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## LA VERDADERA “GUERRA DE LAS GALAXIAS” ESTÉTICA BARROCA DE PHILIP PULLMAN

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### Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es doble: la investigación de las formas contemporáneas de literatura para “los niños de la videosfera”, estos jóvenes lectores inmersos en el contexto de la globalización, y la evaluación del barroco posmoderno en el sistema “Star Wars” de los medios escritos y audiovisuales. Estos últimos utilizan esta estética en la búsqueda de una hegemonía comercial. Los nuevos escritores encuentran en ello su “distinción” (en el sentido en el que Pierre Bourdieu lo entiende), en una intertextualidad, abierta o enmascarada, con los grandes autores de siglos pasados (William Blake y John Milton). Philip Pullman en varios libros, en concreto, en su trilogía *En la encrucijada de los mundos*, y Jostein Gaarder en *El mundo de Sofía* ofrecen brillantes “mariposas”, emblemas del barroco, en una nueva visión del Sujeto occidental y una “reterritorialización de las Letras”. ...Más específicamente, el gesto literario de Philippe Pullman consistió en extraer el mensaje barroco de las versiones popularizadas de los medios de comunicación y ofrecer una versión superior.

**Palabras clave:** El barroco posmoderno, William Blake, la picaresca, humor, parodia, Philip Pullman, Jostein Gaarder.

## LA VÉRITABLE “GUERRE DES ÉTOILES” L’ESTHÉTIQUE BAROQUE DE PHILIP PULLMAN

### Résumé

Notre article se donne un double objectif : l’examen des formes contemporaines de la littérature pour “ les enfants de la vidéosphère ”, ces jeunes lecteurs pris dans le cadre de la mondialisation, et l’évaluation du baroque postmoderne dans le système “ Star Wars ” des médias écrits et audiovisuels. Ces derniers exploitent cette esthétique dans la recherche d’une hégémonie commerciale. Les nouveaux écrivains y trouvent leur “distinction” (au sens où Pierre Bourdieu l’entend), dans une intertextualité, ouverte ou masquée, avec les grands auteurs des siècles passés (William Blake et John Milton). Philip Pullman dans divers livres en particulier, dont sa trilogie *À la croisée des mondes*, et Jostein Gaarder dans *Le Monde de Sophie* offrent ainsi de brillants “ papillons ”, emblèmes du baroque, dans une nouvelle vision du Sujet occidental et une “ reterritorialisation des Lettres ”. ... Plus précisément, le geste littéraire de Philippe Pullman a consisté à extraire le message baroque des versions vulgarisées des mass-médias et d’en offrir une version plus élevée.

**Mots clés:** Le baroque postmoderne, William Blake, le picaresque, humour, parodie, Philip Pullman, Jostein Gaarder.

## THE ESSENTIAL “STAR WARS” PHILIP PULLMAN’S BAROQUE AESTHETICS

### Abstract

This essay has a twofold purpose: to consider the issues of contemporary Young Adult literature addressed to “the children of the videosphere” within the context of globalized culture and to assess the importance of postmodern Baroque aesthetics in the “Star Wars” system of modern Letters and mass-media. Writers often resort to such aesthetics with the prospect of commercial hegemony, but some of them find their “distinction” (in Pierre Bourdieu’s delineation) through intertextuality – be it avowed or hidden – with the great masters of the past (William Blake and John Milton). We will investigate the

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secret workshop of Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials Trilogy* and some of his other works, as well as Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* and diverse literary productions. With their arresting butterflies as significant baroque emblems, these works provide a new and spellbinding vision of the Western hero and offer a new "reterritorialization" of Letters. More particularly, Philip Pullman's literary gesture has been to extract the baroque message from the vulgarised versions of popular mass media and to give it a new distinction.

**Key words:** Postmodern baroque, William Blake, picaresque, humour, parody, Philip Pullman, Jostein Gaarder.

Going back to Philip Pullman's novels published at the beginning of this century seems quite important in 2019, as the highly anticipated second BBC film adaptation of *His Dark Material Trilogy* has already been announced last February. The series is based upon Pullman's *Northern Lights*, *The Subtle Knife*, *The Amber Spyglass* and deals with the characters of Lyra and Will, whose fates are entangled as they cross parallel universes filled with all the paraphernalias of baroque aesthetics. In the course of this presentation, we will meet them and explore their quest for truth, which does not thwart the full play of their author's imagination.

### 1. The Baroque and Picaresque Revival: 'Wars in Heavens' for 'the children of the videosphere'

#### *The Artist within a globalized system of mass-culture*

At the 1997 International Research Society For Children's Literature Congress in York (UK), my concerns with the process of globalization in the field of contemporary culture and the development of the Internet led me to advocate a transformation of the world map of literary exchanges. It seemed to me that a 'New Deal' was possible, based on the assumption that there existed many conflicting cultural systems, rather than a single hegemonic one. Obviously, there was no longer any 'center' to speak of, as the 'center' is everywhere in the kingdom of conglomerate mergers and impersonal, nation-oblivious capitalism. Thus a different democracy of Letters might be coming up in the near future. Consequently, I called for a new deal through the title of the paper published later in the Conference proceedings,

using a kind of magic watchword: “Roald Dahls of the World, Unite!” (Perrot, 2002) Revolution in the field of children’s literature criticism is part of the symbolic order, and stands as an escape from the economic system of values: it implies the complete reversibility of the gift into the counter-gift, as analyzed by Marcel Mauss in his famous essay “The Gift” (1925, English translation 1954<sup>1</sup>), and rules bodies, words, images of love, families and art, in which the laws of the market have no reason to exist. In this essay I will stress the new literary forms involved by the cultural anchoring of literature and relate them to the ‘deterritorialized’ productions of the new mass-media market.

### *Literature and “the Market”*

Such productions seem to exert a larger influence on children’s literature than ever in every country where television exists, i.e. on readers whom I called ‘the children of the videosphere’, children and adolescents, who, in the age of digitalisation of images, sound and text, can watch television, transfer films and video-games onto their computers and have access to worldwide web culture and reading (Perrot, 1999, p. 24). How many of these have been initiated to literature by deciphering Pokemon stickers or Digimon cards, playing the game on their Nintendo PlayStation, then reading Pokemon magazines and watching their everyday serial showing the endless fight of the forces of Good against those of Evil? A fight which is at the core of Spielberg’s scenario of *Star Wars. The Starwars Trilogy*, published in a single volume by George Lucas in 1993 (1). In France, how many youngsters have become acquainted with Jules Verne’s *Mysterious Island* through Eric Viennot’s CD-Rom *L’île de l’Oncle Albert (Uncle Albert’s Island)*, Emme Interactive, 2000)? How many will read Victor Hugo’s *Notre Dame de Paris* and not prefer the French version of Disney’s film, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*?

I am not complaining about the development of bowdlerized international adaptations, in so far as they make us understand and question our national literatures better, although this may have strange consequences. Some readers have certainly been surprised at seeing the film derived from J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, particularly the episode showing a little black girl acclaiming the young hero: this reads both as a feminist and anti-racist homage of the “politically correct” kind in a nutshell! The picture was clearly American in tone, however British its exoticism

<sup>1</sup> Mauss Marcel, *The Gift* : <https://archive.org/details/giftformsfunctio00maus>

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may have been. Similarly, in the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, the part of Hermione as an adult was taken by a non-white actress, raising Rowling's enthusiasm...

I am more concerned, however, about the process of uniformisation of life and about the annexation of cultural and national identities. The present international spirit is about to be achieved not through political, but economic action, through the heightening of the living standards of the world's middle classes, still leaving huge masses of people cruelly starving and deprived of the use of books.

*Not a single identity, but multiple ones*

Since the meeting in York, however, things have been changing in Europe: through the election of new town councils in the European Union in 2000, European citizens were able to participate in the lives of other countries. This is only to confirm the fact that more and more people from England, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, etc, settle or spend their free time in Southern countries, as could already be seen from Quentin Blake's *The Story of the Dancing Frog* (1995). This changing pattern is not the privilege of artists, such as David McKee or Brian Wildsmith, who have a house in France, or of other illustrators, such as the Italian artists living in London or in Paris. It is also a worldwide feature, the result of the ease of international travel and trade, as reflected in Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* (1991), charting a new kind of philosophical journey to Greece, or in his *Through a Glass, Darkly* (1993). In the latter novel, which we are going to look into more closely, Cecilia's Norwegian family goes to Crete for holidays, thus storing wonderful memories of sun and happiness. Contrasting with the colder climate of Norway, these represent a kind of earthly Paradise where, however, the Minotaur's maze still conjures up dramatic memories.

In an article entitled "A Little Tour of the USA in French Children's Literature" published in a special number of *The Lion and the Unicorn* dedicated to European literature, I analysed the special contributions of novelists with French nationality – mainly women – who have either married US citizens or settled in the USA because of their spouses' professions (Perrot, 1998). While love and friendship are certainly among the best incentives for crossing boundaries, marriage or feelings are not the only reasons for which people may be transplanted to a different part of the world. We can see how Quentin Blake came to be asked to create a picture-book *Un bateau dans le ciel* ("A Boat in the Sky") precisely on the issue of citizens' rights, for French publisher Rue du Monde (2000) *Violence against*

*the Child: The Other is with (in?) us*

What characterizes the period we live in, indeed, is a crucial change in national identities. This affects all multicultural societies, including France with its overseas “départements” such as New Caledonia. Nor does Britain escape this fate, as has been shown by John Oakland in his book *Contemporary Britain* (2001), which points at social tensions in certain urban areas, and at the contrasts which exist between different political parties about “Modernization, the ‘Cool Britannia’ slogan and Labour Government policies” (p. 47). Oakland quotes former Prime Minister Tony Blair’s well-known 1998 speech promoting the idea of such a multicultural society: “Part of that modernization is about the identity of a country. It matters what a country looks like and feels like.” (p. 46) In many countries, independentists do not shrink from the use of weapons and killing to achieve their aims...

To put this in literary terms, let us go back to the sentence written on the cover of the Scholastic edition of Philip Pullman’s last book, *The Amber Spyglass* (2000): “War in heaven – and the fate of the worlds lies in the balance”. In fact, one could consider Pullman’s *His Dark Materials Trilogy* as a kind of allegory hinting at the cultural war that has been waged between and within some nations in the past. On the other hand, some political openings, such as the 1989 proclamation of the Children’s Rights, which has been signed by more than one hundred countries now, have transformed readers’ expectations and horizons, as well as the authors and artists’ motivations: as in Pullman’s story, they provide ‘bridges’ for a better circulation between previously enclosed worlds.

The main problem definitely remains violence in every form: children are still thrown out of windows by Roald Dahl’s international ‘Trunchbulls’, or have their Daemons severed from them by the likes of Mrs Coulter. Artists can still identify themselves with the victims, as Quentin Blake has shown in *Clown* (1995) or the late Tomi Ungerer, winner of the 1998 Hans Andersen Award, in *Otto*, the picto-biography of a Teddy Bear (1999). The latter book, a kind of modern melodramatic yet humorous romance, shows how, during World War II, Otto is separated from his ‘master’, a young Jewish boy, who is arrested and entrusts his bear to the care of his friend, an Alsatian boy. The Teddy Bear is then taken from Alsace to Germany, where he experiences the fright caused by the Allied bombings, before being adopted and taken to USA by the non-white US soldier whose life he has saved. Fifty years later, he is finally found in a dustbin, like Blake’s Clown, and restored to his first child master, now an ageing grey-haired man, who has miraculously escaped death in the Nazi camps and is going to live

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with the friend he has found again through the wonderful mediation of the toy. Otto is thus the true ‘transitional object’ (as D.W. Winnicott has it): in Tomi Ungerer’s rather pert conclusion, he creates a field of understanding for the two old men reunited by their love for the old symbolic Teddy Bear! A facetious ending, however, corrected by the representation of Henry Matisse’s *Dance* shown on the walls of the two friends’ room expressing their exhilaration...

### *Postmodern Baroque*

Tribulations of literary characters beyond national boundaries express the interest in a new picaresque and baroque trend, as will be seen in Pullman’s trilogy, or in Gaarder’s above mentioned *Through a Glass Darkly* (1993), which I consider to be a radical turning-point in the world’s YA literature, and whose imprint, as we are going to see, is significantly felt in one of Pullman’s shorter novels, *The Butterfly Tattoo* (1998), in which the problem of contemporary political violence is tackled.

In this respect, I would first like to mention a YA book written by a French writer, whose books have also been published as general literature by Gallimard : Nadejda Garrel’s *Dans les forêts de la nuit* (In the forests of the night) published by Nathan in 1995. It describes a young boy’s fantastic perambulations in the company of a tigress and a cockatoo across Europe – a kind of diminutive baroque pageant – to the farthest end of Siberia. The story features a quotation in English from William Blake’s celebrated poem “The Tiger”, as an epigraph after its title page:

Tyger tyger burning bright  
 In the forests of the night  
 What immortal hand or eye  
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

Blake’s visionary tiger is conjured up to express the cruelty of the times and people, but in the story, together with the cockatoo it acts like a kind of ‘daemon’ within a contrasted pair. It is also meant to fire the young reader’s imagination, just like the play on Milton’s elementary particles in Pullman’s story. Blake and Milton’s angels, who inspire the English novelist as well as Jostein Gaarder, are the representatives of the baroque trend. This seems to support the most conspicuous recent books,

something I have analysed in my book *Art baroque, art d'enfance* (1991), stressing the importance of images derived from an acute and delicate perception, such as the rainbow. One can foretell the impact that “Northern lights” and the substance of the Clouded Mountain, “which glowed and faded in slow breath-like rhythm, with a mother-of-pearl radiance” (Pullman, 2000, p. 416) will have on young readers’ imaginations. This baroque resurgence springs from the paraphernalia of science-fiction as well as from a new vision of the world, as is evident from one single instance drawn from Gaarder’s *Through a Glass, Darkly*, showing Cecilia’s vision, when she comes back from Crete, where the castle of Knossos has made a great impression on her: “When they flew into the airfield, they had dived down beneath all that Christmas cotton wool. And there was revealed a magical country with electric lights in all the colours of the rainbow” (Gaarder, 1998, p. 126).

This same vision is expanded into the larger saga of Pullman’s trilogy, for instance with the picture of Ama and her daemon playing with the rainbow in *The Amber Spyglass* (Pullman, 2000, p. 140) or, gorgeously in *Northern Lights*, with the picture of Aurora (Borealis?): “Streams and veils of light hung like curtains, looped and festooned on invisible hooks hundreds of miles high or blowing out sideways in the stream of some unimaginable wind” (Pullman, 1995, p. 23).

This literary trend provides the Ariadnean thread that leads my progress through the maze of contemporary fiction addressed to the young by mass culture in books and movies, from the Pokemon and Starwars American series to more elaborate literary creations: not only angels or demons, but revolving wheels of fire, blazing fireworks and weapons operated by elementary particles are the toys or implements which are meant to dazzle our dear ‘children of the videosphere.’

So, in the following pages, I will first consider the specific components of our new contemporary identities. I will deal with this theoretical issue through an examination of Philip Pullman’s shorter fiction, *The Butterfly Tattoo* (1998). At the same time I will explore Pullman’s Baroque aesthetics and compare the structural patterns of the different books in *His Dark Materials Trilogy* (1995-2000) to assess his originality from this critical stance and analyse his strategies as a writer in part inspired by Gaarder’s writings. We will see that his ‘distinction’, in the meaning of the word used by Pierre Bourdieu, i.e. his ‘symbolic prestige’, comes from his use of the Oxford setting and lanscape, as the birthplace of English scholarly distinction itself, and from his cultivation of a certain style grounded in intertextuality with reference to Blake’s and Milton’s works. The question will remain

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open as to the ultimate meaning and literary value we can ascribe to such a carefully planned cultural ‘reterritorialization’ of his fiction in the great tradition of English letters...

## 2 Contemporary Identities: Philip Pullman’s and Jostein Gaarder’s Butterflies

### *A postModern view of the Western Subject*

In a seminal paper, “Children’s and Young Adult’s Literature in the Age of the Millennium: Towards New Concepts” published by Ulf Boëthius in *Modernity, Modernism and Children’s Literature* in 1998, Steinar Bjork Larsen notes that “The logic should be that when childhood and adulthood are left and dismantled, also youth will be submitted to parallel kinds of change” (p. 105). The blurring of the generational categories and of the distinctions between adults and children, Larsen goes on, are due – if we accept Julia Kristeva’s “Metadiscourse of Modernism” (p. 109) and Deleuze and Guattari’s point of view – to the fact that nowadays “desire is deterritorialized” (p. 111). For the Western subject conceived as a ‘discursive product’ (p. 106) seems “to be affected by a growing amount of identities, and it starts out in childhood” (p. 105). This goes against, and undermines, an important premise of traditional children’s literature: the concept of a stable subject; and it “affects the debate of the interplay between children and adults as separate kinds of implied readers of children’s literature” (p. 97).

### *The Butterfly Tattoo or the Northern Ireland Conflict: Terror at the heart of the kingdom*

Larsen grounds his argument in an analysis of Jostein Gaarder’s *Through a Glass, Darkly* (1993), in which the Angel Ariel comes to talk with Cecilia Kotbu, a young adolescent girl suffering from some frightful illness and is going to die in the end, whom he helps to accept death and “enter Eternity”. The conversations, as in Gaarder’s *Sophie’s World*, are based on the pattern of Socratic philosophical dialogues, leading to the progressive discovery of ideas and truths. The girl’s initiation is conducted through the image of the ‘glass’, which Ariel symbolically holds out to the girl and which helps her to see hidden realities. As Ariel explains, vision is ruled by a very simple principle “Sometimes we can peer through the glass and catch a glimpse of what is on the other side. If we were to polish the glass

clean, we’d see much more. But then we would no longer see ourselves” (Gaarder, 1998, p. 136).

This is what happens to Cecilia, floating in the sky beside her sleeping self, and sailing in the air with the angel over the landscape before she dies. Pullman’s readers will immediately have seized the analogy with links this description and that of Lyra looking through the ‘Amber spyglass’, which allows her to see “the myriad tiny sparkles...moving against the wind, in a slow deliberate current that looked all but conscious.” (Pullman, 2000, p. 384) The Amber Spyglass is but a transformation of the ‘dark glass’ of common humanity, and in her ecstasy, Lyra “suddenly snapped awake to find herself outside her body and panicked.”(p. 384) When we know that Cecilia collected precious stones and that Ariel has sapphire blue eyes, (Gaarder, 1993, p. 133), we can get an inkling of the subtleties of the literary work achieved. Lyra will meet her death, like Cecilia, but she will come back to earth, saved by her friend Will and her own determination. Another interesting point here is that Cecilia gradually rises to a full understanding of human complexities by comparing her identity to that of the angel, who appears to her as an ideal double in her dreams or in her fever.

A typically baroque feature is introduced here into the story, through the presence of the little brooch given to Cecilia as a Christmas present: a “fever butterfly”, “a magic butterfly... that changes colour when the temperature changes...” (Gaarder, 1998, p. 13) This is a living emblem of the child’s or adolescent’s innocence and frailty, working almost on the same principles as the animal “daemons” of Lyra and all children in the kingdom of Northern lights : these change shapes and physically espouse all the moods and inner feelings of their human selves, and die when their ‘masters’ do. Cecilia will similarly relinquish her magic double, when she takes her final flight into Paradise: “I don’t suppose I will have any use for it, after all”, she says. (*Ibidem*, p. 144) An important baroque feature is also to be noticed: the epigraph to Gaarder’s novel is a poem by Edith Sodegran beginning with the lines:

Joy is a butterfly

Fluttering low over the earth...”

The image recurs just before the ending, when the Angel addresses Cecilia with the following comparison: “You look like a splendid butterfly that has flown from the hand of God” (p, 154).

We will keep this butterfly in mind and, for the present, simply establish a first link with the tattooed butterfly that Chris Marshall, the young adolescent of Philip Pullman’s *The Butterfly Tattoo* (1998),

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discovers after making love to Jenny, the innocent young girl he has met and saved at the beginning of the story : “a small, perfect butterfly, tattooed at the top of her left breast” (Pullman, 1998, p, 72). It is the image of the same tattoo which returns after the girl – who has initiated him to physical love – has been killed, and she is found, with “so much blood” around her, on the last page of the story. The text then reads as follows: “and he shrank away from her, from the butterfly tattoo, from that dear body he’d loved so much. And betrayed” (p. 183). The butterfly has been tattooed on the girl’s body, as one of those symbolic inscriptions, or ‘symbolic wounds’ in the words used by Bruno Bettelheim in *Symbolic Wounds. Puberty Rites and the Envious Male* (1954), marks of special initiation which adolescents are eager to sport out, at the same time expressing their exclusion from the society they find themselves forced to live in. Are there any reasons to suspect that Philip Pullman has been led to transform the image of the butterfly, as found in Gaarder’s splendid emblem of God’s generosity, into such a tragic embodiment of human mutability?

Like Pullman and curiously enough, Gaarder in *Through a Glass, Darkly*, was inspired in his choice of the figure of lord Asriel in his trilogy by Milton’s Ariel of *Paradise Lost* and by an extract from Paul the Evangelist’s letter, actually quoted by Steinar Gjörk Larsen: “When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly...” (*The Bible*, 1, Chor. 12:10-11. Larsen, 118). This leads to the problem of the Fall and of Adam and Eve’s exit from the Garden of Eden: Ariel tells Cecilia that these two were first happy, “inquisitive little children, who climbed trees and played around in the great garden, he (God) had just made.” But “They became grown-ups. That was the great mistake... they became sexually mature...”. This urges Cecilia to exclaim: “I’ve heard that Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise, but nobody told me it was from their *childhood* paradise” (italics in the text, Gaarder, p. 26).

In Ariel’s opinion, the first Fall was redeemed to a certain extent by the fact that sexuality meant new children being born: “The world is created anew, you see, every time a child comes into the world” (p. 27). And so Cecilia, through her early death, will avoid both sexuality and a new Fall, though her intellectual curiosity has been satisfied and she has only shared the life and love of an angel. In this denouement Steinar Bjork Larsen reads Gaarder’s “Romantic Myth of Childhood as a variety of the Modernist Program of the Artist”, and adds “we might suspect that the fall of Adam and Eve is

genuinely a fall into the decadence of the late 90s.” In a word, Gaarder is understood to stand in favour of aestheticism and to be subverting the “scientific view of the Enlightenment.” (Larsen, 1998, p. 118).

Now, a similar conversation about the Garden of Eden takes place in Philip Pullman’s *The Butterfly Tattoo*, but the context has been transferred to the setting of a thriller in true John Le Carré style, in which the criminal hides behind the policeman’s mask. Thus we witness an apology, not for innocent aestheticism, but for political realism, and even cynicism tailored to adolescent readers. The initiation is not provided by a “Socrates from heaven”, but by another type of “joker”, close to Gaarder’s favorite philosopher, that is by Carson, the villain of the story, who finally cheats Chris Marshall and kills Jenny. Carson is in fact a criminal who wants to take his revenge on Barry Springer, a former INLA member who betrayed him when they were politically active. He has no settled identity and is hiding under different names (Barry Miller, Michael Daly) in Oxford, as the owner of the enterprise Oxford Entertainment Systems, where Chris works. Springer pretends to be, and really is, actually a peaceful family man caring for his wife and a fond, loving father. With his twofold personality, he is also “an expert in explosives”, (p. 150) and has killed many people as an Irish Independentist.

To carry out his plan, the killer pretends to be Fletcher, a policeman serving his country in the anti-terrorist Special Branch, so as to get the information he needs about Springer’s hiding place from Chris. When he meets the boy, his persuasive rhetoric is based on the claim that “Democracy has a price” and that “The price of freedom is eternal vigilance” (Pullman, 1998, p. 154). So Springer, the ‘mole’, as a specialist in electronic equipment, is a danger for the country, “with his perfect cover right in the heart of England” (*Ibidem*, p. 153) and is suspected of preparing violent action. His argument is expressed in a parodic talk held in his white Mercedes; Fletcher offers Chris Marshall an apple and says:

We make the world safe for democracy... We’re not innocent; *we know*. I don’t know whether you are religious. The Garden of Eden – you know that story? The tree of knowledge of good and evil. Remember that? Before you eat the fruit, you are innocent... But I will tell you something. Losing that innocence is the first step to *real* knowledge... Those people out there - innocent, because they don’t know. Like children. Like sheep... You can’t do good unless you stop being innocent... (*Ibidem*, p. 156)

Fletcher is a “sophist”, or more precisely, a double-dealer, like Mrs Coulter in the *Dark Materials Trilogy*: having obtained the information he needs, he drives his white Mercedes to go and kill Barry

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Miller in his hiding place. By sheer coincidence, however, he makes a mistake and his victim is Jenny, Chris Marshall's love: "I am the angel of death", he says. (*Ibidem*, p. 181) One last detail eventually helps us to understand the similarities of Pullman's and Gaarder's stories: in the latter, Cecilia once tells Ariel: "You remind me of a genie of the lamp, who fulfills every wish" (Gaarder, 1998, p. 62). From this "genie" to Jenny, the transfer is not merely a matter of relative homophony, but also hides a deeply elaborated philosophical view: Jenny has fulfilled Chris's physical desires, and is going to pay for it, since Chris has 'marshalled' her to death. Similarly Ariel has helped Cecilia to understand the realities of the flesh: "We've talked about the thin covering of skin and hair which all flesh and blood is wrapped in from top to toe," Gaarder's text reads. And he leads the girl back to look at the "Garden of Eden" (p. 114). This is facetiously echoed in Pullman's story, through the name of the killer, "Fletcher". The reader will have to wait for the denouement of *The Amber Spyglass* in the Oxford Botanic Gardens to see the happy pair made by Lyra and Will experience a moment of bliss, before the bridge between their two different worlds is barred and they have to wait for the "republic of heaven" to be reunited...

#### The expansion of *His Dark Materials Trilogy*: From the white Mercedes to the Rolls Royce?

I will leave any researcher whose curiosity has been aroused by this enquiry with a literary mystery and the mission to investigate it: *The Butterfly Tattoo* was first published in 1992 under the title *The White Mercedes*. Why did Philip Pullman feel the urge to rewrite it? Was it because he got acquainted with Gaarder's 1993 novel, the very year it was published in English, in 1998, which could have helped him finish the third volume of his trilogy? Or had he known of it before, when it was published in Norwegian? What are the major differences between the two versions of his story? Does the butterfly come up only in the second one? Or was it already present in the first? These are issues of interest for any one seeking more precise details on the workings of Philip Pullman's literary creation<sup>2</sup>. Let us remember that Fletcher's first name is Carson: the luxury car motif is so important that it reappears in *The Subtle Knife* (1997) in the guise of Sir Charles Latrom's Rolls Royce. Sir Charles is but another

<sup>2</sup> I must here mention my debt to my colleague Professor Virginie Douglas who found that Philip Pullman himself answered these question when he admitted that the change was due to a decision of his publisher, when he was not yet a recognized author. See [https://daphne.blogs.com/books/2004/08/sarahs\\_comments.html](https://daphne.blogs.com/books/2004/08/sarahs_comments.html) (<http://pullman.davidficklingbooks.com/publication?pubID=110>)

name for Lord Asriel, the ‘mole’ that will eventually leave his cover and fight Metatron, the Angel of Death, in the 2000 final book, to save Lyra, the daughter he had not acknowledged. The girl is like ‘the orphan children’ defined by Ariel in the end of *Through a Glass, Darkly*, i.e. “The ones who come from nobody knows where” and who “are given many names” (Gaarder, 1998, p. 145). The special point of view of ‘His Dark Materials’ Trilogy entails the consequence that it is the adults who are guilty of forsaking their children (Mrs Coulter, Marisa; Lord Asriel). Will’s father, who is responsible for his wife’s madness (an echo of “the mad woman in the attic”?), also has several names: he is called Parry, Grumman, The Shaman. This is why, naturally, Will and Lyra, who are pure and strong enough to save each other through the power of love, have only one.

*The trickster’s trick: From Leira to Lyra?*

All these twists of names and identities in Pullman’s stories are not really surprising, when we know that in *Through a Glass, Darkly*, Cecilia, walking along the river with Ariel, learns that the stream is called Leira and, as Ariel himself remarks: “In a heavenly looking-glass even the most earthly thing becomes heavenly as well”. As the girl does not understand at first, “He smiled mysteriously: “you see everything in a glass, darkly.” Then Ariel said: “Can you read “Leira” backwards?”... ”Of course, it’s Ariel !” (Gaarder, 1998, pp. 145-146). The name of this river which will not be found on the map of Norway is the reverse of that of her flying companion, and these logics of reversal have been applied to the writing of the trilogy.

As can be seen, everything was ready for the coming on Philip Pullman’s literary staging of Lyra Belacqua, the main character in his most ambitious work, gallantly waging her fight against the falsity and deceit of fathers, through Lord Asriel’s faults. The reader at that stage will think that the novelist felt the need to go one step further, by redeeming the weaknesses of the representatives of the paternal authority, just as Jenny did appeal to her own father, when she wrote “Dad” with her own blood on the wall of the room. Already in Gaarder’s *Through a Glass, Darkly*, hadn’t Cecilia been imitating Christ in his agony, repeating after him and after Ariel: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Gaarder, 1998, p. 132). The same motif emerged from the underlying religious myth that gave a pattern to both fictions. In Pullman’s shorter story, as well, Chris has been marshalling the death of the young girl he loved, Jenny (his ‘genie’?), as the real victim of men’s violence. Barry Springer was also

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a bad father, forgetful of his essential duties, sacrificing his children on the altar of hatred.

Can we then say that Gaarder's book stands as a possible hypotext to Philip Pullman's trilogy or to part of his trilogy? If, as Pullman himself claims, "the storyteller is a trickster" (Parsons and Nicholson, 133), then we have to take the blanks in his statements into account. And I have been particularly intrigued (to use one of Pullman's very words, which we are going to come across now) by what he said to Wendy Parsons and Catriona Nicholson in his interview published in *The Lion and the Unicorn* in 1999. Explaining how difficult it was to start to write *His Dark Material Trilogy*, he said:

I couldn't get it going. It didn't work, and it wouldn't work, until after one of these days of sitting and groaning and wishing, I wrote the words *Lyra and her daemon*, and then I realized I didn't know why she'd have a daemon, or what her daemon was, but thought it sounded intriguing, and so I wrote the rest of that chapter. (Italics in the text; Parsons and Nicholson, 1999, pp.127-128)

What a strange literary apparition! How could the word "daemon" come up spontaneously and become connected with the name of the girl on the page? Was it due to the reading of Gaarder's *Sophie's world*? One will object that the name of Lyra has been suggested by "two sources", as Pullman confided to James Carter in another 1999 interview: "In Blake's *Songs of Experience* there are a couple of poems about a little girl called Lyra, a little girl lost and a little girl found." (Carter, 1999, p. 188) This statement is far from the reality of things; a rapid check of the quotations shows that "The Little Girl Lost" or "The Little Girl Found" comes from *Songs of Innocence* and she is called "Lyca", not "Lyra," (Blake, 1994, p. 57). In the same volume Blake included the poems "A little Boy Lost" and "A Little Boy Found", but in *Songs of Experience* the reader will only find the poems, "The Little Girl Lost" (and the girl's name then is "Ona"! ) and "The Little Boy Lost." These are children of "a former time", when "Love, sweet love, was thought a crime." Their meeting "in garden bright/ Where the holy light/ had just removed the curtains of the night" is that of sin. It calls for a "vision", which will be achieved only through the dream of "the age of gold," when "Free from winter cold,/Youth and maiden bright,/To the holy light,/Naked in the sunny beams delight."(p. 127) This ideal of the "garden of love", freed from the Puritan yoke, will be partially reached by Lyra and Will, the two lost children reunited in the Botanical Garden in Oxford.

In his interview with James Carter, Pullman specified the second origin for Lyra Belacqua: "the songs he had to sing at his grandfather's church and coming from a collection called *Lyra Davidica*." (Carter, 1999 p. 188) He explained that when he wrote the words 'Lyra and her daemon,' it was for

him a kind of illumination: “that was the key”. Not only could he use the motif of “a sort of animal companion which changed shape according to your mood, “ but also: “The main theme, I had now discovered, ... was Adam and Eve and the Fall, the story of innocence and experience, and innocence becoming experience”(Carter, 199, p. 190). This does not explain why he simultaneously had “the idea of the North and polar exploration”: only in Jostein Gaarder’s *Through a Glass, Darkly*, could he have discovered the link between this theme of the Fall and that of the ‘daemon’, in the meaning he gives to this word. As we have seen, Cecilia’s ‘dæmon’ was both the Angel Ariel – the ‘Joker’ – and her small butterfly thermometer, a trinket which changed colour, according to the height of her fever. The ‘alethiometer’, which Pullman derived from his interest in ‘Renaissance book emblems’, (Carter, 1999, p. 190) appears to be its original science-fiction transformation.

To conclude on the twinship between Gaarder and Pullman’s butterflies, let us stress Philip Pullman’s perception of social issues as the consequences of deeper political involvement, which is obvious when you read *The Butterfly Tattoo*. The theme of ‘Fall’ in his fiction is not a matter for mere philosophical debate. Hatred and violent death result from the tensions within the complex modern identities at the ‘end of the Millennium’ in the United Kingdom, and clearly reflect the political situation in Britain (notably the issue of Northern Ireland). His epic trilogy enabled him to deal with larger issues linked with the status of the “alien” (the Mulefa in *The Amber Spyglass*) and to widen his philosophical outlook through a finely polished and luminous literary ‘glass’.

### 3. Cultural War: a competition between Literature and the Mass-media

*The seduction and fear of Repetition: a cultural answer to the invasion of the “Gosebumps” thrillers*

The success of J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* was immediate, and its detractors were too fast in calling it “cheap literature”. Popular success is not irremediably linked with easy writing. The book stands out with its lively dialogues, with its sense of narrative surprises, and the Dickensian flavour of its characters. Some of its devices are certainly not very different from what we might find in contemporary picture books: Harry facing the “gorilla scratching its head and looking remarkably like Dudley, except that it was blond” (Rowling, 1, p. 23) seems to come out of Anthony Browne’s *Zoo*. Such features belong to the special folklore of childhood, with its baroque bias. When

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Fénelon's tale written for the Duke of Burgundy, "Voyage à l'île des plaisirs" (1690) ("A Journey to Pleasure Island") showed a wonderful island, where the earth was made of chocolate and rivers were flowing fruit juices, similarly the child nowadays has been set between the real and the magical, or to put it differently between "the chocolate and the virtual", a feature I have noticeably stressed for "the children of the videosphere" (Perrot, 2000, p. 24). In the episode just drawn from J.K. Rowling's novel, Harry and the Dursleys are precisely eating "large chocolate ice-creams" while Mrs Coulter, herself, proves unexpectedly generous with her prisoner Lyra, as far as her 'chocolate' is concerned. (Pullman, 2000, p. 55) The virtual realities of other worlds united by fluxes of golden Dust are major assets for the seduction of the reader. All these comments tend to suggest that from an international perspective, J.K. Rowling can be considered as the English cultural answer to the invasion of "goosebumps" thrillers. Of course, this invasion cannot be equated with what happened after World War II, with the publication of Frank Hampson's *Dan Dare* comic strips, whose launching, as Tony Watkins has shown in his essay "Piloting the Nation" (Dudley & Watkins, 2000), was part of a political campaign inspired by the Reverend Marcus Morris. It was then meant to bar the invasion of American horror comic strips accused of corrupting the youth and to protect British children from immoral books, to make them "share laughter that comes from the heart, not from the gutter" (p. 156).

The baroque trend already stressed in Pullman's works may have been emphasized by his partiality for English comics, which he liked in his youth, as he claimed in an interview for *The Guardian* on Saturday 14 May 2016<sup>3</sup>, and may have helped him with the semi-graphic novels of his literary beginnings. It is generally the major aesthetic line of influence, which – perhaps unwittingly or as a result of inner conviction – in contemporary mass-media. It has been particularly underlined by David Lusted in his article, "Children and Popular Culture: the Case of Turtle Power" published in *A Necessary Fantasy? The Heroic Figure in Children's Popular Culture*, edited by Dudley Jones and Tony Watkins (2000): "Their fiction," he writes, "is best described as baroque, a form of drama whose secret reference is coded through ornate and embellished dramatis personae, iconography and fictional world" (p. 284). This also fully characterizes the Japanese Pokemon series, which have held millions of children under their spell, with their frightful discharges of energy and their staging of permanent fighting and fireworks or symbolic Catherine wheels. Their world is divided between the conflicting

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/may/14/philip-pullman-why-i-love-comics>

parties of the Good, Ash and Misty, and their friends, and the Bad, James and Jesse, the Evil Twins who ceaselessly desire the world’s “devastation”, aided by Meowth, the cat, the only Pokemon that can speak. Another typically Baroque pair is constituted by Starmie and Butterfree: the former is a starfish that has a jewel for its centre, which glows with the seven colours of the rainbow and the latter is a big but dangerous butterfly, which fills the air with toxic Dust. The film *Pokemon II* (2000) in particular is a kind of space opera opposing the good Pokemon to a monstrous collector who collects Pokemon like curios, and who, like Darth Vader in the *Star Wars Death Star*, lives in a huge aircraft equipped with an imperial landing platform and firing laser canons in all directions. The story is a cultural hotchpotch and in one gigantic whirlpool of disintegrating matter, it allows the spectator a glimpse of an Italian baroque cupola. And so we are led to the following hypothesis.

*Has Philip Pullman been rewriting the Star Wars scenarios and spirit ?*

The plots of successive Pokemon episodes in general are naively simple and can be summed up as a transitory victory of Evil then defeated by the forces of Good and by the restoration to power of the legitimate representatives of either established morality or of the lineage. The same structural pattern governs George Lucas’ *Star Wars film trilogy: Star Wars* (1976), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Return of the Jedi* (1983). Anakin Skywalker, seen as a young boy in *The Phantom Menace* (1999), has gone over to the dark side of life and has become Darth Vader, the master of the Empire that will be defeated with the return of his son Luke Skywalker. The “Old Republic”, i.e “the Republic of legend, greater than distance or time”, as George Lucas’s scenario runs, which will give birth to a video game in 2003, has been overthrown, but will eventually be replaced by the Alliance, through the triumph of the moral heir, the Jedi who has kept his integrity and resisted Dark Forces. Luke Skywalker has avoided the failure of repetition (which would have brought him over to the dark side of life, just as Lyra and Will in their meetings in the Botanical gardens- however ambiguous - will not succumb to the lures of sin and bring about another Fall.

In such a general context, it is interesting to compare the last scenes of George Lucas’s scenario with the ending of Philip Pullman’s trilogy. In the denouement of *Return of the Jedi*, Luke discovers the true face and nature of his dead father, and then, as the corpse is burning, “smoke rose from the vents in the mask, almost like a black spirit, finally freed” (Lucas, 1983, p. 470). Luke has the illusion

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of seeing his father's face again through the flames of a blazing bonfire, just before the conclusion, which is, as follows

It gave Luke a momentary sadness, but then Leia took his hand and drew him back close to her and to the others, back into the circle of warmth and camaraderie; and love.  
The Empire was dead.  
Long live the Alliance. (*Ibidem*, p. 471)

In the last pages of *The Amber Spyglass*, when Lyra's father has died, and Will has gone back to his own world, after the final love scene in the Botanical garden, it is the fur of her daemon Pantalaimon that the girl caresses, and in the din of Oxford bells, she says:

He meant the kingdom of heaven was over, the kingdom of heaven, it was all finished...  
He said we had to build something...  
And then what?" said the daemon, sleepily. Build what?  
The Republic of Heaven, said Lyra. (Pullman, 2000, p. 340)

The reader might well have the impression that Philip Pullman has been rewriting the *Star Wars* scenarios with a different purpose. The challenge indeed is felt, not only in this scene, but also in many episodes of his trilogy. For instance, the meeting with the Mulefa people, with their "seed-pods" in *The Amber Spyglass* (Pullman, 2000, pp. 92-95) seems to echo that of the Gungan in the "pod-racers" arena of *The Phantom Menace* (Terry Brooks, 1999, p. 156, sq.). Humour and parody screen the desire to seduce the young readers with the cultural baits that are deemed most palatable to their finicky, yet very particular tastes. Again, the death of Lee Scoresby, the aeronaut, in that same book, sounds like an equivalent for the death of Darth Vader which has just been described. It occurs as a contrast, "untroubled by the flares and bursting shells" of the raging Star War, and with a similar image.

[...] out of the little grove, away from the baffled spectres, out of the valley...the last little scrap of consciousness that had been the aeronaut Lee Scoresby floated upwards...passed through the heavy clouds and came out under the brilliant stars, where the atoms of his beloved daemon Hester were waiting for him (Pullman, 2000, p. 440).

Here we come across the main rhetorical motif that holds these worlds together: that of 'Dust' or of 'His dark materials' borrowed from Milton's poem, quoted as an epigraph to the trilogy. In his interview with James Carter, Philip Pullman has explained that "it is a phenomenon which astronomers tell us has to exist in order to keep the universe as it is, because, otherwise, it will fall apart"(Carter,

1999, p. 191). The elementary particles discovered by Rusakov, whose name occurs in Pullman’s *Northern Lights* (p. 89 and 370), offer the basis of the cosmic poetry that pervades, sometimes too easily, the dreams of Western science-fiction. But, as Pullman again added in his comments to James Carter, “The beauty of it is that they don’t know what it is yet” (p. 191). Visionary literature springs from the blanks within absolute scientific knowledge. Pullman’s answer to *Star Wars* could be less moral than cultural. Strangely enough, the death of Lee Scoresby allows us to make a comparison with Marcus Morris’s rejection of American horror comics in 1949: fifty years later, it is not the dare-devil aviator who saves children. These are able to save themselves, as the old generation is either corrupted or destroyed. Heroism is the privilege of Will, who is in charge of the Subtle Knife and of Lyra, whose name suggests a lyrical expansion of the poetical heart.

*Clouds of Golden Dust in Tales of Two Cultures: between Blake and Gaarder*

William Blake’s first Felpham vision is here to remind us of the poetic use which the concept of ‘dust’ has already been applied to. For then the poet, who was a great admirer of Milton’s poetry, “saw particles bright” forming the shape of a man, as Peter Ackroyd recalls in his biography of the poet of *Songs of innocence* (Ackroyd, 1996, p. 228). In a way, the description of the “consciousness” of Lee Scoresby and of Darth Vader leaving their bodies has been anticipated by Blake’s vision of “the Spectre of his brother... seen leaving the dead body.” Just as “Urizen rose from his couch” (*Ibidem*, p. 99).

But Dust comes in more significantly, when Lord Asriel in *Northern Light* explains to Lyra Belacqua the mysteries of the universe and of “uncountable billions of parallel worlds.” He reminds her then of what she saw on the slide at the very beginning of the story: “You saw Dust pouring into this world from the Aurora, ” and hints at the City, which is “the origin of all the Dust, all the death, the sin, the misery, the destructiveness in the world” (Pullman, 1995, p. 377). He is, of course, in a position symmetrical to that of Gaarder’s initiator: Ariel praising to Cecilia the splendour “of “billions of stars and planets, moons and asteroids” (Gaarder, p. 118). But, whereas Ariel can “push his right arm through a closed window” (*Ibidem*, p. 55) and cross naturally from one world to another, Lord Asriel recognizes that in order to destroy Death and Dust, he has to “build a bridge and cross.” (Pullman, 1995, p. 377). Naturally the novelist will also have to coin his “Subtle Knife” to enable his young hero

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to make this dream come true.

Once again, we must stress the fact that both writers have used the same type of images, and Gaarder's angel Ariel tells Cecilia that: "The human soul flickers past in a brain that is woven together of some particles of dust which, once upon a time, drifted down from the stars in the sky." (Gaarder, 1993, p. 93) In a way, the structural link in Pullman's fiction between Rusakov's scientific view of the Dust and its philosophical displacement on the issues of moral life, seems to duplicate and parody another set of contrasts in Gaarder's novel: that of the supposedly prosaic view of Lyra's schoolbook, *Science Illustrated*, which is recurrently mentioned (p. 26, p. 84, etc.) and of the elevated poetry of the angel-philosopher's speech. These similarities again point to the convergent rhetoric and divergent political inspiration that command the two literary worlds.

The fear of death by fire is also expressed in the description of many airfights that are similar to many of those occurring in the Apocalypse

The aircraft caught fire or exploded, the giant bird uttered a scream like the tearing of a mountain high curtain and plummeted on to the rocks far below, and as for angels, each of them simply vanished in a drift of glowing air, a myriad particles twinkling and glowing dimmer until they flickered out like a dying firework (Pullman, 2000, p. 228).

But Philip Pullman's passion for blazing fireworks, surely ascertained in his short children's novel published in 1995, *The Firework Maker's Daughter*, has been transposed into a philosophical vision: as the father of the girl in this novel says, when she has demonstrated her cleverness and won a competition in fireworks, what matters is neither fame nor tangible objects, but three gifts: "talent, perseverance and luck". Finally this "sparks and tinsel" rhetoric, which considers the universe as a whole – including humanity – in the flow of shining particles, is typically a popular refashioning of the Leibnizian theory, which, as was shown by Gilles Deleuze in *Le Pli, Leibniz et le baroque*, (1988: *The Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque*) had to be dismissed by Newtonian optics. For Leibniz, matter was regarded as a multitude of monads, each a nucleus of force and a microcosm or concentration of the universe.

This theory was shared by William Blake, for whom "white light had become part of a mathematical equation" and "the diagram an emblem of separation and division", in fact for him "the origin of great sins" (Acroyd, 200), as his painting of Newton contemplating the diagram and measuring with

a compass clearly indicates. The quest for truth must not thwart the full play of imagination, and we know that in *His Dark Materials* the alethiometer, which “tells the truth”, might “have been a compass or something of the sort,” (Pullman, 1995, p. 74) but also that every one has to make it work according to one’s own nature. If we remember that the first title planned for *Northern Lights* was *Book One: The Golden Compasses*, and that Newton’s compass appeared on the cover of the American edition with the title *The Golden Compass*, (Parsons & Nicholson, 126), we can see how easily a writer’s intentions can be betrayed by the commercial imperatives of the publishing system. Going back to Blake and Milton, Philip Pullman’s literary gesture has been to extract the Romantic message from the vulgarised version of popular mass media and restore it to its original distinction.

This achievement is crowned by a lyrical intensity which is not devoid of the fire that enlivens the bardic inspiration of the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, one of Pullman’s favourite poets (Carter, 1999, p.181). This can be seen in the description of the Clouded Mountain, first compared to the model of the universe considered as an ‘abominable heresy’ by the Consistorial Court, a model which, once ‘exorcised and burnt’, significantly reminds Mrs Coulter of the image of a ‘fold’, which would certainly have been appreciated by Gilles Deleuze

The Clouded Mountain affected her in a similar way: it was less like a rock than a force-field, manipulating space itself to enfold and stretch and layer it into galleries and terraces, chambers and colonnades and watch-towers of air and light and vapour (Pullman, 2000, p. 515).

One will note the ternary rhythm giving breadth to the baroque vision, just as in the presentation of Salmakia’s minute dragonfly chariot with its harness in a truly modernised *Midsummer’s Night Dream* Shakespearian manner: “spider-silk reins, stirrups of titanium, a saddle of humming-bird skin.” (p. 154) These images mean to impress naive readers through the flamboyant side of the demonstration...

### **Conclusion:** Piloting “a Republic of Heaven” ?

Almost thirty years after World War II and the atomic Bomb, the fear of World War III and the need for a Brave New World (Watkins, 2000, p. 154) were present in the field of English adolescent literature: the danger of American horror comics spreading violence had conjured up the figure of the 1949 *Dan Dare* heroic pilot (*Ibidem*, p. 156). Ghosts of another Decadence (that of material ‘Dust’ and

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‘sin’) urged a new kind of hero to save Philip Pullman’s literary universe from being a mere duplicate of the ‘Star Wars’ saga. The novelist could not be satisfied with the prospect of Jostein Gaarder’s dying Cecilia left with the angel Ariel in the sky for eternity, i.e embodying a novelist’s cult of childhood that points to an abstract “variety of the Modernist program of the Artist” (Larsen, 1988, p. 118). He would resort to a couple of knowing yet pure lovers, Lyra Belacqua and Will, who had heroically fought and mastered Evil, both in themselves and in society. These heroes, after going to the Poles and ‘seeing their death’ on perilous expeditions, have been ‘reterritorialized’: they have come back home to the heart of the threatened England of *The Butterfly Tattoo*. Yet the ‘Garden’ they stay in at the end of *His Dark Materials Trilogy* is still a fictional world split into different worlds and the power to create ‘bridges’ between parallel universes has been lost. Lyra will return to Oxford and Jordan College, there to encounter a woman who offers to teach her again how to read the alethiometer. Lyra and her daemon Pan agree that she has to make the most of her life. The ‘hidden City’ is still in the far-off realms of the sky, screening the Master of all things, when Lyra and Will’s feelings and humane concerns seem to be very close to the modern reader’s command. Philip Pullman’s heroes are democratic heirs of aristocratic values, but even though the novelist does not hide the fact that his “Republic of heaven” is not an asset and that consciousness is what matters, we feel some sort of nostalgia in the huge Miltonian machinery he has been led to prefer to the ‘little jewel’ of Chris Marshall and Jenny’s realistic drama. Yet his literary universe will remain as a true basis for the building of another type of cultural Paradise: that of the Citizens of the World...

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