

THE EXPLORATION OF WILL'S MATURATION THROUGH INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN PHILIP PULLMAN'S *HIS DARK MATERIALS* TRILOGY¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper, through focusing on Philip Pullman's *The Subtle Knife* (1997) and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000) from *His Dark Materials* trilogy, analyses the maturation process of young co-protagonist Will, who in the beginning is introduced to the readers as a boy carrying the world on his shoulders. It showcases his gradual coming of age through the effect of his actions with others, and whilst doing this social thinker Jürgen Habermas's interpretation of the intersubjectivity theory helps to trace the changes in him. Moreover, the article briefly discusses the way in which intersubjectivity differs from Bakhtinian interpretation of multi-voiced narratives. Therefore, concepts such as mutual understanding and self-reflection are shown to affect the process of maturation in quest style young adult narratives. In the meantime, the whole discussion is backed up with a framework belonging to the doyen of fantasy literature critic John Clute, whose "full fantasy Story" (1997; 2011) model with its gradual four phases, is incorporated into the analysis.

Keywords: Intersubjectivity, Growth and Maturation, Philip Pullman, Full-fantasy Story, Jürgen Habermas.

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PHILIP PULLMAN'IN HIS DARK MATERIALS ADLI ÜÇLEMESİNDE ÖZNELERARASILIK TEORİSİ VE BAŞKAHRAMANLARDAN WILL'İN GELİŞİM SÜRECİNİN İNCELENMESİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışma Philip Pullman'ın Türkçeye "Karanlık Cevher Dizisi" olarak çevrilen üçlemesinin ikinci ve üçüncü kitapları olan "Keskin Bıçak" (1997) ve "Kehribar Dürbün" (2000) adlı romanlarındaki başkahramanlardan biri olan ve okuyuculara ilk başta dünyayı sırtlarında taşıyan çocuk olarak tanıştırılan Will adlı karakterin olgunlaşma sürecini analiz etmektedir. Will'in aşamalar halinde seyreden gelişim süreci, onun diğerleri ile olan iletişiminin etkileri ile gösterilmektedir. Bunu yaparken de sosyal konulardaki yorumları ile yaygınca bilinen düşünür Jürgen Habermas'ın Öznelerarasılık teorisi anlayışı, karakterdeki değişimlerin izini sürmekte yardımcı olmaktadır. Ayrıca, makalede, çalışmanın temelini oluşturan Öznelerarasılık teorisinin Mikhail Bakhtin'e ait olan çok-sesli roman kuramından farkı da kısaca tartışılmaktadır. Bu yüzden, mutabakat ve özdeşleşim gibi olguların macera ya da diğer bir deyişle arayış tarzındaki genç yetişkin öykülerinde olgunlaşma süreci üzerinde etkili olduğu gösterilmektedir. Aynı zamanda, fantastik edebiyat türünün kıdemli eleştirmelerinden biri olan John Clute'un dört aşamadan oluşan Ful-fantezi Hikâye modeli eser analizinin tümüne dâhil edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öznelerarasılık, Büyüme ve Olgunlaşma, Philip Pullman, Ful-fantezi Hikâye, Jürgen Habermas.

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Introduction

Philip Pullman, one of the prolific writers across Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries, has received popularity and world-wide attention especially after the publication of *Northern Lights*, which even earned him the prestigious Carnegie Medal. Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*, which the award-winning book belongs to, consists of three books; *Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), *The Amber Spyglass* (2000). Throughout the novel sequence, the writer creates a parallel world whereby two versions of the Oxford city exists. Lyra, the protagonist of all three novels, belongs to the Victorian era, where it is ordinary for people to physically carry their dæmons with them. Dæmons in Lyra's world are manifestations of the human soul taking different animal forms depending on moods, they are the constant companions of their human counterparts. For example, when Lyra has fears and feels overwhelmed in the face of dilemmas, her dæmon is the reality testing agent that enables her decision-making. Whereas, Will who is introduced to the reader as a co-protagonist in the second book, *The Subtle Knife*, belongs to today's modern Oxford, and unlike the way it is in Lyra's world, in Will's world people do not carry their dæmons with them. In this paper, because of the way the narrative unfolds with two important main characters, contemporary critical theorist Jürgen Habermas's interpretation of intersubjectivity is used to highlight the interesting and growing friendships. Moreover, the fact that there are no dæmons in Will's version of Oxford is mostly reflected to his thinking through the dialogues that he has with other people, and this catalyses the exploration of intersubjectivity through focussing on Will's growth and transformations only. As a quest and coming of age fantasy, Pullman's trilogy is intertwined with many instants of encounters – Will passes through different modalities of experience with different companions, and every time he does so, he discovers the realm of intersubjectivity.

Robyn McCallum suggests that:

Concepts of personal identity and selfhood are formed in dialogue with society, with language, and with other people, and while this dialogue is ongoing, modern adolescence— that transition stage between childhood and adulthood — is usually thought of as a period during which notions of selfhood undergo rapid and radical transformation. It should come as no surprise, then, that ideas about and representations of subjectivity pervade and underpin adolescent fiction (1999: 3).

McCallum, in her book entitled *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity* (1999), clearly acknowledges the importance of dialogues and interpersonal relations in young adult fiction. Moreover, in the book she explores the representation of subjectivity/ intersubjectivity, and traces the formation of identity in young adult literature. Additionally, essential motifs of

adolescent novels such as displacement, quest, and doppelgänger (the double) are explored by her as dialogical narrative strategies which depict the formation and social construction of subjectivity, as part of the selfhood studies. She grounds her approach with theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, who is widely considered as a "theoretician of texts" (Todorov, 1984: ix). The theories that McCallum consults in her work are; dialogism (multiplicity of perspectives and voices) and polyphony (multiple voices), which might explain the reason why in the subtitle of her work she prefers the word "subjectivity" instead of "intersubjectivity." As Sara K. Day notes:

one of the most common and important goals of polyphony is to portray the development of characters' identity and subjectivity, multi-voiced narration is in many ways particularly applicable to young adult literature, a genre defined by its protagonists' maturation, increasing awareness of their subjectivity, and expanding worldview (2010: 66).

Sara Day, inspiring from the young adult novel *Slave Day* (1997), also points out that "the use of multivoiced narration in adolescent literature allows for [...] the way in which that identity depends upon the acceptance or rejection of the roles made available in the larger system of power that surrounds it" (2010: 82). Similarly, *His Dark Materials*, as a multi-voiced narration, to adapt Bakhtinian terminology, deals with the issue of power through "constructing complex networks of character relationships that demonstrate the challenges that adolescents face while navigating various institutional and social hierarchies" (Day, 2010: 66). For example, in the third book, *The Amber Spyglass*, Will in the absence of Lyra who is hidden away in the Himalayas by her mother, uses the power of the knife to make himself feel "stronger." Because, the double-edged knife that he guards can cut through any material in the world, and it exerts the attraction of power because it could either be used to defeat tyranny or as a weapon to destroy the peace of the lands in the multiverse. Will, in the hope of seeing Lyra again, challenges the angel allies Balthamos and Baruch and says: "No. If I'm stronger, you have to obey me. Besides, I have the knife. So I can command you: help me find Lyra" (*The Amber Spyglass* 654). He thinks that only by acting in this stereotypically masculine and power play manner, can he seem adamant about his decisions. On the contrary, the reason Lord Asriel's spies become his companions to serve the purpose of finding Lyra, is not because they are afraid of the masculine behaviour or the power of the knife, it is because Balthamos and his lover Baruch are surely convinced by Will's strong emotional bond to Lyra. However, until he completes his quest of reuniting with Lyra, Will's entrapment remains over, because, whilst rescuing Lyra from the cave in Himalayas, he kills a trained warrior with the blast of a pistol: "Will did not want this. His body revolted at what his instinct had made him do, and the result was a dry, sour, agonizing spell of kneeling and vomiting until his stomach and his heart were empty" (*The Amber Spyglass* 783). It is at this stage of Lyra's inactive times that Will's risk-taking side emerges and

foregrounds itself. On the other hand, as he does not know how to control one-on-one risky situations, his intolerance to the peril of losing gives itself away, and he loses the thread of the moderation and overuses his power. Having said this, one should never forget that courage blinded by excess feelings without moderation can be disruptive, just as in the case of the leader of dwarves, Thorin, in *The Hobbit*. Thorin was the most courageous, most fierce and most powerful of them all, but his fondness of the Arkenstone became his end before he could fulfil his life: “men have before now been ruined by wealth, and have lost their lives through courage” (Aristotle, 1906: 3). Whereas in the beginning, when he was asked to take on the responsibility of taking the subtle knife, similar to Frodo in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Will resented and rejected the possession of it: “I didn’t want it! I don’t want it now! If you want it, you can have it! I hate it and I hate what it does –” (*The Amber Spyglass* 622). Nevertheless, despite his unwillingness to accept the responsibility of bearing the knife, with power relations and interdependencies around it, Will is left with no choice and have to accept it, since he has a test to pass, which is his coming of age. As it is shown with the examples so far, Bakhtinian multiplicity of perspectives and the contribution of his concept towards interpreting the formation of self in young adult literature is obvious and pertinent. Likewise, Sara K. Day’s application of the Bakhtinian concept to the power relations is relevant. On the other hand, what Bakhtinian idea does not address fully is that it still lacks the deeper thread of understanding maturation and coming of age in the modern fantasy fiction stories. Because, transformations that occur throughout the process of maturation can also take the form of degradation, and in the chosen text *The Amber Spyglass*, this manifests itself for Will. Moreover, the multiplicity of dialogues and voices in narration does not warrant mutual understanding and self-reflection that are necessary for the development of rational subjectivity, and are amongst the two crucial pillars of Habermas’s understanding of intersubjectivity.

Habermas, who is known better for his “theory of communicative reason” (1981), having worked extensively on discourse ethics, created concepts such as everyday practice (*alltagspraxis*) and life-world, and then built his philosophy of intersubjectivity (Yoon, 2001: 62). Because he believes that the sociology of discourse “involves an articulation of intersubjectivity and dialogue” (Snedeker, 2000: 246). Intersubjectivity basically suggests that to become a self-aware individual, the recognition of others is equally crucial. Yet, the toilsome recognition process has some requirements, such as self-reflection and mutual understanding. As Yoon suggests: “Habermas holds the view that morality and ethical life can be mediated through the paradigm of intersubjectivity aiming at mutual understanding and consent” (2001: 63). Similarly, Snedeker highlights that “for Habermas, reason has become the absolute value through which human consciousness derives the possibility

of self-reflection and progress" (2000: 246). As it is clear, for Habermas, simply having dialogues with others does not make the whole act intersubjective, for progression towards a more mature and objective self, reflection and mutual understanding are also required.

From ancient times until the Anthropocene epoch of today, the self and others automatically have existed in dynamic togetherness. As Titus Maccius Plautus, a playwright of the Old Latin period, in the second century wrote: *Lupus est homo homini, non homo, quom qualis sit non novit* (first attested in his *Asinaria* in 195 BC), which translates as: A man is a wolf, not a man, to another man, when he has not yet found out what he is like (Stone, 2005: 273). Here Plautus is highlighting the significance of getting to know one's self, and yet he is also implying that there are others, so to be a human, having the recognition of what is best for others becomes equally important as the recognition of what is best for the self. Therefore, the aim in this paper is to showcase Will's maturation process through the effects of his human engagement and interaction with others.

Discussion: Is *His Dark Materials* a Story of Fantasy or 'Stark-Realism'?

Before discussing the trajectory of Will's maturation at greater length, it is useful to understand Philip Pullman's stand on the genre that he is writing. Pullman, proudly borrowing from John Goldthwaite's *The Natural History of Make-Believe* (1996), argues that Tolkien's work exemplified closed fantasy, and hence he suggests that the Shire is artificial:

such fantasy is both escapist and solipsistic: seeking to flee the complexities and compromises of the real world for somewhere nobler altogether, lit by a light that never was on sea or land, it inevitably finds itself enclosed in a mental space that is smaller, barer, and poorer than reality, because it's sustained by an imagination that strains against the world instead of working with it, refusing and not accepting. The result is a hollowness, a falsity (2001: 661).

Perhaps, concerned about being labelled as an "escapist," Pullman's aim is to make it clear that he writes "stark realism" despite this not being a literary category; whereas, his novels are in fact sold on the fantasy fiction or children's literature shelves. It is a pity that Pullman reads Tolkien and only sees comfortable hobbits who know their rightful places, rather than the story of maturity of a hobbit and the process of growth into adulthood. On the other hand, it is equally important to understand the professional parameters behind his slightly negative approach towards Tolkien, who is not even his contemporary. It might also be that "[Pullman] too might be feeling trapped by genre labels not because [he] objects the level but it restricts what people expect of [him], and just possibly what [he] feels able to write as a consequence"

(Kincaid and Harrison, 2010: 14). Numerous fantastic fiction writers express their discomfort in pigeonholed labels. A science fiction and fantasy survey conducted by Paul Kincaid (1989), asked British authors eleven questions regarding the genre they are belonging or feel like belonging to, and twenty years later (2009), Niall Harrison conducted the same survey, yet this time with a different group of authors. The survey questions ranged from asking authors which category their works belong to, (science fiction and/or fantasy), to their explanations behind choosing to write what they write, the place of any major influences in their works, probability of different responses to their writings by the public in Britain, America and elsewhere around the world, and effects of good science fiction/fantasy on readers. One of the main conclusions of this research was that writers generally do still not like the idea of rigid boundaries, and instead try and avoid any permanent genre expectations to be able to expand their writing styles (2010: 11-24). Therefore, it can be suggested that Pullman does not want to be put into rigid boundaries in terms of the genre that he is writing, because what he does is updating historical fantasy – such as, instead of dragons he has talking armoured bears, instead of dwarves he has wheeled people, instead of elves he has harpies, moreover he chooses settings that are familiar from our everyday life.

The Full Fantasy Stages of Will's Maturation

John Clute uses the term *fantastika* as a “generalised non-imperialist polythetic umbrella designation” for fantasy fiction, science fiction, gothic and other related sub-genres and he sees it as a child of romanticism in Europe, as well as describing it as something that is understood to be fantastic through which the planet may be seen (2017: 16-17). Moreover, as a critic of science fiction and fantasy, he has a well-known model of the “full fantasy Story,” which I have turned into the following figure:

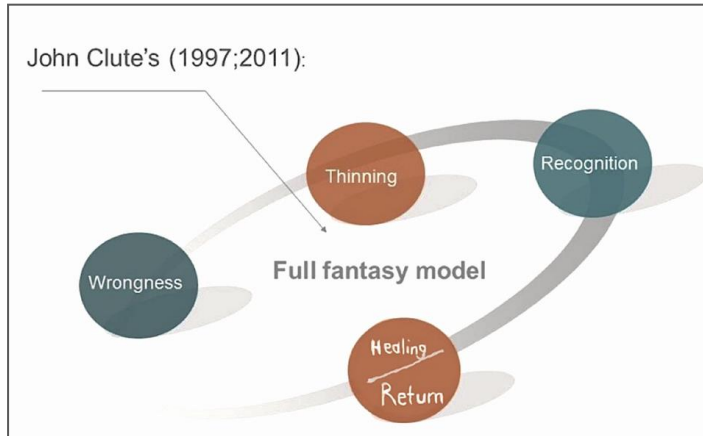


Figure 1. John Clute's Full-fantasy Model

According to Clute, there are four gradual phases of fantasy, and these are essential stages to point out and relate for my paper because the model helps to reveal the process of coming of age through the transformations and critical transition stages for the selected text. Clute approaches fantasy in a process-oriented way, and to expand his four stages: (1) *Wrongness* is the sudden sense that something is wrong which often leads to a quest. (2) *Thinning* is a growing sense of unreality and frustration at the inability to achieve change, which then leads to uncertainties or fear of the unknown, such as death. (3) *Recognition* is the protagonists' self-understanding of what is happening to them, whereby they, to get to know more of themselves, are actively involved in collaborative exchanges with other subjects and thus can fully pluck the courage of risking life, to get rid of the predominant feeling of the earlier unknown but now known shadowy qualities. Finally, (4) *Return* is the return to feeling at home in a world in which one's actions have real effects. It is worth noting that after the thinning stage, there comes an awareness and "recognition" of roles and selves, or characters start remembering the purpose of the quest. In turn, this objective and recognition can lead to more transformative changes, allowing them to "return" home (Ersoy, 2017: 320). As it is understood from the discussions so far, the dialogue with others is an important factor for quest style young adult narratives where there is a transition from childhood to adulthood, and the idea could be explained with various dialogue-based theories; yet, what these analyses and discussions lack is that they neglect the stage of regression as well as progression, and mostly there is not a literary logical framework such analyses can be situated in. On the other hand, Clute's

framework meets such a basic need and it makes the literary analysis flow consistently, as well as harmonizing it with the related interdisciplinary theories.

Will, who is introduced to the reader in the second book, *The Subtle Knife*, is a boy who has made no friends. He does not even know much about his own world because he has been taking care of his fragile mother since he was seven, therefore: “[h]is experience of protecting her – from social services, and from the persecution of local children – has toughened him, and made him unusually self-reliant” (Ruskin, 2011: 228). Will does not know much about his father, either, because when he was a little baby his father went on an expedition to the Arctic from which he never returned. As Margaret and Michael Ruskin suggests: “we have a second child placed in a nearly-orphaned situation” (2011: 228). Moreover, because of his fear of revealing the true circumstances of his family, he carries the world on his shoulders. As he later confesses to Lyra: “All I know is keeping secret and quiet and hidden, so I don’t know much about ... grown-ups, and friends. Or lovers” (*The Amber Spyglass* 1034). Therefore, being part of the background is what he knows the best. For Will, the “full fantasy” starts when he accidentally kills an intruder in their house, or at least he does think so. Thus, suddenly something interrupts and contradicts the flow of his daily life, generating “wrongness,” and alarmed with the fear of getting caught by the police, he steps into a portal, finding himself displaced in the joined place Cittagazze. What is interesting is Will feels safer here, because “[h]e had a whole world to hide in” (*The Subtle Knife* 369). Cittagazze is a new place for Will and as McCallum acknowledges: “characters who are displaced out of their familiar surroundings are apt to be depicted as undergoing some form of identity transformation or crisis” (1999: 68-69). Therefore, although Will might seem to experience a sense of relief dazzled by the alternate world that he is in, the state is temporary for him – since this crisis is a telling sign of his transformation process, which has already started.

Similarly, in her attempt to recognise the other as another subject, Lyra, who was not so perceptive before, realises that Will is “afraid, but he’s mastering his fear, like Iorek Byrmison said we had to do; like I did by the fish-house at the frozen lake” (*The Subtle Knife* 443). Thus, Lyra’s developing new self-consciousness begins to understand the need to be recognised by another developing self-consciousness. That said, Jürgen Habermas states: “self-consciousness involves the individual’s becoming an object to himself by taking the attitudes of other individuals towards himself within an organized setting of social relationships” (1992: 225). This is an intriguing passage in that it suggests that for becoming an object to itself, the self needs the attitudes of the others, and for Lyra this is mainly achieved through Will, with whom she mutually connects towards the middle of the second novel. When Lyra’s alethiometer is stolen

and she desperately wants to find it with Will, then, he too realizes that: "it was *we* for certain. He was bound to her [Lyra] now whether he liked it or not" (*The Subtle Knife* 488). From then on, Lyra starts discovering new things only through looking at Will's face and eyes: "that was new for her, too, to be quite so perceptive. The fact was that where Will was concerned, she was developing a new kind of sense [. . .]. Everything about him was clear and close and immediate" (*The Subtle Knife* 612). As Margaret and Michael Rustin suggests, with the second book: "[t]he children become deeply committed to each other's concerns. They become a 'we', and their relationship survives many dangers because they learn to think about and support each other" (2011: 237).

The circumstances of Will's life have encouraged him always to fight mentally and physically against things; throughout the narrative, he fights against the intruders in their house, he fights with Lyra against Tullio to get hold of the subtle knife and loses two of his fingers, and with the support of the bear king, Iorek, he fights to rescue Lyra; yet, all the same, he does come to question whether fighting is always the correct response. The following dialogue between Will and his long-lost father John Parry, demonstrates the point:

"But why should I fight them? I've been fighting too much,
I can't go on fighting. I want to –" [. . .]
"You fought for the knife?"
"Yes, but –"
"Then you're a warrior. That's what you are. Argue with anything
else, but don't argue with your own nature"
(*The Subtle Knife* 622 - 623).

However, his father is shot dead shortly after their conversation and in trying to do justice to his father's request to take the knife to Lord Asriel, Will promises to himself that "[he]'ll fight. [He]'ll be a warrior, [he] will." (*The Subtle Knife* 625) The fact that Will is trapped in to follow such a trajectory, his affirmative self-promise to be a fighter and a warrior, impedes in his maturation process. Yet, Will still has time to claim back that thread, for growing out of his childhood. It is at this stage that he experiences "thinning", when he loosens the bondage. According to Clute, the transition from the stage of thinning to recognition lies at the heart of fantasy and it is the moment when the protagonist learns or remembers the Story (2011: 115). Of course, Will is going to experience the "recognition" stage, too, yet it will not come easily and quickly to him. Because, as Dale Carnegie thinks, it is people themselves again who will decide to change their minds when they feel like it. In conjunction with that, as he sums up the worthy bit, we may hurl at others all the logic of a Plato or an Immanuel Kant, but that will not alter their opinions if we hurt their feelings in trying to persuade them to change their manners (1981: 119).

In the third book, *The Amber Spyglass*, Will and Lyra are apart and Will has to go on a quest to save his friend Lyra from Mrs Coulter, who has kidnapped and restrained her in a cave. However, to complicate things, this incarceration of Lyra is also an attempt by Mrs Coulter to save her daughter from the attack of the angel, Metatron, who wants to kill Lyra because he believes her to be the second Eve. During his stressful times of locating Lyra's whereabouts, Balthamos becomes Will's guide to decide paths, and when he says: "Balthamos?" the reply in return is: "Always here" (*The Amber Spyglass* 657). Moruzi Kristine suggests: "The incident with Xaphania typifies how adult knowledge is critical to guiding the children on their journey" (2005: 62). Yet, Balthamos is not the only companion that Will befriends in the process, there is also the bear Iorek. At times Iorek, witnessing Will's immersion into the "powerful temptation" (*The Amber Spyglass* 851) of getting a glimpse of his own world, warns him without hurting his feelings:

"You know it already, but you don't want to, which is why I tell you openly, so that you don't mistake it. If you want to succeed in this task, you must no longer think about your mother. You must put her aside. If your mind is divided, the knife will break" (*The Amber Spyglass* 809-810).

Will takes such a considerate advice whole-heartedly, because sometimes people need to be told things openly and that is what Iorek does, guidance. In fact, from the very start Will is aware that to grow up and build his new intersubjective identity he needs to stop thinking about his parents. As Margaret & Michael Rustin suggests:

Will has to lose two of his fingers to become the owner of the knife – that was the necessary cost of growing up. No doubt there is reference in this to a form of initiation rite. [. . .] The two missing fingers are an ongoing reminder of the parents he has had to cut off in order to escape an imprisoning identity" (2011: 235).

Yet, the application of such a need is hard and stressful. As if bear Iorek's anticipation proves right, during a pivotal time, when Will and Lyra are again together and about to make an opening for the land of the dead, Will is desperate to look for his mother again, yet, he predicts the kind of objections that Iorek would raise to him and says to himself: "Yes, I know she's there, but I'm just going to look away while I do this" (*The Amber Spyglass* 851). Will here remembers the dialogue that he had earlier with Iorek. As Hubert Hermans suggests, either to think about an event in the past or to anticipate a problem in the future, can involve imaginative conversations with other people who interrogate, agree or disagree, as well as those who respond in favourable or unfavourable ways (1999: 67-68). Thus, by conducting this particular dialogue with himself, Will manages to solve the essential problem of selfhood or self-consciousness

– “How can an individual get outside her/himself in such a way as to become an object to self?” (Habermas, 1992: 138). He learns to grow in this aspect through such real and imagined interactions with the others.

When Will meets with his father's ghost in the land of the dead, he now “recognizes” that only the choices he himself makes, with his own freewill, will do justice to himself, and he thus understands enough about himself to say:

“You said I was a warrior. You told me that was my nature, and I shouldn't argue with it. Father, you were wrong. I fought because I had to. I can't choose my nature, but I can choose what I do. And I *will* choose, because now I'm free” (*The Amber Spyglass* 999).

It is at this moment that Will regains the thread of the story. The story ends, when Lyra and Will close every single window in the air to put an end to the breach of the worlds, and when Will willingly breaks the knife. What breaks the subtle knife is pure love, and Will breaks it by choosing to think of Lyra this time – not of his mother, as he would do before. Will goes through serious transformation; above all, now, there is no reason why he cannot make friends with others anymore, because he successfully triumphs over that confining feeling: “Mary was a friend. He had a friend. It was true. He'd never thought of that” (*The Amber Spyglass* 1081). Will has perceived and revealed the potential of what his independent self can do, if he deliberately chooses to, and such things take time to be internalized and stabilized as they come to be part of identity which leads to the discovery of having an agency in the world. The following example, illustrates the point too. Before returning to home, Will wonders the aftermath of his return and concerning it approaches to angel Xaphania, but then he has a quick self-reflection and interrupts his own thought by saying:

No, on second thought, don't tell me. I shall decide what I do. If you say my works 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 (*The Amber Spyglass* 1068).

Conclusion

At the end of the novel, Will and Mary, who are now more aware of the results that their actions can have, “return” to their version of Oxford. Similarly, the scientist Mary Malone has also learned about intersubjectivity when she found an opening and stepped into the world of *mulefa*. It was the first time she met *mulefa*, which are physically elephant-like beings with seed pods as wheels in place of their legs; they

are communal, well-integrated, and strongly rooted in the physical everyday of their worlds. What makes mulefa stand out from the rest of the beings in Pullman's multiverse is that with the naked eye they can see the Dust, which is an elementary particle conferring consciousness. At first, Mary believed they were creatures, but after spending some time with them, the word "creatures" became the word "people," because they weren't human and yet they were a group of people with their own little society. She learned to consider them as "wheeled-people" and when she saw how they worked two by two with their trunks tied to each other, she then realized how her hands cut her off from the others: "And from that time on, she use[s] one hand to know the fibres, sharing the task with a female zalif [Atal] who had become her particular friend, fingers and trunk moving in and out together" (*The Amber Spyglass* 753-754). After witnessing the social formation of the mulefa, Mary reflected on the way she considered them, developed her understanding of them and worked in cooperation with them.

By undertaking a journey, in which others are met in varied circumstances, before returning home, completes a process of self-recognition which results in the gaining of maturity. This self-recognition does not necessarily need to emerge as manner an end-product but is an ongoing process accompanying the journey. Yet, as the examples have shown so far, the progress is not always steady, at times things can go wrong as well, leading to potential devastation or a cycle of breakdown and repair; however, as the old saying goes, struggle builds character. Failures, loss of courage, and longings are all depressed feelings which can also be perceived as portents of the pending transition by which the same bodies will reappear as different individuals who have become more aware of their selves. The co-protagonist of the trilogy Will, was originally motivated by a naïve quest to get a glimpse of his long-lost father; however, his quest has changed dimension and due to his earlier record of isolation in his own world, he felt "compelled to discover and affirm [his] identity, to fulfil the potential of [his] as-yet unformed self[f], to accept responsibility for 'becoming'" (Dooley, 1979: 2).

On the other hand, Clute's return is not necessarily the end because self-awareness is not enough; for a continuing "renewal" process that lasts for a lifetime, one must also "choose" to act, or choose to act when required, which becomes another distinctive sign of maturing for protagonists.

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