeat evil, rebellion factors as a significant aspect of their experiences. The conscious actions that give the children power, however temporary this power is, can lead to growth and a shift of power dynamics. In Genesis, the issue of power is absolute—God is the authority, and disobedient humans are punished. Awareness occurs instantaneously when the fruit is eaten. His Dark Materials, in part, blurs the lines of this authority and endeavors to make rebellion a means of personal growth and maturity.

Along with rectifying the perceived sin of the Fall, Pullman also speaks of wanting to remedy the predicament generations of women have faced as the daughters of Eve.<sup>4</sup> Inherent in Genesis is the ideology that man is superior to woman; she was weak and was tempted into sin. For centuries, the idea that women are fragile creatures in need of male protection and

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<sup>4</sup> This is C.S. Lewis' term. Pullman has been consistently, and famously, critical of Lewis' inclusion of orthodox Christian morals in The Chronicles of Narnia.

domination has persisted in Judeo-Christian religions, creating a continual problem for feminists and those seeking equality between the sexes. As critic Carol Gilligan succinctly explains, “It all goes back, of course to Adam and Eve—a story which shows, among other things, that if you make a woman out of a man, you are bound to get into trouble. In the life cycle, as in the Garden of Eden, the woman has been the deviant” (6). Gilligan, and many others, see the female life cycle as still being defined by the actions of Eve.

Yet Philip Pullman attempts to establish equality between Adam and Eve that many critics have found lacking in other versions of the Fall. Pullman states that there exists equality between his new Adam and Eve, “This is a different relationship, and they're on a new footing. . . . Eve is the equal of Adam and shares in whatever it is that happens” (127 Parsons interview). Even though Pullman’s intentions are to create Adam and Eve as equal figures, the question arises if he has actually succeeded. Pullman’s trilogy ends with a beginning; the universe is expected to be changed forever by this second Fall. What, if any, changes can be expected for the future roles of women in this universe? Has Pullman’s Fall actually righted any wrongs; is there equality as a result of this new Fall?

I believe answers to these questions can be found throughout the three book series. His Dark Materials is a fantasy trilogy that follows the adventures of two characters, a young man and woman, who are on the cusp of puberty. The dynamic that is created between them is reflective of the gender roles being portrayed in the novels. In Genesis the Fall creates essentially unequal positions for men and women. Is Pullman creating new and progressive roles that challenge the original version of the Fall? Does he achieve equality and break from traditional gender roles present in modern Western society, or does his story reinforce the gender roles begun with the original Fall?

In the Genesis myth Eve's eating of the fruit, her disobedience of God, placed her (and countless women since) in a precarious position. In shouldering blame for humanity's exile from Eden, the consequence of her rebellion was a constrictive gender role. I plan on investigating further the idea of rebellion creating spaces in power. I propose that rebellion is a vehicle to create gender roles, and the study of rebellion can illuminate how these roles work in societies. I believe that the gender roles in His Dark Materials can be investigated through Pullman's use of rebellion. Beyond the ultimate mutiny that occurs at the end of the series when Lyra becomes the new Eve, smaller, but perhaps not less significant rebellions, exist in the books. What these acts are and who commits them can illuminate gender issues.

In his acknowledgements at the end of The Amber Spyglass, Pullman states that he has "stolen ideas from every book I have ever read." Yet, Pullman most refers to and has been most critical of John Milton and his work Paradise Lost. The titles of the series His Dark Materials,<sup>5</sup> as well as of The Golden Compass,<sup>6</sup> are both derived from lines in the famous poem, and Pullman gives credit to the tremendous inspiration he gleans from Milton when he admits that "Paradise Lost" "started it all for me" (Lexicon interview). It is the ideas, and more importantly the ideology created by Paradise Lost and the Genesis myth, that Pullman is so eager to undermine. As Burton Hatlen points out, "For a century after Milton's death, readers of Paradise Lost seem generally to have accepted the poem as grounded in these orthodox Christian doctrines" (84). Milton's treatment of women is debated by his critics, but Pullman's focus on an Eve figure, instead of a second Adam, suggests that he believes the original Fall myth was unfair in its subservient placement of women in Western society.

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<sup>5</sup> Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain/His dark materials to create more worlds, (II, 915-6)

<sup>6</sup> He took the golden Compasses, prepare' / In God's eternal store, to circumscribe / This Universe, and all created things" (VII, 225-27). Note: Golden Compass was originally entitled Northern Lights.

Milton's Eve is described as lovely and graceful, with "perfect beauty adorned" (IV, 634). While Adam is "for contemplation . . . and valor formed," Eve is formed "for softness . . . and sweet attractive grace" (IV 297-8). This is in direct contrast to the initial characterization of Lyra in His Dark Materials, who is to become the second Eve. In the beginning of the novels, Lyra is a half-wild girl who is allowed great latitude by her caretakers and grows to be stubborn and deceitful. She is by nature defiant and is often disobedient; the novel series begins with her sneaking into a forbidden chamber.

Will, her male counterpart, also begins his story with a disobedient action. He defies a group of grown men who, he believes, are trying to take advantage of him and his mother. Even from the start their actions are innately different; Lyra is disobedient from her own curiosity, while Will rebels to protect his family. Will's action has the aura of legitimacy and deliberation, while Lyra's is selfish. This initial difference foretells the later dominant position that Will takes in the relationship that is so reminiscent of the patriarchy, and it suggests that Pullman still sees some essential difference between the male and female. Looking at how each child deals with power, how they rebel, and who they rebel against gives insight into these larger issues figure into the texts.

Beyond the two main characters, an investigation into how other characters deal with power and obedience is to see how relationships between men and women manifest in the trilogy. In particular, Mrs. Coulter and Lord Asriel, both fiercely independent, are fertile ground for examination. They both rebel against established institutions in their world; both wield immense power. However, using and gaining that power is quintessentially differentiated by their sex.

At the end of *Genesis* and the *His Dark Materials* trilogy, both Eve figures are changed. The original Eve had her eyes opened to the ideas of sin and death: she is expelled from the Garden to spend her life physically toiling to survive. Lyra's eyes are also opened, yet she discovers love and walks away with a new maturity. Unlike Eve, Lyra's change is not instantaneous; rather, she grows throughout the series into the character she becomes at the story's culmination. Yet while Pullman succeeds in illustrating the effort that must go into attaining wisdom and consciousness, he fails to create a "new" Eve. As Lyra progresses in her journey, she loses some of the childish traits she once had—such as her deceitfulness and stubbornness. But what else does Lyra sacrifice for maturity? Despite some of her unsavory qualities, Lyra is from the beginning an intriguing, spirited, and sparkling character. At the end of the series, she has subdued her bad characteristics, as well as some characteristics that made her so interesting to begin with. Once so independent, Lyra conforms to her destiny, and a traditional gender role, by the trilogy's end. This facet of Lyra's character is what inspires the final question that I want to pursue: what are the costs of maturity for women as represented by Lyra? The answer that I propose is that Pullman suggests, even perhaps advocates, that conformity is a necessity for female maturation. I believe that Pullman's progressiveness is limited and does not transcend his portrayal of gender roles; instead, Pullman's texts join the long tradition of patriarchal writing that is pervasive in our culture. This essay is an investigation of the gender roles that are entwined in Pullman's trilogy. These gender roles are neither hidden nor explicit; instead, they are intertwined within the layers of meaning found in the text, and have become woven into the very fabric of the fantasy tapestry that Pullman creates. Looking at how and when Lyra and other characters rebel, and when they do not, can be a starting point for finding answers to this question.

Although Philip Pullman will (tongue in cheek) protest that his writing is “stark realism,”<sup>7</sup> His Dark Materials is part of the fantasy genre. However, fantasy has many different variations and defining fantasy may be as futile as chasing leprechauns. Critic Ruth Nadelman Lynn recognizes the struggles of classifying fantasy: “Critical definitions of fantasy vary from the ambiguous, for example, ‘Fantasy . . . is so many different things that attempts to define it seem rather pointless,’ to the obscure: ‘[In fantasy] the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted.’ Between these poles lies a great variety of interpretations” (xxiv). Colin Manlove has characterized fantasy broadly as “A fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms” (ix). While this definition may encompass fantasy literature as a whole, Pullman is writing a very specific kind of fantasy, a sub-set of the genre.

A broad definition like Manlove’s encompasses many different types of fiction. Fairy tales, animal-fantasy, toy fantasy, time-travel fantasy, witchcraft/sorcery fantasy are all recognized as sub-set of the genre; the category of fantasy that Pullman writes in is most commonly known as “high” fantasy. The simple way to define this fantasy is that it is “books about worlds other than our own” (Lynn 211). However, J.R.R. Tolkien noted specific characteristics for this sub-genre, including the creation of an original and self-sustaining fantasy world, which was removed from the primary “real” world. These creations he coined as “secondary worlds” and believed that the action in the text should occur in these worlds, access or reference to the real world being non-existent or limited.<sup>8</sup> An infinite number of worlds exist in His Dark Materials, which parallel the “real” world. Action in the trilogy takes place both in

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<sup>7</sup> Pullman says he writes stark realism in several interviews, I cite the Parsons interview.

<sup>8</sup> See J.R.R. Tolkien’s Tree and Leaf

the “real” world (where Will and Mary come from) as well as several original “secondary worlds.” Characters can move between worlds through holes made by the subtle knife. For this reason, placing Pullman’s work amongst “high” fantasy is potentially problematic, for some critical debate questions the use of the term “high” fantasy as applied to literature that includes references to the “real” world along with secondary worlds. However, since most Pullman critics refer to his work as “high” fantasy, I will do the same.<sup>9</sup>

One of the wonderful aspects of fantasy, and secondary world fantasy in particular, is that it allows for a large amount of creativity by the author. Manlove believes that the fantasy writer may be exclusively entitled to another designation, for the author, “in making a fantasy at all, making a new nature, a new world: he has perhaps a special right to the term 'creator', however much the world he makes may partake of the one in which he lives” (xii). The characteristics of fantasy illustrate the infinite possibilities that are available to the author; fantasy worlds are only limited to the writer's imagination. Fantasy, one of the most truly creative genres, is not bound by anything in the physical world; within fantasy readers travel to worlds deep within their own imaginations, and experience a totally foreign life. Yet the purpose and strength of fantasy lies not in its ability to provide an “escape” for readers, but to allow them to reexamine their own world. Particularly in secondary world fantasy, the creation of original worlds opens up the possibilities for entertaining literature, and for social, political, or cultural commentary on the “real” world.

Indeed, critics have long recognized criticism of the real world as being one of the functions of this type of fantasy. Critics Sheila Egoff and Ann Swinfen both agree that one of fantasy’s main purposes is to explore not the created world, but the real world. Swinfen suggests

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<sup>9</sup> In my study of criticism of His Dark Materials, there seemed to be no debate over the use of the term “high” fantasy in relation to the novels. See notably Karen Patricia Smith, as well as Naomi Wood and others.

that “the fundamental purpose of serious fantasy is to comment upon the real world and to explore the moral philosophical and other dilemmas posed by it” (231). According to these critics, fantasy then provides not a window into another world but in many ways a mirror to examine our own world. Furthermore, fantasy allows for this exploration to be completed in relative safety. Since fantasy is recognized as the imaginative, separation exists between the real and the unreal which comfortably allows criticism of the same culture that consumes fantasy. Thus, Pullman’s statement that he writes “stark realism” should not be disregarded; indeed, fantasy is often used to explore real world issues.

The freedom of fantasy could have a positive impact on female characters in, and female readers of, fiction. In fantasy, writers can create civilizations that break with traditional gender roles: they can create worlds where women are free to pursue their dreams, slay their own dragons and embark on their own quests, as fantasy has already so frequently done for men. If authors of fantasy are not limited to the real world, then they are also not limited to the patriarchal social structures operating in Western society. The great possibility and opportunity that fantasy presents is that, through this vehicle, authors can create truly progressive and subversive writing; they can criticize the roles of women in society. As Egoff states, “The purpose of fantasy is not to escape reality, but to illuminate it: to transport us to a world different from the real world, yet to demonstrate certain immutable truths that persist even there—and in every possible world” (134). If fantasy is an elucidation of “immutable truths” that are common for all worlds, what are these truths? What aspects of our culture and traditions become part of these truths that first are transferred to the secondary world and then back again to the real world and the reader? Where does the role of women fit into these truths? One way to answer these

questions is to unravel the cultural values transmitted through the fantasy text and in, particular, to discover how the texts reflect gender roles.

Like other genres of children's literature, fantasy also has a dual nature: it can conform to societal expectation while at the same time subvert it. Oftentimes, fantasy is not used for a critique of society, but as a glorification of certain aspects of a culture. Mark Hillegas recognizes that both C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien believed that fantasy "is a mode valuable for presenting moral or spiritual values, which could not be presented in realistic fiction" (xii). Therefore, fantasy is illuminating because reading these texts can suggest what the author believes are the important aspects of culture to bring into the secondary world and what parts can be left behind.

The question arises: is Pullman creating new roles for young women in his fantasy, or is he falling back on accepted and traditional roles? Should Pullman's fantasy be considered an illumination of the real world in order to criticize or to re-create it? Pullman, himself, would most likely consider his writing as progressive. Clearly he longs to engage his readers in questioning some of their own cultural practices. Yet the practices that Pullman wants readers to examine seem to be limited. In the His Dark Materials trilogy, Pullman creates original worlds with unique cultures; he even goes so far as to create a secondary world with a totally different evolutionary path than our own world. Pullman makes it clear that while these worlds may be parallel to our own, their occupants have had the opportunity to evolve in vastly different ways. But, gender roles in all of these parallel worlds follow tradition patterns. While Pullman is a master at expanding the known universe, he does not expand upon or create any new gender roles. Instead, he relies on the "natural" or ingrained Western cultural designations for female power and inter-gender relationships that are familiar to him and his audience.

The consideration must be made that Pullman could have used the high fantasy genre to break away from Western societal norms; since the children spend most of their time in secondary worlds they do not necessarily have to conform to real life expectations. In her essay “Mystical Fantasy for Children: Silence and Community” Leona Fisher explains, “since the journeys [of child characters in fantasies] represented . . . can only be temporary and the Primary World restored, they aim no permanent ‘blow at adult authority’” (39). Since there is “no permanent blow” to adult power, it is conceivable that Pullman could have created children that are not repressed by adult (or any other) authority. However, as Roberta Seelinger Trites recognizes in Disturbing the Universe, freedom and repression are often central issues in adolescent literature—and indeed as much as His Dark Materials is fantasy, it is adolescent literature as well. While the two protagonists Lyra and Will are on the cusp of adolescence throughout the series, once they recognize their love for one another, they realize this next step in their development.

Noted psychologist Erik Erikson has described adolescence as a specific period in the human lifecycle, a time when identity is discovered and power issues are being explored. Rebellion is just one means of exploring these issues, and Erikson saw rebellion as an acceptable and normal part of adolescence, as well as a way for the young adult to break way from the confines of childhood and to create a self.<sup>10</sup> At the time of adolescence misbehavior takes on a new dimension; now, misbehaving can lead to new insights into an adolescent’s identity. Disobedience, in the form of rebellion, becomes a conscious action intended to gain power or change its structure. At the point of adolescence, young people continually test power dynamics through rebellion in an effort to find space in the adult world. As Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened by their rebellion, so too can adolescents gain knowledge through their own rebellions.

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<sup>10</sup> See Erik Erikson’s Childhood and Society

Since dealing with power dynamics is an inevitable part of creating identity, anxiety about adolescent's place in the world and in power dynamics is reflected in adolescent literature. Trites asserts that "Young Adult novels are about power" (3), both power that is possessed and power that represses:

Power is a force that operates within the subject and upon the subject in adolescent literature; teenagers are repressed as well as liberated by their own power and by the power of the social forces that surround them in these books. (7)

Trites recognizes the adolescent's need for rebellion in establishing identity; however, rebellion also figures into the need for young adults to integrate into society. According to Trites, adolescent rebellion is not always about defiance but ultimately about conformity: "Much of the genre is thus dedicated to depicting how potentially out-of-control adolescents can learn to exist within institutional structures" (7). Disobedience is not a means of severing, but rather a way to bring a character into conformity with their world.

If Trites is correct, it seems that rebellion in young adult literature is problematic; it can provoke change, but also elicits submission to societal institutions. Anne Scott MacLeod emphasizes that this problem with rebellion is especially true of girl's fiction. In relation to post-World War II girl's books, she states that "Real rebellion was as taboo as sexuality" and that "serious conflict" just "did not happen" (59). Indeed, according to MacLeod young women's literature of the time did not seriously engage in characters finding new identity because "their sex had already determined their identity" (59). MacLeod's comments are about historical fiction, but the question remains whether some of these same constructs are appearing in more modern literature, such as His Dark Materials. While it is apparent that Lyra has a truly

rebellious nature and participates in “serious conflict,” does her rebellion actually result in an actual gain of power? Does Lyra eventually conform, as Trites’ ideas would suggest?

Even though power and rebellion are large issues working in the text, criticism of His Dark Materials has not comprehensively dealt with these issues. A brief look at the criticism published on Pullman reveals that most of the scholarly work undertaken thus far falls into specific categories: most scholars have either examined the religious themes in the books and contrasted them to other works of literature (notably Milton’s “Paradise Lost,” William Blake’s poetry, and other fantasy series, especially those by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien), or inspected Pullman’s use of science. A collection of critical essays on the trilogy entitled His Dark Materials Illuminated illustrates the narrow focus of this analysis; out of the eleven individual essays in the collection, at least eight directly deal with these categories.<sup>11</sup>

Another conspicuous gap that exists in the current analysis of His Dark Materials is the lack of gender criticism. For example, very little work has been done exploring how gender is constructed, what gender roles are being promoted or ignored, and what the possible implications of gender issues in these texts on the reader are. My investigation of female rebellion in the trilogy is in part a reaction to the lack of attention that gender issues have received in the criticism. It seems odd that so little gender criticism focuses on Pullman, for there is no lack of this critical approach to other children’s literature or fantasy literature. Criticism of children’s literature has long focused on issues of gender, and children’s fantasy is no exception. C.S. Lewis, Frank L. Baum, Ursula Le Guin, Madeleine L’Engle, and J.K Rowling have all been analyzed for the ways in which gender operates in their stories. However, while such

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<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, according to the biographical sketches at the back of the book, the majority authors included in the collection are not children’s literature scholars and do not deal with issues particularly relevant to this genre.

scholarship into gender and rebellion in His Dark Materials is lacking, two exceptions do exist: Naomi Wood's essay "Paradise Lost and Found: Obedience, Disobedience, and Storytelling in C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman" and Kristine Moruzi's "Missed Opportunities: The Subordination of Children in Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials."

Wood's essay examines Pullman's use of rebellion in contrast with how the same issues operate in C.S. Lewis' Narnia Chronicles. She finds differences in how each author approaches disobedience and attributes this divergence to each "writer's different positions on the divine and authority" (254). Wood states that each series presents rebellion as a part of the maturation process; however arising from variations in personal ideology about Christianity, Wood finds that "Lewis advocates obedience, and the progressive Pullman questions it" (238). Her essay is a good starting place to begin thinking about how these issues are manifesting in the books, but she does not address any gender consequences that may arise from rebellion, such as even more constricting roles and conformity to masculine domination. Also, her comparison of Pullman to Lewis somewhat limits the possibilities of an in-depth criticism of His Dark Materials.

I believe that Wood falls into the trap of portraying Pullman as more liberal, in regards to obedience than he actually is. Regardless of what Pullman may say about himself, I find that ultimately he reinforces responsibility, obedience, and conforming, rather than deviating from societal convention. Kristine Moruzi's publication also investigates the important role of obedience in His Dark Materials. She believes that "Pullman fails to offer any genuinely new ideas of the world with respect to adult-child relationships and the roles that children play in society" (55). Moruzi sees Pullman as another writer in a long tradition of authors who limit their child character's choices and neutralize the potential effects of rebellion. Unlike Wood, Moruzi briefly discusses gender roles in the books and finds that "Pullman reinforces traditional

gender roles” (60). Unfortunately, like Wood, Moruzi’s criticism is also somewhat limited. Since Moruzi attempts to investigate many aspects of rebellion in a relatively short essay, gender roles are not fully explored.

While the role of rebellion has been examined by both Wood and Moruzi, I do not fully concur with their analyses. Wood presents Pullman as more progressive than Moruzi is willing to concede. Also, neither author interprets the adult figure’s rebellion nor looks at the gender restrictions in which characters are operating. Thus, rather than merely acquiescing to Moruzi or Wood’s views, I wish to complicate some of the ideas Wood has presented. However, I agree with Moruzi that Pullman’s progressive potentials are neutralized by his treatment of rebellion and will apply this idea to female power in the texts.

Even though Pullman writes in the fantasy genre and can create new worlds and new social structures it seems that he will not or cannot escape the influence of his patriarchal upbringing. Instead, he injects his worlds with the traditions that are familiar to him. This is particularly evident in Lyra’s world. From the opening scene of The Golden Compass, the power of the patriarchy is apparent:

She had lived most of her life in the College, but had never seen the Retiring Room before: only Scholars and their guests were allowed in here, and never females. Even the maid servants didn’t clean in here. That was the Butler’s job alone. (GC 4)

The Retiring Room is indicative of the sexist world in which Lyra was raised, an exclusively male realm where the only women present are servants. The male exclusivity of the Retiring Room is reminiscent of all-male country clubs, golf courses, and gentlemen’s societies that exist in reality. Inside the college walls, male intellectualism reigns supreme.

Even outside of Jordan College, the world Pullman has created is restrictive to women, especially in terms of women's education. This is apparent through the way Lyra views female Scholars. As Maude Hines points out, Lyra "has a disdain for women Scholars, echoing the ideology in which her upbringing is steeped" (40) which Lyra often internalizes:

She regarded female Scholars with proper Jordan disdain: there *were* such people, but poor things, they could never be taken more seriously than animals dressed up and acting a play. (GC 66)

Lyra regards these words with all seriousness; she has been raised in a society that privileges masculinity and knows no other way of thinking. At this point in the book, no hint suggests Lyra's thinking is impaired; she merely shows "proper Jordan disdain." Women scholars are to be pitied; they are "poor things," not capable of the same intellectual thought as men. They aren't to be taken "seriously" and are considered so low as to be called "animals." These women live in a world where they can only pretend to be Scholars; there is no chance for real occupation in scholarship. In fact, the only female scholar that Lyra admires is Mrs. Coulter, and she is perhaps the most evil of all characters in the text.

Lyra has internalized her world's gender roles. Even the term "female" is repulsive to Lyra: "The word female only suggested female Scholars to Lyra, and she involuntarily made a face" (GC 70). Even in her fantasy stories, Lyra has totally digested male dominance; when recounting a tale of her father's cleverness, Lyra admits her tale is second hand because "girls en't allowed at the High Table" (GC 131), which is where the action of the story occurred. At the beginning of the series, Lyra may be such an attractive heroine because she is following the male role models, the only respectable role for her. Lyra is so ingrained in the masculine world that she does not know how to act "feminine." It is not until she goes to live with Mrs. Coulter

(her biological mother), and is exposed to Mrs. Coulter's world, that she begins to understand something different, and then she begins to change.

Once outside of Jordan and away from its scholars, Lyra has her first contact with women of her own class. These women, Mrs. Coulter's friends, provide another facet for examining the role of women in Lyra's world. Lyra finds:

women so unlike female Scholars or gyptian boat mothers or college servants as almost to be a new sex altogether, one with dangerous powers and qualities such as elegance, charm, and grace. Lyra would be dressed up prettily for these occasions, and the ladies would pamper her and include her in their graceful delicate talk, which was all about people: this artist, or that politician, or those lovers. (GC 82)

The women that Lyra meets are foreign to her, with powers that are considered "dangerous;" yet, the ladies' powers, "elegance, charm, and grace," are in contrast to the power of the men. Men have scholarship, knowledge, cleverness, which are more highly esteemed in Pullman's societies. Furthermore, the women do not speak of worldly manners, but of trivial, superficial gossip. They are not participants in serious matters unlike most of the males in the books.

Mrs. Coulter herself is an example of how pervasive and powerful male dominance is in this world. Mrs. Coulter is ambitious, yet she has been born into a world where members of her sex are not allowed to be ambitious. To compensate for this, she uses the "dangerous" powers of females of her class, such as refinement and loveliness, but she also uses her cleverness. In this way, Mrs. Coulter has nonetheless been able to gain power, as Lord Asriel tells Lyra:

You see your mother's always been ambitious for power. At first she tried to get it in the normal way, through marriage, but that didn't work, as I think you've heard. So she had to turn to the Church. Naturally she couldn't take the route a

man could have taken—priesthood and so on—it had to be unorthodox; she had to set up her own order, her own channels of influence, and work through that. (GC 374)

Mrs. Coulter's ability to attain power is limited; she must creatively bypass obstacles in her path. Not being "so well born" (GC 121) as someone like Lord Asriel, she tries to gain influence "in the normal way" by marrying "up;" that the usual way for women to gain power in Pullman's secondary world is through marriage is disturbing. It is a problematic that Pullman transfers women's inability to acquire power except through marriage from the real world to the secondary world. Yet even though Mrs. Coulter marries a rising politician, a "member of the king's party" (GC 122), her ambitions are still not satiated.

Mrs. Coulter is a widow; her husband was killed years before the trilogy takes place in a duel with Lord Asriel. Perhaps, her widowhood allows her the freedom to pursue her desire for power. No longer able, or perhaps obligated, to rely on her husband's power, she achieves some positions of influence after his death. As Lord Asriel points out, since was not satisfied with the power she attained through her marriage, Mrs. Coulter turns to the Church to satiate her needs. She is the creator of the Oblation Board, which is investigating the Church's belief that Dust is the cause of original sin. To eradicate Dust, the Oblation Board is experimenting with pre-pubescent children, often irrefutably harming or killing them. However, Mrs. Coulter is only allowed to lead the project because its practices are so unsavory and loathsome that others are unwillingly to take the job.

Despite her success, Mrs. Coulter remains keenly aware of the suppression of women in her world and uses male bias in her favor. During the interrogation of the witch on the Church's boat, Mrs. Coulter is herself accused of withholding information. She manipulates the men and

conceals her cleverness by reminding them (quite reminiscent of Queen Elizabeth I) that she is a mere woman, ““You forget I’m a woman, Your Eminence, and thus not so subtle as a prince of the Church”” (SK 35). By reminding the priests of the stereotypical notion that females are not capable of the same intellectual intricacies as males, she is able to outwit them.

Since Mrs. Coulter is merely a woman and cannot “take the route a man could have taken” (GC 374), she must depend on other means of attaining power. One way of asserting control over people is through her immense charisma. Upon her first meeting with Lyra, the child is “entranced,” and she “could hardly take her eyes off her” (GC 66). After all, it is Mrs. Coulter who entraps so many of the children at Bolvangar. Yet when dealing with men, Mrs. Coulter does not only use her charisma to enchant, but also her sexuality. Mrs. Coulter is a noted seductress of powerful men from Lord Asriel to Lord Boreal. Ironically, she uses her femininity, the illusion of sweetness prized by the patriarchy, as a means to control men.

Mrs. Coulter is distinctive from the other women in the text; she is powerful, aggressive, and beautiful. She achieves great influence and wields large amounts of power in her world. However, she is also portrayed as a corrupted, unnatural woman who severs and murders children. Yet she seems so unnatural because as a woman, her violation of children is even more reprehensible. Her power is also presented as something not ordinary in Lyra’s world; indeed, presenting the only human woman with power as extraordinarily evil only strengthens the power of the patriarchy.

A possible reason for Pullman’s secondary world construction is that Pullman attempts to criticize the Christianity’s influence in the subordination of women. However, if this is the case, then it does not make sense that the gyptians, a human society that is outside the bounds of Pullman’s fictitious Church, is just as patriarchal and male-dominated. In gyptian society which

is a loosely organized governmental body based on a family system, men act as heads by representing and speaking for their families. The men make the decisions; women are regulated to keeping house and raising children. Even when women may be needed, the men choose to keep them out of danger:

“Lord Faa, en’t you a taking any women on this expedition to look after them kids once you found ‘em?”

“No, Nell. We shall have little space as it is. Any kids we free will be better off in our care than where they’ve been.”

“But supposing you find out that you can’t rescue ‘em with-out some women in disguise as guards or nurses or whatever?”

“Well, I hadn’t thought of that,” John Faa admitted. “We’ll consider that most carefully when we retire into the parley room, you have my promise.” (GC 136)

However, only men will be admitted into the parley room; no women will be allowed in the decision making process. In the end, only Lyra is allowed to go on the trip North after all. The gyptian people, not dominated by the regulations and beliefs of the Church, also participate in a patri-focal and male dominated social structure. This arrangement illustrates how pervasive this construction is throughout the trilogy and suggests that Pullman is not attempting to promote women’s liberation and gender equality.

Another society that illuminates the extent of male domination in Lyra’s world is the purely fictionalized panerbjorne, or the polar bear society. While Pullman spends relatively little time illustrating this particular culture, he does give enough clues to suggest the gender roles that are playing out. To begin with, bears, and especially larger bear species like polar or grizzly bears, are symbolic of male power and dominance. From birth, “bears were raised by their

mothers, and seldom saw their fathers” (GC 341); this would suggest that the mother is the most significant influence on a young bear’s upbringing, and thus that the female is powerful in society. That cubs are exclusively brought up with a strong feminine presence implies a matrilineal or matrifocal, rather than a patriarchal, culture. However, this is not the case, for the bears represent one of the most male-dominated societies in the series. While bears do not follow a typical Western patriarchal family structure in terms of child-rearing, their government is very male-dominated. A king, not a queen, rules the bears. Arguments are decided through physical combat between males; thus this society places value on Western masculine ideals of brute force and fighting ability.

Furthermore, most of the action involving the bears takes place with a male bear, or exclusively between male bears; no female bear is introduced into the plot of the trilogy. Even when Lyra travels to the heart of Svalbard and into the palace of the king, she still does not have any direct contact with female bears. As Lyra watches the preparation for Iofur and Iorek’s battle she notices: “Bears of high rank had the best places, and there was a special enclosure for the she-bears, including, of course, Iofur’s wives” (345). This description suggests both that female bears are of a lower caste than male bears because they are placed in a separate enclosure and that male bears (or at least the king) have the right to have more than one wife, which further degrades the value of females in this particular society. In addition, the female bears are kept separately from the males, intimating that mixed society is undesirable. That no females are present as advisors or warriors for either king bear is more evidence that they hold a low social position.

The bears construction as an ultra-masculine society adds a new dimension to the relationship between Lyra and Iorek, by placing Iorek in the position as protector of the weaker

Lyra. Throughout the trilogy, Lyra disobeys many different characters; however, Iorek is one of the rare characters whose authority she never challenges. In many respects Iorek acts *in loco parentis*, guiding and protecting Lyra through out her journey. Lyra comes to depend on the masculine protection of Iorek when she cannot help herself. While this could mean the need of the child for a parent, I believe it also speaks to the idea of the female needing the protection of the male. Like a white knight, Iorek faces many obstacles and dangers to protect Lyra, the highborn female. Their relationship speaks to the English tradition of knights and damsels in distress. Later, when Iorek is not present to fill this role, Will takes his place and keeps this hierarchy alive.

However, the ubiquitous patriarchy in Lyra's world contains one exception--the Lapland witches, an exclusively female culture of beautiful and magical human-like women. The inclusion of a female-dominated group could be to offset the male dominance that pervades the other societies, or it could imply that Pullman is not opposed to feminism. However, the potential for this matri-focal culture to have a feminist influence on the story is negated in several ways. Instead of adding another dimension to the complexity of gender roles in the trilogy, the witches again fall into preconceived notions of what it means to be female.

Pullman gives the witches the gifts of magic and longevity, traits that men in Lyra's world cannot possess, but these gifts are not without terrible sacrifice on the part of the witches. Rather than a blessing, the women's long lives appear to be a curse. Since males cannot be witches, the witches must procreate with human males. However, since they live so much longer, witches are continually falling in love and losing their mates to old age:

. . . men pass in front of our eyes like butterflies, creatures of a brief season. We love them; they are brave, proud, beautiful, clever; and they die almost at once. They die so soon that our hearts are continually racked with pain. (GC 134)

The sacrifice that the women must endure for their powers and potential to dominate is that they are perpetually heartbroken; for if they give birth to a boy, he will be human and destined for his father's fate. The witch's heartbreak is stereotypical of the how Western society views women; the yearning need for a male partner not only illustrates women's dependence on men but also reinforces the traditional heterosexual relationship.<sup>12</sup>

The innate powers that the witches possess are cast as not being worthy of the sacrifice that they demand. The pain of separation from her mate and her son is so great that Serafina Pekkala, the brave witch-queen, would gladly give up her powers to become mortal. She confesses:

I loved him at once. I would have changed my nature, I would have forsaken the star-  
tangle and the music of the Aurora; I would never flown again—I would have given all  
that up in a moment, without a thought, to be a gyptian boat wife and cook for him and  
share his bed and bear his children. (GC 134-5)

The language of this particular passage is troubling: it shows how passive Serafina has become when she is in love with Farder Coram. Annis Pratt writes that in typical women's fiction, a witch is a "powerful, untrammled woman who, by daring to *enjoy* her unmarried state, defies social norms" (122 italics in original). However, the witches that Pullman creates do not fit into Pratt's pattern. As queen of her witch clan, accomplished warrior, and wise leader, Serafina Pekkala is one of the most brilliant, strong, and independent female characters in the trilogy.

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<sup>12</sup> Moruzi posits that regardless of the one homosexual relationship between the angels, the trilogy overwhelmingly reinforces heterosexuality as the preferred sexual orientation.

Yet, to share Farder Coram's life, she would have to turn her back on her role as queen and assume a position with relatively little power. Even though Serafina cannot change her nature she is willing to make the sacrifice for Farder Coram. His hold on the power in their relationship is obvious from her language; she would "share *his* bed" and "bear *his* children." In a very conservatively patriarchal ideology, she would relinquish ownership of herself and the children.

That Serafina would give up all her power and influence to take a very traditional role as a housewife and mother is disturbing. It suggests that women long to be in this role, and do not desire or want power, even if that power is a natural cultural entitlement. Serafina's giving up power and her inherent gifts for a man is especially troubling. A witch's ability to fly, hear the "music of the Aurora," and feel the "star-tingle" are all enjoyable to her. To give these up for a man is symbolic of relinquishing pleasure, or even sexual pleasure (star-tingle becomes highly suggestive of this), for the male's needs. As Pratt further explains "from a patriarchal perspective one would expect the single, eccentric, old woman, or old maid [or witch] to be a figure of derision and social ostracism" (127); rather than creating women that enjoy freedom from men, Pullman creates witches who long to be like "normal" women—women with families and husbands. Instead of powerful individual, Pullman posits the role of mother and wife, subservient, homebound, and selfless, as the natural longing for a woman of child-bearing age.

Yet the stereotype that women are happiest when caring for others is not limited to the secondary world in His Dark Materials. Mary Malone, the physicist from Will's world who is investigating Dust and its connection with consciousness, also conforms to this ideology. As a physicist, she is an intelligent and independent woman in a mostly male dominated field, and she is one of the most morally untarnished characters in the series. However, Mary plays the role of the "serpent;" she tells Lyra and Will the memory of her own sexual awakening and thus inspires

them to profess their feelings for one another. As Russell points out she is the “sexual educator for Lyra and Will, the only adult who describes to them the world of sense pleasures” (217).

Thus, Mary’s knowledge is not only limited to academics, but she also possess a wisdom about love, sex, and physical pleasure.

Mary is unusual from other female characters in the trilogy because she has found peace without a male presence in her life. While she does tell Will and Lyra she lived with a man for four years (AS 446), she has found happiness in her single life.” “And I have got my work. Well, I *had* my work. So I’m solitary but happy, if you see what I mean” (AS 446). Even though she states she is happy in a solitary life, Mary quickly assumes a mothering role. Her name foretells her fate: Mary is the traditional mother of Jesus. Indeed, this destiny as a mother figure is posited as the most important of Mary’s duties. Even despite Mary’s discovery that Dust is “dying” and her fashioning of the amber spyglass, her motherly education of Lyra and Will is most vital. Her mother role continues even after the Fall, as she offers to not only to help, but to care for Will when he returns to his own world: “In fact, Mary makes a commitment to serve as a caregiver, an offer that conveys both affection and loyalty” (Smith 147). “Affection” and “loyalty” are then Mary’s most important virtues, not her intelligence and bravery. Furthermore, she begins to depend on her position as a caretaker: “He’s [Will’s] a strong boy . . . . But I’ll help him. Besides, I *need* him” (AS 504 italics in original). Once again, despite being single, the female character takes on a traditional gender role, as mother and protector.

Along with the secondary world construction, character construction also plays a significant role in shaping the obedience theme in the series. One of Karen Patricia Smith’s “Five Key High Fantasy Conventions” is that “adult (and other) guides offer information and assistance to major characters” (136). The world that the Pullman creates is highly structured

and rewards complacency. Like other fantasy series, His Dark Materials focuses on a Manichean struggle between the perceived structures of “good” and “evil,” and the two children must negotiate this world with the help of adults. In order for the protagonists to succeed, they must determine and gain help from “good” adults. Although the difference between the two sides is not clear in the beginning, obviously Pullman characterizes the Church and Christianity to be “evil” and promotes the rebellious faction as “good.” Similarly, he deliberately crafts a difference between “good” and “bad” adult figures, allowing the young characters only to rebel against the “bad” adults while retaining ultimate submissiveness to the “good” adults.

This character construction is similar to the way that other fantasy writers have created their characters. Commenting on Susan Cooper’s The Dark is Rising series, critic Michael Drout explains “rebellion is not considered in Cooper’s world not because the adults possess complete power to stop it, but because in a world where the ‘good’ adults are always right, it is unthinkable to disobey them” (244). Like Cooper, Pullman’s child characters do not rebel against the “good” adults, and thus the status quo for the adult/child power relationships is retained. Moruzi comments on this strategy in Pullman’s work: “Pullman depicts a socially-and textually-constructed childhood for Lyra and Will where clearly designated adults and special guides . . . provide assistance to them.” (65) The children may be acting independently, but it is essential to keep predestination in mind; the children must succeed to save the universe. Their disobedience of the good adults, or higher forces, would only hurt themselves. While not as restrictive as Cooper, I believe that Pullman does somewhat rely on this same curb on rebellion in His Dark Materials; if the children understand that the adult is “good,” they are more likely to be obedient, whereas they will try to subvert the power of perceived “bad” adults.

Naomi Wood takes a slightly different interpretation of the construction of good and bad characters. She sees the lines between good and bad to be unclear and views Pullman's characters in a more complex manner. Wood states, "Even characters who are on the 'good side' are not necessarily or inevitably admirable or right"(245), and Wood goes on to give Stanislaus Grumman as an example of this phenomenon. Once again, I diverge from Wood's interpretation here. I believe that Grumman is a poor example of a "good" adult who is not always admirable; as Will's father, he is an important character but plays a relatively small role in this series. Most of the other adults who are constructed as "good" such as Mary, Iorek, Serafina Pekkala, John Faa, Fader Coram, and Lee are consistent in the role of good adult throughout the series.

A better example for Wood to have used would have been Lyra's parents; out of all the characters in the novels, they are the most difficult to interpret. Her parents pose an appealing divergence; bad throughout most of the novel, they end up saving their daughter's life and the fate of the universe. However, it must be remembered that Lyra and Will spend most of their time either running away from or trying to subvert either Lord Asriel's or Mrs. Coulter's authority. A mark of the children's growing maturity is their ability to understand that "good" and "bad" are not necessarily exclusive; they begin to understand that "good" adults can do "bad" things. As the character Mary points out "People are too complicated to have simple labels" (AS 447). This in part, makes rebellion and obedience in the text more complex. The children may unwittingly subvert the power of an adult who is trying to help them or keep them safe, as when Lyra escapes from Mrs. Coulter in the third novel. Yet, the knowledge they can gain from these subversions can be an invaluable learning experience. In The Amber Spyglass, it can be seen that Lyra and Will begin to make their own decisions, and rely less upon adult authority; instead of allowing adults shape their journey, they begin to take their own path.

While the children are not provided with a consistent adult patron throughout the entire series, as Karen Patricia Smith points out, “Numerous guides proffer information and assistance during the traversing of perilous landscapes by Pullman’s protagonists” (145). John Faa, Farder Coram, Iorek Byrnison, Lee Scoresby, and Will’s father all take on the role of the good adult mentor. The children trust these characters implicitly, and in the “good” adults often allow Will and Lyra freedom to complete the tasks. Even the tiny Gallivespians, who are mistrusted at first, gain the children’s respect. Often these adults serve as protectors, and their authority is not questioned by either Will or Lyra. Troublesomely, the adults who act in this capacity are mostly male. With the exception of the Lady Alamkia, Serafina Pekkala, and Mary, all the trusted adults are men, and the females that are present take on a relatively small role compared to the men.

Even though a constant parental authority does not exist, something acts in its place. The alethiometer is an ever present force that is highly influential for the children. Always telling the truth, the alethiometer gives advice and even commands Lyra, and she always follows its instructions. In fact, the alethiometer is presented as having a consciousness of its own, answering questions that Lyra does not ask, and leading her into unanticipated adventures. It enables, constricts, and shows the children the path that they ought to take while demanding obedience. If Lyra questions its motives or its honesty, it reprimands her: “she even thought it was rebuking her for asking the same question twice” (345). Since the alethiometer never lies, to disobey or distrust it would be absurd. The alethiometer guides and protects Lyra and Will during their journey and often acts *in loco parentis* for the children. As Lyra matures, she begins to rely on its power less and less, which further suggests its role as an authority figure.

Even though most characters fit into roles of “good” and “bad,” this is not to suggest that the characters are simplistic. To the contrary, Pullman’s characters are richly written, not static or one-dimensional. Pullman beautifully creates depth of character through his formation of daemons, or “external human souls in animal form” (Hines 38). Daemons occur only in Lyra’s world and are psychologically linked to their humans; a separation of even a few feet causes extreme pain and anxiety. Children’s daemons are still unformed, they can change shape, but adults’ daemons “settle” or take a fixed form. As the old seaman tells Lyra, the settling of a daemon can provide an understanding into “what kind of person you are” (GC 197). In essence, daemons represent a part of human consciousness that exists outside the body and that can express human personality traits.

Daemons add to character development, but they also can shed light on gender roles being portrayed in the novels. Daemons are almost always the opposite sex of their human counterpart. As Pullman explains: “Daemons are usually the opposite sex (not gender --- that's a grammatical term) because we each have a bit of the opposite in our make-up, and it was one way of making that visible.” (teenreads.com interview). Yet Pullman’s words are contradictory; by presupposing everyone has a “bit of the opposite in our make-up” implies that “masculine” and “feminine” sides of personality exist and that there are distinct sex differences. This suggests that identity is also concrete; if sex differences are clearly differentiated, then the potential for gender to be changeable is negated. This is further illustrated with the “settling” of a daemon, which symbolizes the change between the fluidity of a child’s character to the fixed character of the adult in His Dark Materials.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Personally, I find that the “settling” of daemons is a flaw in the trilogy. The fatalistic notion that adult personality is unchangeable is contradictory to the tolerant sentiment of books.

Daemons could potentially complicate gender roles, but instead Pullman endows his daemons with traditional gender differences. As human characters fall into familiar gender roles, so do their daemons. This can be seen in the way human characters interact with and use their daemons. Mrs. Coulter often uses her golden monkey daemon to channel her sexual or physical aggressiveness. When Lyra disobeys Mrs. Coulter's wishes, she uses her daemon to bring her back under control:

Lyra cried out in alarm, and then in fear and pain, as Pantalaimon twisted this way and that, shrieking and snarling, unable to loosen the golden monkey's grip. Only a few seconds, and the monkey had overmastered him . . . (GC 86)

Since Mrs. Coulter's monkey daemon is male, he can be perceived as an acceptable outlet for the features of her personality that are not considered feminine. Her femininity is protected because it is the masculine monkey that acts, not herself. Pantalaimon also functions in a similar manner; he too is a channel for Lyra's aggressiveness. Hines recognizes "Pantalaimon's victory in a staring match with another daemon establishes Lyra's dominance over another child" (41). Lyra relies on the masculine power of Pan to settle differences with other children, without risking physical confrontation.

Pantalaimon also acts as Lyra's "voice of reason," his personality is more reserved and cautious than Lyra's. The trilogy begins with Pan trying to convince Lyra not to sneak into the Retiring Room where "only Scholars and their guests were allowed . . . and never females" (GC 4). Lyra's introduction in the novel is a forbidden action; Lyra is invading the masculine space to quell her own powerful curiosity, a trait that will come to play in her ultimate fate. Yet Lyra is being disobedient, not rebellious; when faced with getting caught, she runs and hides. Lyra is

not sneaking into the Retiring Room to consciously subvert the adult (and male) authority; she was simply inquisitive.

Thus His Dark Materials begins like another children's fantasy series—The Chronicles of Narnia. In both, a child goes into a wardrobe and embarks on a quest to new worlds. Yet Pullman has vehemently and publicly criticized C.S. Lewis; in “The Dark Side of Narnia” he writes that his disgust for Lewis stems from “the misogyny, the racism, the sado-masochistic relish for violence that permeates the whole cycle,” and he is particularly critical of Lewis' gender constructions.<sup>14</sup> That he begins his series with a similar scene as Lewis's, suggests that Pullman would like to right what he perceives as his predecessor's wrongs.

Although Lyra is often successful at being disobedient at Jordan College, upon her when she leaves Lyra is not always victorious in her struggles against adult authority; when she clashes against powerful adults she often fails in gaining real power. Early in the trilogy, Lyra is introduced to Mrs. Coulter, a beautiful and powerful woman, who has the ability to control situations and people. Willful Lyra falls under her spell and cannot, at first, overcome her influence. Lyra tells herself that “the one thing that kept her polite and attentive to Mrs. Coulter was that tantalizing hope of going north” (GC 85), but she has not yet felt the consequences of Mrs. Coulter's wrath. While living with Mrs. Coulter in London, Lyra attempts to defy a simple request and discovers how powerful her guardian really is:

Lyra sobbed in terror.

“Don't! Please! Stop hurting us!”

Mrs. Coulter looked up from her flowers.

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<sup>14</sup> The passage that Pullman most refers to concerning gender issues and sexuality is from the last book of the Narnia Chronicles, entitled The Last Battle. In it, Susan Pevensie is not allowed to join the other children in Paradise because she has become interested in boys, ““Oh Susan!” said Jill. ‘She’s interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on growing up’” (741).

“Do as I tell you, then,” she said. (GC 86)

Mrs. Coulter easily overpowers Lyra, not only through strength, but with her cunning use of her daemon. While Lyra struggles in pain, Mrs. Coulter is cool and collected and quietly resumes her flower arranging. She easily cows Lyra and bends her to her will.

This same evening Lyra decides to run away from Mrs. Coulter’s home. Unable to assert power over her mother and disturbed by the golden monkey’s snooping, Lyra heads out on her own. Curiously Lyra chooses to flee her mother, rather than facing off against her control, “‘Are we going to run away?’ he [Pantaliamon] whispered back. ‘Course. If we do it now with all these people about, she might not notice for a while’” (GC 96). Lyra runs away, sneaks out of the flat, and avoids an altercation with Mrs. Coulter. Most likely aware to the danger of her caretaker’s power, Lyra is forced to rebel in a non-confrontational way, which in part limits the power that she can achieve from this rebellion. Her running away becomes more an act of desperation than of courage.

While her escape from Mrs. Coulter appears to be triumphant, Lyra soon finds herself in grave danger. After wandering the streets of London for hours, two men attempt to kidnap her. Again, Lyra cannot resist the overwhelming adult power and is ensnared by the men:

One man was swiftly lashing cords around her, around her limbs, her throat, body, head, bundling her over and over on the wet ground. She was helpless, exactly like a fly being trussed by a spider. (GC 103)

She is completely at the mercy of the Gobblers and must be rescued by the gypsies. That she is overpowered and then rescued by adults suggests that at this point in the story, Lyra is too weak and cannot rely on herself to survive. Again, the effectiveness of her running away is limited; Lyra runs from adult authority only to rely on it for her safety.

At Jordan College, Lyra had little supervision, and in London she finds herself chafing under Mrs. Coulter's watchful eye. Yet under the care of the gyptians, Lyra behaves, and even prospers despite their control. She especially creates a connection with Farder Coram, whom she loves "for his knowledge and for the firm way he directed her" (GC 143). As Will later points out, "She [Lyra] seemed quite willing to take orders if she saw the sense of them" (SK 24), and the ways in which she obeys Farder Coram reflect this aspect of her personality. Lyra had previously tormented the gyptians and tried to sink their boat (GC 36), but while in their custody, she doesn't rebel against these "good" caring adults: to rebel, after all, would be ridiculous as these people are protecting and helping her. Therefore, her lack of rebellion or any sort of disobedience while with the gyptians is acceptable because they care for her, and have her best interests in mind; Lyra has no need or desire to rebel.

Lyra probably would have remained with the gyptians and have been happy to do so, if she had not been kidnapped by the Samoyeds. Taken and sold to the Oblation Board at Bolvangar, Lyra once again finds herself under the control of the "bad" adults. Immediately she begins to lie to them; she tells her captors that her name is "Lizzie Brooks" and pretends to be a dull, stupid girl (GC 237). Bolvangar is a place of power and control; many children live under the supervision of relatively few adults, and these children must be kept in submission. Pullman, a former teacher, ironically gives hints on how to control a large group of children: "You can't keep a large group of children in one place for long without giving them plenty to do, and in some ways Bolvangar was run like a school, with timetabled activities such as gymnastics and 'art'" (GC 248-9).

At Bolvangar, Lyra immediately begins subverting the authority of these adults by plotting her escape and spying on them. However, on the night of her mother's arrival, Lyra is

caught eavesdropping and almost is severed from Pantaliamon. Once her presence is detected, the men forcibly place her into the cutting machine:

But they fell on her again, three big brutal men, and she was only a child, shocked and terrified; and they tore Pantalaimon away, and threw her into one side of the cage of mesh and carried him, struggling still, around to the other. (GC 278)

Lyra is physically overpowered by the men; she cannot assert any control over her situation.

Lyra's inability to save herself has much to do with her age, but may also be reminiscent of her sex as well. Later on in the trilogy, Will is able to overpower adults, using his masculine strength and phallic knife. Ironically, in *Bolvangar* Lyra's unnatural and evil mother saves her. Once again in Mrs. Coulter's clutches, the gyptians, an opposing adult force, is integral to her rescue.

Lyra continues to rely on adult protection, until she goes across the light bridge and enters into a new world. Without an adult to defend her, Lyra finds a substitute in Will. While she is away from her adult protectors, she begins her maturation; for instance, she starts to realize the importance of playing fair and the dangers of lying. Carol Gilligan writes:

For boys and men, separation and individuation are critically tied to gender identity since separation from the mother is essential for the development of masculinity. For girls and women, issues of femininity or feminine identity do not depend on the achievement of separation from the mother or on the progress of individuation. (8)

Since Lyra is experiencing change brought about by separation, does she break from the mold Gilligan illustrates? Is this change due to her growing maturity, or does it have to do with Will? It appears that a male is essential for Lyra to mature as a woman. Maria Nikolajeva writes,

“Many child characters do indeed meet either a friend or an opponent of the opposite sex who initiates a turning point in the protagonist’s life (432). As Lyra starts to depend more and more on Will, she becomes less adventurous and rebellious. It seems that while she did not accept her place in the traditional society before, she does once Will arrives. By implication somehow Will is able to “tame” the rebellious nature in Lyra; by connecting with him she finds her identity while he finds his through adventure and separation from his mother.

Like Lyra, Will’s introduction into the story also involves a subversion of adult authority; however, some profound differences exist between his subversion of power and Lyra’s. Lyra goes into the Retiring room because she is curious and wants to investigate what is forbidden to her, she is being disobedient. Will’s first appearance centers around his struggle to secure the safety of his mother and to protect his family from the threatening men who continue to harass them. Several times he chases these men away until he finally has a violent confrontation with them, “Then the door began to move. Will waited til the man was framed in the open doorway, and then exploded up out of the dark and crashed into the intruder’s belly” (SK 6). While Lyra’s first action is to satisfy her own curiosity, Will’s action is necessitated by the circumstances; his reaction is required to keep his family safe and he is aware of his rebellion.

Another difference between Lyra and Will’s first disobedient acts is that Lyra’s rebellion is meant to be very non-confrontational. She sneaks into the prohibited space and does not mean to meet anyone directly, nor does she expect for anyone to ever find out. Conversely, Will’s rebellion is intentionally provocative; the men are intimidated to have governmental authority and by outwardly challenging them Will goes beyond merely protecting his family to breaking the law. By fighting the intruders, Will takes part in a very masculine act; Lyra’s is non-physical

action more traditionally feminine. In addition, Lyra's action is more frivolous than practical Will's.

However, it is not just the first rebellion that frames Will in this sensible and masculine role. Throughout the trilogy, Will's behavior follows a fairly consistent pattern. He is reluctant to rebel and usually does so only when forced into the situation or when he needs to protect someone else. His confrontations are physical, and he meets his opponents face-to-face. Will follows the male pattern identified by Gilligan as having to assert his masculinity by breaking from his mother. In the beginning of The Subtle Knife, Will is very attached to his mother: "She [his mother] was so full of love and sweetness then that he could think of no better companion, and wanted nothing more than to live with her alone forever" (SK 11). According to Gilligan's theory, Will could not mature in this environment; when he goes out to find his father, he symbolically finds his masculinity in the process. Therefore, because of Will's masculinity, Western culture has deemed appropriate for Will to act as a protector to Lyra.

Will is described from the beginning in masculinized terms. The first description of Will shows him with a "fierce, un-happy glare in his eyes," "tight-set lips," and a "jutting jaw" (SK 2). His masculine energy is so strong that even the men who invade his home are wary of the boy:

He looked so fierce that neither of the men laughed, though he was so young. They could easily have knocked him down, or held him off the floor with one hand, but he was fearless, and his anger hot and deadly. (SK 11)

Again in this scene Will is described as "fierce" and additionally, "fearless." When Lyra later meets Will, she sees him as "strong," "stocky," and "savage" (SK 27). Her view of him as a

masculine force is important to the dynamic of their relationship because it begins to define the gender roles that emerge as the story unfolds.

Lyra and Will's relationship begins with a confrontation; Lyra rushes out at Will, whom she perceives as a threat. Once they realize there is no danger, Lyra first backs down and retreats: "She realized what he was at the same moment, and snatched herself away from his bare chest to crouch in the corner of the dark landing like a cat at bay" (20). Even though at this point in the trilogy Lyra is a tomboy and not a "typical" woman, she takes on the traditional submissive feminine role. Her passivity is carried on in the ensuing encounter. Will is the one who takes charge of the situation: "'Find a couple of plates,' he said, and Lyra obediently did so" (24). Lyra obeys Will in this early encounter, but when it is her turn to give orders, Will does not acquiesce to her authority:

"Show me," she said.

It was a command, not a request. He shook his head.

"Not now," he said. "I want to go to sleep. Anyway, it's the middle of the night."

(26)

Surprisingly, Lyra accepts this response with little thought. Already, an obvious change has occurred in her character, and she continues this change in the pages that follow.

In a 1999 interview with Wendy Parsons and Catriona Nicholson, Philip Pullman was questioned about this change in Lyra's character. The interviewers recognized a "shift in gender boundaries" in the second book and inquired about the alteration in Lyra. His response is as follows:

Because she's in a different world. It's not her world anymore. In a world where she's not at home, she has to rely on somebody else, which is a learning thing for

her. She's been so independent, so argumentative, so bossy in a way, that it's good for her to be taken down a peg or two and to see that actually there are some people who don't even look human at first, as Will doesn't, because he hasn't got a daemon. (127)

Pullman's assertion is reasonable, but I think that her change has far greater implications than his answer implies. Lyra is in a new world—the world of pubescent feelings and gender expectations. For the first time in the novels, she has found her equal in someone her own age. The other children that she has had previous contact with are servant children, street urchins, or the gyptian youngsters; none of these characters are her equal in class, bravery, or intelligence. When she meets another powerful child, she is cowed and falls into a comfortable role as the weak female.

If Will has power over Lyra from the relationship's inception, then his influence only grows when he succeeds in possessing the subtle knife. When Lyra realizes that her athelometer is missing, she comes to Will for help, perhaps recognizing that she alone cannot overcome the grown Lord Boreal (Sir Charles Latrom). Together, they face Lord Boreal, only to be forcibly guided by him to the knife. Right before Will attains the knife, Lyra is still slightly resistant, but nonetheless acquiesces to, Will's domination:

“Better go and see,” Will whispered “I'll go first.”

“I ought to go first,” she whispered back, “seeing it's my fault.”

“Seeing it's your fault, you got to do as I say.”

She twisted her lip but fell in behind him. (SK 172)

Lyra shows her submissiveness by following “behind” Will, even though her “twisted” “lip” shows her disdain. After Will prevails in gaining the subtle knife, Lyra’s attitude changes; the two characters rarely have these sorts of disagreements.

The fight for the subtle knife is significant not only because it marks a turning point for Will and Lyra’s relationship, but also because it is a rare instance in the trilogy when a child’s action actually leads to a permanent gain in power; in this way gaining the subtle knife takes on new significance as a rebellion. In order to get the knife, Will must use his masculine physical prowess to overthrow the older Tullio. One reason that Will is able to overthrow Tullio is that the man is not the entitled to have the knife:

“Giacomo Paradisi,” the old man muttered through broken teeth. “I am the bearer. No one else. That young man stole it from me. There are always fools who take risks like that for the sake of the knife.” (SK 173)

Prodded by this information, Will engages in a desperate battle with Tullio, in which he defeats the thief with his fighting ability and physical prowess. However, Will is permanently injured in the struggle, losing two fingers.

Once Will gets the knife back from Tullio, he is informed that he now is the knife bearer, and is permanently endowed with a powerful object:

“My time is over,” he said. “The knife knows when to leave one hand and settle in another, and I know how to tell. You don’t believe me? Look!”

He held up his own left hand. The little finger and the finger next to it were missing, just like Will’s.

“Yes,” he said, “me too. I fought and lost the same fingers, the badge of the bearer. And I did not know either, in advance.” (SK 180)

As Lyra is destined to have the althelimeter, Will is destined to become the knife bearer. However, while Lyra is given the golden compass, Will must earn the right to the subtle knife. Highly evocative of an initiation right, the male must prove his worth through a physical confrontation; once he is victorious, he has earned respect and the right to bear the object. This process marks a gender difference between the two characters; as a female Lyra is not physically able to win an object through confrontation because her gender determines that she is given her object instead of earning it. As Rustin and Rustin point out, “it [the subtle knife] represents a kind of active thinking (a ‘masculine’ kind of consciousness), whereas the althelimeter is a more ‘interpretive’ (a more feminine kind)” (238). The knife gives Will a certain air of authority: he matures through his experience and attains power.

Will’s new power and maturity has an affect on the relationship between him and Lyra. Will’s winning the knife and his subsequent help in retrieving the althelimeter entitles him to Lyra’s devotion. His new found power places him in a dominant position in their relationship; moreover, from this point on, Will and Lyra hardly leave each other’s side. Together, they begin the final part of the journey, now Will and Lyra act together.

The Amber Spyglass begins with a chapter entitled “The Enchanted Sleeper” and this sleeper is Lyra, powerlessly asleep and under her mother’s control. Once again, Lyra is in trouble and must be rescued in a fairy-tale like manner (the title of the chapter reinforces this) by a virile male. Will, confident in his new dominant role, will be her rescuer. He commandeers the help of two angels and commands them through strength:

“Then are you stronger than human beings, or weaker?”

“Weaker. You have true flesh, we have not. Still, you must come with us.”

“No. If I’m stronger, you have to obey me. Besides I have the knife. So I can command you: help me find Lyra.” (AS 11)

Yet, as they tell Will, the angels have limited physical ability, and cannot be of much help to Will. Up against the powerful adult Mrs. Coulter, Will realizes that he needs someone more potent to help him. Therefore, he seeks out the assistance of another who has protected Lyra, Iorek Byrinson. In order for Will to get Iorek’s help, he must assert the authority he has earned as the knife bearer and gain the respect of the bear king. Facing the great bear fearlessly, he outwits Iorek and wins the help he needs.

Once Lyra is rescued, the children find themselves in the presence of two Gallivespians, tiny human like creatures who work for Lord Asriel. While the Gallivespians are smaller than Lyra and Will, they are endowed with sharp spurs, which on numerous occasions they use with deadly adeptness. Lyra, at this point in the story taking on a more submissive role, is inclined to obey the Gallivespians. Will, however, emboldened by his other successes, is not to be domineered:

“You should show some respect,” the Chevalier said to Lyra. “You are a thoughtless, insolent child, and several brave men have died this evening in order to make you safe. You’d do better to act politely.”

“Yes,” she said humbly, “I’m sorry, I will. Honest.”

“As for you—“ he went on, turning to Will.

But Will interrupted: “As for me, I’m not going to be spoken to like that, so don’t try.” (AS 168)

This interaction with the Gallivespians illuminates the differences that have arisen between Lyra and Will. Typical of a traditional Western ideal of femininity, Lyra is more submissive than

Will; she needs him to assert power. Much like Mrs. Coulter uses her monkey daemon to show her aggressiveness and thus protects the illusion of proper femininity, Lyra has adapted to use Will in the same way. Although Pullman justifies Lyra's new submissiveness by explaining that she is "in a different world," but Lyra is not in fact, reacting to a new world; she is conforming to the world that she comes from by filling a traditional female role.

The traditional female role is fully realized during the climatic second Fall scene. While Will may be the physically brave, it is Lyra that is emotionally brave; she initiates the acknowledgement of their love:

Then Lyra took one of those little red fruits. With a fast-beating heart, she turned to him and said, "Will . . ."

And she lifted the fruit gently to his mouth.

She could see from his eyes that he knew at once what she meant, and that he was too joyful to speak. (AS 465)

Unlike the original Fall as presented in Genesis, Will is fully aware of the implication of the action. He begins kissing Lyra again and again enabling Dust to flow back into the world, ensuring the continuance of conscious thought. As the new Eve, Lyra has the opportunity to create a new tradition, yet she falls into conventions already in place in Western society. In Genesis, Eve's tasting the fruit is an act of rebellion, but can the same be said for Lyra's actions in Pullman's version of the Fall?

At the moment of the Fall, both Lyra and Will end their childhood and take the first steps into adolescence and adulthood. However, like Eve before her, this step is initiated by Lyra alone; Will is a participant, but only a complaint one. It is one of the few times in the trilogy that Lyra asserts her power and initiates action; that this is a conscious action (she knows what will

happen because of the knowledge imparted by Mary) implies that she is being truly rebellious. While this seems like a positive change for the role of women in the Fall story, it also suggests a traditional role for women. After all, the woman at the helm of the new Republic of Heaven has many traditional qualities; she is heterosexual, physically submissive to her male partner, and femininely attractive. The Lyra who takes the fruit is much more conventional than she was at the start of the trilogy. Furthermore, at this point she has undergone the painful separation from her masculine side, Pantalaimon. Her actions as Eve represent the blossoming of her femininity; she has lost the masculine qualities and tom-boyishness she once possessed. When Lyra leaves Pan behind on her travel to the land of the dead, their witch-like severance<sup>15</sup> completes the embrace of the feminine.

Moruzi proposes that the children's rebellion in the text is not fully realized and cites predestination as a structure that neutralizes the potential for the children to gain power. Is this climatic point in the series a true rebellion or is the idea of obedience and disobedience complicated by the idea of destiny? I agree with Moruzi that disobedience in the text is negated by certain authorial constructions. During the re-creation of the Fall, this change becomes most apparent. After all, as is revealed in the first book of the trilogy, Lyra is fated all along to become the next Eve:

And they have spoken of a child such as this, who has a great destiny that can only be fulfilled elsewhere—not in this world, but far beyond. Without this child, we shall all die. . . But she must fulfill this destiny in ignorance of what she is doing, because only in her ignorance can we be saved. (GC 176)

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<sup>15</sup> In Pullman's secondary world, witches can separate themselves from their daemons through a painful process that allows witch and daemon to remain connected, while not limiting them to the usual constant physical contact.

While Lyra is disobedient of the Authority by becoming the next “Eve,” she ultimately obeys her destiny and saves the universe. Lyra is preordained to be the next Eve and during the moment with Will she is not aware of obedience or disobedience. She unknowingly follows her destiny; she is obedient to higher powers of Dust, higher even than the false Authority.

Naomi Wood also recognizes the influence of predestination in the text. However, Wood adds that free will is an important aspect to the trilogy as well:

Although this is a narrative world governed by prophecy, a sense of destiny and fate, free will is insisted on, even if it is illusory. As part of a narrative, characters also must choose what direction the narrative takes. And all they have to lead them is an innate sense of truth and justice. (252)

This “innate sense of truth and justice” leads the characters to make correct decisions and eventually obey the authority of greater powers. Wood recognizes that in Pullman’s work, as in the work of other fantasy, free will is often an illusion; fate always prevails over an individual agenda. If free will is indeed a chimera, by giving his children an obviously preferred choice, issues of obedience are not as critical.

Even if free will does somewhat neutralize the potential for rebellion in the text, Wood goes on to posit that rebellion still functions as a way for the character’s maturation and growth:

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

I don’t fully agree with Wood that at the moment of the Fall is when Lyra and Will find their true maturity. I would argue that Lyra’s true maturation comes not with her Fall, but rather when she

accepts her fated separation from Will. In the sacrifice, she demonstrates her realization and acceptance of her adult fate. She is obedient to the path that she does not want but which is already chosen for her. As the Angel Xaphania explains: “This is no comfort, but believe me, every single being who knows of our dilemma wishes things could be otherwise; but there are fates that even the most powerful have to submit to. There is nothing I can do to help you change the way things are” (AS 491). If she should disobey, there would be consequences (the hole letting the dead out would have to be sealed), so she takes the “right” path and separates from Will. In the end, as an adult, she is obedient to the greater good. Disobedience, like so much in Pullman’s series, also has a transient nature. Lyra can be disobedient in the carefree world of children, but as she travels the path to adulthood, this must end. Obedience, not disobedience as Wood proposes, becomes a mark of maturity.

Trites’ idea that obedience and conformity are the keys to maturation is more applicable to His Dark Materials than Wood’s theory that rebellion is the path to maturity. Pullman may have intended for disobedience to be the key to growth, but it is in times of obedience, not rebellion, that actual character growth occurs. Through their journey, both Will and Lyra have come to a better understanding of themselves; in accordance with Erikson’s definition of the adolescent stage, the young adults have begun to form a concrete identity. Yet the identity that Lyra creates for herself through her contact with Will mirrors a traditional female gender role. She is subservient to Will and submissive to adult power. She must constantly be rescued and protected throughout the trilogy by male power. After all, Lyra has to return to her own world where this gender role for a woman of her class is not only expected, but demanded. Even though obedience has allowed Lyra to mature, it has also enabled her “to exist within [her] institutional structures” (Trites 7); since those “institutional structures” are confining and

repressive, obedience is not necessarily beneficial. Lyra's adventure with Will has inevitably taught her how to be an adult, how to conform and how to survive, but not without sacrifice. It should be noted that Lyra's does not conform as a necessity for survival, but rather willingly as a "natural" progression of character. As an adult Lyra can fit into her world, but because of the patriarchal expectations of her society, her conformity is not necessarily a positive step.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Genesis, 3:16)

In Philip Pullman's creation of a second Fall, no God or Authority comes down to admonish the rebellious pair—there is no literal expulsion from Paradise. Nonetheless, Lyra and Will suffer for their rebellion; if their personal paradise was a life together, they are denied it by forces which they cannot control. Children no more, their separation and subsequent acceptance of this fate reveals a new maturity that the characters possess, but this maturity comes at a high price, especially for Lyra. As the original Fall spawned gender inequalities, so too does Pullman's new fall. The new Eve is submissive, sweet, gentle, loving—she embodies the feminine qualities approved by the patriarchy.

When Lyra returns to her home, she also returns to a world where there is still little opportunity for female independence. Having passed into adolescence, Lyra knows that she cannot remain any longer at Jordan College, and agrees to attend a female boarding school. While at one time she disdained female Scholars, Lyra now realizes that this way she will gain the knowledge that she desires. As she ponders her future, she worries about her reception at her new school:

Lyra wondered about the other pupils. They might be cleverer than she was, or more sophisticated, and they were sure to know a lot more than she did about all the things that were important to girls of their age. And she wouldn't be able to tell them a hundredth of the things that she knew. They'd be bound to think she was simple and ignorant. (AS 516)

Yet there is little doubt that the girls will accept Lyra because she has learned how to conform, how to behave in her world, and how to act as the acceptable woman she never was before Will. Even though Pullman is highly critical of Lewis' treatment of Susan Pevensie at the end of the Narnia Chronicles, Pullman's ending is eerily similar. Lyra now too will be interested in "nylons and lipstick" and she too is unable to live in her personal paradise with Will. Maude Hines writes, "In The Golden Compass, Philip Pullman presents us with Lyra, a young girl in a grown man's world, a girl of 'noble' birth who hangs out with urchins and servants, a girl who in essence doesn't belong where she is" (37). But now Lyra has the skill to belong. Gone is the naughty Lyra; she will no doubt be obedient to Dame Hannah in order to gain the knowledge of how to read the aetheliometer.

Lyra's fate as a traditional woman may not just be an isolated incident. In her book Archetypal Pattern's in Women's Fiction, Annis Pratt writes:

The novel of development portrays a world in which the young woman hero is destined for disappointment. The vitality and hopefulness characterizing the adolescent hero's attitude toward her future here meet and conflict with the expectations and dictates of the surrounding society. (29)

In His Dark Materials, Lyra is faced with her future and her new role as a woman. If anything Lyra has learned throughout her ordeal, it is when to rebel and when to submit. In pondering her

new life at boarding school Lyra finally concludes, “They [the other girls] don’t know it yet, but they’re going to be my friends” (AS 517). With this next step in her life, Lyra’s acceptance into her society will be complete.

The irony of Lyra’s conformity is that Pullman is attempting to revise the original Fall myth. His Dark Materials begins with disobedience and ends with compliance; implying that Pullman does not necessarily approve of rebellious children. The rebellion that he presents in the texts is carefully constructed to allow the young protagonists only limited powers. True, Will gains a powerful weapon, but the knife is eventually destroyed and he must return to his world and fit in just as Lyra must. While Will’s world values the qualities that he has developed, like courage, determination, and strength, he must put aside his warrior aggressiveness to survive in his home world. In contrast to Will’s prized qualities, the masculinized qualities Lyra once possessed are repressed in response to her inability to gain power through rebellion.

In the novel Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing by May Sarton, the title character muses, “Women are afraid of their daemon, want to control it, make it sensible like themselves” (101). Sarton is not writing about daemons in the same sense as Pullman, but her words could equally apply to the women in his trilogy. Pantalaimon’s “settling” represents Lyra’s settling into adulthood and embracing the feminine; she has learned to control her daemon. Pullman’s Fall has not made any significant changes to gender roles; Lyra’s fate, like Eve before her, is submission to patriarchal norms. Will has undertaken the role of protector and provider, like Adam before him. Power earned through rebellion is limited and mostly reserved for men, as illustrated not only through Will and Lyra, but also Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter. Proud and passionate as Mrs. Coulter is, she is ultimately anti-woman and her quest for power is unnatural for a woman in her world, and therefore she is destined to embrace her role as a mother

and save Lyra. Indeed, the only person whose rebellious intentions are realized is Lord Asriel, who ensures the overthrow of the Authority. Yet even Lord Asriel does not live to enjoy his triumph because he dies with Mrs. Coulter during the killing of Metatron. Rebellion after all, has the potential to destroy as well as create. In Pullman's trilogy, rebellion seems contradictory; instead of leading to power and individuality, it becomes a means of submissive integration.

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