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Paradise Lost and Found: Obedience, Disobedience, and Storytelling in C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman

*In the fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *His Dark Materials*, by C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman respectively, the authors use symbols and themes from *Paradise Lost*. Each author's narrative choice uses his view of cosmic order to persuade readers that obedience should be understood as central to coming of age. At stake is the proper role of human agency in the world. Can children become narrators of their own lives, or are they fated simply to occupy narratives already written for them? Obedience and disobedience are inextricably connected with narratives of origin, of development, and of maturation. Both Lewis and Pullman model and problematize the process of independent storytelling in order to arrive at truth; their treatments of obedience and disobedience explore each writer's sense of the nature of authority, storytelling, and the creative process.*

KEY WORDS: C. S. Lewis; Philip Pullman; *Narnia*; *Paradise Lost*; *His Dark Materials*; obedience; imagination; storytelling.

Literature for children, partly because of its traditionally didactic role, often focuses on obedience as a central issue. *Obedience* is a fraught term; it may be understood as a natural and instinctive response to a superior or as coercive violation of individual choice through persuasion and/or physical force. It is esteemed by kings, generals, priests, parents, and other authority figures but may be contested by those most vulnerable to authority's dictates: subjects, rank-and-file, laity, and children. The most important instance of disobedience in Judeo-Christian scripture is Eve's decision to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge in order to be like God; her disobedience initiates humanity's Fall. Themes and symbols surrounding Eve's disobedience and its metaphoric reflection of humanity's moral status have been appropri-

ated by two important children's fantasy series with doubled and paradoxical effects.

C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe; Prince Caspian; The Voyage of the Dawn Treader; The Silver Chair; The Horse and His Boy; The Magician's Nephew; The Last Battle.*

Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials: The Golden Compass/Northern Lights; The Subtle Knife; The Amber Spyglass*

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

In C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* and Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*, the authors re-create the story of humanity's Fall from grace through disobedience as found in Genesis and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The conservative Lewis advocates obedience, and the progressive Pullman questions it. But both pose obedience as a problem for children as each defines, explicitly and implicitly, legitimate authority and morality in his fiction. Each author's narrative choice uses his view of cosmic order to persuade readers that obedience should be understood as central to coming of age. At stake is the proper role of human agency in the world. Who, ultimately, writes the narrative that gives our lives meaning? Can children become narrators of their own lives—or are they fated simply to occupy narratives already written for them? Obedience and disobedience are inextricably connected with narratives of origin, of development, and of maturation. Both Lewis and Pullman model and problematize the process of independent storytelling in order to arrive at truth: must we retell the same stories or can we invent new ways of getting at old—or inventing new—truths? Lewis' and Pullman's treatments of obedience and disobedience explore each writer's sense of the nature of authority, storytelling, and the creative process.

Pullman vs. Lewis

Pullman has gained notoriety for his public attacks on Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* and on Lewis' God. In "The Dark Side of Narnia," Pullman writes that the series is too tainted with "misogyny . . . racism, [and] sado-masochistic relish for violence" (p. 6) to have any redemptive qualities at all for today's child. Pullman declares that Lewis' narratives "cheat" readers by employing *dei ex machina* to solve narrational problems while indiscriminately and inconsistently mixing plural mythic traditions to produce a pastiche of a world rather than a "secondary creation" as Tolkien defined it (p. 273). Although Pullman demonstrably chafes at Lewis' influence in the field of children's fantasy, they have a great deal in common: both authors earned degrees in English Literature from Oxford University; both write "high" fantasies that draw on the Classical, Norse, and English myths and romances of the Western tradition; both are entranced by the past and its difference from the present; both use their fiction to comment on and criticize our world; and both write of naïve protagonists who find themselves responsible for the destiny of a world. Both Lewis and Pullman are intimate with the literature of the Fall: Lewis published a monograph on *Paradise Lost* in 1942, and Pullman relates that he reread *Paradise Lost* and William Blake before undertaking his

Philip Pullman, "The dark side of Narnia"; J.R.R. Tolkien, "On fairy stories"

C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*; Milton, *Paradise Lost*; William Blake; Alix Sharkey, "Heaven, Hell, and the hut at the bottom of the Garden"

own re-vision of the story for today's young adults (Sharkey, p. 13).¹ Both authors cast a prohibiting authority, a moral choice, protagonists in whose hands the fate of a world is placed. Both link issues of obedience and storytelling to the moral and social consequences of coming of age. Finally, Pullman's vehement opposition to Lewis, coupled with his seemingly deliberate rewriting of crucial moments and characters in Lewis' fiction, suggests a deep connection between the two: both series begin with children hiding in a wardrobe and being jet-tisoned from there into world-shaping adventures; both feature beautiful, deadly women wearing furs who tempt and betray children through sweets; both feature youthful heroines—Lucy and Lyra—who have special relationships with powerful, dangerous beasts—Aslan, Iorek.

Ruth Bottigheimer, *The Bible for Children: From the Age of Gutenberg to the Present*

However, crucial differences exist between the two authors in their appropriation of the characters, events, and themes of *Paradise Lost*. Lewis, a Christian whose doctrine is informed by his saturation in the writings of Medieval Europe and the theology of St. Augustine, posits a divinely established order with a built-in hierarchy “that consist[s], in descending order, of God, men, women, and animals” (Bottigheimer, p. 198).² Pullman, in the republican tradition of Blake and of Milton's political writing, depicts corrupt ecclesiastical and political authorities to whom allegiance would be evil. Generally speaking, Lewis is Augustinian on obedience and the Fall, while Pullman is closer to gnostic theology.³ In his monograph on *Paradise Lost*, Lewis asserts that obedience to authority is decorous and appropriate, even beautiful; we consent to submit, recognizing authority's right to control knowledge and power. Eve's sin was her desire to become godlike in knowledge and thus to rival God. On the other side, Pullman appears to agree with those gnostics who, “instead of blaming the human desire for knowledge as the root of all sin, [. . .] did the opposite and sought redemption through gnosis. And whereas the orthodox often blamed Eve for the fall and pointed to women's submission as appropriate punishment, gnostics often depicted Eve—or the feminine spiritual power she represented—as the source of spiritual awakening” (Pagels, p. 68). 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.

Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*

Authority, Authorship, and Narration

The ultimate authority in both Lewis' and Pullman's works is God; each draws on Christian scripture, theology, and history for the portrait. Lewis upholds what he terms “merely Christian” doctrine while creating a world in which Christianity as such does not exist. Pullman creates a Christianity without Christ, exhibiting deep skepticism

about divine power as it is deployed through institutional religion. Lewis' God is a benevolent liberator, while Pullman's is a tyrannical usurper. This difference is crucial to understanding the role and significance of obedience in each series, in the ways each author pictures and characterizes his version of God, and in the way each narrates his tale. As "creator-god" of their respective tales, Lewis and Pullman employ narrators that capture structurally the qualities of their ultimate authority figures—narrators that mirror and implicitly comment on their respective visions of authority.

I am citing all titles in text in abbreviated form: *LWW* = *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; *PC* = *Prince Caspian*; *VDT* = *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; *SC* = *The Silver Chair*; *HB* = *The Horse and His Boy*; *MN* = *The Magician's Nephew*; *LB* = *The Last Battle*; *GC* = *The Golden Compass*; *SK* = *The Subtle Knife*; *AS* = *The Amber Spyglass*

In the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis depicts the second person of the Christian trinity, Christ, rather than attempting to embody the ineffable first person, who never appears in his narrative except as a name, "the Emperor Beyond the Sea." Appropriately for a country of talking beasts, Lewis chooses the King of the Beasts to represent Christ, alluding also to the biblical Lion of Judah. Although the Lion Aslan's purposes are often mysterious and his visits to Narnia so far apart that some Narnians begin to doubt his existence, he is a personal, incarnate deity who punishes and rewards unambiguously (wine, dance, and picnics for the faithful, thrashing and humiliation for miscreants). In the words of evangelical cliché, a "personal relationship" with Aslan is possible. But this relationship is not always necessarily comfortable: "'Course he isn't safe,'" Mr. Beaver tells the nervous Pevensies who are anticipating their meeting. "But he's good. He's the King, I tell you'" (*LWW*, p. 76). At the same time, some characters, most notably Lucy, develop relationships with Aslan that permit caresses, kisses, and even romps.

Responses to the Lion reveal facets of his character, but even more they reveal the personality of the responder: those who hate or dismiss the Lion are damned, those who lean toward him, even if they fear, are saved. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, treacherous Edmund's instinctive response to the Lion is self-indicting, just as his siblings' response indicates their receptivity to the Truth:

At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in his inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realise that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer. (*LWW*, pp. 64–65)

Aslan merits all these reactions as they result from the implied relationship each child has with the Good, Truth, and hence with God; thus, the three "good" children each experience Aslan's name as a metaphor of the thing they most delight in, the good in them turning

C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*

to the good in God and thus experiencing him as the thing most good in themselves. Those who respond negatively to Aslan turn their backs not only on the divine Other but also on the good in themselves. To Lewis, God's authority is a consequence of his essence. In the natural hierarchy of value, some creatures are superior and others inferior; God, as maker of everything, must be the most superior of all. We obey God because that is the way we appropriately respond to his superiority, which Lewis also defines as "goodness." Disobedience of God's commands demonstrates our "perversity," a word Lewis frequently employs to describe any behaviors that do not match his sense of the norm: the everyday traditional English life—allied with "fried eggs and soap and sunlight and the rooks cawing at Cure Hardy" (p. 299). In Lewis' novels, the good tends to align with heterosexuality, with sexual division of labor and society, with the great chain of being. Perversity, often shading into evil, is good pursued through faulty humanism: progressive, socialist, and feminist efforts to institute programmatic social change—exemplified in the "co-educational" or "mixed" school attended by Jill and Eustace in *The Silver Chair* that allows all children to do as they like, tolerates bullying, and whose Head "was, by the way, a woman" (*SC*, p. 1, 215). In the *Narnia* series, to obey Aslan is simply to align oneself with good. Those who disobey not only get punished, but idiotically frustrate themselves.

"Achuka interview—Philip Pullman," question 3, John Goldthwaite, *The Natural History of Make Believe*

C. S. Lewis, "The inner Ring" and "Kipling's World"

Lewis' implied sense of God's personality (represented in Aslan) is reflected in his choice of narrative voice. As others have noted, Lewis' narrative voice employs the honeyed didacticism of a charismatic schoolmaster, an uncle, having the rhetorical edge over a stranger while not having the intimacy of a parent. The omniscient, godlike narrator is affable but reserved, accessible but unequal. Lewis' avuncular narrator tutors his readers, specifically instructing them about how to react to characters and events in the tales, offering a place in what Lewis called, in a different context, the Inner Ring.⁴ Eustace Clarence Scrubb "almost deserves" his name because he's a little twit ruined by his "up-to-date and advanced" parents who are "vegetarians, non-smokers and teetotallers" (*VDI*, p. 1). He hasn't read the "right" books and is interested only in science, specifically his bug collection: "most of us know what we should expect to find in a dragon's lair, but, as I said before, Eustace had read only the wrong books" (*VDI*, p. 71). Notwithstanding Lewis' awareness of the dangers of desiring membership in the Inner Ring, the *Narnia* series models the "innering-ness" of true believers in Aslan. At times, those who are "in" and those who are "out" are reminiscent of junior high school cliques. Prince Caspian's reasons for rejecting the daughter of the Duke of Galma are her looks: "Squints, and has freckles" (*VDI*, p. 18). Of the episode in Lewis' *Prince Caspian* in which the "dumpy, prim little girls with fat

legs” are frightened away while the “sweetheart” Gwendolen is invited to join Aslan’s group, John Goldthwaite writes

John Goldthwaite, *The Natural History of Make Believe*

The happy entourage here cavorting through Narnia is not a gathering of Christ and his Elect; it is a party of the Smart Set frolicking down the avenue and laughing at the pokey people they pass. Sweethearts named Gwendolen are in; girls with fat legs or freckles are out. In the care of Saint Jack, the Last Judgment has become a beauty contest: no Prizzles allowed at that heavenly pub, The Lion and the Lamb, and no freckles and no dumpies, either. (p. 228)

As contradictory as it may seem, given the discourses about the way we “choose” good or evil, election to this select group in Narnia is rarely about choice and more about the kind of person you are. Although redemption is possible (as with Edmund and Eustace), for the most part characters do not change so much as they are recognized as “the right sort.”

Lewis’ narrator, the friendly uncle-cum-deus ex machina, presents the problem of identifying legitimate authority as relatively simple and the rewards relatively clear. Knowledge of “true” authority is inherent in the *Narnia* books: because characters are *made* knowing the right and only their perverted will prevents them from acting on it, there is no need, most of the time, for outright instruction or directions. People like Edmund in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* or Digory in *The Magician’s Nephew*, who might plead that they were enchanted and did what was wrong under those influences, are not absolved: they *knew* and must repent (see *MN*, p. 135). This degree of control does offer a degree of security: under the narrator’s guiding hand, only so much can go wrong in Narnia. Although the child protagonists may temporarily suffer discomfort, hunger, and fear, no doubt arises that the Narrator and his image, Aslan, are in control. If events get out of hand, a greater good will result. Although the Deep Magic surrenders traitors to the White Witch for death and Aslan must “follow his own rules” (*VDT*, p. 135), there’s always a legal loophole—the Deeper Magic from *Before the Dawn of Time*. This allows Aslan to make it come out all right in the end—even if that means killing everyone off and moving the action elsewhere, as occurs in *The Last Battle*. Trials exist for the good of those being tried, and we are to ignore the subsidiary casualties along the way, such as the group of creatures turned to stone by the White Witch as they celebrate Christmas, allowing Edmund to see another example of how truly evil she is (*LWW*).⁵ For those who are part of the inner circle, all things work together for the heroes’ good—even when not obvious.

Pullman’s figure of God is different, much more distant than Lewis’, without a corporeal intermediary such as Aslan. Introduced as an ac-

tual being late in the second book of the series, *The Subtle Knife*, “the Authority” is the oldest of the angels, but no creator; he lied to those who came after him. Made of Dust like the rest of the sentient universe, the angel Balthamos relates that the Authority “was formed of Dust as we are, and Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself” (AS, p. 31). Jealous of those who have flesh, the Authority through the Church ruled that material bodies were inherently evil, that angelic bodies were superior, though, as the humans discover, they themselves are physically stronger than the angels (AS, pp. 11, 375, 399). The Authority established the world of the dead as “a prison camp” (AS, p. 33) and gave the harpies who ruled it “the power to see the worst in every one” and feed on it (AS, p. 316). Inconceivably ancient, ruling through intimidation and lies, the Authority has delegated much of his work to a regent, Metatron, an angel who wants even more totalitarian control. The angel Baruch relates that

The Authority considers that conscious beings of every kind have become dangerously independent, so Metatron is going to intervene much more actively in human affairs. They intend to move the Authority secretly away from the Clouded Mountain, to a permanent citadel somewhere else, and turn the mountain into an engine of war. The churches in every world are corrupt and weak, he thinks, they compromise too readily . . . He wants to set up a permanent inquisition in every world, run directly from the Kingdom. (AS, p. 61, ellipses in text)

In the first book of the series, *The Golden Compass*, we only know the Authority through the Church. Unlike Lewis, who does not describe any kind of institutional religion (except for that of the “heathen” Calormenes) in *Narnia*, Pullman exploits the known offenses of institutional religion, Christianity in particular, to buttress his thesis about the poisonous effects of religion on humanity and the rest of nature. Lewis, aware of the same dismal history, perhaps, exchanges for the institutionalized church a vision of individual relationships with the divine.⁶

In Pullman’s world, the Church is monolithic, powerful, and combines the most authoritarian, formidable, and evil aspects of Protestant Calvinism and Roman Catholicism.⁷ Pullman’s fictive Church, described in orthodox manner as the Body of God, is similar enough to the Christian Church to make some of Pullman’s characterizations pointed: his Church, like many in our world, silences heretics through Inquisition, castrates young boys to retain their lovely voices at the cost of their sexuality (“so useful in Church music” [GC, p. 374]), and generally opposes desire for the things of the material world while amassing great wealth and power. Pullman’s Church sponsors all scientific research (called “experimental theology”) and uses resulting technology in its rituals. It approves or disapproves of individual dis-

A "coulter" is an iron blade fixed at the front of a plow to make a vertical cut into the soil, evoking the guillotine devised by Mrs. Coulter's employees to sever children and their daemons.

coveries referencing Church doctrine. Of chief concern in the series are elementary particles called Dust, identified as Original Sin by Church scholars. In an effort to fight Dust (which collects around human beings beginning with puberty), the Church commissions the "General Oblation Board" to study Dust and solve the problem of its attraction to adolescents and adults. Led by the evil Mrs. Coulter, the General Oblation Board kidnaps children to sever them from their "dæmons"—animal-shaped souls—in an experimental process euphemistically called "intercision." Those who undergo this process either die or become zombies without any wills of their own. If we may know the Authority through his representatives, we have to agree with the shaman Stanislaus Grumman's description of the struggle against the Authority: "every little increase in human freedom has been fought over ferociously between those who want us to know more and be wiser and stronger, and those who want us to obey and be humble and submit" (*SK*, p. 320).

Clearly, Pullman and Lewis have different notions of deity: Pullman sees God as a despoiler of the material universe; the cosmos itself acts independently from the Authority, since other gods and powers exist and since the Authority himself was formed out of Dust, as were other conscious beings. Pullman leaves the question of how Dust originated to evolutionary theory: as the physicist Mary Malone muses, "Some lucky chance in our worlds long ago must have meant that creatures with backbones had it a bit easier . . ." (*AS*, p. 437). Dust coalesced in the same way, "becoming aware of itself" and gravitating toward other conscious beings over tens of thousands of years. Pullman's God-authorized Church is an illegitimate arbiter of a creation it does not seek to understand except to exploit and stands for repression, exploitation, and the most negative aspects of authority. Lewis on the contrary describes God as the maker and sustainer of creation, which can only run properly if allowed to follow *its* "nature," a paradoxical notion since we are both naturally good, with truth built as it were into our cells, as we saw in the examples of responses to Aslan, but also naturally perverse, expressing essentially fallen natures.

Pullman's narrator does not tell us what to think about moral decision making—at least not in the direct and regulated manner of Lewis' narrator. If Lewis' narrator is avuncular, Pullman's is more like a documentary with very little voice-over: he shows us vignettes that enable us to see more than individual characters see. In one interview, he compares himself to a cinematic camera (Sharkey, p. 13). This technique creates dissonance between characters' and readers' understanding of situations. This dissonant space invites readers—one might say it forces readers—into judgments about characters' insuffi-

cient, incomplete grasp of a given event. For example, this dissonance heightens the ironic contrasts between what Lyra knows and assumes about life and what we know; privileged in our knowledge, we lament Lyra's lack of it. In "Lyra's Jordan," the second chapter of *The Golden Compass*, the first section is told from Lyra's point of view; the rest of the chapter reveals in shifting, episodic ways the activities of a mysterious group, switching from past tense to the present and back to past so that we have a sense both of immediacy and our own inability to do anything to prevent what is happening/has happened. In the present tense, we learn about "slow" Tony Makarios and his life as a street child, his "clumsy tenderness" for his drunken mother, and how he lives on handouts and minor pilfering. With promises of luxury sweets—"chocolat!"—a beautiful lady in furs whose daemon is a golden monkey lures him to a cellar. Shifting ominously to the past tense again, we learn that she promised the large group of children she had collected in the cellar that they would be cared for as they journey to the North and their parents notified. But no one is notified: "The lady stood on the jetty and waved till she could see their faces no more. Then she turned back inside, with the golden monkey nestled in her breast, and threw the little bundle of letters into the furnace before leaving the way she had come" (*GC*, p. 44). When this same woman is introduced to Lyra at the end of the chapter as Mrs. Coulter, we have knowledge Lyra does not, that Mrs. Coulter is most likely the cause of the recent disappearance of Lyra's best friend, Roger the kitchen boy. Lyra's subsequent enthrallment by Mrs. Coulter is more excruciating to witness because of our special knowledge. Our narrator is no comforting uncle, for it is uncomfortable, indeed, not to know who will prevail and suspect as well that we might encounter another past-tense episode in which the future has already been decided against the heroes.⁸

Frequently, Pullman's vignettes express a paranoid vision of pervasive machinations of power against the groping actions of the progressive-radical opposition: the powerful side, the institutional side, tends to be better organized, has better information, and is more ruthless.⁹ Because Pullman generally avoids authorial commentary, at least in the overt Lewisian style, readers are led less and must evaluate characters on their actions and interactions with other characters. When individual characters explain a phenomenon or make a moral judgment, we are forced to judge their reliability. Even characters who are on the "good side" are not necessarily or inevitably admirable or right. Even as we might thrill to Stanislaus Grumman's summary of the struggle against the Authority as a righteous and good cause (*SK*, p. 320), we know he is breaking the solemn vow he made to Lee Score-sby, the man who saved his life by giving up his own. We also know that in breaking that vow he is endangering Lyra. Thus, Pullman's

narrator challenges the reader, even as Lyra is challenged, to make moral sense of the story without overt direction, requiring the reader to develop more independent judgments of the moral stakes. And independence, of course, can lead to disobedience.

Lewis' and Pullman's narrative voices embody the divine authority they imagine, though they require different responses from the reader. Lewis' narrator invites the reader to become part of the club, while Pullman's narrator raises questions about what belonging to a club might involve. Lewis' narrator encourages conformity to the good (which is assumed to be naturally apparent to anyone who is "normal" in Lewis' limited sense), while Pullman's narrator demonstrates the difficulty of determining the good course of action when knowledge is always partial and impressions may be manipulated or mistaken. Although both write in the high-fantasy genre, Lewis' allegiance to fairy-tale romance conventions demands the "happily ever after"—even as his apocalyptic Christianity posits eternal bliss Elsewhere, a Telos to which he holds creation is tending. In contrast, Pullman insists that his work is "stark realism" at least in psychological terms (Achuka, p. 4); referencing evolutionary theory and physics, Pullman grounds his fantasy in contemporary science. Rather than occupying the all-knowing, all-powerful position of Lewis' God/narrator, Pullman's narrator creates ironic discontinuity, highlighting harsh contradictions between ideology and practice, culture and instinct, means and ends. Pullman's narrator is godlike in knowledge perhaps, but not omnipotent; unresolvable conflict must remain unresolved and no *deus ex machina* can make "happy ever after." So results the bitter-sweet ending of *The Amber Spyglass*. As the angel Xaphania austere explains to Will and Lyra, who have just learned the necessity for a lifetime apart shortly after they discover their mutual love, "There is no comfort, but believe me, every single being who knows of your 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, p. 491). Pullman has substituted a more abstract notion of fate for a personal deity, with the burden of making meaning placed more squarely on human beings.

Achuka: Children's books UK, "Achuka interview—Philip Pullman"

Prohibition: "For Your Own Good" or Arbitrary Tyranny?

Even as Lewis' and Pullman's visions of authority and authorship differ, so do their notions of the purposes of prohibition and obedience. Both rehearse God's prohibition against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in their own books but arrive at rather different notions of what the prohibition is to mean. In his critical writing about *Paradise Lost*, Lewis argues that prohibition is not a matter of practical instruction against coming to harm as in the

C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*

common parental warnings: “Don’t play in the street. Don’t touch the hot stove. Don’t talk to strangers.” For Lewis, prohibition is simply an opportunity to obey, a ritual duty to be performed in homage of a greater power. In support, Lewis quotes St. Augustine: “the Fall consisted in Disobedience. . . . The apple was ‘not bad nor harmful in so far as it was forbidden’ and the only point of forbidding it was to instill obedience, ‘which virtue in a rational creature . . . is, as it were, the mother and guardian of *all* virtues’” (pp. 68–69). To be obedient is to be virtuous; obedience creates and nurtures the other virtues. Following through, Lewis declares that the very simplicity of the command and its ease in keeping makes the disobedience that much more “heinous.” In Lewis’ closest imitation of the Garden of Eden situation for children, *The Magician’s Nephew*, the forbidden tree grows apples of eternal youth, and Digory desperately wishes to take an apple to his dying mother.¹⁰ Significantly, Digory’s desire is not for knowledge, as in the Genesis story, but for life—and not even selfishly for himself but for his mother. The evil enchantress-empress Jadis tempts him to take the apple without permission, but he demurs and brings an apple back to Aslan, as he has been instructed. After being forced to give up all hope of saving his mother by his own actions, Digory is given permission to pick another apple for his mother. Aslan notes that if he had taken the apple improperly, “it would have healed [your mother]; but not to your joy or hers. The day would come when both you and she would have looked back and said it would have been better to die in that illness” (*MN*, p. 175). This authority seems benevolent: Aslan is “sorry” for Digory and his mother and weeps for them; he ultimately gives permission to take the fruit.

Digory’s test seems excessive and its exercise rather pointless, except to reinforce Aslan’s authority; Digory’s obedience is a sign of his submission. Digory’s desire for knowledge, indeed, is his initial “sin”: waking Jadis of Charn, a.k.a. the White Witch, is the product of curiosity, the same curiosity that leads him to become a “famous professor” later in life (*MN*, p. 36); however, that action is never directly prohibited. Polly, the more cowardly partner of the adventure, does not want to risk any danger and they fight nastily, but it is not presented at that point as a moral choice; under other circumstances Digory might have been represented as heroic. Digory, however, is made to recognize that his action was indeed a sin, particularly since it resulted in the tainting of Narnia on the very day of its birth. Digory’s desire to “know everything” (*MN*, p. 36) is curbed by Aslan’s silence (even though Aslan does know everything, even what “would have happened”). Aslan’s delay in alleviating Digory’s anxiety for his mother seems gratuitous rather than necessary, and some readers question Aslan’s tactics. Other important “obedience” scenes, such as Jill’s repetition of the “Signs,” Puddleglum’s insistence on obeying

Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*

them even when they don't make sense in *The Silver Chair*; and Lucy's trial in *Prince Caspian* of commanding her older siblings to follow Aslan with her when they cannot see him, also stress dogged obedience against logic. This seems like "poisonous pedagogy," authority prohibiting or commanding simply so that the subject learns, in Pullman's words, "to obey and be humble and submit," rather than learning to be autonomous or enterprising, or even to value the good in reason. Children, obedient children can enter the kingdom of heaven, but independent adults are more problematic, hence Lewis' troubling dismissal in *The Last Battle* of Susan who has lost interest in things Narnian along with her childhood and is now "only" interested in lipstick, nylons, and invitations (emblems of her sexual coming of age).¹¹ Good grownups such as Professor Kirk maintain their childlike openness to the impossible and ignore the tricky adult issues of sexual desire and the pressures of courting (we're never told that either Digory or Polly marry, and they are single when we meet them as adults).

Genesis 3:22–23, RSV

Obedience in Pullman's series is not nearly so tied to the values of Genesis and, hence, far more problematic. Pullman retells the Genesis story as a prohibition against becoming autonomous, free, adult: if you eat the fruit, the serpent tells Eve, "your eyes shall be opened, and your daemons shall assume their true forms, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (*GC*, p. 372). Pullman's narrator focuses upon the "knowledge" aspect of the Genesis archetype: the prohibition is specifically against acquiring knowledge that would make the knower godlike. The precedent is already set in this world's version of Genesis: "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever'—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden. . . ." For Pullman, God's prohibition demeans both God and man: warning Adam and Eve away from the Tree of Knowledge, God seems only to want them ignorant to protect his own status. Pullman's version of the Genesis story stresses both the immaturity of prelapsarian Adam and Eve ("they were naked in the garden, they were like children . . ." [*GC*, p. 371]) and the vindictiveness of a God who drives Adam and Eve from the garden because he is an Elite of one; God wants to prevent them from eating from the tree of life and becoming as immortal as he. The serpent tells Eve the truth: the act of becoming knowledgeable about good and evil does separate her from the rest of creation (*GC*, p. 372), makes her different, potentially a rival of the Authority himself.

Fittingly, Lyra's choices about whom to obey are complicated. Frequently, her sense of human rights and justice causes her to defy

those who appear to have her best interests at heart. In the first chapter, disobeying a rule against being in the Scholars' Retiring Room in her Jordan College home, Lyra sees the Master of the College pour poison into the bottle of wine her Uncle Asriel is supposed to drink. Fear of punishment for disobedience is not compelling in this life-and-death situation: she reveals herself to save her Uncle's life. Disobedience in this instance places Lyra in a situation where it is indirectly "rewarded." This act jettisons Lyra into a plot that wrenches her from her home and protectors (even the Master, the text reveals, genuinely cares for Lyra's well-being and is torn between bad and worse choices), into the home of the glamorous but malevolent Mrs. Coulter, who we know is behind the mysterious child-abducting "Gobblers." Escaping from Mrs. Coulter's London apartment, Lyra falls in with Gyptians, whom she has always seen as enemies but who turn out to be deeply invested in her welfare; finally, in fulfilling what she thinks is her mission to Lord Asriel, she ends up betraying her best friend, Roger, who dies at Lord Asriel's hands in the service of what he has judged to be a higher good. Thus, although Lyra begins her quest believing, childlike, in moral clarity, she quickly learns that many adults do not obey the rules. In the first book of the series, Lyra is more successful when she disobeys than when she submits, when she lies rather than tells the truth.

Discernment, Free Will, and Ethical Action

Pullman and Lewis both acknowledge that in an imperfect world, deciding whom to obey is not easy. In the *Narnia* books, however, we get positive directions. Rightful kings in Narnia can only be "sons of Adam," imported from our world at the beginning of Narnia's history (*MN*, *PC*, etc.). False Kings (and especially, Queens) are those who do not have human blood, like Jadis/The White Witch and The Lady of the Green Kirtle, or those who are rulers by usurpation or conquest, such as Miraz in *Prince Caspian* or Rabadash, the abortive conqueror in *The Horse and His Boy*. When Prince Rilian emerges into Narnia after his long enchantment underground "there was something in his face and air which no one could mistake. That look is in the face of all true kings of Narnia, who rule by the will of Aslan and sit at Cair Paravel in the throne of Peter the High King" (*SC*, p. 199). We're frequently told that looks, particularly the eyes, tell observant people all they need to know about whom to trust. Race and breeding are other determining factors; half-breeds, especially, are suspicious (*LWW*, pp. 77-78).

Knowing whom to trust or obey is also based on creatures' stereotypes (Lewis might call them archetypes). When Edmund questions

why the group is following a robin they know nothing about, his brother's rejoinder is "Still—a robin you know. They're good birds in all the stories I've ever read. I'm sure a robin wouldn't be on the wrong side" (*LWW*, p. 59). Because the stereotypes are used without textual critique, they are reinforced rather than questioned. Based, apparently, on general predispositions to hierarchy, dogs are loyal, cats treacherous; apes are cunning and shifty while asses are simple, and so forth. Lewis' characters assume that qualities like birth order, gender, and race define the person and justify the resulting treatment: Aslan tells Peter he will be High King "because you are first-born" (*LWW*, p. 126); "battles are ugly when women fight," says Father Christmas to Lucy (*LWW*, p.105); dark-skinned Calormenes who smell of garlic and onions are "cruel" (*LB*, p. 21)¹²; and Black Dwarfs throughout the series are untrustworthy. Ultimately, as Aslan demonstrates, there are only two possible sides: love or hate, right or left, in or out, saved or damned (*LB*, pp. 153-154). Identifying the "right sort" is a fairly easy task in Lewis's black and white world.

Interestingly, given Pullman's vocal rejection of Lewis' work, he uses some of Lewis' techniques for judging character. In Pullman's world, all humans have daemons, intimate familiars who accompany a person through life. Daemons are animal-shaped and have names, personalities, and usually genders separate from their humans, though they share emotions, identities, and fates. Although children's daemons can shape-shift, as the child enters puberty, the daemon settles into one shape, a shape that defines the child's personality and identity thereafter. All servants have dog daemons (*GC*, p. 5), while sailors tend to have sea creatures (usually seabirds) as their mates (*GC*, p. 167). Daemons are expressions of their humans' fundamental personalities: thus, Lord Asriel's snow-leopard daemon, Stelmaria, expresses his very similar predatory, untamed, grand, and elegant personality and Mrs. Coulter's golden monkey her exotic, cunning, uncanny glamour. Although ideologically at odds with his predecessor, Pullman suggests the same chain-of-being value hierarchy that Lewis assumes; thus "higher" servants have more impressive dog daemons than "lower" ones do,¹³ and you can tell much about individuals' personality by what kind of daemon they have, as demonstrated by the unequal struggle between Mrs. Coulter's golden monkey and an intruding journalist's butterfly early in *The Golden Compass*. As one adult comments to Lyra, "There's plenty of folk as'd like to have a lion as a daemon and they end up with a poodle. And till they learn to be satisfied with what they are, they're going to be fretful about it. Waste of feeling, that is" (*GC*, p. 168). Like Lewis, this suggests that you can perceive a person's substance just by looking at them, though as versions of externalized souls, daemons justifiably express a fundamental aspect of the self.

Fortunately for the suspense value of his series, Pullman has not chosen to make the task of determining a character's value and substance overly simple. The motility of children's daemons suggests potentiality rather than determinism, within bounds (less intelligent children's daemons don't change as often); unlikely pairs appear, like Texan balloonist Lee Scoresby and his hare daemon Heather who fly despite their bodies' earthbound appearance. In addition, the conflict is more than simply about the struggle between "good" and "evil"; Pullman inserts positive and negative wild-card figures who are not impelled by the same motivations or rules as those who guard the status quo. Not everyone acknowledges the same God. In addition to establishment figures, we encounter humans who do not hold with the Church or what it stands for: nomadic Gyptians and Tartars, whose social structure is basically democratic rather than hierarchical; witches, a different species from humans, who govern through matriarchal clans and worship goddesses rather than the Authority. Armored bears, a rational species with no gods at all, add more diversity to the population so that Lewis' grand binary For/Against Aslan is not possible.

That said, Pullman does create an ambiguous new binary: for or against Lyra, the new Eve. Lyra is a child of prophecy, long anticipated by the witch clans, who, "because they live so close to the place where the veil between the worlds is thin, . . . hear immortal whispers from time to time, in the voices of those beings who pass between the worlds" (*GC*, p. 176). They say Lyra must "fulfill [her] destiny in ignorance of what she is doing, because only in her ignorance can we be saved. . . . She must be free to make mistakes. We must hope that she does not, but we can't guide her" (*GC*, p. 176). We learn at the end of the second book that witches call Lyra "Eve, again" (*SK*, p. 314); she is this world's opportunity to replay that drama without the shame and repression attendant on the Authority's precepts. In a book premised on the importance of knowledge, she must do her part ignorantly. Lyra's powerful personality and sense of duty override external commands, and her actions grow out of an innate sense of right and wrong (she is clear on this, even when she's not clear about whom she should obey). In *The Amber Spyglass*, she even harrows Hell, the Authority's prison camp, to free the dead to rejoin the living world in elemental form. Will, Lyra's companion in the second two books of the series, explicates in another context why they must both act in ignorance rather than in obedience to a predetermined story:

"What work have I got to do, then," said Will, but went on at once, "No, on second thought, don't tell me. I shall decide what I do. If you say my work is fighting, or healing, or exploring, or whatever you might say, I'll always be thinking about it. And if I do end up doing that, I'll be resentful because it'll feel as if I didn't have a choice, and if I

don't do it, I'll feel guilty because I should. Whatever I do, I will choose it, no one else." (AS, p. 496)

In other words, as Serafina Pekkala says to Lee Scoresby: "We are all subject to the fates. But we must all act as if we are not . . . or die of despair" (GC, p. 310). 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.

Lyra's stubborn sense of good allows her, for example, to argue with her sophisticated father about whether a grand end justifies a questionable means. Satanic hero Lord Asriel explains to Lyra his goal to gain access to and destroy "the origin of all the Dust, all the death, the sin, the misery, the destructiveness in the world" (GC, p. 377), implicitly justifying whatever measures he takes to do so. Lyra, however, continues to ask the central question: "What were *you* doing? Did you do any of that cutting?" (GC, p. 376), a question he refuses to answer. For Lyra the process is "too cruel. No matter how important it was to find out about original sin, it was too cruel to do what they'd done to Tony Makarios and all the others. Nothing justified that" (GC, p. 376). And when Lyra's best friend, Roger, for whom she has come all the way North and suffered all things to save from the Gobblers, is abducted, severed from his daemon, and killed by Lord Asriel himself in the service of his higher calling, Lyra resolves to fight both her parents: to get to Dust before they do and "cherish" it rather than seeking to destroy it (GC, p. 398). Both Lord Asriel and Mrs Coulter desire power above all and will stop at nothing to achieve their ends: Lyra indicts both megalomaniacal parents as inhuman. This disobedience to parents continues when Will disregards his dying father's command to bring the subtle knife to Lord Asriel in order to find Lyra and rescue her from her mother. Eventually, Will's choice to disobey is affirmed by the ghost of his father, who tells him, "full of pride and tenderness[,] 'Well done, my boy. Well done indeed'" (AS, p. 418). Obedience to inner promptings, disobedience of authorities—the cosmic order here is not based on suppressing natural impulses, but on embracing them.

The Truth in Storytelling

Although Lyra prides herself on her ability to lie (which echoes in her name),¹⁴ she is also the possessor and intuitive reader of the "alethiometer," which tells only the truth. Lyra's imaginative ability and focus can be used to either purpose. Having access to absolute truth, she would seem to have found an infallible guide that she should, under no circumstances, disobey. Here, the Authority has been super-

seded by the alethiometer, which is manipulated by the very Dust, elementary particles, Dark Matter, that the Church wants so much to destroy. Dust, however, is not simply a substitution for a personal god at a farther remove. The relationship between Dust and humanity is more symbiotic: Dust is “attracted” to the creative consciousness of human beings, particularly as they attain sexual maturity and become adults. When the magpie-philosophers of Cittagazze compromise the integrity of their world and others by cutting “windows” between them to steal ideas and inventions, the resulting leaks endanger Dust—and consciousness—as well as sentient beings in multiple worlds. Not that Dust has a grand Telos to which it tends, but Dust, like the rest of the material universe, will either survive or perish depending on the choices made by whole groups of conscious beings. Lyra becomes part of that evolutionary process, recognizing ultimately that her own moral choices, her compassion, and her sense of responsibility do in fact impact the universe. In *The Amber Spyglass*, Lyra begins to use the alethiometer not as a way to predict the future but as a way to pursue the goals she has independently decided to be important. The alethiometer becomes an advisor to but not a determiner of her fate. As Lyra becomes more decisive in the third book, the alethiometer becomes more tentative: it cannot tell her whether she will be successful—only that she is right (AS, pp. 237–238). Pullman’s “fate”—“Dust,” “dark matter,” “elementary particles,” directed by a combination of chance and consciousness supplants a personal deity.

From priding herself on her ability to lie (a gift that she appears to have inherited from both mother and father), Lyra in *The Amber Spyglass* learns a Coleridgean distinction between fancy and imagination. In one of the most powerful sections of *The Amber Spyglass*, she learns that lies cannot nourish the soul. The Harpy overseers of the world of the dead instantly recognize Lyra’s clichéd romancing as false and attack her violently, leaving her bleeding and shaken: “*Liar! Liar! Liar!* . . . the word echoed back from the great wall in the fog, muffled and changed, so that she seemed to be screaming Lyra’s name, so that *Lyra* and *liar* were one and the same thing” (AS, p. 293). Lyra is shaken: “Will—I can’t do it anymore—I can’t do it! I can’t tell lies! I thought it was so easy—but it didn’t work—it’s all I can do, and it doesn’t work!” (AS, p. 294). However, when Lyra begins to tell the ghosts about the material world they have almost forgotten, the great battle between the town and college children and the clayburner’s children, their enjoyment of the sensory pleasures of their clay arsenal, and of the conclusion of the fight in a glorious and elemental mixture of air, earth, and water, when “every child looked exactly the same, mud from scalp to sole, and none of them had had a better day in all their lives” (AS, p. 315), even the harpies are silenced:

“Because she spoke the truth. Because it was nourishing. Because it was feeding us. Because we couldn’t help it. Because it was true. Because we had no idea that there was anything but wickedness. Because it brought us news of the world and the sun and the wind and the rain. Because it was true” (AS, p. 317).

Both Pullman and Lewis tell stories about life and love and obedience, but the truths they distill differ because of the writers’ different positions on the divine and authority. In Lewis’ children’s books, no child becomes a storyteller in her own right; children instead choose (or fail) to obey—to become part of the overarching grand narrative that the Emperor Beyond the Sea has written. Within that narrative, each person has his or her “own story” and a responsibility not to stray off into another’s story: As Donald Glover has summarized, “Story is Lewis’ metaphor for meaning. Repeatedly he impresses on his characters that they have their own story . . . and that they had better pay attention to learning what the plot of that story is rather than wondering what it might have been” (p. 218). Rather than emphasizing independent agency or free will, in other words, the narrative encourages conformity to a predetermined pattern (“what the plot of that story is”). As Lewis concludes his series,

Donald Glover, “The magician’s book: That’s not your story”

for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before. (LB, p. 184)

Lewis’ commitment to “the end,” to the idea that time is linear and the grand narrative of history is tending toward an apocalypse after which the real story can begin, belies his narrator’s evident enjoyment of the materiality of the world. He writes so deliciously of the trees’ banquet in *Prince Caspian*, which begins with “a rich brown loam that looked almost exactly like chocolate . . . [then] an earth of the kind you see in Somerset, which is almost pink. [The trees] said it was lighter and sweeter. At the cheese stage they had a chalky soil and then went on to delicate confections of the finest gravels powdered with choice silver sand . . .” (PC, p. 206). Still, Lewis’ idealist repudiation of the chaotic and imperfect nature of the material world leads him to posit a “true,” more material world elsewhere, a world that can only be entered through obedience to the master narrative, not through independent creation of new stories.

Pullman argues that storymaking should not be an escape from this world but a way to reinvent it. If chance through evolution over mil-

lions of years has produced both Dust and consciousness, when matter begins to understand itself, a strange synthesis occurs. One of the things that begins to happen is storymaking, and through storymaking, new ways of creating the world. Mary Malone's role as "serpent" in this new Garden of Eden is to tell her own true story of her "de-conversion" from celibacy to joyful sexuality, thereby helping Lyra and Will to understand their feelings for each another. Lyra's true stories, based on her material experience rather than preposterous romancing, nourish not only the poor ghosts but even the harpies. As she becomes a young adult, Lyra learns not the entire story of which she is a part but learns to be faithful to the truth in her own. She does not become Authority but author. And the Authority—"ancient of days"—himself a victim of the success of his narrative, is gently liberated from his body and his role by the very children who have overturned his empire (AS, pp. 410–411).

The angel Xaphania tells Lyra and Will as they return to their own separate worlds that the way to travel between worlds as the angels do can be learned: "It uses the faculty of what you call imagination. But that does not mean *making things up*. It is a form of seeing. . . . No, . . . nothing like pretend. Pretending is easy. This way is hard, but much truer" (AS, p. 494). The imagination allows an expansive apprehension of the complexity and wonder of worlds—and possible worlds—but finally, our true work is to build "the Republic of Heaven" independently of Telos, recognizing chance and change and imperfection as part of the glory of the world about which there are always new stories to be told. Disobedience, then, recognizes that different stories might need to be told, that the official story is not sufficient. Disobedience is not perversity but rather creativity. When it is not random or arbitrary, productive disobedience "is hard, but much truer," a creative interaction with chance and consciousness.

Both Lewis and Pullman insist on the "real" implications of their fantasy stories. One of Lewis' spokesmen in the *Narnia* series, Professor Kirke, argues with Plato that all worlds are secondary copies of the "real" world on which all is based. Therefore, to create a fantasy world is simply to render a new copy; with Tolkien, it might be argued that the author of such worlds becomes a creator like the greater and more potent creator of our own universe (p. 277). When Lewis described his composition process, he distinguished between the "Author," who is the container for the story bubbling and fermenting within and who has little control over the ingredients and the "Man" who acts as superego and critic (pp. 35, 36). Although Lewis denied having Christian allegorization in mind when the "Author" in him began to imagine the *Narnia* stories, the "Man" in him hoped

that a reader might return to the story of Christ with a different feeling about it:

C. S. Lewis, "Sometimes
Fairy Stories May Say
Best What's to Be Said"

I thought I saw how stories of this kind could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralysed much of my own religion in childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? But supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? (p. 37)

The *Narnia* series reinvents the narrative of Christian teleology while leaving the values untouched—obey and be rewarded in the world to come. However, the form also informs the content; how is it that the “true story” of the Gospel should need such bolstering? At the very least, rewriting the Gospel seems potentially heterodox, if not heretical. Aren't we to be paying attention to our “own” stories and not worrying or fantasizing about others? In its perverse independence, Lewis' “Author” and depiction of the imaginative process begins to sound more like Pullman's evolution and less like his own orthodoxy.

On the other side, Pullman exhorts his readers to take an activist role in creating the world that they want:

“We shouldn't live as if [the Kingdom of Heaven] mattered more than this life in this world, because where we are is always the most important place. . . . We have to be all those difficult things like cheerful and kind and curious and patient, and we've got to study and think and work hard, all of us, in all our different worlds, and then we'll build . . . The Republic of Heaven,” said Lyra. (*AS*, p. 518)

The way we regain paradise is to embrace our real world, to live in it, to recognize our symbiotic relationship with it, and to strive to learn and tell true stories to those who come after. While this paean to human creativity and resourcefulness is inspiring, it undercuts the basis of fantasy writing. Shouldn't we then read and write realism alone, based on the possibilities inherent in “where we are”? What good does it do to escape to wonderful imaginary places filled with satisfactions we can only yearn for, never experience—daemons, armored bears, mulefa? And if we are to create a democracy, what business have we naturalizing hierarchies, imagining children of destiny? Doesn't the romance form inevitably glamorize the very ideology against which Lyra and her companions have been fighting?

These paradoxes depict the strength and autonomy of the form both Lewis and Pullman have chosen for their tales. Even the author-creators confess their dependence on their form; if they insist on the real and true aspects of their stories, they also must submit to the

ways their stories intractably unsettle their stated goals. The powerful relationship between tale, teller, and listener creates dynamic rather than static meaning. Stories that inspire new stories, stories that provoke thought, stories that ask the big questions . . . all these require the reader to pay attention, to think, and above all to imagine and create. If the Genesis story with all its ambiguity might be said to affirm one thing, it is that desire for true knowledge is a human constant and the pursuit of that desire leads to new worlds and new challenges, for good and ill. And we must tell stories to give those worlds and challenges meaning, which is the only way to grow up.

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Notes

1. As a teenager, Lewis contemplated writing an opera, *Loki Unbound*, with a promethean Loki as his hero, struggling against the arrogant and tyrannical Odin; with his reconversion to Christianity, however, Lewis returned to a more orthodox view of the authority of God as creator (*They Stand Together* 6 October 1914; 50–53). His struggle with the idea that God might be a cosmic sadist, however, continued even into his last published work; in *A Grief Observed* he discusses these ideas again.
2. See also Peter Brown: “Augustine’s exegesis validated the rule of men over women and the rule of the father over his children as part of God’s original order” (Brown, p. 400). For a discussion of nineteenth-century adaptations of *Paradise Lost* for children, which involved attempts to contain the subversive qualities of the poem, see Julie Pfeiffer’s essay in *Children’s Literature* (1999).
3. For Lewis, see his own *Preface to Paradise Lost* and Elaine Pagel’s chapter on “Gnostic Improvisations on Genesis” in *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (pp. 57–77).
4. Lewis discusses the spiritual dangers of the desire for the “Inner Ring” in a talk with that title, reprinted in *They Asked for a Paper* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962. 139–149). He also treats the topic in the person of Mark Studdock in *That Hideous Strength* (1945) and in “Kipling’s World,” in *They Asked for a Paper*, pp. 72–92. He doesn’t apply his point that such desire is seductive and tempts to every kind of treachery to his own pictures of those intimate and small groups of the righteous who pervade his works: the company at St. Anne’s, the Friends of Narnia, and so on. Numerous critics (most tellingly John Goldthwaite, pp. 226–229) have pointed out the explicitly exclusive tone of Lewis’ vision.
5. As a child, I worried about this stony group. What if Aslan never came across them to breathe them back to life as he did in the castle and on the

- battlefield? We're never told what happens to them, though Edmund imagines them crumbling away with time.
6. Lewis, inconsistently perhaps, differs from St. Augustine, who advocated the centrality of the institutional church for the Christian.
 7. Pope John Calvin moved the headquarters of the Church to Geneva, though the papacy has since been superseded by a Magisterium (*GC*, p. 30). Pullman carefully makes all Christian institutions culpable.
 8. *The Amber Spyglass* does succumb to didacticism and exposition far more than the two previous books do, perhaps because of the need to "wrap things up."
 9. I use these terms to indicate the revolutionary and democratic elements of the opposition's discourse; this said, Lord Asriel is just as ruthless, hierarchical, and his actions often questionable.
 10. Lewis' science fiction fantasy novel *Perelandra* also imagines this concept for adult readers.
 11. Goldthwaite, p. 236.
 12. The exceptions are those who embrace Narnia, Aslan, and "northern" values, such as Aravis in *The Horse and His Boy* and Emeth in *The Last Battle*.
 13. Pullman continues to play with this notion, perhaps recognizing its incompatibility with the democratic tenets the series supports. In the final book, we're told about daemons' "settling": "As you grow up you start thinking, well, they might be this or they might be that . . . And usually they end up something that fits. I mean something like your real nature. Like if your daemon's a dog, that means you like doing what you're told, and knowing who's boss, and following orders, and pleasing people who are in charge. A lot of servants are people whose daemons are dogs. So it helps to know what you're like and to find what you'd be good at" (*AS*, p. 457). So servants *choose* their servitude, or are naturally bound to it?
 14. This connection is explicitly made in *The Amber Spyglass*, p. 293.

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