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Subjectivity in Young Adult Literature (Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials, Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis

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Abstract

Subjectivity is a crucial concept in children's books and is discernible both within a particular culture and in comparison among cultures. The stories of the two novels discussed, express a quest for a sense of identity. I explored first, the images of femininity that the fictions offer, and second, the interactions between selfhood, other selves, social and cultural forces, and displacement. I limited my discussion of Bakhtinian theory to the concept of dialogism. Both novels articulate the complexity of ways in which the subjectivity of female adolescents, Lyra and Marjane, is formed in dialogue with different literary works and social discourses, assumptions and practices which constitute the cultures of East and West. Both characters are depicted as fragmented, multiple and dependent on the social discourses and practices. Pullman for the most part challenges the male's monomythic heroic prerogative by making Lyra the world's macrocosmic transformer and savior by the time her journey is over. Marjane also, like a traditional fairy-tale hero, prevails over her personal oppressors. Thus renewed, Marjane finally achieves a microcosmic triumph.

Key Words: Subjectivity, Children's Literature, Dialogism, Bakhtin, Femininity, Double, Displacement, Philip Pullman, Marjane Satrapi, His Dark Materials, Persepolis.

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Introduction

Childhood as a concept has been constructed differently in different cultures and at different times; therefore, the books written for children have been created based on the issues related to the specific cultures of their origin and the specific time of their creation. However, in all cultures, children's literature shows a concern to depict identity and individual development; such issues of selfhood come under the heading subjectivity (*The Politics*). John Stephen explores various conceptions of subjectivity that are available to us, and which seem to predominate in children's literature, pointing out that we can then go on to examine how this subjectivity is represented in texts. He argues that the literature in most cases is only about subjectivity to the extent that the producing culture is preoccupied with it (*The Politics* 2). As McCallum points out, "conceptions of subjectivity are intrinsic to narratives of personal growth or maturation, to stories about relationships between the self and others, and to explorations of relationships between individuals and the world, society or the past- that is, subjectivity is intrinsic to the major concerns of adolescent fiction" (*Ideologies of Identity* 3). Accordingly, representations of subjectivity pervade adolescent fiction in both West and East. Ideology of identity, as McCallum defines it, is that "concepts of personal identity and selfhood formed in dialogue with others, with language and society. The idea that subjectivity is dialogical presumes the coexistence of concepts of a personal identity as both a subject and an agent" (*Ideologies of Identity* 256). Key terms in theories of subjectivity according to McCallum are individual, subject and agent (256), but because there is a tendency to combine these terms, it is essential to indicate how they are to

be used. Smith makes the following distinctions. The subject is to be understood as a

conglomeration of provisional subject positions into which a person is called momentarily by the

discourses and world s/he inhabits (xxxv). A person is not, however, "simply determined or

dominated by the ideological pressures of any overarching discourse or ideology, but is also the

agent of a certain discernment" (xxxiv). Agency, then, refers to "the place from which resistance

to the ideological is produced and played out" (xxxv). Thus, "subjectivity is an individual's sense

of a personal identity as a subject- in the sense of being subject to some measure of external

coercion- and as an agent- that is, being capable of conscious and deliberate thought and action.

And this identity is formed in dialogue with the social discourses, practices and ideologies

constituting the culture which an individual inhabits" (*Ideologies of Identity* 4).

To analyze subjectivity in adolescent fiction, I will primarily work with Mikhail

Bakhtin's concept of dialogism. The concept of dialogism is central to Bakhtinian theory, though

it is probably difficult to define. "Bakhtin is a major proponent of the dialogic construction of

subjectivity and of the novel as a dialogic form, and his theories of subjectivity, language and

narrative have a significant contribution to make to the study of narrative technique and the

representation of subjectivity in children's and adolescent fiction" (*Ideologies of Identity* 10). The

general meaning of dialogue is a verbal interchange between individuals where there is an

exchange of words, ideas, and viewpoints, as opposed to monologue, wherein one person speaks.

Yet, Dialogics or dialogism, according to Bakhtin, means the process by which meaning is

extracted out of interactions among the author, the work and the reader listener. These elements

are in turn influenced by the context in which they are placed, i.e. by the social and political

forces acting upon them. This is what Bakhtin has to say on how meaning is generated in Dostoevsky's dialogic novel:

> It is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monologic category (thematically, lyrically or cognitive1y) - and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant. (*PDP*18)

Bakhtinian theory of dialogism is a way of examining how texts represent a higher level of human communication, and how they interact with the social and cultural contexts in and through which they are produced and received. Rudd writes that Bakhtin employed the term dialogism fluidly, sometimes to indicate specific types of discourse and sometimes globally to indicate emancipatory energies operating in and through language. In the most technical sense, dialogism refers to discourse that is double-voiced (165).

> In a more global sense, however, dialogism is also Bakhtin's term for one of a pair of forces that, throughout the history of language, have been constantly at war. The first force is monologic centripetal and unifying; all the normative voices of society- the state, the church, the court and other regulating institutions are essentially monologic in Bakhtin's view. The second force is centrifugal and strives continually to evade capture in official discourse. Although there must always be a presence of both forces in society as in language, dialogism is clearly

the privileged force in Bakhtin's analysis. Dialogic discourse represents the force

of language in its most democratic, generative and creative aspect. (Rudd 166)

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin describes dialogism as the organizational

principle of the polyphonic novel in which a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and

consciousnesses" are "juxtaposed contrapuntally." In this interplay of voices, no single

monologic voice is allowed to unify or dominate; not even the narrator's views can constitute an

ultimate authority (40). "Bakhtin describes single-voiced or monologic discourse as that which

sets itself up as the ultimate semantic authority within a given linguistic context" (Rudd 165). By

contrast, double-voiced discourse according to Bakhtin contains within it a conscious reference to

someone else's words, inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and

which retains, an intention of its own (Rudd 189). Therefore, as Hirschkop writes, there are two

main ways that Bakhtin uses the concept of dialogism. It can refer to particular kinds of dialogic

discourses as opposed to monologic discourses, and it is used as a descriptive metalinguistic

concept that refers to the "dialogic orientation" of all discourses (674-675). As Bakhtin writes in

his book *The Dialogic Imagination,* monologism is associated with the "historical process of

linguistic unification" (270) and sociopolitical and cultural centralization (271), while dialogism

is associated with conflictual forces within language and culture, linguistic diversification, and

decentralization (272). Monologic forces "guarantee a certain maximum of mutual understanding

and a real although still relative unity" (270), but these forces can only "operate within the midst

of heteroglossia" (271). Monologic forces are expressed in the idea of a "unitary language"or "a

system of linguistic norms" which is manifest as an official dominant language and ideology.

However, "a unitary language is not something given but is always in essence posited- and at

every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia" (270). The concepts of monologism and dialogism have a range of implications for theories of subjectivity and the novel, and Bakhtin's concept of dialogism implies a dialogue between individual and society (*Ideologies of Identity* 13).

The second way that the concept of dialogism is used is a metalinguistic concept that refers to the dialogic orientation of discourse (*Dialogic Imagination* 275). According to Bakhtin any word, text or utterance is oriented toward other preceding or subsequent words, texts or utterances and toward an other and that other's anticipated answering word (280). The terms intertextuality and addressivity have been used to refer to these two orientations. As Bakhtin says, the intertextuality of discourse means that "no living word relates to its object in a singular way: between the word and its object, between the word and speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other alien words about the same object, the same theme" (*Dialogic Imagination* 276). What Bakhtin means by intertextuality, or, if we prefer the original term used by him, "dialogics" as Maria Nikolajeva writes, is that literature and art are created in a continuous conversation (dialogue, discourse) between creators, in which each new piece of art or literature is a new line in the conversation. The meaning of the text is revealed for the reader or researcher only against the background of previous texts, in a clash between them and the present text (153). John Stephens, who has a chapter on intertextuality according to Bakhtin, also suggests that "the production of meaning from the interrelationships between audience, text, other texts, and the socio-cultural determinations of significance, is a process which may be conveniently summed up in the term intertextuality" (*Language and Ideology* 84). The addressivity of discourse means that "every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape

the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (*Dialogic Imagination* 280). This highlights the role of language in relations between the self and other selves: "Language, for the individual consciousness lies in the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's" (293). As Bakhtin suggests in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* "monologism, at its extreme, denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities, another *I* with equal rights (thou)" (292).

Thus, according to Stephens, intertextuality is analogous to the intersubjectivity which human individuals experience in their day-to-day existence and which gives shape and purpose to individual subjectivity. As might be expected, intersubjectivity is often constituted as an overt theme in texts which foreground their own intertextuality (84). Whereas dialogism is associated with the formation of intersubjectivity as mentioned above, "monologism refers to a form of solipsism, which fails to recognize the subjectivity of the other. Conversely, addressivity can also describe the strategies of response toward the discourse of a text or speaker utilized by an addressee or reader" (*Ideologies of Identity* 15).

McCallum points out, "Adolescent fiction has in common with Bakhtiniann writings a predominant concern with the relations between the self and others, and the influence of society, culture and language on cognition and maturation" (*Ideologies of Identity* 10). The dialogic stance, as McCallum argues is a particular kind of relation between two positions- between the self and others, between the subject and language or society, between two ideologies or discourses, two textual voices, and so on. In this sense, dialogism is an analytic strategy which enables the conceptualization of a relation which is neither oppositional, nor dialectical (in the sense that it does not entail a synthesis of the two positions), nor monological (12-13).

On the other hand, Jacqueline Rose controversially has argued that the child as other has been almost entirely appropriated by adult authorial discourse and desire and, therefore, could not in any uninflected sense be heard in children's literature (qtd in Rudd 166). Stephens also writes, "Literature written for children is also radically intertextual because it has no special discourse of its own" but rather "exists at the intersection of a number of other discourses" (*Language and Ideology* 86). Perry Nodelman, without overtly using intertextual terminology, also treats children's literature within the context of childhood, popular literature, general literary experience, myth, culture, etc, that is, precisely at the cross-roads of different discourses (qtd in Nikolajeva 155).

But contrarily, Rudd argues that "the implied presence of a child in the discourse of an adult narrator or author always introduces a note of inner polemic or dialogization in the adult voice, (which means it internalizes an anticipated hostile response and argues against it, creating an internal, unresolved split in the speaker's own discourse), hence asserting its authority even if absent or suppressed. Likewise a child narrator may internalize, and be dialogized by, an imaginary adult interlocutor" (165-166). David Rudd has characterized children's culture as fundamentally dialogic, and a similar claim may be made for much children's literature in its ongoing dialogue with adult literature and culture:

> When fairy tales are deployed to subvert authoritarian discourses, they become
> dialogic although they may also be used monologically. Another way in which
> children's fiction, particularly young adult fiction, may be dialogic in Bakhtin's
> global sense is that it represents characters whose identities are unfixed, open to
> otherness and in a process of becoming. (Rudd 166)

Therefore, dialogism, for Bakhtin, not only describes the nature of language but is also the principle of discourse and the universal axiom of human life (Helms 7), and as mentioned representations of subjectivity in fiction are always dialogical and based on ideological assumptions about relations between individuals, and between individuals, societies and the world.

Dialogism and Subjectivity

As McCallum writes "Liberal humanist and romantic concepts of subjectivity usually underpin narratives of maturation. The infiltration of modernist and structuralist conceptions of the subject into children's literature has been limited and tends to occur within the dominant liberal humanist ethic" (*Ideologies of Identity* 67). This ethic privileges concepts such as

> the uniqueness of the individual and the essentiality of the self, as opposed to
> concepts of the self as fragmented or plural, or of subjectivity as being formed
> through language and in dialogue with social ideologies and practices. The
> preoccupation with personal maturation in adolescent fiction is commonly
> articulated in conjunction with a perceived need for children to overcome
> solipsism and develop intersubjective concepts of personal identity within this
> world and in relation to others. (*Ideologies of Identity* 67)

"Solipsism is the inability to distinguish between one's own self and the otherness of the world and of other people" (*Ideologies of Identity* 7). As McCallum says there has been a common tendency in contemporary adolescent fiction to represent the move out of solipsism as one which conceives of the selfhood of an individual as essential, prosocial and prelinguistic.

However, this move is also represented as one which situates that individual within dominant social and ideological paradigms, a prestructured social order within which s/he is ultimately represented as disempowered and passive (*Ideologies of Identity* 7).

> Underlying these representations is an opposition between the individual and society, which also logocentrically opposes subjectivity and agency. Adolescent fiction, and many of the discussions which surround it, typically assume and valorize humanistic concepts of individual agency that is the capacity to act independently of social restraint. However, the image of empowered individuals capable of acting independently in the world and of making choices about their lives offers young readers a worldview which for many is simply idealistic and unattainable. The question, then, is how to strike a balance between these two ideologies of identity. (*Ideologies of Identity* 7)

As pointed out above, the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism recognizes that individual subjectivity is intersubjective; it is formed in a dialogic relation with an other and with social discourses and practices. Emerson points out that, Bakhtin's model of the formation of consciousness and subjectivity through language and social interrelations has no room for – and perhaps no conceptual possibility of – an independent unconscious (251). In fact, for Bakhtin, the Freudian unconscious is a myth which evades history and social process (251). Bakhtin emphasizes the role of the other in completing the self. Individual consciousness is impossible outside of a relation with an other. For Bakhtin, the other completes the self and loss happens in the absence of the relation between self and the other. Bakhtin writes:

> I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for
>
> another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts
>
> constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another
>
> consciousness, (towards a thou). Separation, dissociation, and enclosure within the
>
> self are the main reason for the loss of one's self. Not that which takes place
>
> within, but that which takes place on the boundary between one's own and
>
> someone else's consciousness, on the threshold. (*PDP* 287)

McCallum writes that Bakhtin sees the process through which the specular image is perceived and recognized as representing the process whereby subjectivity is constructed via an internalized other (*Ideologies of Identity* 73). According to Bakhtin, "since we lack any approach to ourselves from outside…we project ourselves into a peculiarly indeterminate possible other" from whose position we "give form to ourselves" (qtd in McCallum 73). In this way, our relationship to our exterior…pertains only to its possible effect on others and we evaluate our exterior not for ourselves, but for others through others (qtd in McCallum 73). For Bakhtin, the lack of the unified singular subject and the construction of subjectivity through relationships with others is to be viewed positively; a person experiences subjectivity as social, multiple, discontinuous and as always in a state of becoming (*Ideologies of Identity* 74).

The books I will discuss in my thesis are two adolescent novels from Western and Eastern cultures, namely, Philip Pullman's Trilogy *His Dark Materials*, *Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), on the one hand, and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000): *The Story of a Childhood* and *The Story of a Return,* on the other hand. Both novels use the quest of a female character (although in Pullman's trilogy we have the quest of a

female character and a male character simultaneously, I will focus just on its female character to be able to compare with Satrapi's female character's quest in *Persepolis*), as a primary narrative structure to depict the formation of subjectivity.

Philip Pullman (born in 1946) is an English writer. He is the author of several best-selling books, most notably the fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials* and the fictionalised biography of Jesus, *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*. *His Dark Materials* is a trilogy consisting of *Northern Lights* (titled *The Golden Compass* in North America), *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*. *Northern Lights* won the Carnegie Medal for children's fiction in the UK in 1995. *The Amber Spyglass* was awarded both 2001 Whitbread Prize for best children's book and the Whitbread Book of the Year prize in January 2002, the first children's book to receive that award. The series won popular acclaim in late 2003, taking third place in the BBC's Big Read poll. It follows the coming of age of two children, Lyra Belacqua and Will Parry, as they wander through a series of parallel universes. The fantasy elements include witches and armoured polar bears, but the trilogy also alludes to ideas from physics, cosmology, philosophy and theology. The trilogy functions in part as a retelling and inversion of John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*, with Pullman praising humanity for what Milton saw as its most tragic failing, original sin, although Milton's mixed feelings on this topic can also be glimpsed through Pullman's text.

Marjane Satrapi (مرجان ساتراپی) (born in 1969) is an Iranian-born French graphic novelist, cartoonist, illustrator, film director, and children's book author. She is a regular contributor to magazines and newspapers throughout the world. In addition to *Persepolis,* she is the author of *Embroideries*, *Chicken with Plums*, and several children's books. *Persepolis* is

Satrapi's best-selling, internationally acclaimed memoir-in-comic-strips. It is the story of Satrapi's unforgettable childhood and coming of age within a large and loving family in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution; of the contradictions between private and public life in a country plagued by political upheaval; of her high school years in Vienna facing the trials of adolescence far from her family; of her homecoming- both sweet and terrible; and finally, of her self-imposed exile from her beloved homeland. It is the chronicle of a girlhood and adolescence at once outrageous and familiar, a young life entwined with the history of her country yet filled with the universal trials and joys of growing up.

The two female characters of these two novels are represented as constructed intertextually and fragmented. Their stories express a quest for a sense of identity which is stable, coherent, unique and whole. The criterion for selecting these two novels is determined by my interests in the works of Bakhtin's dialogism on the formation of subjectivity in adolescent literature. There are three main narrative strategies that are the versions of the quest narrative in these two novels that I am concerned with. The first narrative strategy to which I will refer in chapter two is intertextuality. This term covers literary and cultural texts, discourses and genres used to construct fictions, but my focus here is on its use to represent female subjectivity. I will explore the female subjectivity and illustrate how the two adolescent main characters in question (Lyra and Marjane) can expose the gendering of the discourses of femininity in two different cultures. I will take the concept of a "discourse of femininity'" from Dorothy E. Smith, though in applying it to these fictional representations I will narrow its scope of reference. Through their different uses of intertextuality, I will foreground the dialogic structuring of the narrative discourse to explore the female identity of these two characters. I will explore firstly, how Pullman and Satrapi create

their works in a dialogue, implicitly or explicitly, with traditional literary stories and myths from their own cultures. I will consider the effect of this dialogue on the subjectivity formation of their female characters. I will also analyze the manner in which the two authors enter into dialogue with the genres of what is called the tradition of children's literature to construct their female characters. In this connection, I will see to answer the question of whether or not the writers reproduce plots implicit in genres of the past or challenge them in order to create a new heroine. And finally, I will examine other examples of intertextuality with social and cultural discourses, in order to examine whether these two authors are successful in challenging the patriarchal discourses of their cultures.

Chapter 3 outlines Bakhtin's approaches to the relationship between the self and the other and the representation of interpersonal relations in narrative. The discussions of these two novels focus on the use of the quest motif. The formation of subjectivity is represented as a "quest for the self", and the double, or doppelgänger. "The double, or doppelgänger, is used to represent intersubjective relationships between self and other as an internalized dialogue and the internal fragmentation of the split subject" (*Ideologies of Identity* 68). This motif is used to express the idea that "a sense of personal identity is shaped by a relation to an other and to represent a dialogue between different conceptions of the subject, namely the ideas of an essential subject, a subject constructed through interpersonal relations and social processes, and a split or fragmented subject" (*Ideologies of Identity* 68). The two female characters under discussion are seen to experience cultural or psychological displacement or marginalization. "Ideas of selfhood are constructed within specific social, linguistic and historical contexts, characters who are displaced of their familiar surroundings are depicted as some form of identity transformation or crisis.

Displacement can effect a fragmentation of the subject and social and cultural alienation"
(*Ideologies of Identity* 69). I will focus on the sociocultural influences on subjectivity, with
particular attention to displacement as another narrative strategy used in these two novels. I will
explore in the first part, how the individual's identity is formed in dialogue with others. Who is or
who are the other(s) or double(s) of these two female characters whom they define themselves
with? What is the role of this double in forming their subjectivities? Is it oppositional,
complementary or developmental? In the second part, I will explore the influence of
displacement on the formation of subjectivity of these two characters. While individual's identity
is formed in dialogue with social discourses, ideologies and practices, what will happen when a
young adult is displaced? Are Lyra and Marjane represented as more actively involved in, and
empowered by, the process through which they are constructed or are they represented as more
passively constructed and disempowered by the social contexts in which they are displaced?

In chapter 4, I will compare and contrast these two novels, in order to find the similarities
and differences in the representation of selfhood or formation of subjectivity shown in Eastern
and Western cultures. I will explore how subjectivity is represented in Marjane Satrapi's
Persepolis and draw some comparisons with the thematically analogous Philip Pullman's trilogy
His Dark Materials. Differing understandings of subjectivity can be observed in the
representations of the two female characters in these two books.

Subjectivity in Children's Literature

In all cultures, adolescent novels frequently show a concern to depict ideas about personal growth, maturation and the development of concepts of selfhood or in short the formation of subjectivity. As Stephens writes, "Attention to the representation of subjectivity in literature enables us to consider how values are formed and changed, how emotions are cultivated, and how maturation is experienced" (*The Politics* 1). Because subjectivities emerge in social contexts, they vary from place to place. I am centrally concerned with the images of selfhood and the formation of subjectivity that adolescent fictions offer their readers in different cultures, and especially the interactions between selfhood, social and cultural forces, ideologies and other selves in the West and East. This review will explore books and articles written in the field of subjectivity in children's and young adults books that are related to my research and that I have found worthwhile in this regard.

Key influences on the formulation of conceptions of subjectivity in children's literature scholarship have come from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Lacan and Linda Hutcheon on postmodernism (*The Politics* 2). Bakhtin's theories, such as polyphony, heteroglossia, dialogism, monologism, intertextuality and the carnivalesque in literature, occupy a central place for studying subjectivity in children and young adult books and finding selfhood and ideologies behind it. I will follow Bakhtin's theory in my research, but I will focus just on dialogism and its relation to subjectivity as outlined in my introduction and further elaboration. According to McCallum, the rediscovered work of Bakhtin has had a profound influence on theories of subjectivity, language, culture and narrative (*Ideologies of Identity* 9). Bakhtin was a major

proponent of the dialogic construction of subjectivity and of the novel as a dialogic form, and his theories of subjectivity, language and narrative have a significant contribution to make to the study of narrative technique and the representation of subjectivity in children's and adolescent fiction.

However, as Stephens points out there have been very few studies of subjectivity in relation to children's and young Adult Literature and these have either explicitly or implicitly shaped discourse in the field (*The Politics* 2).The concept of subjectivity was first discussed in the field of children's literature in John Stephens's *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* and in an article by Roberta Seelinger Trites, "Claiming the Treasures: Patricia MacLachlan's Organic Postmodernism." Stephens in this book examines children's fiction in relation to the ideology that operates explicitly or implicitly. He argues that all fiction written for children carries ideology and is intended to help a set of beliefs and values that will shape the child reader's socio cultural development. Much of this ideology is not readily visible, and Stephens has combined elements of narrative theory and critical linguistics to examine and make visible this component of children's fiction. However, Stephen's work will be of interest to reader-response theorists and practitioners, because he emphasizes more on the concept of subjectivity, the positions readers can take in interpreting texts.

Another important book in this field in connection to my argument, is Robyn McCallum's *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity.* This book follows Maria Nikolajeva's *Children's Literature Comes of Age* in the Garland series as a critical treatment of literature for young. McCallum's book considers literature for young people and children and uses a Bakhtinian approach; she focuses exclusively on the examination of the

representation of dialogic conception of subjectivity in adolescent and children's fiction. In fact, McCallum's book is the most complete and focused examination of Bakhtin's theories of novelistic discourse in literature for the young. McCallum writes in her book, *Ideologies of Identity,* that concepts of personal identity and selfhood are formed in dialogue with others, with language and with society. Ideas about and images of the self are defined in relation to existing social codes, structures and practices but also are the product of conscious actions (7). McCallum believes that these issues are of major relevance to an understanding of adolescent fiction, because "ideas about and representations of subjectivity are always inherent in the central concerns of this kind of fiction": that is, in connection with personal growth and maturation, as well as the relationship between the self and others, and between individuals and the world, society or the past (256). This book focuses on two main aspects of adolescent fiction: the representation of subjectivity as being dialogically constructed through interrelationships with others through language, and in relation to social and cultural forces on the one hand; and on the other hand, ideologies and the use of dialogical narrative strategies to structure narratives, to represent subjectivity and intersubjectivity in Australian fiction written for adolescents. Nikolajeva's and McCallum's books make excellent reading alongside each other. In fact, the real strength of McCallum's book is the way the author manages to divide the strands of subjectivity, narrativity, dialogism, and adolescent fiction. In relation to my two novels, I have tried to use the way McCallum applies Bakhtinian theory in particular, dialogism, and its relation to subjectivity in reading Australian novels especially in chapters 3 and 4.

Nikolajeva in *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* invites scholars of literature written for children to embrace "Bakhtin's overall view of literature

as carnival, a symbolic representation of a socially liberating process, a subversive, that is, disgui sed, interrogation of authorities" (10). Stephens writes, "This work aspires to be a general theory for children's literature, there is no need to define subjectivity here and the term itself rarely appears, although readers should now know it is implicit in conceptualizations such as 'how writers can empower and disempower fictive children' (*The Politics* 3). Nikolajeva explores how writers of literature for children have used specific genres, settings, characters, and narrative devices such as voice, focalization, and subjectivity to confirm or interrogate power structures in their texts. This book is a powerful call for a specific theoretical framework for approaching children's literature that deals with subjectivity from another angle.

I have also found John Stephen's and Robyn McCallum's essays very fruitful specially McCallum's "Other Selves: Subjectivity and Doppelganger in Australian Adolescent Fiction" and Stephens and McCallum's "Discourses of Femininity and the Intertextual Construction of Feminist Reading Positions".

One shortcoming of research in this area is that children's studies in English is mainly a monolingual phenomenon, mostly dealing with children's literature in English-speaking countries and referring to critical material written in English. But *Subjectivity in Asian Children's Literature and Film: Global Theories and Implications* (2013) by John Stephens is a different and valuable book in this field that brings together essays by scholars from several Asian countries -- Japan, India, Pakistan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Australia, Thailand, and The Philippines -- to address subjectivities in fiction and film within frameworks that include social change, multiculturalism, post-colonialism, and globalization. Few scholars of western children's literature have considered what subjectivity entails in children's literature and film from Asian

countries. This volume has informed me both about the countries represented and about my

country (Iran), and it was this book that brought to my mind the idea of working on subjectivity

in adolescent literature in West and East.

Chapter II

Femininity and the Intertextual Construction of Female Characters

Both novels, *Persepolis* and the trilogy of *His Dark Materials* are constructed intertextually, out

of a dialogue between the current narratives and particular texts and authors or more general plots

implicit in the genres that the narratives use. Indeed, they are in communication with multiple

works. As Stephens argues, "when compared with general literature, the literature produced for

children contains a much larger proportion of retold stories" (*Retelling Stories* 3). I take the

concept of a discourse of femininity from Dorothy E. Smith, though in applying it I narrow its

reference. Smith views femininity as "a social organization of relations among women and

between women and men which is mediated by texts, that is, by the materially fixed forms of

printed writing and images" (39). The discourse of femininity has no particular local source and

is not embodied or produced by individuals, but individuals orient themselves to the order of the

discourse in talk, writing, creating images (whether in texts or on their bodies), produced and

determined by the ongoing order, which is their concerted accomplishment and arises in the

concerting (Smith 4o). Stephens and McCallum write, "The process Smith describes coincides

with Althusser's interpellation, or the summoning of individuals into a place within a structure

and an identity in which they seem to recognize themselves" (*Discourse of Femininity*131).

> Femininity is not simply an effect of patriarchal oppression, though patriarchal
>
> practices and assumptions play major roles in orienting female subjectivities
>
> toward a feminine discourse centered on submission to authority (the voice of the

father), conformity to codes for appearance and behavior that define the self as

feminine, complicity with restricted career choices determined by others, and

subordination of the self in romantic love relationships. (*Discourse of Femininity*

131)

The discourse of femininity according to Smith, is always already intertextual because it

is a complex of textual relations among magazines, television, advertisements, shop and fashion

displays, and books (41). In this chapter, I illustrate how Philip Pullman and Marjane Satrapi in

their adolescent novels expose femininity or female subjectivity in the characters of their main

protagonists, and explore how a discourse of femininity is in dialogue with culturally privileged

texts, specific literary texts, general plots implicit in the genres and social and cultural discourses.

"With these dialogic strategies, writers challenge the ideological gendering both of genres and of

social practices directed at young people, exposing the processes whereby femininity is

constructed and naturalized in texts and enabling more autonomous forms of female subjectivity

to be expressed" (*Discourse of Femininity* 131). Then, I show whether or not the authors have

really succeeded in creating female characters that transcend traditional gender roles of their own

cultures of West and East. I will focus just on the main female characters Lyra and Marjane.

Lyra, the New Eve

As I mentioned, intertextual links are often more evident in children's texts than in mainstream

literature, and we see it clearly in Pullman's trilogy. My analysis will start by focusing upon how

Pullman creates his trilogy in an open dialogue with traditional stories and plots implicit in the

genres of the past (what might be loosely called the tradition of children's literature) to construct his female character, Lyra Belacqua. At the same time, I will continue with other examples of intertextuality with social and cultural discourses, in order to examine whether Pullman is able to challenge these patriarchal discourses.

In the acknowledgements that end *The Amber Spyglass,* and thus the entire *His Dark Materials* trilogy, Philip Pullman makes this statement about his writing process: "I have stolen ideas from every book I have ever read. My principle in researching for a novel is read like a butterfly, write like a bee, and if this story contains any honey, it is entirely because of the quality of the nectar I found in the work of better writers" (AS 549). He mentions three writers in particular: Heinrich von Kleist and his essay "On the Marionette Theatre" which explores a metaphor for the Fall of man; John Milton, for *Paradise lost;* and William Blake, whose poetry feeds Pullman's ideas about innocence and experience, his picture of the Authority and his interpretation of *Paradise Lost* (Butler and Halsdorf 4). The narrative of all texts are centrally concerned with the biblical story of the Fall, which each takes as a source.

Stephens and McCallum make it clear that the myth of the Fall has had two primary ideological functions. First, it constructs an authority paradigm for a hierarchical relation between individuals and God. Second, the Fall sets up a gender paradigm (*Retelling Stories* 37). Pullman has often stated that the purpose of his work is to re-imagine the Judeo-Christian myth of the Fall as "absolutely essential": "It's the best thing, the most important thing that ever happened to us, and if we had our heads straight on this issue, we would have churches dedicated to Eve instead of the Virgin Mary" (Parsons and Nicholson 119). As LaHaie writes, Pullman works against Christianity, and he attempts to rewrite the most patriarchal of all Judeo-Christian stories which

was used by the Christian church and by political and social institutions to limit women for

centuries (83). In fact, "Pullman invents a modern version of Genesis: the story of Eve and Adam

committing Original Sin in the Garden of Eden – but instead of condemning this Fall of Man the

trilogy celebrates mankind's fall into knowledge and consciousness" (Sundman 1). The

protagonist of this trilogy is Lyra, a young girl who is prophesied to play a great part in the war

between science and religion by taking the role of the second Eve and so again falling into

temptation, thereby hindering Dust (Knowledge) from draining out from existence[1]. "Lyra is the

girl who is to save the world. Because she does not know of this prophesy, however, she will be

left to respond as she sees fit to the situations in which she finds herself. She can fulfil her destiny

only by being free to make her own way" (Freitas and King 98).

　　　　Paradise Lost is the overarching intertext for *His Dark Materials*. The themes and

narrative structure of Milton's epic poem directly inspired Pullman's trilogy. The misogynic

nature of the old Christian story that Milton builds on creates a separation between the sexes: it is

the earthly myth that obscures the views of the two worlds—the male and the female—coming

between their orbits of understanding (Whitfield 59). A lot of critics, such as Sandra Gilbert and

Susan Gubar have reached a "conclusion that his [Milton's] works are staunchly antifeminist"

(qtd in Al-Badarneh 105) or "consistently masculinist" (105). They believe that Eve is a

patriarchal ideal of womanhood deprived of her autonomous identity and trained to be obedient

to men by male power" (Tanimoto 72). Others, like Diane Kelsey McColley and William

Shullenberger, attempt to re-evaluate Eve's feminine quality and reveal her individual virtue

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[1] Dust or Rusakov Particles are elementary particles associated with consciousness. Because Dust is attracted to consciousness, especially after maturation, the Church within the series associates it with original sin and seeks its end.

(Tanimoto 72). Although Milton's patriarchal ideas about Eve's secondariness, inequality, inferiority and subjection to Adam are clear in his work, Eve's liberty, independence, her desire for knowledge, and Adam's need for her should be considered. In the course of the epic, Eve comes to achieve her equality to Adam through establishing her own freedom, self-will, and self-judgment (Al-Badarneh 105). Thus, Milton's Eve is not a demonic character who seeks liberty like Satan, nor is she a servant to patriarchal Adam. On the contrary, she is intelligent, elegant, beautiful and innocent. Just after the Fall, Eve perceives her position as inferior to Adam's and the necessity to seek freedom. McColley in her book *Milton's Eve* suggests that Eve's departure from narcissistic self- love and her choice to be Adam's obedient wife are actions of her own free will (32). Shullenberger distinguish Eve's virtues from Adam's, and regards hers as feminine and maternal virtues (qtd in Tanimoto 73). Whitfield argues:

> "Although Eve is depicted as slightly inferior to Adam and must submit to his
> will, she shows that she is the first human to have wisdom as a virtue, the first to
> truly want to know, even in spite of Milton's attempts to taint her language,
> without her, God's plan couldn't work; free will wouldn't have been exercised.
> True, she is given the role Mother of the Human Race and mother of the seed that
> will bruise the head of the serpent; however, the scale is tipped to emphasize her
> wrongdoing, her wanting to know, to be equal or surpass." (61)

I agree with Squires when he says "Pullman follows Blake's line on Milton that Milton was of the Devil's party without knowing it. [...] [Pullman sets out in the trilogy] to reverse the morality of the biblical Fall and to celebrate knowledge, consciousness and sexuality" (119). The critical debate about *Paradise Lost* – "whether it succeeds in its stated aim to justify the ways of

God to men or rather, depicts God and Christianity as essentially cruel, free will as a trap for humankind and the human desire for knowledge as wrong- is a central theme in *His Dark Materials*. Yet Pullman's rewriting of the Bible and *Paradise Lost* is explicitly anti-God and pro-temptation, with the Fall as completely essential and his chosen position as "of the Devil's party" an intentional ideology" (Squires 120). Pullman's work reassesses Eve's actions, and as Pat Pinsent argues, "if the Fall is not seen as a disaster but as a necessary stage in human evolution, the whole notion of sin in general, and original sin in particular, comes to be seen in a different way, as a means to enlightenment and self-knowledge rather than as a major offense against God" (203). Therefore, in contrast to the romantic reading of Satan as the true hero of *Paradise Lost,* Halten affirms and suggests Pullman would agree that the true hero is Eve, with Adam in a key ancillary role (88). Accordingly, Pullman makes "a new Eve the very savior of humanity" (Sundman 1).

Lyra is the new Eve, "Mother of us all" or, as Donna Freitas and Jason King explain, "though she does not physically give birth to children, Lyra re-opens the door to a future in which every intelligent being can truly be alive rather than being trapped in a passionless and deterministic universe like a mindless lump of matter" (136). Pinsent writes, If the Fall is regarded ...not as evil deed that demands a redemptive act, but rather as an opening up of the human race to knowledge, much of the abundance of Christian theology devoted to theories of atonement becomes irrelevant (203). Thus the mythical elements of the story impact the extent to which women are empowered because through them Pullman directly addresses the historical impact Christianity has had on women (LaHaie 85).

Pullman as an author of a modern female role — like the other authors in this field — challenges the stereotypes that have commonly burdened female characters in the past who are rendered vulnerable by their youth, beauty and gender. He has also challenged traditional gender hierarchies by giving women central roles in his trilogy: Lyra is our quest hero (Hatlen 79). Pullman's Lyra, as "the archetypal empowered modern female hero, brazen and courageous [...] sets out on a quest, traditionally a male domain" (Halsdorf 128) in the first book, to save her male friend Roger and to find her father. In fact Pullman inverts "the traditional fairytale scheme of prince saving princess in what Andrew Butler calls resexing of the hero" (Halsdorf 128). She is strong–willed and independent with a thirst for adventure, and she has a tendency to disregard rules and make mischief. Described as a "half-wild, half-civilized girl" (18) "coarse and greedy little savage" (*NL* 37), "she disobeys inter alia by getting into fights, stealing from the market, missing her lessons and exploring off-limit areas of Jordan such as the Retiring Room, a trespass that sets the main events of the story in motion" (Halsdorf 128). Despite being a girl she is a leader among the children: her best friend Roger follows her devotedly, and it is Lyra's raiders (*NL* 37) that vandalize the gyptians' canal – boat. "From being a tomboy, her innate sense of initiative develops into true deeds of valour. She repeatedly masters her fear in dangerous situations to perform heroic acts" (Halsdorf 129), and her intuitive ability to read the alethiometer[2] marks her as one of the most empowered people. At this early stage, Pullman presents Lyra as a kind of fantasy hero. She appears to be destined for greatness, the New Eve; "she is no ordinary girl" (Halsdorf 129).

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[2] The alethiometer is a compass-like device that is used to communicate with Dust and find truthful answers to one's questions.

Solhaug says, "A trait which distinguishes the fantasy genre is the idea of the hero's role. It tends to rely more on a chosen individual to save the world, and the plot often revolves around the hero and how the hero comes into being. The fantastic genre has developed from the tradition of myth and legend" (317). Curti believes 'women have not been absent from these texts, but their role has been that of "the object of a quest or adventure, not the subject' (qtd in Solhaug 317). Accordingly, I see how Lyra fits into the paradigm of the fantastic hero in this trilogy, and how this is in some ways deconstructed. Pullman adds elements of science fiction and myth to his fantasy in order to challenge the outmoded gender tropes with varying degrees of success (LaHaie 105). According to Stephens and McCallum "the mixing of genres is in itself dialogic, as the genres blend and clash with one another" (133). That is why "Pullman relies on science fiction so as to facilitate his creation of empowered females" (LaHaie 79). Matthew Dickerson and David O'Hara, write as follows about *His Dark Materials*: "The books do bear as much or more in common with science fiction than with fantasy" (202). One can draw from this a notion that science fiction introduces us to more modern ideas, whereas fantasy fiction often reinforces binary oppositions and stereotypes. Thus, Pullman's novel constitutes what can be called a hybrid between science fiction and fantasy (Solhaug 317). Solhaug further observes that fantasy fiction often contains female characters, but they are nearly always in the position of object rather than acting as the active subject. Science fiction, on the other hand, "is often considered in connection to postmodern and feminist criticism, where there is a focus on deconstruction, especially on that of binary oppositions" (317). Furthermore, according to Solhaug, "a trait which distinguishes fantasy from science fiction, is the idea of the hero's role. Science fiction tends to rely less on a chosen individual to save the world in a messianic sense, whereas in fantasy, the plot often

revolves around the hero and how the hero comes into being" (317). The deemphasizing of the hero allows science fiction writers greater latitude in shaping characters in ways that do not conform nicely to preconceived binary categories, and also enables to them to escape the demands of fantasy tropes which nearly always place the male protagonist in the position of the "chosen one" or the hero (LaHaie 80).

Lyra, the heroine of *Northern Lights*, has been praised by Hunt and Lenz as "the first believable little girl since Alice" (qtd in Solhaug 318). Maria Nikolajeva talks about the influences myth has had on children's literature. In her analysis, she states that the mythical hero, who is male, moves through monomyth paradigm that underlies many myths worldwide: separation – initiation – return, or home – away – homecoming (Nikolajeva, 2002, 28). Elaborating on these points, she uses a "rite of passage" as a starting point, which leads to the hero's removal from his home. Following this, the hero receives a special task he must do, but in order to fulfill this, the hero must cross a threshold of some kind. The hero faces several trials, and alongside his outer quest, there is also an inner quest for identity. Then we find the subjugation and conquering of a female character, which allows the male to assert his power, before the hero is returned to the point of departure. At this point, if the hero is still a child, there is a "promise of further adventure", where he can "cross the boundaries between the ordinary and the magical world" (30). As Solhaug says, the perimeters shown here can all be linked to Lyra's identity as a mythic or fantasy hero, with the exception of the subjugation of woman (324). However, as Stephens says "evidence of an ideological agenda that explicitly seeks to critique normative categories of gender does not automatically guarantee success. This is because there is a tendency for major genres in children's literature to be endemically gendered in their character

functions, events and outcomes" (17), which we see clearly in constructing Lyra, and her contradictory nature throughout the novel. Although Pullman tries to create Lyra as the myth-hero of the trilogy, as Stephens says, he conforms to the boundaries, rules and patterns of gendering that construct fantasy in most of the scenes where the genre manifests itself. We see this in Lyra's functions and behavior, and the events that happen to her. On the other hand, in the scenes where Pullman resorts to science fiction, he creates a more modern and empowered woman. Solhaug writes about "both rejecting and fulfilling the expectations towards [Lyra]; this in terms of both being a constructed hero, as well as a character, is at the center of the action and makes the foundation of her contradictory nature" (320). I will focus on her contradictory nature as a constructed hero and as a traditional female girl, and explain it in detail.

Lyra is depicted as independent and powerful; she moves beyond passivity and the domestic sphere. Growing up in a super-patriarchal society, she is reluctant to identify with women. We see the individuality of her and her liberty from social and textual discourses of femininity in the first book. She is able to achieve agency within an essentially patriarchal culture, and Pullman frequently challenges the feminine norms of this society. However, this is not entirely consistent. For example, Lyra has no interest for academic life, despite growing up at the prestigious Jordan College in Oxford (in her universe). She believes that the college is a men's world. On the other hand, when Lyra encounters Marisa Coulter, she is "entranced" (62) by her, as Marisa is the first woman ever to impress her. Lyra cannot believe that Mrs Coulter is a Scholar since Lyra, as a product of her culture, truly disapproves of women accessing the male-dominated sphere of education: "She regarded female Scholars with proper Jordan disdain: there

were such people but, poor things, they could never be taken more seriously than animals dressed up and acting a play" (62). As Halsdorf says:

> Lyra's world is extremely patriarchal, dominated by a church that classifies women as inferior to men, and the environment of Jordan in which she is raised reinforces these cultural norms. Her scornful and belittling attitude to female scholars is representative of this society, where women are disempowered, existing as mothers, housekeepers and servants. In any other occupation they are not taken seriously, apart from rare exceptions such as Mrs Coulter, or else they are alienated, seen as the other, the enemy like the witches. (133)

Shortly thereafter Lyra goes to live with Mrs. Coulter - her biological mother - and is educated not only in "the rudiments of geography and mathematics" (*NL* 82) but also in "[h]ow to wash one's own hair; how to judge which colors suited one; how to say no in such a charming way that no offense was given; how to put on lipstick, powder, scent" (*NL* 83). In other words, Lyra learns the codes for appearance and behavior in order to be a seemingly traditional, patriarchally determined young woman. This education aims to produce "ladies, as well-dressed as Mrs Coulter if not so beautiful or accomplished: women so unlike female scholars or gyptian boat-mothers or college servants as almost to be a new sex altogether, one with *dangerous* powers and qualities such as elegance, charm and grace" (*NL* 74). These lessons are fundamentally opposed to the way in which Lyra behaved before because they are about using what looks like female weakness to achieve strength - indirectly. Pullman seems to imply that this is how women can be dangerous (LaHaie 90). Lyra soon feels like "a universal pet" (*NL* 79) and discovers that she does not like Mrs Coulter's nature and rebels against this devious feminine

world and runs away. She wants to achieve direct agency which can also involve deception. Although, Lyra does not like Mrs. Coulter's use of feminine wiles, "we get references to Lyra lying and telling stories to her own advantage" (Squires, 57) more in the second book of *His Dark Materials* and also several times in *Northern Lights*. People talk of her as the betrayer (Pullman 29); later she is described by Ma Costa as having "witch-oil in her soul", and being "deceptive" (*NL*100). "The capacity for deception", as Halsdorf writes, "is another attribute often allocated to femininity" (130). Indeed, she lies frequently and successfully, to begin with for fun and love of invention, to impress her friends or to avoid punishment and as a defense mechanism against insecurities she manifests because she lacks parents (Halsdrof 130). However, this gives the reader certain expectations towards the plot and Lyra's character. The hero in fantasy tends to be close to flawless, making Lyra look like an anti-hero of sorts (Solhaug 321). Although Lyra's lying is not presented as a negative trait, her skillful lying not only helps her out of compromising situations, but she uses deception for self-protection when she assumes another identity at Bolvangar, and for aiding Iorek — an act that earns her the sobriquet Silvertongue (*NL* 348). The point is that Lyra's deceptions are different from those of Mrs Coulter in that they do not stem from the idea of the female as a pretty trap.   Instead, Lyra deceives more as a rogue, and in that sense equals any male rogue in a literary gallery that includes numerous predecessors. She is a female picaro in many ways. However, in the end she realizes the importance of truth, and throughout the story she intuitively discerns that she should not lie. This is part of her maturation process. It is instructive that Lyra is the bearer of a truth-revealing device, the alethiometer — a mise en abyme of her essential or deep nature. In this connection, it ought to be emphasized that, unlike her Machiavellian mother, Lyra does not use the manipulative qualities she has inherited

and learned from Mrs. Coulter to exploit others and seize power. Lyra represents "a certain fluidity with respect to gender stereotypes rather than rigidity" (Halsdrof 131), in the first book.

The second book *The Subtle Knife* also includes Lyra as a major character but shifts her to the second place after Will. With the arrival of Will in *The Subtle Knife* and the move of the action to alternate worlds (as is also the case in *Amber Spyglass)*, Pullman reinforces traditional gender roles more than before, and we see patriarchal discourse that presents the female and female experience as something inferior and subordinate to the male realm. Lyra starts out as the obvious hero in *Northern Lights* who forcefully and bravely drives the plot forward through her intention to save her friend Roger. However, thereafter she has to start sharing centerstage with Will in the following book, and, suddenly, in the third book, "her status as a myth-hero seems significantly reduced and almost taken over by Will, while she is depicted as a maiden in need of a brave man's rescue" (Sundman 14). Pugh points out how unusual it is "[f]or a mythic hero to engage in a mutually erotic relationship with a lover as an equal" (64); thus, as I mentioned above, Lyra loses much of the independence and confidence that made her so appealing throughout the first novel. Now we have Will who, as a male mythic hero, imposes by his very presence more traditional divisions of gender roles typical of the fantasy genre. Ultimately, Lyra is unable to construct herself consistently as autonomous agent in a cultural discourse that does not valorize empowered and independent women. Pugh separates the concepts of fairy tale hero and mythic hero, meaning that the former typically strives to accomplish victory within a small and personal context, for example within his or her family, and the latter — in a larger, broader social context. In the return stage, the hero of monomyth always brings back transformational power to his community, i.e., his transformation (often moral) ends up being the transformation

of his entire community. Pugh points out that the fairy tale-hero is more likely to be female and the myth-hero more likely to be male (63) although I should add that there many male fairy tale heroes as well, e.g., the young miller's son in *Puss in Boots* by the Brothers Grimm. His is a case in point: after triumphing against all odds, he becomes rich and marries the king's daughter. But he does not transform his community, among other reasons because he does not have one. Although Pullman chooses to create a female mythic hero in his adventure story — as it is Lyra who ends up destined to save the world and humanity through her monomythic experience — she acts as a fairy tale hero or even traditional female character in some parts of the trilogy. The results is female empowerment occurring in fits and starts. However, keeping company with such ground-breaking female characters as Asgtrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking, Lyra still appears as a pioneer in a male-dominated fictional world.

When Lyra encounters Will in *The Subtle Knife* she finds that he "was strong and stocky, not formed as a grown man, of course, because he wasn't much older than she was, but he'd be powerful one day" (*SK* 377). Lyra notices the strength in his eyes (*AS* 380) as he commands the angels Bauch and Balthamos, and even Iorek admits to Lyra: "He outfaced me. I thought no one could ever do that" (*SK* 207). Again, we meet this "innate powerfulness that seems to come naturally with manhood, and she learns that though they are the same age, he is more responsible and mature than she is" (Sundman 13), which she comments: "'If you start behaving like a grown-up, the Spectres'll get you,' she said, but she didn't know whether she could tease him yet, or whether she should be afraid of him" (*SK* 407). On the other hand, Lyra is described as lost and she becomes increasingly dependent on Will to help her on the journey. Lyra has "become this woman who seems not to know what to do and has to keep asking Will, What shall we do

now?" (Parsons and Nicholson 127). She even seems to forget the earlier knowledge she gained from Mrs. Coulter when Will tells her to wash her hair and she says, "I dunno how...I never washed my hair. The housekeeper done it at Jordan, and then I never needed to after that" (*SK* 62). Throughout the last two books, Will is forced to fight and bully in order to save himself, and more importantly to save Lyra, even though he is reluctant to do so. Lyra, on the other hand, often expresses a wish to kill someone, particularly in the first novel, but she never does. The fact is that Will, not Lyra, owns the subtle knife, in spite of the fact that the hero is supposed to be Lyra. It is as if the trilogy starts in one mode of discourse, namely, feminist, but then slips into something much more traditional.

The events and characters' functions have a tendency to be gendered as it is implicit in many plots of the fantasy genre, which is a reflection of social discourses. Zettel argues, "I'm not sure I understand this choice. Lyra wishes to kill her enemies numerous times but never quite gets around to it; Will, who just wants to go home, kills repeatedly. In his rejection and rework of cliché, Pullman commits one of the biggest—the male warrior and the female instigator" (45). Therefore, Will, as the one with the knife and greater physical strength, assumes the dominant role of warrior and decision maker and becomes Lyra's protector in many ways. While Lyra apparently looks upon Will with immediate respect, Will is a bit less respectful, ordering her to do the dishes, change her clothes and wash her hair, as he does not want her to attract attention when they enter into his Oxford, and warning her, "if you give me away, I'll kill you" (*SK* 405). In fact, Will's presence seems to infantilize Lyra, at times making her a traditional damsel in distress figure - no different from a fairy tale character from the world of the Brothers Grimm.

The focus of the story also shifts from Lyra's quest to Will's, as the alethiometer tells her that her task is to help him, rather than continue with her own concerns (*SK* 421). Lyra promises him that "I'm only going to do what you ask, from now on'" (542), implying that she will now only use the alethiometer when he requests it, and is thus subordinating herself on behalf of his, now more important, quest. As the surface story refers to her as a new "Eve", she becomes close to the original Eve - particularly in subordinating her original intentions to romantic love. Lyra is "the one who came before" and who will "come again" (*SK* 39) and who is "Eve, again" (314). She is "in the position of Eve, the wife of Adam, the mother of us all" (*AS* 67). Although the author might have chosen Lilith - Adam's apocryphal "feminist" consort who shows much more agency and independence according to various traditions - Pullman decided to stick with Eve who carries a tremendous amount of patriarchal baggage. LaHaie says "as Eve is not the equal of Adam in the traditional stories, neither is Lyra the equal of Will" (92). Rachel Falconer has also detected this inequality between Lyra and Will, which she exemplifies with a scene in which Lyra understands how to use the subtle knife faster than Will, but not wanting to tell him what to do, she stays quiet (508). And so Will gradually, almost imperceptibly, turns into the protagonist, with Lyra slipping into a more passive, traditional female position. Falconer points out that Lyra Exercises conventional feminine wiles (81). Falconer also comments, "Indeed Lyra surpasses even Milton's prelapsarian Eve in her deference to Adam, so much that one wonders if Lyra's exaggerated performance is meant to underline that she is acting, rather than inhabiting, the dutiful wifely role" (82).

Therefore, although Mary Harris Russell writes, "What seemed attractively preeminent to many readers of Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, especially in the first two volumes, was

that Lyra Belacqua was a vibrant young girl-becoming-woman who apparently avoided the fate of far too many women in high fantasy, of being drafted into subaltern service to the patriarchy" (212), Lyra is drafted into subaltern service to the patriarchy in the second and in the third books.

When Will has finally saved Lyra, she again inhabits "the dutiful wifely role", obvious in the scene following their escape: "How lucky Will was that she was awake now to look after him! He was truly fearless, and she admired that beyond measure" (*AS* 790). This subservient stance is a recurring event to such a point that reader might even forget the original feminist Lyra of the first book. The scene where this might be most apparent is when they encounter horrific harpies in the world of the dead: "Will had the girl pressed against his chest, with his shoulder curved over to protect her, and he felt her shaking and sobbing against him" (893) and "Lyra shrank to the ground at once, covering her ears, and Will, knife in hand, crouched over her" (897).

> Lyra undoubtedly displays feminine characteristics as the novel progresses. Her bravery when facing adversity includes compassion, pity and mercy; notably when overcoming her horror and disgust vis-à-vis the hideously mutilated Tony Makarios when others cannot, and even extending kindness to her enemy, the aged Authority. This also hints at an innate protective mother instinct, which is further emphasized as she is, according to the prophecy about her, the new Eve, "Mother of all" (SK 328), though not physically a parent. Little by little we see the most pertinent discourses bear on the experience of a lover and a young girl at the state of becoming. (Halsdorf 130)

Thus, in most parts of the second and third book, Lyra conforms to a stereotypical conception of her roles, both as (future) mate and mother. Butler writes, "Lyra moves from headstrong agent in the first book, via deferential assistant to Will in the second, to the comatose prisoner of Mrs Coulter in the third. She is increasingly subject to the agency of others" (102). At the beginning of *The Amber Spyglass*, Lyra is imprisoned by her mother and drugged into a deep sleep. We have an open dialogue with Sleeping Beauty here because she must await rescue by a young man, although she is not at this stage awoken by a kiss. Squires compares this with the traditional fairy tale design: Lyra is the captured princess and Will — the hero who is coming to save her (127). She is immobilised as an "enchanted sleeper" (the title of the first chapter, which surely brings fairy tales to mind) (645) for approximately one third of the book, and in the meantime Will goes on a long and dangerous journey to find and free her.

On the other hand, we can see the contradictory nature of Lyra in the next scene, where we have an open dialogue with myth. While Lyra is a subaltern and we see the subjugation and submission of her in the Sleeping Beauty scene, the episode in which Lyra and Will journey to the land of the dead intersects with the monomyth plot in which she is replaced by a myth-hero. Once awakened, Lyra becomes Will's partner, and the central accomplishment of the pair is to travel to the land of the dead, which is similar to the Greek underworld rather than to the heaven of the Christian church, and find a way for the spirits' energy to be released back into the world. "Allied to the genre of folk story and fairy tale is that of myth and legend, which is another area that Pullman plunders extensively for *His Dark Materials,* particularly in the form of Greek myth and legend" (Squires 129). The living entering an underworld inhabited by the dead is reminiscent of the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the former going in search of his dead wife,

much as Lyra searches for her lost friend Roger (Squires 129). Had Lyra followed in the footsteps of her biological mother, she would have grown to become a Machiavellian liar and deceiver — narcisstic and self-serving. Instead, after receiving care and love from a foster mother, "Lyra summons her own death and faces the underworld in hope of saving another, and her voluntary separation from the deepest part of her soul rewards her with the courage to integrate the characteristics of the two women who symbolize the goddesses who gathered narcissus flowers alongside Persephone at the time of her abduction" (Bobby 160). It can be argued that, in embracing the monomythic pattern and saving the consciousness of humanity, Lyra regains the agency that she has lost through the transition from the first book into the next two. A return stage where the hero comes back transformed and transforms the community signals autonomy and victory. As Farder Coram says, "To go into the dark of death is a thing we all fear […] But if there's a way out for that part of us that has to go down there, then it makes my heart lighter" (AS 500). Therefore, "in making the decisions that honour her own self and the whole of humanity, and in continuing to look for the symbols that reveal deeper truths, Lyra finds and follows her pathway to bliss. Perhaps, then, *His Dark Materials* is a re-imagination of the myth of Persephone; only in Pullman's rendition Persephone is ascending, finding that through her chosen path of solitude and study she may have the greater impact on all the worlds if she remains in the light" (Bobby 160). In fact, as I mentioned, Lyra is constructed as the woman hero with an inevitable destiny to be a savior whose decisions and actions are supposed to honour herself and the whole of humanity and simultaneously as the woman who waits in the cave to be rescued by a man. As Squires writes:

From the second volume of the trilogy onwards, after meeting Will, Lyra must

unlearn some of her independence. This submission goes alongside Lyra's

growing feelings for Will as the two pass from childhood into adolescence. Lyra's

character softens as the trilogy proceeds and is altered yet further in Lyra's

Oxford. As an illustration of this, *The Amber Spyglass* opens with Lyra

imprisoned, fairy tale like, in a drugged sleep, waiting to be rescued by Will. At

this point she has lost her own volition- her own will- and must rely on those

external to her. Lyra's mission becomes secondary to, and dependent on, Will's,

and her credentials as a feminist protagonist are arguably undermined. She must

learn humility, dependence, trust and love, virtues that make her realize that,

counter to her earlier wishes, she wants things to change, and she does want to

grow up. Lyra's softening is thus represented as part of the inevitable process of

adolescence, whereby the individual becomes increasingly socialized.

Nonetheless, a case could clearly be made that this process shifts her character

away from the feisty attractiveness of the young girl. And yet, it is Lyra's destiny

as the new Eve that implies the plot of *His Dark Materials*, and Pullman's

rewriting of this role makes a different feminist claim. (40-41)

Another obvious intertextual connection used by Pullman is William Blake's *Songs of

Innocence and Experience*. The Songs are about states of mind and human consciousness,

however, their principle of interdependent contrasts is applicable to the question of gender.

"Blake saw these contrary states as opposite sides of the same coin, symbiotic and

complementary rather than negating each other" (Halsdorf 127). He went on to state in *The*

Marriage of Heaven and Hell that "without contraries is no progression", as he "sought to transform the energies generated by conflict into creative energies, moving towards mutual acceptance, reconciliation, harmony" (qtd in Halsdorf 127). Halsdorf believes that "the representation of femininity for Lyra in this trilogy follows a similar pattern, both in constructing the self and in the treatment of gender duality. The trilogy advances equality and mutual respect by celebrating the different genders in their own right, and reconciles the male/female aspects of each individual" (Halsdorf 128). I agree with Halsdorf to some extent, because, as LaHaie says, Lyra's growth and maturity seem inevitable, but she also appears to lose something of the hero in becoming more closely aligned to clear gender stereotypes. When she is compared to Will, her supposed equal, her transgression of gender norms is debatable to an even greater degree (95), to the point where Squires argues, "Lyra's ... transition from girl to adolescent.. .calls into question the characterization of women, both in her trajectory towards love and womanhood and the possible softening of her feminist credentials and in her primary role as the new Eve. In both of these manifestations of her character, gender politics are central and are part of the thematic of *His Dark Materials*" (76).

On the other hand, at the end of the novel, Lyra learns to respect women, accept herself as a woman, and identify with them. Although throughout the last two novels, it is Will who performs those functions of the hero which may be inappropriate for Lyra as a traditional woman character, it is Lyra who can read the alethiometer and has this knowledge as a virtue. It is Lyra who truly wants to know, and at the end she strives to be a scholar to fulfill just her own goals and desires. In fact, she represents Milton's Eve who, through gaining knowledge, is supposed to save human beings as a collective. Like Eve, Lyra rejects her submissive role by giving an apple

from the tree to Will. In fact, Mary's narration of her sexual experience is the spur to Lyra's fulfilling her destiny as Eve. Lyra's growing feelings for Will become apparent as she listens to Mary's story, and it leads to a physical manifestation of that love. Pullman, like Blake (and in accordance with the traditional interpretation of the verb "to know" in Genesis), places sexual energy at the centre of the quest for knowledge, experience and adulthood (O'Sullivan 115). And it is Lyra that starts this quest with Will in an ancillary role. As in the case of the Fall, it becomes the necessary stage for their evolution and becomes a means to enlightenment and self-knowledge. Thus, Pullman reinforces and reinvents Milton's Eve with the same contradictory character, instead of positing an entirely new Eve. They progress from a state of innocence to one of experience, and the consciousness associated with their sexual awakening allows them to save the universe. However, this development does not allow them the opportunity to move completely beyond the traditional roles of femininity and masculinity.

Innocence and experience are central concepts in Pullman's trilogy. Carole Scott refers to "Blake's perception of innocence, experience, and higher innocence as stages of maturity, both physical and spiritual (Scott 103). In his depiction of Lyra's and Will's growing consciousness and experience, Pullman makes such themes central to his own narrative and also establishes links to the third of his major sources — the nineteenth-century German writer Heinrich von Kleist (Squires 122). Kleist's "On the Marionette Theatre" tells of the encounter between the narrator and a dancer. Their discourse on the puppet theatre and their anecdotes of a young man coming to consciousness of his own grace, and so losing it, nourish Pullman's thematic concerns in the trilogy. There is a particular analogy between Kleist's metaphor of the young man who loses his grace through consciousness and Lyra's capacity to read the alethiometer (Squires 123).

Lyra enters into a "calm state" and experiences a sensation of such grace and power that she …felt like a young bird learning to fly" (*NL* 151,152). Her readings are rapid, and her interpretation of its meaning swift. "The adult alethiometer readers rely on numerous interpretive books to read it correctly, whereas Lyra, in her childlike state, needs nothing other than her own mind. At the end of *Amber Spyglass*, however, she loses this capacity shortly after she finds her love for Will, becoming in the process the new Eve" (Squires 123). As a new Eve, Lyra must fall again by committing the "sin", which here is only seen as a sin by the "evil" church but is otherwise depicted as virtue: sexual awakening and love. This is seen as entering a new consciousness that is to represent "the movement from innocence to experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden" (Frost 319). In this regard, as Wheat says, "Lyra's fall involves falling in love; she does not fall in theology's sense of falling from God's grace" (219). The metaphoric nature of falling becomes a central concept for Pullman who reimagines the semantics behind this word in order to revise thoursands of years of dogma. Lyra discusses her loss with Dame Hannah Relf, the head of St Sophia's College:

> "one day I knew it so well-I could move up and down the symbol-meanings and step from one to another and make all the connections-it was like…" She smiled, and went on, "Well, It was like a monkey in the trees, it was so quick. Then suddenly-nothing. None of it made sense; I couldn't even remember anything except just basic meanings like the anchor means hope and the skull means death. All those thousands of meanings …Gone"

> "They are not gone, though, Lyra", said Dame Hannah. "The books are still in Bodley's library. The scholarship to study them is alive and well." (*AS* 543)

Lyra resolves to relearn how to read the alethiometer, using the methods of scholarship and knowledge. As the angel Xaphania says to her, she first read it by "grace" but can "regain it by work" (*AS* 520). Xaphonia goes on to explain that this second form of reading will be richer as a consequence: "Your reading will be even better then, after a lifetime of thought and effort, because it will come from conscious understanding. Grace attained like that is deeper and fuller than grace that comes freely, and furthermore, once you've gained it, it will never leave you" (*AS* 520). Essentially, this is a transition from making sense of reality through pure emotion to doing it through a mix of emotion and cognition. Finally, Lyra reveals her understanding that, "We have to be all those difficult things like cheerful and kind and curious and patient, and we've got to study and think and work hard, all of us, in all our different worlds" (518) in order to build the "Republic of Heaven" (518). Squires writes, "Lyra's softening is thus represented as part of the inevitable process of adolescence, whereby the individual becomes increasingly socialized. Nonetheless, a case could clearly be made that this process shifts her character away from the feisty attractiveness of the young girl" (41).

To conclude, although Pullman challenges the stereotypes that have commonly burdened female characters in the past and traditional gender hierarchies, the way Lyra comes to interpret herself and the world around her and her behavior are ultimately informed by a male-dominated ideology, brought to life by a male—a dominant literary male—in a field of male-dominated tradition. In fact, the primary purpose of the trilogy is to make Lyra the new Eve, which places her in the position of the first mother from Judeo-Christian tradition. In other words, as LaHaie says, she has been figured by her culture as a replacement for the original female stereotype (107). On the other hand, Lyra is very close to Milton's Eve, as the mother of all human beings;

she re-opens the door to a better future in which every intelligent being can truly be alive. Although she is not independent from social and textual discourses of femininity, she finds a sense of agency that changes her own world, and she finally returns to college with a stronger, more focused sense of self in terms of womanhood and femininity. She is now more modest and dutiful and quite content with settling into her new feminine role. As she now is able to identify with the feminine, she also has a good view of women and can appreciate how "much cleverer, and more interesting, and kindlier" they are (AS 1081). However, "Situated as it is at the crossroads of children's literature and fantasy, *His Dark Materials* fails to take advantage of the freedoms these two genres provide and reinforces current conceptions of children and their role in society" (Moruzi 56). In fact, Pullman strives to give Lyra the role of a fantasy hero, a woman who tries to obtain knowledge for her goals and desire as a savior of humanity, and in this path he challenges the boundaries of femininity to a great extent. However, as Halsdrf argues, despite a widespread view of Pullman as an author who challenges tradition, in the area of gender construction he is not exclusively progressive in outlook but maintains a number of conservative elements in the trilogy (128). Although Pullman does challenge the foundations of Catholic dogma in a major and scandalous way, his deconstruction of the female role in Christian discourse is at best partial.

Marjane, a combination of Persian Myths, along with Islamic and Westernized Woman

In this part of chapter 2, I will focus on how Satrapi creates her graphic novel in an open dialogue with the antiquity of Iranian culture and myths, recent history, Western feminism and plots implicit in the genres of the past in order to construct her female character, Marjane. As Dianat says,

> There are lots of Iranian female authors who attempted to explore and define self in a struggle between modernity and tradition, community and individual, and veiling and unveiling. Satrapi's *Persepolis* is an example of a life narrative which not only embodies her experiences in Iran, Austria, and France, but also reflects social, political, and cultural transformations in the aftermath of the revolution. (111)

Satrapi depicts a modern Iranian female role from childhood to womanhood — a character who is the subject of her life, and writes her life narrative. As Elahi points out, Satrapi first forces her readers to see her autobiographical persona as a complex individual in search of an identity. Secondly, she seeks to identify with this complex individual by seeing her through the frame of the comic book narrative and its panels (315). In this way, Satrapi challenges the stereotypes that have commonly burdened Iranian female characters in the past as "victims of Iranian religious patriarchy" (Basu 3) and victims of their gender in such a society. "Through her attempt to explore different class systems, Satrapi challenges Western stereotypes of the East" (Basu 3). She also challenges traditional gender roles in life narratives and comic books by giving voice to a woman in her quest to find the self. "As women give voice to themselves and their

communities, they collect, articulate, and culturally reconstruct the past, including culture and myth" (Dianat 126). Although "Satrapi's story is told through a female and Iranian perspective, two descriptors that have been—at least historically —infrequently linked within Western discourses, including feminist conversations" (Nabizadeh 153) and although she also "offers readers ideas that have been marginalized and she does it in a form that was itself originally marginalized, the comic (Allison73), this novel is welcomed and read a lot in the world.

Satrapi in her re-evaluation of subjectivity in an essay entitled "How can one be Persian?" writes, "We are set-stuck, really- somewhere between Scheherazade's famed *One Thousand and One Nights* and the bearded terrorist with his manic wife disguised as a crow" (*Persian* 20). She continues, "Iran has extremists for sure, Iran has Scheherazade as well. But first and foremost, Iran has an actual identity, an actual history- and above all, actual people, like me" (*Persian* 23). Barthes asserts through storytelling, "our fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definition, that we create ourselves. We are the stories that we tell ourselves about who we are" (Anderson 196). Like Scheherazade in *One Thousand and One Nights,* Satrapi takes the role of a narrator to create and define herself so as to introduce a real Iranian woman without censorship. The story of *One Thousand and One Nights* starts at a point where the Shahryar (شهریار *Šahryār*, holder of the realm, king) finds out that his wife is unfaithful to him. He kills his wife and resolves to marry a new virgin each day and behead the previous day's wife, so that no spouse would have the chance to be unfaithful to him. Scheherazade decides to narrate a story each night to the King in order to cure his intense desire for killing women and show him the truth. Since her stories always promise more narratives to come, the king is too curious to let this brilliant story-teller die. "*One Thousand and One Nights* is a book in which

narration equals life; and the absence of narration results in death" (Samini 742). Thus, narration

for both Scheherazade and Satrapi is vital. Milani says that "writing about the self was considered

equivalent to a physical unveiling of women" (21) in the traditional society of Iran particularly

after an Islamic revolution. *"*As Scheherazade saves the kingdom from annihilation by offering

herself to the king, Satrapi, by unveiling herself, presents the other side of the coin about

everyday life in Iran. They are not only defining self through their narratives, they also ward off

literal and figurative death. Through their narratives Scheherazade and Satrapi attempt to liberate

nations from misjudgments by teaching their audiences and involving them in their narratives"

(Dianat 112). Thereby, the narration comes to help these female characters to uncover hidden

realities, and provides the possibility of changing these women as others to a familiar self for

readers, through listening to them. Satrapi aims to correct the overwhelming image of women in

chadors and guys with guns in Iran as she claims this image of Iran is far from the truth. Her

narrative attempts to dispel certain Western stereotypes of Iran and introduce the reader to

progressive and liberated segments in Iranian's population (Kahol 18).

Satrapi uses her experiences and memory to narrate her life in the form of a graphic

novel; however, as Dianat says, memory as a product of personal identification and social

commitment is intersubjective and dialogical. Memory could indicate past experiences and also

the changes in an individual (123). Cosslett writes, "Memory can mean both the stories we tell

about our past and the ways in which we are changed by our experience" (4). According to

Spence and Walkerdine the 'notion of unified and stable subjectivity is put under pressure from

memory' (qtd. in Cosslett 8). Barthes also believes that a coherent self is a "fiction, that it must

always involve being seen from a distance, through the perspective of the Other" (Anderson 73).

Anderson also says, "For Barthes, the subject can neither recapture the past, restoring it like a 'monument' nor aim toward some ideal of transcendence in the future: there is no other place of radiant unification which can redeem the subject outside or behind the discourse in which he constructs and deconstructs himself" (71). Annette Kuhn says that "memory . . . has its own modes of expression: these are characterized by the fragmentary, non-linear quality of moments recalled out of time" (qtd. in Cosslett 8). In writing *Persepolis*, it is clear that we have two Marjanes — the one narrating and the one experiencing within discourses of different periods that are in dialogue with each other during the whole of the novel: "Two selves involved in writing of life: the self then and the self now offers Satrapi's journey from girlhood to womanhood" (Dianat 123).

In my examination of this novel, I would like to consider the different genres she has used to narrate her novel. I suggest that not only is this a challenge to stereotypes about women in Iran and Iranians in general but also, according to Ostby "its dialogic approach to highly politicized issues more broadly is informed by a layering of medium and genre that facilitates the transcending of national and cultural biases" (Ostby 560). Satrapi mixes some genres in order to highlight "the universality of experience of an Iranian teenage girl" (Kahol 18). According to Stephens and McCallum, "the mixing of genres is in itself dialogic, as the genres blend and clash with one another" (133). Since the 1970s, women's life writing has gained richness and depth from the production of graphic memoirs such as the underground anthology *Wimmen's Comix Collective* (1972–1992), and more recently — Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragi-Comic* (2006), Julie Doucet's *My New York Diary* (1999), and Aline Kominsky-Crumb's *Need More Love* (2007).

These works demonstrate the ability of visual narratives to agitate, inform, and unsettle assumptions about women's lives and their histories, while representing those histories in new and visually arresting ways. In each case, the author's personal approach to narration informs the aesthetic design of the text. The complex feelings in each autobiographical work, such as feelings of shame and guilt about sexuality, suicide, and disease, are literally given space for visualization, a process that generates creative interventions into understanding survival and subjectivity. The comic's form, then, itself a medium that has gained wider acceptance only in recent decades, seems an ideal platform through which to explore these affective constellations. (Nabizadeh 153-154)

Charles McGrath from The New York Times Magazine points to the growing popularity of graphic novels and asserts that comics are thriving in a climate of "newfound respectability" because "comic books are what novels used to be—an accessible, vernacular form with mass appeal." However, McGrath does little to recognize women in this new literary field and claims that "[t]he graphic novel is a man's world, by and large" (Chute 92). Hillary Chute dismisses McGrath's claim that the graphic novel is "a man's world" in her essay (92). Chute points out that one of the most important phenomena in the emergence of graphic texts as a popular mainstream form is the rise of female writers and artists and, implicitly, the rapid emergence of a popular audience for these writers (qtd in Allison 74). She also refers to *Persepolis*' "political topicality as its reason for success" (Chute 108). Gillian Whitlock and Anna Poletti's use the term "autographics" as "[l]ife narrative fabricated in and through drawing and design using various technologies, modes, and materials" (V).

As one mode of autographic writing, comics offer what I call here a "frame of recognition" for the subjects they portray. By "frame of recognition," I mean first the physical frame—usually in the form of a line—that encloses images and words in comics, and second, the way that these frames are figuratively deployed to redress over determined narratives of marginalized subjectivities, including women's lives. In women's life writing, the work of comics is particularly significant because of the personalized field of vision that the form promotes. (Nabizadeh 153)

In this sense, "comic art can potentially challenge those modes of political or aesthetic representation that naturalize their own worldviews by erasing or obscuring their own frames" (Elahi 314). Graphic memoirs in the work of Marjane Satrapi can negotiate identity in a way that explicitly questions existing forms of ideological and psychosocial framing. This is not to say that comic art is non-ideological. Rather, it is to suggest that the conscious use of pictorial panels can expose and thus deconstruct the ideological frame (Elahi 314). As Hillary Chute suggests, "the types of challenges we see in women's graphic narrative are not found anywhere else—or anywhere else in a post-avant-garde horizon," and part of the political significance of these images lies in their complexity and avoidance of an "obviously correct feminist politics" (*Graphic Women* 4–5). Therefore, Satrapi uses the graphic form to engage readers and to allow them to see complex and subversive content in a genre formerly considered safe and innocuous (Allison 81). In fact, "she takes the simplicity of the genre one step further with her use of stark images rendered in black and white, thus portraying images that appear to be quite clear and underdeveloped. However, she uses the graphic form in a way that promotes not only a new and

more complete understanding of Iran, but also a new and more complete understanding of the readers themselves" (Allison 82). Satrapi writes, "I wanted people in other countries to read *Persepolis*, to see that I grew up just as other children do" ("Writing). The intertexts of *Persepolis* also "reflect the historical and technical openness of the graphic novel form, and *Persepolis* is transformed into a culturally multiperspectival text" (Ostby 559). The reader can observe the subtleties of narrating womanhood in this novel with its careful unraveling of cross-cultural codes and expectations (Nabizadeh 153).

Meanwhile, life narratives by diasporic authors can shape dialogue across cultures. As Whitlock says, life narrative "renegotiates and redefines how we imagine and rehearse cross-cultural encounters and how we know and identify ourselves in relation to others" (Whitlock 10).

> Their memoirs contain the testimony of men and women from the diasporic and exilic communities which challenge established ideas about cultures, tastes and subjectivities. Memoirs have suddenly become relevant in a cosmopolitan, post-modern culture shaped by globalization, transgression and hybridity. The diasporic discourse has cropped up in the form of life narratives against a background of resurgent fundamentalist forms of cultural identification based on religion or nationalism. The purpose of autobiographical writing is to offer alternative narratives to those reified by any single source or by images of mass media. The writers of these life narratives inhabit two worlds and also rope in the global reader. (Kahol 14)

Miller points out that Satrapi's choice of medium is crucial since the visualization of what is invisible, in Chute's terms, is achieved through a graphic style that is elegantly detached

from the immediacy of the sensations and emotions that are portrayed. Furthermore, the wit of

the retrospective narrative text offers a further space for reflection (47-48). Satrapi in the popular

conventions of the bildungsroman, provides for us a graphic novel and "constantly pushes the

boundaries of this constricting framing tradition" (Ostby 563). Each of the nineteen chapters of

this novel contains at least one complete short story and narrates scenes that contribute to the

education of the naïve girl narrator. A central function of the child narrator is to provide the

exiled author a spatiotemporal distance from the events she narrates (growing up amidst

revolution, civil war, war with Iraq), the issues she raises (violence, patriotism, gender, class),

and the cosmopolitan peace she desires (Friedman 36). As Chute explains, Satrapi's highly

stylized and stark representations juxtapose horrific violence with the everyday life of a young

child, drawing simultaneously on the Persian miniature tradition and the European avant-garde

(*The Texture* 99). To create what Chute calls a "graphic narrative" of "witness," Satrapi matches

her child narrator's naiveté with the stylized simplicity of her graphics of violence, torture, and

war (Friedman 26-27). Chute suggests that "[i]mages in comics appear in fragments, just as they

do in actual recollection; this fragmentation, in particular, is a prominent feature of traumatic

memory" (*Graphic Women* 4). Indeed, this fragmentation is also evident in the co-constitutive

relationship between the récitatif—the authorial narrative—and the diegetic text: usually in the

form of speech bubbles, so that most graphic narratives are polyphonic in structure. This creates

space for the past and present to jostle alongside one another on the same page and frequently in

the same panel (Nabizadeh 157). Nabizadeh points out, "This oscillation is complicated further

by the images that accompany the written word, and the slippages in between, which generate

multiple layers of meaning. These attributes are evident in *Persepolis*, with its dramatic yet

playful invocation of a story that moves between past and present" (157) to reveal the complexities of constructing subjectivity as a woman in social and cultural crisis as well as displacement.

The first volume of *Persepolis* depicts Marjane's childhood—set against the 1979 Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). As the story commences, the reader is introduced to Marjane as a schoolgirl, the daughter of middle-class intellectuals, whose school class has recently been compelled to wear the veil under the dictates of the new Islamic Government. "The first volume traces the contours of Marji's life and her growing political consciousness across domestic and public domains subject to heavy surveillance by the new regime. From its opening pages, her story depicts the tensions that permeate daily life after the 1979 Revolution" (Nabizadeh 155-156). The Islamic revolution of 1979 was a turning point for women in the history of Iran. The women participated alongside men in the revolution; however, after that everything changed.

> Iranian women, under Reza Shah's West-oriented reforms, had been enjoying
> many liberties for a long time. In fact, Reza Shah had decreed the forcible
> unveiling of women in 1936. Since the last quarter of the 20th Century militant
> Islam and jihad have been continuously pushing women to the margins. Islamism
> is manifesting itself superficially in the resurgence of the veil, whether willingly
> or forcibly. The Islamist movement projects women's empowerment campaigns as
> leading to western decadent practices, godless secularism, promiscuity and
> weakening of the family unit, labelling it as "Westoxication." In the name of
> religion, several women leaders have been slain, imprisoned, flogged for being

unveiled or improperly veiled or wearing makeup. Women are dictated to in every

sphere of life – their dress, their rights within the family, access to the public

domain and even the right over their bodies. (Kahol 15)

Milani remarks, "A society characterized for centuries by its glorification of masculinity

was witnessing a crisis" (*Words Not Swords* 32) because of Reza Shah's West-oriented reforms.

The notion of masculinity eroded, and the need to reinstate the old gendered system was felt. The

most apt and visible option was available in veiling to highlight the division between the sexes

(Kahol 17).

As a system of visual communication, the veil expresses the gendered identity

unambiguously. It evokes femininity and creates an essential woman who is

presumed to be different from men. The veil is a distinct, almost theatrical visual

emblem. It separates rather than unite the sexes. It dramatizes and polarizes the

difference between men and women. It is a defining female garment. A veiled

woman makes a man, any man, appear more masculine by contrast. (*Words Not

Swords* 33)

The changes and revolution worsened the conditions of women in Iran. Various groups

started to oppress others. For instance, women were forced to wear hijab as a manifestation of

male power over women (Dianat 133). Satrapi depicts in detail how the lives of Iranian women

have been challenged by these political and social changes. In the very first panels of the first

volume, Marjane is lonely and while she is wearing the hijab, she introduces herself: "This is me

when I was 10 years old. This was in 1980" (3). This is the representation of the heroine in the

face of what Ostby calls "homogenizing pressure from both the Iranian regime and Western stereotypes. The Veil dates the story and situates Marjane in the pictorial center of this moment in Iranian history with a headscarf appropriate to the revolutionary era" (563). While the second panel shows four fully-veiled female students, in the left corner Marjane is partially visible with the suggestive caption: "I'm sitting on the far left so you don't see me" (3). Therefore, in this way that she pushes herself outside the frame so that all we see of her is her elbow. This suggests her story is not like that of her peers in this society: "As if she resists being displayed in a stereotypical portrait of Iranian girlhood alongside identically veiled peers" (Ostby 564). Throughout the story, Satrapi depicts the hijab and other restrictions on women's clothes, as well as modes of conduct. She also shows the ways in which these invasions are challenged by the female (and male) characters including herself. In the opening pages, for example, Satrapi depicts her classmates playing with their headscarves as skipping ropes, which foreshadows forms of civil resistance in adulthood. Then we read the traumatic events of Marjane's life, such as the execution of her beloved uncle Anoosh because he is a communist, and the Iran-Iraq War. In an interview, Satrapi explains, "I was born in a country in a certain time, and I was witness to many things. I was a witness to a revolution. I was a witness to war. I was a witness to a huge emigration. I was a witness when I came back" (Leith). The image of the eye on the first page suggests that Satrapi functions as a witness to these social and political events. By witnessing and narrating every day and historical events, Satrapi challenges the existing clichés about Iranian girls as passive and subordinate. She shows how women have resisted and struggled to maintain their independence and freedom and how they have demonstrated against the veil (*Persepolis* 5). The heroine participates actively in all these events and functions as a witness to the war.

"Although the scope of the war is larger than Marjane's, she admits that she has seen 'a few' dead people (*Persepolis* 166). Being a female witness conveys a feminist theme that questions whether a woman's account is equal to a man's. Satrapi challenges the notion and attempts to prove that as a female eyewitness, she is able to offer an honest, accurate, and precise account" (Dianat 120).

Satrapi's disillusionment with the Islamic state centers on its treatment of women with the veil serving as a metonymic trope for a series of legal restrictions that the regime has imposed on women (Friedman 37). Her mother's fury at being threatened with rape by "two fundamentalist bastards" with beards for not wearing the veil (74) emboldens her daughter's public rebellion against the state ((Friedman 37). She tries to defend her rights as a woman, demonstrates with other women against the veil, and gets beaten by the Guardians of the Revolution (76). "For the first time in my life," Marjane says, "I saw violence with my own eyes" (76). Friedman writes, "While the state claims to protect women from rapists by legislating the veil, Marji sees first hand that the state uses the issue of the veil to protect violence against women" (37).

Additionally, in some situations, Marjane is forced to conform to the rules and ideologies of this Islamist society or has to learn how to deal with them. She writes, "I agreed with my mother. I too tried to think only of life. However, it wasn't always easy: at school, they lined us up twice a day to mourn the war dead. They put on funeral marches, and we had to beat our breasts" (95). Likewise, she learns how to pretend that she prays, and she tells lies in some situations. However, while some women become "guardians" of the revolution in order to "arrest women who were improperly veiled" (133), Marjane enjoys wearing her denim with a Michael Jackson button and Nikes. She refers to growing up in a secular and liberal family: "As a family

we were very modern and avant-garde" (6) so Marjane has this opportunity not to conform to codes of appearance and behavior that define the self as feminine in Iranian society after the Islamic revolution. She and her parents are in love with things Western – be it music, clothes, movies or TV programmes. This universalization of experience erases all differences in a gesture of cultural understanding (Kahol 20). Her parents go to Europe sometimes, enjoy Pink Floyd, and are aware of modern cultural movements and books. Although, the parents, like many Iranians, have to compromise in order to live with the new norms, they do not force Marjane to do so. She has her own freedom and at the same time challenges the Islamic government's limitations. She puts her posters of Kim Wilde and Iron Maiden up in her room (131) and listens to and dances with Kim Wilde's song "We're the kids in America whoa" (134). She is similar to many other teenagers in the world.

Constructing subjectivity in such a society with different and opposite discourses for a teenage girl is cumbersome. An exiled Iranian writer Zohreh T. Sullivan identifies the Islamic revolution of Iran as a moment of anger for women (qtd in Kahol 16). The misogynic nature of the Islamic revolution creates a specific separation between its followers and its opponents so that both groups struggle constantly with each other. When the school principal announces that wearing jewelry and jeans is forbidden, Marjane goes to school with a bracelet on. In an ensuing struggle, Marjane hits a teacher, and is expelled from school. After being expelled, and even though she has to move to another school, she is daring enough to object to the teacher's assertion that, "since the Islamic Republic was founded, we no longer have political prisoners" (144). Marjane responds: "We've gone from 3,000 prisoners under the shah to 300,000 under your regime" (144). Marjane is daring and outspoken and has a tendency to disregard rules and

make mischief; she is not shy or quiet which are both qualities expected of a traditional Iranian girl. Her parents support and encourage her to be brave and outspoken. Her father is proud that she is so loud and expressive, but her mother then warns them both that Marjane could be executed. She tells Marjane, "You know what they do to the young girls they arrest? . . . You know it's against the law to kill a virgin . . . a guardian of the revolution marries her . . . and takes her virginity before executing her" (145). Therefore, like many other Iranian girls she learns how to have a double life inside and outside of the home.   This is a form of internal immigration which anticipates her real exile.

In addition to violent events like torture, cinema burnings, shootings — all excesses of the revolution and war — of which she hears every day, there is violence in each childhood story she is told. For example, she hears the story of her grandfather who was put "in a cell filled with water for hours" (24). Szép says, "Violence is Marji's everyday experience, and as such it is part of her construction of identity" (28). She lives with these fears and thinks about them. After listening to the story of her grandfather's life, she writes, "That night I stayed a very long time in the bath. I wanted to know what it felt like to be in a cell with water (25). In another scene where her friend Niloufar is raped and executed (the rape happens because of the superstitious assumption that one cannot execute a virgin), she writes, "All night long, I thought of that phrase: 'To die a martyr is to inject blood into the veins of society.' Niloufar was a real martyr, and her blood certainly did not feed our society's veins" (146). Thus, as Marjane becomes a teenager, she becomes bolder and more disobedient. Marjane writes, "After the death of Neda Baba-Levy my life took a new turn. In 1984, I was fourteen and a rebel. Nothing scared me anymore" (143). Marjane's friend Neda Baba-Levy is killed by a bomb that hits her house. After Marjane sees her

friend's corpse, a completely black panel illustrates her horror: "No scream in the world could have relieved my suffering and my anger" (142), "I learned that you should always shout louder than your aggressor" (143). This becomes part of her identity as a woman. In addition to this, Szép argues that Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* shows that it is nearly impossible to preserve the innocence of childhood during war. The parallel processes of maintaining and losing innocence are illustrated several times (28). Therefore, Marjane has transformed into a disobedient rebel girl that has lost her innocence of childhood to a great extent. In fact, it seems as if she has been raped in a manner of speaking.

Eventually, to secure their daughter's survival outside this fraught setting, Marjane's parents send her to Vienna. Persepolis 2 opens with fourteen-year-old Marjane—the adolescent avatar—describing her arrival in Vienna in 1984. Marjane has come to Austria with the "idea of leaving a religious Iran for an open and secular Europe" (155). In Vienna, she is physically displaced, has a sense of social and cultural displacement and also experiences mental and physical changes. In one scene in book 2, she reads her mother's favourite author, Simone de Beauvoir. Nancy K. Miller notes that in *Persepolis*, "dissident genealogies turn out to be as much a matter of books as of blood" (20). Three small panels portraying Marjane as a child, watching her mother read *Le Deuxième Sexe*, are juxtaposed with two large panels showing the adolescent Marjane. Nancy K. Miller says, Marjane's reading of *The Second Sex* are a sign of Satrapi's affiliation with a long history of feminist engagement, an affiliation that is both transgenerational and transnational (25). In the first panel, she attempts a practical demonstration of an idea from Beauvoir's book, namely, that if only women could urinate standing up, their view of the world would change. This ends in failure but shows her relationship to her mother and other women. In

the second of the two panels, Marjane sits on the toilet and thinks: "As an Iranian woman, before learning to urinate like a man, I needed to learn to become a liberated and emancipated woman" (175). This scene implicitly suggests that Marjane, like her mother and the previous generation of Iranian women, feels defeated by a patriarchal society. She knows that all attempts to reform the female condition — including the Shah's reforms and the revolution — have not been successful so far. Now in a Western country she is looking for a way to reconstruct herself. As Ann Miller says "She ultimately achieves this freedom through her artistic production, which will allow her to symbolize her transnational female experience" (Miller 47-48) but with great effort and after years.

Marjane has to find and construct herself as a woman in different communities with different cultures. However, "her adolescent years spent in Austria are marred by a vacuum that comes from the lack of identity" (Kahol 18). Szép points out, "She is constantly challenging both the Western perception of the Islamic woman and the Western perception of the modern Western woman" (29). As an Iranian woman, she is faced with some clichés in Austria. She is called uneducated, witch, prostitute, and etc. Even her boyfriend's mother tells her that she is "taking advantage of Markus and his situation to obtain an Austrian passport" (220). On the other hand, women who Marjane meets in Austria seem rather naïve, in spite of their freedom, with an emphasis on their sexual freedom. As far as Iranian women are concerned, instead of being veiled, unidentifiable, and oppressed, they are shown as individuals who find ways to show their integrity (Szép 30). As Claudio says "In *Persepolis*, pictures of the veiled woman reject the stereotype of the Muslim voiceless woman" (qtd in Szép 30). Marjane unveils the code-system

behind the aesthetic of covering up. Islamic women in *Persepolis* are constantly pushing the limits by wearing makeup, shorter veils or maintaining a double life (Szép 30).

Due to her unsuccessful romantic relationship, and because she does not find Viennese society's response to her identity crisis compassionate, she decides to return to Tehran. To find her identity, Marjane has experimented with a wide range of roles which contain a mixture of Western and Eastern cultural elements: God's disciple; the prophet; the witness; the punk as allowed by Islamic rule and the punk as allowed by Western freedom; the consumer; the homeless person; and the wife and the divorcee. In the end, she is still overwhelmed. After she returns to Iran, the previous experience of cultural integration with Austrian society creates Marjiane's state of hybridity. However, the "repressive air" (248) of Iran does not give her enough room to construct herself (Szep 30) again. One of the last experiences Marjane has in Iran shows it clearly.

As the best art school graduates in Tehran, Marjane and her husband, Reza, have been chosen to design a "theme park based on Iranian mythological heroes the equivalent of Disneyland" (*Persepolis* 329). Satrapi also "alludes to the transnational suggestiveness of Persian miniatures, particularly those that depict scenes from the Shāhnāmeh, when she constructs panels whose content is deeply ironic or filled with hidden meanings or, in representations of shock or grief, when she does away with frames altogether" (Ostby 564). She re-imagines the myths of *Shāhnāmeh* and takes them as the source for designing the theme park. Many *Shāhnāmeh* Persian miniatures contain expressive or empowering images of female or gender-ambiguous figures who render the epic's male warrior heroes transfixed, spellbound, or otherwise momentarily powerless (Ostby 566). One of the illustrated scenes from the *Shāhnāmeh* is the famous battle of

one of the heroines named Gord Afarid (a champion) against Sohrab (another Iranian hero who is

the commander of the Turanian army). This confrontation delays the Turanian troops who are

marching on Persia. Gord Afarid is a symbol of courage and wisdom for Iranian women. She is,

however, defeated by Sohrāb who realizes that his adversary belongs to the opposite sex when he

succeeds in removing her helmet. He then promptly falls in love with her. Gordāfarid, who does

not see herself as Sohrāb's equal in battle, deceives him by false promises. She takes him up to

the gate of the fortress which she enters, and the gate closes behind her. Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh,

in a study of women in the *Shāhnāmeh*, refers to Gord Afarid as "the first Amazon in the Iranian

national epic"; like her Greek counterparts, Gord Afarid is every bit as fierce and loyal a warrior

as her male equivalents (42). There are many Persian miniature depictions of the moment in

which Sohrab snatches the helmet off Gord Afarid's head to reveal her disguise.

> These illustrations are notable for the fact that Gord Afarid and Sohrab appear
>
> remarkably equal in stature, physical position, and size—he does not outmatch her
>
> physically, and their horses and battle gear are similar. Gord Afarid and Marji as
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> active agents in, rather than passive recipients of, culture and history. The link
>
> between Marji's nightgown and Gord Afarid's tunic suggests that the cross-
>
> cultural vantage point of the epic heroine, both proud of her nation and (as a
>
> resident of the borderland Sapid Dezh) cognizant of the slippery definition of
>
> nationhood, is literally woven into the fabric of her childhood. By turning the
>
> spotlight on Gord Afarid in her imaginatively reconstructed Persia, Marji—and,
>
> by extension, Satrapi—has recovered a powerful indigenous archetype that

directly contravenes assumptions made by both the Islamic Republic and Western readers about timeless female disempowerment in Iran. (Ostby 569)

Marjane needs to show Gord Afarid as she really is. "If Gord Afarid cannot be represented, then Iran's history as Satrapi has experienced it cannot be represented from within" (Ostby 569). The censor guard accepts that "a Gord Afarid in a chador is no longer a Gord Afarid" (331). Marjane finds out that it is impossible to work as an artist with censorship. She now knows, as she herself is expected to be a person she is not, and has to do the things she does not believe, her art works also will be far from the truth. Marjane decides to leave Iran for Paris: "Not having been able to build anything in my country," she narrates, "I prepared to leave it once again'" (339). She is referring to the current climate of censorship and fear that keeps her from preserving, and extending, the tradition of feminism that is latent in Iranian history and culture—from the ancient stories of the *Shāhnāmeh* through Iran's subsequent centuries of pictorial depiction to the amusement park design in the twentieth century and even to the twenty-first century (Ostby 569). The last words of *Persepolis* express desire for freedom: "Freedom had a price." (341). She has to pay for it by not seeing her grandmother at her deathbed. As Ann Miller says, freedom is inseparable from the condition of women generally, the women who as a group still must fight for equal rights along with political freedom from a repressive regime (24).

Although like Gord Afarid, Satrapi is defeated by patriarchal power in the way that it has repressed her aspirations and her hopes for fulfilment, she is still connected to her nation and loves it. "Satrapi makes a distinction between Iran's despotic rulers—whether the Shah or the revolutionary Islamic regime—and the nation of Iran or Persia with which she still identifies" (Friedman 42). There are national identity, culture and literature that she has inherited, cherished

and longed to preserve. The title of Satrapi's narrative, *Persepolis*, indicates her longing for the past (Dianat 112). Satrapi yearns for and seeks to return to the days when Iran was known for its glory: "This old and great civilization has been discussed mostly in connection with fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism . . . I know that this image is far from truth. This is why writing *Persepolis* was so important to me" (*Persepolis* ii). She shows this longing also with her deep relationship with her grandmother in the novel. For Marjane, the embodiment of integrity and femininity is her grandmother: she does not make compromises and always follows what is morally right (Szép 30). The grandmother's message is: "Always keep your dignity and be true to yourself" (150) which haunts her during the painful adolescent years in Vienna. Marjane invokes her grandmother's discourse as the model for her own self–knowledge when she has to reveal her real identity to some students. She lets be known that she is "Iranian and proud of it. [...] For the first time in a year, I felt proud. I finally understood what my grandmother meant. If I wasn't comfortable with myself, I would never be comfortable (197). Even the little rebellious action of changing the model of her uniform, that she starts designing for herself "short head-scarf, wide trousers" "that would please both the administration and the interested parties" (298) reconciles her grandmother and her. Her grandmother states, "It's fear that makes us lose our conscience. It's also what transforms us into cowards" (298). After these words, we read Marjane's reaction: "It is how I recovered my self-esteem and my dignity. For the first time in a long time, I was happy with myself" (298). Moreover, it is again the grandmother who gives Marjane the advice she needs when the heroine breaks down in tears, on the verge of divorcing her husband. Her grandmother cites herself as a model, invoking her own divorce of fifty-five years earlier, "I always told myself that I would be happier alone than with a shit maker!!" (333).

As Ann Miller says, these words bear the wisdom of an earlier generation's experience, and it is the grandmother's advice, based on her own history of non-conformity, that empowers Marjane (Miller 24). The night before Marjane's departure for Europe, her grandmother comes to spend the night at their house. From her vantage point in the bed they share, Marjane observes her grandmother undress; she marvels as the grandmother shakes jasmine flowers out of her bra and the flowers constellate the dark space of the room. "Grandma," the girl asks, "how do you have such round breasts at your age?" Her grandmother explains that she soaks them in a bowl of ice water every morning and night for ten minutes (150). The link between Marjane's nightgown, Gord Afarid's tunic and the grandmother's night dress shows that these three female characters have the same active role in fighting and protecting their dignity. The emphasis on the grandmother's breasts represents her femininity and implicitly suggests her role as the Persian female goddess of fertility "Anahita". Satrapi turns to the motifs of ancient myths to demonstrate the idea that in the past women had greater agency. According to "Iranian Beliefs and Religion" in The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies, Anahita is associated with "fertility, purifying the seed of men, purifying the wombs of women, and encouraging the flow of milk for newborns. As a river divinity, she is responsible for the fertility of the soil and for the growth of crops that nurture both man and beast. She is a beautiful, strong maiden." It is her grandmother who protects her, empowers her to be couragious and nourishes her mind with wisdom of an earlier generation. And it is her legacy as a woman for Satrapi that enables her to "function as a protective deity to preserve Iran's history, culture, and civilization" (Dianat 127).

Chapter III
Dialogism and Subjectivity

Pullman's Trilogy and Satrapi's Persepolis use the quest of their respective main female characters (Lyra and Marjane) as a primary narrative structure to depict the formation of their subjectivity from youth to adulthood. As McCallum says:

> The disparity between the object of the quest and its representation within the
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> narrative discourse implies a dialogue between the idea of the selfhood of an
>
> individual as constructed within a series of provisional subject positions via
>
> specific social and discursive practices, and the self as a unique and essential
>
> entity which exists prior to and in opposition to society. The idea of a unique,
>
> singular and essential self is an assumption which underlies a person's own sense
>
> of, or more specifically desire for, a single and stable personal identity within, and
>
> in relation, to the world and to others. (*Ideologies of Identity* 68)

Lyra's and Marjaneh's quests are situated within a narrative context which represents subjectivity as multiple, fragmented, partial and dependent on social discourses and practices in childhood.   Furthermore, both quests involve displacement. When the two heroines are displaced from their familiar surroundings, identity transformation and/or crisis take place. "Displacement can effect a fragmentation of the subject and social or cultural alienation" (*Ideologies of Identity* 69). The motif of displacement runs through these two novels:

> One way in which the interrelations between individuals, subjectivity, society and
>
> language are explored in narrative is through the social, temporal, cultural or

psychological displacement and alienation characters. Characters are removed
from their familiar surroundings and placed in an environment which is
physically, culturally or linguistically alien. This displacement can also be
psychological, that is, characters, while not physically displaced, experience a
state of alienation from their social surroundings. To the extent that concepts of
selfhood are dependent upon and constructed in relation to social, linguistic and
historical contexts, this displacement of a character can destabilize and place in
question their concepts of personal identity, though it can also be used to assert the
idea of an essential self which transcends social or cultural structures. (*Ideologies
of Identity* 104)

In this chapter, I wish to begin by examining the representation of interpersonal relations,
the relationship between the self and the other.   Next, I will consider the influence of
displacement on the formation of subjectivity in the light of theoretical approaches of Bakhtin.
Bakhtin sees the formation of subjectivity as being dialogical — that is, an individual's identity is
formed in dialogue with others and with social discourses, ideologies and practices (*Other Selves*
17). I will consider the ways of analyzing the use of narrative strategies and motifs in adolescent
fiction, which are often used to explore the idea that a sense of personal identity is shaped by the
other and that subjectivity is multiple and fragmented. I will focus on that other and its effect on
the formation of fragmented subjectivity and maturity and their multiple manifestations. I will
also explore the use of "Displacement", as a narrative strategy in the exploration of relationships
between individuals and social and cultural structures. I will explore whether the selfhood of the
character is represented as separate from, or something transcendent with respect to the social

context from which this character is displaced.   I will seek to determine the ways in which selfhood is represented as constructed and provisional. Characters are represented as more actively involved in, and empowered by, the process through which they are constructed or as more passively constructed and thus constrained within and disempowered by the social contexts in which they are displaced.

The Double and the Quest for Self in *His Dark Materials*

"Since we can never see ourselves directly, we construct a sense of ourselves by appropriating the position of the other, outside the self. This means that subjectivity is grounded in an internal fragmentation and multiplicity. These kinds of ideas are often explored in fiction through the use of the double or doppelganger" (*Other Selves* 17). The double is the situation in which "a character has an imagined or real counterpart or twin who is either a mirror inversion or duplicate of that character and whose presence is crucial for that character's sense of identity" (*Other Selves* 17). The double is a common motif in fantasy fiction, where it is used to represent selfhood as fragmented and plural, but it is also used in realist fiction to explore the social construction of subjectivity. The relationship between the character and its double is analogous with Bakhtinian conceptions of the relation between self and other (*Other Selves* 17-18). In this connection, a Batkhtinian examination of the double in Pullman's trilogy — in particular the relation between self and other — is appropriate. Pullman uses the double in this trilogy to explore both the relations between subjectivity and the other and those between the individual and society.

The relationship between a character and its double is usually oppositional and typically has a moral function. Freud's ideas are useful in analyzing the function of the double in novels in fantasy genres, where the double is frequently a symbolic manifestation of a character's alter ego and often represents that character's "evil" self, as well as the struggle between aspects of the self (*Other Selves* 19-22). The most striking example of this binary pattern — and indeed the most striking feature of Pullman's imaginary world — is his invention of the daemon (Hopkins 49). "The nature of the human-daemon link is never defined and is sometimes expressed in mutually contradictory ways, but one thing seems clear: this looks like a reincarnation of the classic Gothic doubling motif expressed in texts from *Frankenstein* to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, with perhaps its closest analogue being George MacDonald's *Curdie and the Goblin*, where the true animal nature of a person is revealed in his or her handshake" (Hopkins 49). Lyra has a daemon called Pantalaimon. Every human person in Lyra's world, witches included, has a daemon. As Susan Bobby notes, Pullman's "invention of daemons is the hook that pulls us into Lyra's world" (qtd in Lenz 2). Daemon, pronounced "demon", is an external soul that takes the form of an animal, changes from one animal to another –weasel, raven, leopard, fly, and so on — constantly with children but has a permanent form for adults. Pantalaimon appears first as a moth but later in "sleeping-form as an ermine" and then as a variety of creatures (*NL* 28). Servants' daemons are almost invariably dogs, are usually opposite in sex from their human and must remain close to their human unless the human is a witch. Daemons talk with their humans just as humans talk to and touch each other, but there is a "prohibition against human-daemon contact…so deep that even in battle no warrior would touch an enemy's daemon" (*NL* 143). Finally, the daemon vanishes when its human dies. For a human

to be separated from his or her daemon causes immense physical pain and mental anguish. Pantalaimon is Lyra's double in Pullman's trilogy.   In this and other instances, the virulently antireligious author adopts a paradoxical stance by relying on the language of religion (daemon-soul similarity) in order to deconstruct and demolish the edifice of religion.

A primary effect of the double according to McCallum is to destabilize notions of the subject as unified, coherent, or existing outside a relation to the other or to a social context. The double can represent the internal fragmentation and alienation of the subject and the internalization of the intersubjective relation between self and other. The double is both an "other" and another aspect of the self, i.e., an internalized other who, in Bakhtinian terms, completes the self (*Other Selves* 21).

McCallum also writes, "The formation of subjectivity is dialogical in two main ways. An individual identity is formed in dialogue with others and with social discourses, ideologies and practices. These two dialogic processes can be thought of as authoring activities: the subject is authored- that is constructed or represented- by the other and by society" (*Other Selves* 22). In "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity", Bakhtin draws an analogy between the relation of the other to the self and that of an author to a character (*Art and Answerability*).

> The position of the other outside the self is analogous to that of an author in relation to a character, and the other's role in completing the self is likened to the author's role in authoring a character. From such a position of outsideness, a character (or self) is perceived and represented as whole, or complete. Thus, by completing the self, the other also authors the self. Bakhtin's analogy has

implications for the ways in which we interpret narrative representations of these

relations. (qtd in *Other Selves* 22)

Bakhtin's formulation places the created character (or self) in a position of passivity (Jefferson 155). Bakhtin conceives of the relationship between a character and an author as a kind of love whereby the author-lover is the active partner and the beloved-hero his passive counterpart (Jefferson 155). Although Bakhtin describes the role of the author as "a nonauthoritative and unfounded other" (*Art and Answerability* 33), the relation between author and character can function as a power relationship in which the position of the author (other) is dominant (*Ideologies of Identity* 72). Emerson has suggested the gap between self and other, between inner and outer, is for Bakhtin a cause of pain of inarticulateness (256). Bakhtin represents conflict as external and social (*Ideologies of Identity* 73). Both Bakhtin and Pullman see the formation of subjectivity as an aspect in the developmental process of the child and are interested in the transition from solipsism to intersubjectivity.

As mentioned above, Daemons in Lyra's world are humans' doubles. The double motif is in a sense twofold: Lyra and Pan are doubles for each other, and they have another relationship which can be also, as Hopkins writes, "heavy in echoes of another classic duality-based schema, the body/soul dichotomy" (49), that has a doubling effect. When the daemon of the witch Serafina Pekkala's arrives without her, the daemons of the other humans "affected the extreme politeness of keeping their eyes modestly away from this singular creature, here without his body" (NL 190). Since animals do not have daemons, the polar bear Iorek Byrnison tells Lyra that "a bear's armour is his soul, just as your daemon is your soul" (196). As Hopkins argues,

It is true that this schema is not consistently maintained, and indeed it is not

entirely clear that a daemon is incorporeal. It is suggested that they are so when

Lyra releases the imprisoned daemons at Bolvangar, and "they clustered around

her feet and even tried to pluck at her leggings, though the taboo held them back.

She could tell why, poor things; they missed the heavy solid warmth of their

humans' bodies; just as Pantalaimon would have done, they longed to press

themselves against a heartbeat" (262). However, this idea is then apparently

contradicted shortly after when "Pantalaimon pulled free of the monkey's

solicitous paws…and …pressed his beating heart to hers" (279). Nevertheless, the

entire thrust of the Bolvangar episodes is to make it quite clear that humans and

daemons are in effect a dual entity, since any attempt to detach them is so

disastrous and wrong. (Hopkins 49)

Pullman's daemon is not inside the head: "It is soul given creature-shape. It is seen-

constructed as visible. In making the daemon a separate entity, Pullman gives artistic seeability to

a metaphysical idea that is part of his construction of a literary heterocosm, the other-world of

His Dark Materials that posits new territories of reality" (Johnston 45). In this new territory, the

soul is reflective of its owner — "dependent on it; intimately connected in some way; when the

children get drunk the daemons get even more drunk. Pullman is creating an essence of being

which is not drawn from experience and which can be neither proven nor refuted through

experience; metaphysics is not a turning away from experience- historically indeed, it relates to a

sense of an absolute (being, becoming, nature, God, soul, mind, unity, plurality) that screens out

what is not relevant to itself" (Johnston 45).

Accordingly, daemons are part of humans' identity and their other half. "They are connected to their human as if by some form of invisible, emotional cord- there is a limit to the distance by which they can be separated" (Butler 103). For children, as pointed out earlier, the daemon remains mutable, apparently at will, although whose "will is not clear; the metamorphoses are linked to the child's state of mind. The unconscious aspect of this might lead daemons to be explained in Freudian terms as the id, the deepest, darkest and most sexual part of the psyche, a dramatization of Sigmund Freud's third blow to humanity's narcissism" (Butler 103). Given the implicit connection with the English word "demon," one is tempted to see Pullman's daemon as the "evil" part of the human being — the impulses and instincts that may threaten sociality. Hence, from the warning that Lyra's mother, Mrs Coulter, gives her about the onset of puberty in Northern Lights (*NL* 285), it is apparent that daemons are linked to sexual desire. In *The Amber Spyglass* (482) it is clear that touching another person's daemon is taboo precisely because it constitutes something like a sexual act. The word taboo suggests something created by human beings, something constructed, in contrast to Pan's (animal) instinct (Hines 42). But given the attractiveness of taboo objects, e.g., the fruit of knowledge in Genesis 2-3, later it becomes clear to Lyra that touching another daemon is associated with all the ambiguity of sexuality, producing "guilt and strange pleasure" (*SK* 293). By this time the strong word "taboo" disappears, and the act is "forbidden…by politeness" and "something deeper…like shame" (Hines 42).

On the other hand, the daemon may be closer to "Freud's notion of the superego, the part of the psyche that forbids or permits the operation of desire. (Butler 103). For example, Lyra is a great liar, and much of the time it is Pantalaimon who keeps her in touch with the truth. "The

truth-seeking potential of the mind is dependent on the self's relationship to its daemon, because the two voices ensure that all claims and observations are open to question. A splendid skepticism about what is really true is kept in place by the knowledgeable comments of the daemon who knows all the secrets of the heart" (Rustin 10). "The superego is also that which the ego aspires to become, again potentially casting doubt on whether the human forms through the nature of the daemon or the daemon reflects the nature of the human" (Butler 103). In this sense, we are presented with an understanding of human personality in which there is an absolutely necessary dynamic relationship between many parts of the self (Rustin 9). The relationship among these parts articulates a split between that character's sense of herself as a subject and as an agent. It is also a way of heightening our awareness that a complete person will be able to live with the contradictions of his or her own nature. The implication is that none of us is all good or all bad, all kind or all cruel, all brave or all cowardly. Pullman embraces with enthusiasm the recognition of the complex human condition. His hostility to the Church as it features in the trilogy is very much based on the Church's false belief in the absolutes of good and evil (Rustin 9).

Pullman refuses to conceive of Good and Evil as cosmic forces (Halten 80). Although he names the doubles "daemons," this is a kind of false lead, for they are not the evil spirits of humans. Rather, "for him the words 'good' and 'evil' describe certain potentials mixed together in every human being, and the relationship between them is worked out within the human heart" (Halten 80). In fact, children's daemons change shapes "according to mood or necessity" (Hines 38), not based on the good and evil dichotomy. In this regard, Pullman not only problematizes notions of unified selfhood but also blurs distinctions between good and evil.

Additionally, the idea of the daemon, as Johnston says, goes back to early Greece. Socrates describes his daemon as a quiet voice inside his head that helps him discern right from wrong (cf. Plato's *Apology).* For Socrates the daemon is similar to conscience; it is for Lyra as well (44). Pondering what to do about what she has just seen happen to Asriel's drink (it has been poisoned), she snaps at Pantalaimon, "You're supposed to know about conscience, aren't you?" (NL 9). And indeed one interpretation of Pullman's daemons might be that they are the expression of their humans' consciences (Johnston 44). However, "as Lyra's thoughts go on to reveal, it is she who is the moral being in the dual relationship, and she who has to make difficult decisions as they both set off on their adventures through multiple worlds" (Squires 34). Thus, we read: "Lyra felt a mixture of thoughts contending in her head, and she would have liked nothing better than to share them with her daemon, but she was proud too. Perhaps she should try to clear them up without his help" (NL 9). It is clear that human and daemon, although physically and emotionally linked, do not share the same consciousness, and it is the human who is the controlling party in the relationship. Pantalaimon cannot decide where he and Lyra will go or what they will do. Lyra leads the way, as do all the other humans in their relationships with their daemons (Squires 34). "Pan acts as Lyra's confidant and conscience, and her mood is reflected in him: for instance he can turn into an inconspicuous brown moth when Lyra needs to be secret, or as a spitting wildcat when she feels threatened. Though they are mentally and emotionally joined and their life force is one, they are also partially separate and independent beings with individual consciousness" (Squires 34).

Even more indicative of human primacy is the fact that Lyra can keep secrets from Pan — her "feminine mysteries" for example that were discussed above — and Pan avoids her for a

while in anger after she leaves him behind in the land of dead. Therefore, the daemons reflect the character of their humans but can also act as restraints, setting up an externalized internal dialogue (Squires 34). As Lenz says "daemons, whether external or internal, may represent another characteristic of awakened consciousness: its dialogic nature. It has been said that all sensitive and thinking people carry on a sort of ongoing internal conversation with themselves, and certainly this occurs frequently in the novels, when characters argue with their 'best' or 'worst' impulses. In a sense, consciousness of this kind might be equated with conscience" (Lenz 8). A striking example of this kind of dialogue takes place when, after Serafina tells Pantalaimon and Kirjava (Will's now-manifested daemon) they "have to tell them what you know" (474). This is a reference to the terrible reality that the subtle knife creates Specters, "children of the abyss" as Kirjava calls them (486), and the need to keep all the windows closed (485, except as mentioned, the one left open as an exit for the ghosts from the underworld). This seals the separate destinies of Will and Lyra, for they know — and this is something that the daemons do not yet realize — the fact that their daemons cannot survive long in a non-native world. Life without the conscious discourse with one's daemon would be unbearable (Lenz 8).

Therefore, daemons in Lyra's world act not only as symbols of internal fragmentation and alienation of the subject but also as representations of an internalized intersubjective relationship between self and other. They become internalized others whom the children use to define their selfhood. Pan is an "other" and simultaneously shows different aspects of Lyra's identity. For example, the form of the daemon is an important key to a given human's character and social class (Carole Scott 39). Pan is an internalized other who, based on social and cultural structures and forces (as his name reveals), completes Lyra: "The word pan means all, which relates to

wholeness and unity, suggesting that he constitutes Lyra as a whole" (Solhaug 322). Therefore, it is Lyra who apparently leads the relationship and controls her agency so that her daemon remains subject to her (or, at least, he perceives himself as such). However, according to Johnston, the daemon "reflects the mind and emotions of its collaborating owner" (44). Thus, it is Pan who shows the way to Lyra in different situations and appears instrumental in authoring Lyra's selfhood in dialogue with her instincts, society, ideologies, others and etc. This is all the more so because Lyra's and Pan's relationship involves conflict. In fact, "the changing form of a child's daemon exhibit the enormous range of feelings, perspectives and values which add up to the mind of one individual" (Rustin 8).

In view of the above, states of mutability and multiplicity experienced by Lyra as a consequence of coexisting with her double or daemon are conceptualized as conditions of different possibilities of subjectivity rather than aberrations as is the case in *Frankenstein* or *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Consequently, the relationship between Lyra and Pantalaimon is not, strictly speaking, oppositional, nor is it structured morally. The double in this novel is mainly represented as an aspect of the developmental process and maturation of the host child-character. Pullman has asserted that he did not want daemons to be a picturesque detail but rather entities that are fully integrated into the themes and plot of the trilogy. As he goes on to explain, daemons symbolize the difference between the infinite plasticity, the infinite potentiality and mutability of childhood and the fixed nature of adulthood (Pullman 190). This relates to the settling of daemons — assuming a fixed single shape — as children pass through adolescence into adulthood. In a key passage in *Northern Lights,* Lyra discusses this with the Able Seaman during her voyage to the North:

"Why do daemons have to settle?" Lyra said. "I want Pantalaimon to be able to change forever. So does he." "Ah, they always have settled, and they always will. That's part of growing up. There'll come a time when you'll be tired of his changing about, and you'll want a settled kind of form for him."[…]

"Knowing what kind of person you are. Take old Belisaria. She's a seagull, and that means I'm a kind of seagull too. I'm not grand and splendid and beautiful, but I'm a tough old thing and I can survive anywhere and always find a bit of food and company. That's worth knowing, that is. And when your daemon settles, you'll know the sort of person you are." (*NL* 167)

As Lyra's conversation with the Able Seaman demonstrates, "daemons are connected to the process of character development, the journey from innocence to experience, and thus to questions of choice and morality" (Squires 36). In Bolvangar, she is saved only at the last minute from being severed from Pantalaimon. Then, at the moment of her sexual awakening with Will, as they break the interdiction on touching another human's daemon, the following happens:

Will put his hand on hers. A new mood had taken hold of him, and he felt resolute and peaceful. Knowing exactly what he was doing and exactly what it would mean, he moved his hand from Lyra's wrist and stroked the red-gold fur of her daemon.

Lyra gasped. But her surprise was mixed with a pleasure so like the joy that flooded through her when she had put the fruit to his lips that she couldn't protest, because she was breathless. With a racing heart she responded in the same way:

she put her hand on the silky warmth of Will's daemon, and as her fingers

tightened in the fur she knew that Will was feeling exactly what she was.

And she knew too that neither daemon would change now, having felt a lover's

hands on them. These were their shapes for life: they would want no other. (*AS*

527-28)

This transition is another essential element in the formation of subjectivity in *His Dark*

Materials. Growth leads to sexual maturity. While incipient sexuality is mutable during

childhood, it eventually takes up a fixed adult form when a person experiences sexual

relationships. This, according to Nicolas Tucker,

corresponds to the psychologist Carl Jung's idea that all humans have a craving

for another half, also of the opposite sex which, if we could reunite with, would

then mean that we could at last become truly whole individuals. This concept is

described in Jungian terms as the life long search for the anima, where men are

concerned, and the animus in the case of women. But because we can never be

joined up to our missing male or female counterparts, Jung believes we must

always go through life with the feeling that there is something important missing

within us. (qtd in Halsdorf 140)

Contrary to Jung, Pullman is implying that the animus/a is already there in each of us. In

other words, we are whole, and our gender identity partakes of both sexes. We all have some

more masculine and some more feminine character traits — even in our world where people do

not have an external daemon. The daemon is then part of the discovery of the self as a gendered

being, of knowing your identity, even if it is not necessarily the person you dream of being

(Halsdorf 140). Bruner and Ware write, 'The interaction between person and daemon mirrors that

of the intimate alliance of husband and wife-two become one' (qtd in Halsdorf 143). As we see in

the case of Lyra and Will — who are analogous to Eve and Adam — the emphasis is on the

importance of relations between self and other, female and male. This is essential for the

formation of subjectivity and the transition from solipsism to intersubjectivity. However, the

children's daemons lose their ability to shape-shift when they reach sexual maturity and

knowledge of identity. Tragically, it is at this time that Lyra and Will have to separate from each

other because they come from different universes to which they must return. The trilogy

implicitly suggests a positive evaluation of the personal and cultural implications of

fragmentation and the value of intersubjective relations. Pullman stresses the necessity and value

of intersubjective relations, which is close to Bakhtin's approach. The fixing comes at puberty,

i.e., at the moment of sexual awakening, and therefore at a potential moment of transition from

innocence to experience. This seems to be marked by knowing one's place in the social order

(Butler 103). It is at this moment that subjectivity is formed and maturation is experienced.

As O'Sullivan says, sexual maturity is reified in *His Dark Materials* through the construct

of the daemon. However, in a change that symbolizes movement from childhood's innocence to

adulthood's experience, daemons lose their ability to shapeshift and settle into one form which

they maintain for life once their human counterparts gain sexual knowledge (O'Sullivan 115).

"The analogy made to the biblical myth of the Fall in the fruit that Lyra puts to Will's lips

suggests that it is central knowledge that marks their movement from childhood innocence to

adult experience. Lyra and Will's burgeoning sexualities reflect the culmination of Pullman's

objective for his child protagonists to become adult" (O'Sullivan 115). The adolescents' most poignant hurdle, a few pages from the end of the trilogy, is renouncing their newly-discovered love for each other in order to achieve a higher purpose. That purpose is the return stage of the monomyth. Having gone through the adventures of the initiation stage, they must now go back to their respective universes and transform them morally as they themselves have been transformed. They demonstrate that they have taken a major step towards grasping and establishing their identity (Levey 24). In fact, O'Sullivan points out that "the explicit connection between the settling of Lyra and Will's daemons and their newfound adult consciousness conflates knowledge and experience with sexuality to such an extent that it seems to be the only way that children can achieve adulthood" (116). This appears to occur at the expense of other values, i.e., the *Bildungsroman* motif is made explicitly based on sexuality.

As mentioned above, the use of the double in Pullman's trilogy explores not only the relations between subjectivity and the other but also between the individual and society. Pullman uses the social and cultural displacement of the main characters and their daemons to explore the formation of subjectivity within an alien social and cultural context in some parts of the trilogy. When Lyra first meets the second protagonist of the trilogy, Will, in *the Subtle Knife,* in the city of Cittàgazze, each is equally surprised. Will, who comes from our world, a world of no daemons, finds Pantalaimon's shapeshifting "extraordinary" (*SK* 21). Lyra, on the other hand, is shocked to find a person with no visible daemon: she resorts to thinking that Will's daemon must be inside him. Lyra's dual nature — human and daemon — is apparent in her attempt to explain to Will what he is lacking, an explanation that makes Will feel "profoundly alone": "Me and Pantalaimon. Us. Your daemon en't separate from you. It's you. You're part of each other. En't

there anyone in your world like us? Are they all like you, with their daemons all hidden away?" (*SK* 26). "A human being with no daemon was like someone without a face, or with their ribs laid open and their heart torn out: something unnatural and uncanny that belonged to the world of night-ghasts, not the waking world of sense" (188). It is clear that the world codes and conventions into which she is displaced and the people she meets from other worlds are entirely different from her own. As McCallum says, "The concepts of selfhood are dependent upon and constructed in relation to social, linguistic and historical contexts, this displacement of a character can destabilize and place in question their concepts of personal identity, though it can also be used to assert the idea of an essential self which transcends social or cultural structures" (104).

As discussed in the previous chapter, Lyra changes from an independent and empowered girl to a character who appears dependent on and even at times subjugated to Will's will. When asked about the shift between the first two books and why Lyra has "become this woman who seems not to know what to do and has to keep asking Will, "What shall we do now?" (Parsons and Nicholson 127), Pullman has replied,

> [I made this change] because she's in a different world. It's not her world
> anymore. In a world where she's not at home, she has to rely on somebody else,
> which is a learning thing for her. She's been so independent, so argumentative, so
> bossy in a way, that it's good for her to be taken down a peg or two and to see that
> actually there are some people who don't even look human at first, as Will
> doesn't, because he hasn't got a daemon. But he knows his way about his world
> better than Lyra does. (127)

However, Lyra's and Will's initial suspicion of each other is gradually resolved and a deep friendship grows. For a short time, they regard a third world (Cittàgazze), rather than their own respective versions of Oxford, as home. Yet nearly all the adults in Cittàgazze have vanished, so that the only other inhabitants are almost all hostile children. Hence this world is not only unfamiliar but also unwelcoming. Throughout parts II and III of Pullman's trilogy, whenever they are together, Lyra and Will express an increasing longing for home, and are puzzled as to where it is. This becomes particularly urgent towards the end of the trilogy, when Will asks Lyra, "Do you think we'll ever go home?" (458). Lyra's response is "Dunno. I don't suppose I've got a home anyway"(458). Hines makes clear the difficult and demanding situations in which Lyra finds herself at the close of the trilogy. She faces the necessity of returning to the frustrating and unavoidable reality of her habitus where she must try to construct "the Republic of Heaven" with the only materials she has available there. Lyra as a young teenager faces fundamental existential choices in defining the "natural" for herself and at the same time resisting the ruling ideologies of her culture (Lenz 20).

> At the end of the trilogy, Lyra and Will must return to their own worlds and stay there. This frustrating and unavoidable reality is reminiscent of Bourdieu's notion that we can't escape our "habitus," that set of cultural structures that we as subjects internalize as subjects, and that in turn organize our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and find expression in social representations and practices. We experience the "habitus," which organizes our thought patterns, as natural. The unnatural state of affairs in Lyra's world is largely the work of the Church, which strives to make the natural - sexuality, self-knowledge, and ultimately growing up

- unnatural. The rebellion against the church and God is also a rebellion against

Lyra's parents, a separation that enables her maturity. By transferring the Republic

of Heaven to the individual, it also places responsibility for her future directly

upon her shoulders. The trilogy's ending seems to suggest that she can build the

republic of Heaven only with the materials she has available - what she comes to

decide for herself is natural, whether or not she's acting within ideology - in her

world. (Hines 45-46)

Therefore, the "home" reached by the characters as the trilogy concludes is not utopian,

but starkly down-to-earth (Levey 19). It becomes clear that, though human beings can move

between universes to some extent, they are actually bound to their own universe — whether or

not they feel at home in it — until they die and become one with the greater universe (Levey 22).

The latter point becomes clear when Lyra reaches the underworld and liberates the souls of the

dead so that they can join the stream of conscious particles constituting the "mind" of all being.

Given this messianic act, Lyra is the most important child who has ever lived in that she has a

purpose embodied in an ancient prophecy which the Church represses: she is a new Eve, who

must not fall into temptation. She does slowly learn that she has a twofold task to perform: the

freeing of the souls of the dead and the establishment of the republic of heaven — one of

Pullman's favorite projects (Levey 23). Again, the irony of creating a republic of heaven after a

rebellion against religion should not be lost on the reader. Lyra and Will initially believe they can

establish the republic of heaven together — in their own and each other's worlds. However, "a

daemon can only live its full life in the world in which it is born" (AS 814). That, of course, is

why the children cannot stay together at the end of the story, "Because their full lives have to be

lived in the two different real worlds from which they come, worlds that got mixed up because of the disasters brought about by mistaken human ambition. A person in touch with his daemon is at home with himself, and finding the way home is one of the tasks achieved at the conclusion of their adventures" (Lenz 9). The young couple initially cannot face it, but eventually they do so, not only with extreme sadness but also resolutely (Levey 26). The closest they will be able to come to each other again is to enter a tryst that, at noon on each Midsummer's Day, each will go and sit in the Botanical Gardens of his or her Oxford and remember the other (512), until they pass through the world of the dead in their turn and their atoms are reunited with each other in the overarching conscious universe.

Daemons cannot survive long outside their native universes. Thus, fantasies of escape to an alternate world are foreclosed. Lyra must live in her own world and make it as much like heaven as humanly possible. This is symbolic of the human condition. As Andrew Leet observes, drawing upon Erica Wagner, our duty should be to the present time and those around us, not to an image of a potentially rewarding afterlife - what Pullman would regard as an illusory "elsewhere" (Lenz 9). Therefore as Levey says, the balance in the universes has indeed been restored and Lyra has also gained a strong sense of identity and purpose: she belongs to others as well as to herself. She has demonstrated that she is certainly moving towards her own inner *Heimat,* of greater value than a physical home (27-28).

To conclude, the emphasis on the importance of relations between self and other for the formation of subjectivity and the transition from solipsism to intersubjectivity is relevant to the concerns of Pullman's trilogy. The shifting double as discussed in connection to Lyra's daemon, is an important motif in this trilogy. The Daemon is an "other" and simultaneously shows

different aspects of Lyra's identity. At the same time, the double is mainly represented as an aspect of the developmental process and maturation of the host-character, embodying the journey from innocence to experience, and the questions of choice and morality. The fixing of the daemon on a single, immutable shape comes at puberty, at the moment of sexual awakening, and therefore at a potential moment of transition from innocence to experience. This seems to be marked by knowing one's place in the social order. Furthermore, the use of the double in this trilogy explores the relations between the individual and society metaphorically. When the host-character is displaced from his/her universe, the daemon dies. In fact, for a time, displacement prevents Lyra from forming intersubjective relationships with others, and the relations between the subject and society make her unable to carry out her earthly tasks and mission. This leads to solipsistic alienation. By the end of her journey, however, she has gained a strong sense of identity and purpose. As she finally does accomplish her messianic mission, Lyra finds that she belongs to others as well as to herself. Therefore, the final result is mixed. Lyra is at times represented as more passively constructed and thus disempowered by the social contexts in which she is positioned, which makes the experience of displacement partially disempowering. However, at the end of her adventure, she frees the souls of humanity into the multiverse and brings about the spiritual transformation of the world. Pullman paints a complex picture of the human condition.

The Double and the Quest for Self in *Persepolis*

Bakhtin and Lacan both utilize the image of the mirror and the gaze to describe the function of the other in the splitting or doubling of the subject. Mirrors are a common device used in novels in which the double is the actual twin and in novels where the double is a mirror inversion or image of the host-character (*Other Selves* 27). Lacan's theory of the mirror phase is crucial to his conception of the divided, split subject (1-7). The mirror phase refers to the point at which a child (aged six to eighteen months) recognizes and takes delight in his/her own image in a mirror (1-2). The specular image that the child apprehends "is given to him only as Gestalt – that is, in an exteriority – which fixes and inverts the image of the subject in contrast with the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him" (2). Bakhtin's comments about the contemplation of one's own image are similar (*Other Selves* 27). When we look in a mirror, we still do not see ourselves directly. Rather, we see a reflection of our exterior, but not ourselves in terms of our exterior, and this reflection of an exterior does not encompass all of me [because] I am in front of the mirror and not in it (*Art and answerability* 32). As both writers observe, there is a gap between the subject as perceived and the subject as perceiver (*Other Selves* 27). For Lacan the mirror phase marks the point at which the subject is internally split, divided between itself and its mirror reflection (Grosz 15). The child perceives its image in the mirror as stable, fixed and whole, as "a unified totality", but it experiences itself in a schism as a site of fragmentation (Grosz 39). Both Lacan and Bakhtin see the process through which the specular image is perceived and recognized as representing the construction of subjectivity by way of an internalized other. According to Bakhtin "since we lack any approach to ourselves from

outside…we project ourselves into a peculiarly indeterminate possible other" from whose

position we "give form to ourselves" (*Art and answerability* 32). Thus, "our own relationship to

our exterior…pertains only to its possible effect on others" and "we evaluate our exterior not for

ourselves, but for others through others" (32). Lacan stresses the otherness of the specular image.

The mirror phase is to be understood as an identification and as formative of the function of the

"I" (Lacan 5- 7). The subject "I" is constructed via an imaginary identification with the other —

that is the specular image. But, in identifying with its mirror image, the subject is alienated from

that image: the image both is and is not an image of itself; it is also always an image of another

(Grosz 40). For Bakhtin, the event of self-contemplation cannot express a unitary and unique

soul, because it always implies a second participant, a fictitious other, a nonauthoritative and

unfounded author (32-33). There are crucial differences between Bakhtinian and Lacanian

theories of subjectivity, but I focus here on the ways in which the two theories conceive of the

relationship between self and other, and the formation of subjectivity as being dependent on the

recognition of otherness and of the distance between self and other (*Other Selves* 20).

At this point a brief synopsis of *Persepolis* is in order.

In *Persepolis*, as Elahi points out, Satrapi uses the frame of the comic panel to redirect the

gaze of Western European and North American readers toward the individual life and the

complex identity of her own narrative and autobiographical persona (313). "Within this doubling,

the Mirror stage, in which the young adult is inducted into the adult community while still

lacking an autonomous sense of self, is most significant. At the heart of this process of reframing

is Satrapi's use of mirrors as a motif that doubly frames the self and allows for a deconstruction

and reconstruction of Iranians as individuals who matter" (Elahi 313). In this part of chapter 3,

first, I will investigate the significance of mirror scenes in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. I will

focus on the mirror stage and the narrative function of mirror images. Then, I will explore the

effect of the narrative motif of displacement on the formation of Marjane's subjectivity.

Chaney writes, mirror scenes offer a revelation about subject in *Persepolis*, "how we

come to be a subject in relation to other subjects, ourselves, and the tools by which we measure

such relations. Because the mirror stage dramatizes the subject's conflict between an integrated

perception of self and a fragmented one, an imbalance of selfhood structures the imaginary most

frequently according to Jameson, this imbalance would seem to take the form of a degradation of

the Symbolic to an Imaginary level" (26). Elahi points out,

> the mirror stage begins the process of developing an identity that is distinct from
>
> others and yet, at the same time, an identity that is dependent on images of others
>
> in determining itself. From this point in his or her development, the individual
>
> enters the symbolic order which, according to Lacan, is the realm of social
>
> interaction in which language is the medium through which identity is further
>
> developed. It becomes clear in looking at Satrapi's uses of the mirror as a
>
> secondary frame within the comic panel that she narrates a problematic
>
> development of identity, one which is agonistic and remains largely unresolved for
>
> Marjane as autobiographical persona. (320)

"The recurring act of perceiving a reflection depicts the protagonist's quest for

identification and the process of fragmentation that occurs as she vacillates between apparent

Iranian and Austrian religious, political, and sexual values" (Bhoori). Thus, Satrapi uses mirror

image frames to portray the crisis of formation of subjectivity of a girl who is experiencing different social and cultural codes and conventions both in her country because of Islamic revolution and war and when she goes to another country. In all of the mirror images, Marjane is in doubt; she is asking questions of herself or reminding herself that she should behave more properly. In every mirror reflection of herself, she is frowning or crying or is so worried and sad. "Each view swings back and forth for Marjane between an exercise in art--mimicry of some kind--and a feeling of possible damnation, between the performance of self and the subjection and subjugation of self. Furthermore, in each one, the face reflected back is partially hidden, as if to suggest the continuing fragmentation or incompleteness of self" (Elahi 321). Marjane experiences subjectivity as fragmented and doubled both in her country and in Austria, which can be seen as the consummate experience of expatriation.

In the first mirror image, Satrapi describes her childhood encounter with two opposed conceptions of the world--one religious and the other Marxist. She begins to lose faith in God--whom she imagines as similar to Karl Marx: "It was funny to see how much Marx and God looked like each other. Though Marx's hair was a bit curlier" (Satrapi 13). Marjane then puts on a cap, stands in front of the mirror, and pretends first to be Che Guevara, and then Fidel Castro — important revolutionary icons for the Iranian left in the 1970s (16). The image of Marjane standing in front of a mirror and pretending to be Fidel "depicts an ambiguity or uncertainty about self, especially since in the second of this two-panel sequence, she turns toward the reader and frowns" (Elahi 321). The division in Marjane's identity here highlights the fluctuation between Iranian and Western philosophies and the mirror serves as a challenge to Satrapi's self-asserted role (Bhoori). This suggests an uncertainty or a fragmentation of the self in search of

ontological grounding. As Klapcsik writes, Marjane's narrating self represents and in most of the

book maintains a synthesized or integrated attitude toward the West, in which the images of God,

Descartes, Zarathustra and Karl Marx interact with each other. Foreign revolutionaries such as

Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Trotsky are juxtaposed to Iranian revolutionary heroes, including

those of her own family (75). By viewing the reflection of a metamorphosed Marjane in the

mirror, the reader arrives at the conclusion that the young girl creates and assumes the persona of

a counterrevolutionary. Not only does the mirror function as a commentary on the formation of

identity, but also as a bridge between Islam and Marxism (Bhoori). The process of bringing

together two seemingly incompatible ideologies — a materialist and a spiritual one — acts as an

ironic subtext of this identity formation.

In another image in which the self is framed within a mirror, Marjane recalls having heard

about the tortures of Iranian leftists Mohsen and Ahmad in prison by the Shah's secret police.

She narrates that they suffered the worst tortures. She recalls coming up with her own playground

tortures that she inflicts upon her playfellows. She looks in the mirror to see a devilish past

version of herself with imagined horns sticking out of her head and says, "Back at home that

evening, I had the diabolical feeling of power" (Satrapi 53). Again, as with the previous example,

this is a two-panel sequence with Marjane turned around to face the reader in the second panel,

and, again, the reflection turns her back on us to look into the depths of the mirror: "But it didn't

last. I was overwhelmed" (53). Marjane is internally fragmented between good and evil aspects

of herself. As her specular image shows, she is constructed via an imaginary identification with

the Shah's secret police — the evil aspect of herself. However, in identifying with the mirror

image, her relation to that evil aspect of herself is alienated: the image both is and is not an image

of her. She has the feeling of powerlessness, and self-estrangement, a sense of separation of the self from the social world, and starts crying. As Elahi says, the framing of the mirror-frame within the panel here functions to represent the subject's sense of fragmentation and splitting (321).

The following reflection is not a real mirror image; in fact the poster of Kim Wilde acts like a mirror image for Marjane. Satrapi portrays herself as split between modernity and Iranian tradition, as emblematic of her inner divide (Miller 46). Marjane is gazing into a poster of Kim Wilde that she received from her parents after their trip to Turkey, and she imitates the 1980s British pop icon's posture, standing in front of it (131). "The poster is the mirror; Marji is the subject, and Wilde is the reflection" (Bhoori). Marjane is identifying with a Western icon. This moment of sameness is also marked by difference — not only because Marji's hair is dark while Wilde's is blonde, and her top is white while Wilde's is dark, but because her imitation is in the form of a mirror image. In other words, by mirroring Wilde, she shows how she is the same but different, a mirror image being identical yet opposite (Naghibi and O'Malley 237). The poster reflects back Marji's fantasy of Western cultural or counter-cultural identity in the image of Kim Wilde whose song "We're the Kids in America" becomes an anthem for young Iranians who feel stifled by the Iranian regime's limits on personal style. Satrapi depicts her young self as performing identity through bricolage, appropriation, borrowing, and mixture of European and North American styles (Elahi 314). Elahi also argues she is not simply split between two essential and monolithic cultures, given that the fantasies of identification offered to her are presented as self-consciously ideological: these fantasies include both her performance of a "Western" self in front of her smuggled-in Kim Wilde poster in volume two, and her mental image of a veiled

woman when she fails to recognize herself as the person interpellated by the morality police in volume four (318). The result is the rejection of "total" cultural influence which inevitably turns into cultural fusion.

Thematically, *Persepolis* has a dialogic interplay between the individual as being constructed within a series of subject positions from an Islamic revolutionary identity, and as capable of meaning or action outside Iranian social discourses and practices — something related to the universality of the Western culture. Thereby, the novel articulates the complexity of ways in which the subjectivity of Marjane is formed in dialogue with these different social discourses, assumptions and practices which constitute the culture of Iran. This includes various versions of Iran: ancient, modern, Westernized, Islamic etc. — all serving to create a multiple and fragmented subject. Thereby, as Naghibi and O'Malley argue, "the comfort of sameness is always disrupted by the discomfort of otherness" (237) in Marjane's formation of subjectivity. However, in line with the natural human desire for an integrated identity, "Marjane attempts to piece together a divided identity, out of a more complex set of influences, including her family" (Elahi 318).

Marjane's family has a significant influence on her formation of identity that is also clear in her mirror images. In one panel, when Satrapi retells the story of a visit to her uncle in prison, she presents an image in which her self is fully visible in the mirror. Marjane asks her mother, "Do you think I'm dressed nicely enough?" (68). "The mirror she finds in her uncle whose face she frames with a sun-image--a classic Zoroastrian icon representing Ahura Mazda, the deity of light, wisdom, and goodness. In imagining herself in relation to this idealized image of her uncle,

Marjane registers a sense of inadequacy. Again, the point here is that mirrors function in *Persepolis* as sites of subjective fragmentation, instability, and uncertainty" (Elahi 322). In *Persepolis 2* also, Marjane turns to the mirror just before she goes to pick up her mother at the airport in Austria. Again, like her uncertainty about her clothed reflection in the previous example, she is uncertain about how she will look to her mother: "I made myself as beautiful as I could before going to meet her at the airport" (*Persepolis* 200).

Based on Lacan's account for the mirror phase, the child's recognition that it is not one, that it is not complete in itself, marks the initial stages of the transition out of solipsism. It signals the moment of the child's recognition of the distinction between self and other and between the self and the world, and the child's first attempts to construct an identity independent of the other and to locate a position in the world (Grosz 34-35). For Lacan, this moment is also crucial for the child's entry into language and the symbolic order, and hence for the formation of the subject. In this sense Bakhtinian and Lacanian positions are analogous (*Other Selves* 32). Before Marjane's departure to Austria, her grandmother spends the night in their house and gives her some advice: "Always keep your dignity and be true to yourself" (Satrapi 150). In a panel, Marjane is in front of a mirror when we see just half of her face; she is sad and uncertain: "I will always be true to myself" (151). In this frame, Marjane's face itself exhibits the incompleteness. Her wide eyes indicate her anxiety at the thought of separation. Her approach to the mirror phase is complicated here by the fact that the image of herself in the mirror is incomplete without the members of her family, She feels a sense of insufficiency, a sense of not being whole and complete without them as is clear in her specular image. The relationship between Marjane and her family. as depicted in these three mirror images, locates agency outside of her, and so implies a conception of herself as

disempowered and dependent. It corresponds to a form of solipsism that is the inability to perceive one's own selfhood as independent of the world and to construct a sense of one's self as an agent. As long as Marjane perceives herself as dependent and hence constructed by the attitudes and viewpoints of others and in need of them, she is unable to make what she perceives as independent choices and act in the world. Instead, she perceives the world and others as acting upon her. Therefore, as the reflection of the image indicates, Marjane holds fidelity to only half of herself because she constructs her identity in her country and with her family, but she is not certain to be able to construct her identity without them in a new country. On the other hand, as the specular image implies, "the other half awaits her during the processes of physical and internal migration—when Marji will realize the dual nature of self (Bhoori), to locate a position in the world.

Due to her unsuccessful romantic relationship when her boyfriend cheats on her, "Marji feels rejected not only by her boyfriend, but also by the West European society. Markus, her Austrian boyfriend, becomes the center of her assimilation process as he represents all the local bonds for her" (Klapcsik 72): "I wanted him at once to be my boyfriend, my father, my brother, my twin" (237). Marjane is unable to perceive an other as another self, and hence the denial of a subject position for that other independent of one's self. Marjane's relationship with Markus is partly conditioned by this viewpoint. As she says, "my breakup with Markus represented more than a simple separation. I had just lost my one emotional support, the only person who cared for me, and to whom I was also wholly attached" (233). Because she cannot find herself there, she decides to return to Tehran. Her desire to go home and her need for the familiarity of national and familial belonging drive her to readopt the hejab and to look in the mirror in another image (Elahi

322). Although during her years in Vienna, Marjane faces many challenges, including heartbreak, racism, and physical and psychic homelessness, and she pretends that she is French, rather than Iranian, she reflects on the "complexity of her own desire for freedom and individual identity" (Elahi 322). Though we do see her full face this time — as she has experienced the physical and internal migration — it is a face that is again, frowning, worried, and she is uncertain about her own motivations and future in her home country. "So much for my individual and social liberties ... I needed so badly to go home" (245).

In Iran, Marjane has difficulty accepting the rules governing the hejab and gendered identity thoroughly. In one scene, she diverts the attention of a moral guidance committee away from herself--her make-up, her less-than-perfect hejab--by falsely incriminating a young man sitting nearby, telling the authorities that he had been ogling her. The morality police arrest him, and, though she doesn't know what happens, she suspects they punish him physically. Upon returning home, Marjane is reprimanded by her grandmother, the same grandmother who had told her to be true to herself. "My grandmother yelled at me for the first time in my life" (291). Again the previous uncertainty that she had before her departure to Austria is depicted in a mirrored, framed reflection: she has lost her grandmother's approval, and she says, "I decided that it would also be the last" (291). In fact, she endeavors to become close to the ideal self, a self that her grandmother, her uncle, her mother, and her father expect her to be (Elahi 322). The result is the same kind of inauthenticity as what she experienced in the West. Marjane's inability to define herself as an independent person causes her not to enter into the symbolic order successfully.

In Lacanian terms, the ultimate success of self-definition is integration into the adult world; in the traditional coming-of-age tales retold by lots of authors, this integration is symbolized by heterosexual marriage, the true and final entrance into the adult community (qtd in Perry). However, marriage is another challenge for her, and a mirror functions to represent the problems of identity formation once more. Marjane attempts to have a public identity in Iran. She begins to manipulate her physical look—clothes and makeup based on cultural discourses of Iran, and ultimately she decides to marry.

> She tells of being taken by her friends to a salon called Wedding Hairdos. One panel gives a frontal view of a hair salon mirror. Reflected back is Marjane and her hairdresser. Marji, her hair in an overly adorned frame of curls, looks back with surprise and shock into the mirror (315). The whole process of matrimony seems disconnected from naturalized notions of love, fidelity, and the formation of identities around a nuclear family. Marjane wants to live with Reza before marrying him. But the only way the two can live with each other is to be married first. Furthermore, after their marriage, Marjane realizes that her identity is not permanent, and in a two-panel sequence, she compares the woman Reza married (Marjane smiling brightly with long hair, wearing makeup and a short dress with lace trim, sitting in front of a window overlooking a garden with birds) with the woman he finds himself living with (Marjane frowning, smoking a cigarette, dressed in black pants and shirt, sitting in front of a dark window at night) (318). Thus, the process of getting married, even for a young woman with enlightened

parents, involves the construction of a self that is hardly recognizable — in a way,

the antithesis of selfhood. (Elahi 323)

Although the description of her wedding indicates that her experiencing self follows the discourses of Iranian culture, she admits that she "tempered" her Western vision and "conformed to society" and the fundamentalist regime, as she got married simply because "it was difficult to be together outside of marriage" with her boyfriend (Satrapi 312-317). These scenes explicitly show her contradictory formation of subjectivity, when she attempts to construct her identity based on Iranian discourses and Western discourses simultaneously. The last mirror-image depicts Marjane hugging her mother. She has just received her mother's reluctant blessing of her marriage. She eventually divorces, thereby indicating that she cannot define herself as an Iranian married woman and enter into an adult community. On the other hand, she is represented as Elahi argues "by an image that underscores subjective inter-dependence. It is as if the mother's and the daughter's faces complete each other" (323). Her mother says, "I have always wanted for you to become independent, educated, cultured…and here you are getting married at twenty-one. I want you to leave Iran, for you to be free and emancipated…" and Marjane replies, "My sweet little mom! Trust me, I know what I'm doing" (317). Marjane's formation of identity is in the way her mother wants her to be; she is fragmented between her own desires and her mother's desires. Thus, the lingering question pervading the story is: Who and where is the real Marjane?

Although, for both Bakhtin and Lacan, the idea of the unified subject in the mirror phase is an essentializing fiction, each thinker gives this fiction a slightly different emphasis. These ideas are implicit in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. The stress in Lacan's accounts of

fragmentation and division grounds a person's experience of subjectivity in loss, lack and absence (*Other Selves* 32). As Elahi writes, Marjane's journey is incomplete, and we are left with a sense that Marjane is still in the process of becoming a complete subject rather than already being a complete subject, whether recruited ideologically by the state or existing in some pure and essential sense of self (323-324). Marjane comes of age without an autonomous sense of self; she is constantly in the process of becoming. As in the case of other adolescents, her development includes establishing new self-identities within an adult community, the imperfect process of stabilizing that identity, and the preoccupations with looks and image common to young adulthood. However, what is most dramatic about Marjane is that she has to conform to an identity required of her either in the West or in Iran and her "inability to conform with them leads to a breakdown, and she depicts herself as no more than a woman-shaped hole against the black background of the panel" (Miller 46).

In *Discourse and the novel*, Bakhtin describes the formation of subjectivity as a process whereby a person selectively appropriates and assimilates the ideological discourses of others (341-342). He distinguishes between two forms of ideological discourses: authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse (341-348). Authoritative discourses, such as political, religious or moral discourses, are binding and unassimilable. They demand unconditional acknowledgment. Internally persuasive discourse is discourse which is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority and which is frequently not even acknowledged by society (342). The development of an individual consciousness is determined by the struggle and dialogic interrelationships between these two categories of ideological discourse (345). Initially, an individual consciousness cannot separate itself from the surrounding ideological discourses, but

once thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way, there occurs a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse (345). Internally persuasive discourse is formed through the "process of distinguishing between one's own and another's discourse, between one's own and an other's thought" and is linked with the development of "one's own discourse" or inner speech, which is gradually wrought out of others' words which have been acknowledged and assimilated (345).

Marjane is constituted by a range of intersecting social and ideological discourses as she is culturally displaced and depicted while appropriating and assimilating the discourses of others. In volume three, Marjane physically crosses geographic borders that take her from East to West by moving to Austria. The interrelations between the subject and society are important here. Early in *Persepolis* 2, she represents her own autobiographical persona in a photo of herself with her Austrian friend Lucia. The illustration of the photograph is framed by a picture frame presented as a gift to Marjane by Lucia's father (Satrapi 172). "This doubly framed image of the self-forces the reader to see Marjane not only as an individual but almost as a sister to Lucia - a member of an Austrian family, flanked by her Austrian sisters, and framed by a present given to her by their Austrian father" (Elahi 315). Thus, as a member of Austrian society, Marjane has to destabilize and place in question her previous concepts of personal identity as an Iranian girl. The question is what replaces that "old" identity.

Marjane's relationship to Julie shows her first challenges in being a member of Austrian society. Julie;s and Marjane's relationship is like that between a host-character and a double that are mirror inversions as mentioned above regarding Marjane and Kim Wilde. After Marjane is

thrown out of the boarding house run by nuns, she goes to live with Julie and her mother. The

first chapter on the veil introduces us to a split image of Marjane: one half of her is veiled against

a background of Persian artwork (signifying Eastern tradition), and the other half of her is

unveiled against a background of the instruments of science and technology (signifying Western

modernity) (Naghibi and O'Malley 231-232). Thus, we see this split in her relationships with

Julie completely. Julie is constructed as opposite to Marjane, and they clearly perceive

themselves as opposite. Julie says, "Oh, you are the pure, timid, innocent virgin who does her

homework. I'm not like that. I've been having sex for years" (182). We have a constant contrast

between Marjane's darkness and Julie's fairness, Marjane's glumness and Julie's easygoing

likeable temperament. Julie's behavior with her mother also comes into contrast with Marjane's:

"In my culture, parents were sacred. We at least owed them an answer. To behave like this

toward one's own mother made me indignant" (180). Marjane speaks about her own fears and

desires and articulates her own sense of self in relation to Julie. They argue about sex and sexual

relationships experienced by Julie and Julie's mother, and this highlights a key difference running

through *Persepolis*. While Julie has experienced lots of sexual relationships with different

partners, Marjane is ashamed even by hearing that, "I was shocked. In my country, even when

you had sex before marriage, you hid it" (182). Marjane has the feeling of shame and guilt

regarding sex that is the result of too much cultural sensitivity. They also talk about Marjane's

appearance. Julie does Marjane's hair and makeup: "She did my hair and drew on a thick line of

black eyeliner that, from then on, became my usual make up" (184). This act implicitly shows the

impact of Julie on Marjane's formation of subjectivity from then on. Marjane, Julie and the

latter's mother experience dialogic interrelationships of two different ideological discourses from

East and West. Marjane's metamorphoses start from here: "My mental transformation was followed by my physical metamorphosis" (189). She tries new haircuts, changes her makeup. She attends parties, starts smoking, imitates the others' laughter (190-192), witnesses the love affairs of Westerners and eventually has love affairs herself. She even claims that seeing male genitalia for the first time was her: "first big step toward assimilating into western culture" (188). Marjane tries to be a Western woman as if complete cultural displacement were possible. Her socialization into Austrian society does not involve resistance so she is passively assimilated by this society: "I wanted to forget everything, to make my past disappear" (194). She does not perceive her own differences from others in a positive light. She rather sees these differences as a kind of deficit. This becomes obvious at a party where she denies her Iranian identity and claims to be of French origin, a Westerner (Satrapi 195). Thus, as Berry says, in such a situation an individual openly intends to shed her heritage culture, and become absorbed into the dominant culture (705). In fact she assimilates much of Austrian culture, and thus alienates herself from her own culture. The result is existence in a nebulous zone of cultural in-betweenness where identity becomes impossible. This kind of life can be compared to an ontological void where the real sounds of life are muffled by futile imitation. This attitude, however, only characterizes an extremely brief period of her life. Just before she describes the incident where she lies about her nationality, the narrator admits that her efforts to use the strategy of assimilation are hardly successful: "The harder I tried to assimilate, the more I had the feeling that I was distancing myself from my culture, betraying my parents and my origins, that I was playing a game by somebody else's rules" (193). A few days after the party, when she overhears some fellow schoolchildren talking about her fake nationality, Marjane's national pride takes over and she shouts, "You are going to

shut up or I am going to make you! I am Iranian and proud of it!" (197). Thus, her intentions of assimilation weaken and her acculturation strategy turns into separation when she distances herself from Western culture by the statement that identifies her as Iranian (Klapcsik 74). The implicit question is whether an expatriate can transcend the extremes of assimilation or nationalist self-affirmation: a problem underlying the difficulty of life in a globalized world subject to cultural pressures from all sides.

Marjane resocialises herself and tries to assimilate Austrian culture. Although she is able to learn about and gain some understanding of Austrian society, it is done superficially. She misreads various social cues sometimes, and her enculturation into and comprehension of the alien culture arre limited. The two cultures, their traditions, meanings and values, are seen as radically different. At the same time, she retains much of her past traditions, and in her attempts to interpret events and people, she transposes the codes and conventions of Iranian culture onto the alien Austrian culture. For example, when she is invited to a party, she becomes disappointed as it is not what she expects. "In Iran, at parties everyone would dance and eat. In Vienna, people preferred to lie around and smoke. And then I was turned off by all these public display of affection. What do you expect, I came from a traditionalist country" (185). Her inability to be integrated into Austrian society — especially after her failure in the above-mentioned love relationship — is represented by the trajectory of the bus she rides to keep warm: she has become nothing but an abject body in permanent motion (Miller 45-46). This abject body symbolically represents the selfhood of a character as radically separate from the social context into which she is displaced. As Berry says, when there is a little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then marginalization has occurred (705). This happens

exactly for Marjane. Thus, *Persepolis* sums up the experience of many non-Europeans who intend to settle down in Western European countries but have difficulties with accepting the local norms. Such a process reflects and emphasizes Marjane's identity crisis and psychological difficulties in life during her coming-of-age period, her girlhood in crisis (Gilmore and Marshall 688).

Following her return to Iran, Marjane experiences psychological displacement. While not being physically displaced now, she experiences a state of alienation from her social surroundings in her own country. She goes through the depressive moments that so many immigrants, exiles and sojourners encounter as part of re-entry culture shock, i.e., the difficulties of reintegrating into their culture of origin (Bochner 184). One of the symptoms of this reverse culture shock is that the travelers do not fully recognize their homeland, and so they now have to relearn their culture of origin. Especially [s]ojourners from traditional societies exposed to Western liberal influences in areas such as gender relations, attitudes towards authority and alcohol consumption, may find it hard to revert back to the practices expected of them by their families, religious leaders and employers (Bochner 190). This is exactly what happens to Marjane, who "Immediately felt the repressive air" of her country (Satrapi 246). Therefore, she has to relearn the authoritative discourse of Islamic government and the different cultural discourse of the Iranian people. On the other hand, she has had the experience of living in a Western country. Therefore, states of mutability and multiplicity experienced by Marjane as a consequence of living in the East and West are conceptualized as conditions of the different possibilities of subjectivity.

On the other hand, based on Naficy's definition of a transnational individual, Marjane is a transnational person. The transnational individual often needs to face the "neither here nor there experience" (192), which can become a painful or traumatizing event (Naficy 15). Her experiencing self goes through a painful oscillation, crossing back and forth between social, ideological and cultural positions, feeling that she does not fit into either of the two conflicting cultures (Klapcsik 71). In Iran, Marjane becomes as marginalized as in Austria. She feels excluded from both the original culture and the new dominant group. Kosic points out that this may easily lead to psychological crises, as in recent studies "marginalization was associated with high unsociability, neuroticism, anxiety and closed-mindedness" (qtd in Klapcsik 71). She even tries to commit suicide at one point. As a transnational person, Marjane has become powerless because her current state prevents her from forming meaningful intersubjective relationships with others and leads to a solipsistic alienation in which the self is perceived as separate from the world. Marjane says, "I was a westerner in Iran, an Iranian in the West. I had no identity. I didn't even know anymore why I was living" (272). She tries hard to conform to the Iranian discourses when she lives in Iran; however, she still experiences social alienation and psychological fragmentation.

Marjane leaves her family and country in the latter part of the novel, and it is at this point that she realizes that there are other things she wants to do with her life and that she must and can leave her country in order to construct a sense of her own self — as both agent and subject. Volumes two and four end in the Teheran airport. "These scenes set in the most liminal of spaces emphasize Marjane's status as liminal subject" (Miller 47). Marjane is physically and emotionally isolated from her own culture two times. However, the displacement in each

experience functions quite differently. In her first trip she only assimilates and replicates the alien

culture; she tries apparently to socialize according to the cultural codes and conventions of

Austrian society, but she is not successful to the point that when she returns to Iran she has begun

thinking of herself as neither Iranian nor Austrian. Based on Bakhtin, she is not successful in the

process of distinguishing between her own and Austrian discourse, between her own and

Austrian thought and cannot develop her discourse. Whereas in her first trip, Marjane's

subjectivity is represented as replication or assimilation, in her second trip her subjectivity is

represented as one of cultural exchange and transcendent of the alien social context. "She

assumes a liminal position and hybrid discourse between home and the alien world" (Klapcsik

77). Marjane, in a way similar to other exiles, assumes the role of a cultural translator, a unique

liminal or mediating person who is capable of using a "hybrid strategy or discourse" (Klapcsik

70-71). Therefore, as a translator between cultures, Marjane ameliorates the intersubjectivity

between the people of two cultures by bridging them, and consequently enables a move out of

solipsism for both herself and other Iranians. Thereby, her subjectivity is formed as an artist and a

cultural translator. Ultimately, coming of age for the heroine amounts to the realization that

identity must not be derived entirely from one's group in any context. The group can stifle the

individual as a subject, imposing a mask that takes away all personal agency. Marjane becomes

fully Marjane when she assumes her neither-nor and both-and identity in the complex modern

world.

Conclusion

Children develop and are socialized according to the social conventions and cultural practices of the society they belong to, so it is inevitable that literary works produced for young audiences will represent explicitly or implicitly those conventions and practices and will be shaped by ideologies of self and society which inform them (Hisaoka 59). As a child's subjectivity unfolds, it will participate with a cultural community which is itself subject to change, and hence whatever we might think of as "subjectivity" will take many forms. Identity is a crucial concept in children's books and is discernible both within a particular culture and in comparison among cultures. The stories of the two novels discussed above express a quest for a sense of identity. Both novels show ideologies of identity for constructing a female hero in two different cultures and societies, as well as the function of two motifs — the double and displacement — in their subjectivity formation.

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell presents the universal story of the hero — called the monomyth — by comparing mythological, religious, folklore and fairy-tale heroes. According to Campbell, the hero of a given story will always be one and the same action type beneath varieties of costume (4). Campbell says that all hero stories derive from myths and that "the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation – initiation – return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth" (30). In other words, the adventure of the hero normally follows the following monomythic pattern:

a) a separation from the familiar, everyday world

b) an initiatory journey to an underworld-like location where the hero undergoes a ritual "death": his former (unenlightened) self dies to make room for the new self set to emerge in the next stage

c) a life-enhancing return of the new self to the familiar world (35).

The departure of the hero begins with a call which "rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration – a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth." (Campbell: 51). After the initiation stage of the journey, when the hero has traversed the threshold, he must "survive a succession of trials" (97). When crossing the return threshold the hero has departed "out of the land we know into darkness; there he [has] accomplished his adventure. […] his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone. Nevertheless […] the two kingdoms," the one we know and the one we do not know (often seen as the kingdom of the Gods) "[are] actually one. The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly", is the purpose of the hero's journey so that he can return home "transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed" (20, 217).

In terms of gender, the monomythic hero is almost universally male who, as Campbell says, can achieve either a microcosmic or a macrocosmic triumph (20). In fairy tales it is often "the youngest or a despised child who becomes master of extraordinary powers and prevails over his personal oppressors" and achieves therefore a microcosmic triumph. In myths, however, the hero "brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole" and consequently achieves a macrocosmic triumph (38). However, in modern children's fiction, the female has increasingly played the monomythic hero's role, acting out all three stages in full.

The heroine of *Alice in Wonderland* already anticipates this gender innovation by separating from the familiar world of boring English bourgeois experience, descending into an underworld (a death-like experience) and emerging wiser and "better" out of her dream state. Alice's descendant — among many others — is Lyra in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy:

> The departure with the call to adventure about Lyra is fulfilled when she decides to save Roger. The supernatural aid is the Master handing her the alethiometer. Crossing the first threshold is achieved when she travels with Mrs. Coulter to London, but Pullman develops the story further and actually lets Lyra cross the threshold to the unknown three times (included the journey to London) when he lets her go to the dark and desolate North and also when the bridge through the Aurora brings her to another universe. Lyra enters the belly of the whale when she descends to the land of the dead and leaves her soul. Finally, Lyra crosses the return threshold as a whole new person, an adult. (Nordlén 23- 24)

Pullman for the most part challenges the male's monomythic heroic prerogative by making Lyra the world's macrocosmic transformer and savior by the time her journey is over. Although she acts as a traditional female character in some parts of the trilogy, Lyra does travel to the underworld, undergoes a ritualistic death-like experience (where her old self "dies") and returns to the familiar world which benefits from her sacrifice. In embracing the monomythic pattern and saving the consciousness of humanity, Lyra regains the agency that she has lost through the transition from the first book into the next two. A return stage where the hero comes back transformed and transforms the community signals autonomy and victory. Therefore, Lyra still appears as a pioneer in a male-dominated fictional world. Her heroism also "is achieved by

rejecting childhood sexual innocence by freeing eroticism from gender, not by enacting

femininity and masculinity according to social clichés" (Pugh 82). It is Lyra who as an adult

saves all the universes by falling in love with Will and later sacrificing that love in order to let the

ghosts out from the land of the dead. Those ghosts join the chorus of conscious particles of the

(super)universe, thereby re-establishing the spiritual and moral balance disrupted by the

Machiavellian church. This is a macrocosmic triumph precisely because her deed affects

everyone, irrespective of which universe they live in (Nordlén 23). Although she has lost her

power in reading the alethiometer when she comes back home, she now knows that she can

regain this ability by working hard at it. "Since the prophecy is fulfilled, and she has managed to

save the universes, Lyra's occupation is decided. She will be a Scholar, learn to read the

alethiometer and master it once again. In returning to Oxford, Lyra is also calmer and more

respectful" (Nordlén 22). Campbell says that "the solemn task and deed […] is to return" home

"transfigured, and teach the lesson he [the hero] has learned of life renewed" (20). In Lyra's case,

the mission is to "build the republic of heaven" on earth. She wants to teach the others that — in

contrast to the pernicious teaching of the church — "this life in this world" matters the most

"because where we are is always the most important place" (*AS* 548). Suffering great anguish

during her descent into the underworld, Lyra accomplishes her messianic mission in a manner

that illustrates a key point made by Campbell: the monomyth is not just travel but rather "travail"

(work, anguish and struggle) — a particularly apt root for the word "travel" in connection to the

hero's journey.

     Marjane like Lyra represents women's creative power and is a kind of hero as well

although she mirrors the monomyth less directly. Lyra, the mother of all human beings, has the

ability to create life, and Marjane has the ability to tell and reveal the history of living. As the

new Eve, a chosen individual to save the world, Lyra reopens the door to a better future. Marjane,

likewise, "occupies the position of a primary and secondary witness (observing events first hand,

and remediating the past through imagined memories respectively)" (Nabizadeh 158). By

unveiling herself, Marjane creates *Persepolis* and presents another existential option to Iranian

girls that is closer to the truth. She moves between geographical, sociopolitical, cultural,

emotional, and narrative locations to give voice to women — liberating them spiritually in a way

reminiscent of Lyra's liberation of the imprisoned dead in the underworld. The women of Iran are

in a kind of underworld — pinned down by outdated and oppressive dogma and deprived of their

dignity. This is accomplished by rejecting not only Islamist pressures but also Western

stereotypes of the Muslim woman. In this sense, Marjane is truly a citizen of the ancient and

modern worlds.

Ultimately, Marjane's quest is a modern quest and therefore not a straightforward

monomythic journey. However, here too Campbell's three stages can be discerned on a symbolic

level. She experiences the separation stage when she leaves "a religious Iran for an open and

secular Europe" (155). She crosses the threshold to the unknown country, unknown society and

culture — an underworld experience of sorts especially in light of all the fears of Western

corruption cultivated in Islamic societies. Marjane enters the belly of the whale where she tries to

be accepted in the new society and culture: the travail which would normally lead to a clear

transformation. Marjane's transformation is not that simple however. She is not successful and

cannot survive a succession of trials "by culture," finding herself in serious danger. She becomes

addicted, loses her love, becomes homeless, does not have money or a job, does not have any

friends and "needs so badly to go home" (245).   It is almost as if all the Muslim fears of the West are justified, but that is by no means the point here. Her adolescent years spent in Austria do not bring autonomy and victory for her because she suffers from a lack of identity.

Still, in the end, Marjane returns home transfigured and armed with a simple message for her community. She has tried to assimilate much of Austrian culture, which has caused her to become alienated from her own culture. She feels marginalized — seemingly a failure. However, her "travail" turns out not to be a failure — just a winding path. Marjane feels excluded from both the original culture and the new dominant group in her own country. She experiences a painful oscillation between social, ideological and cultural positions of her country and the West, feeling that she does not fit into either of the two cultures. Finally, she is defeated by the last strike: patriarchal power in the way that it has repressed her aspirations and her hopes for fulfilment to be an artist. She finds out that it is impossible to live and work without freedom.

She decides to leave Iran for Paris to be an artist, which signals the ultimate result of her transformation. She has an inner journey this time, and starts her second departure. It's as if she had to do the monomyth twice to get it right — although the first try is not be dismissed since it plays a key role in her growth despite her despair. Thus, like a traditional fairy-tale hero, she prevails over her personal oppressors in the form of patriarchal power, the Islamic repressive regime and censorship. This time around she comes out reborn and triumphant. She starts fighting for equal rights for women and for political freedom by writing her biography from a distinctly female perspective. It is in her second departure that she narrates the experiences from which she has learned so much. Thus renewed, Marjane finally achieves a microcosmic triumph:

publication is precisely the kind of transformative instrument meant to benefit the community

that Campbell talks about.

Marjane's mission is to show the real face of Iranians, and particularly Iranian women. At

the same time, she seeks to reflect Iran's history, culture, and civilization in order to preserve all

that is good and healthy in this cultural realm. Cathy Caruth offers a useful definition of

testimony — one that resonates with Marjane's quest to "not forget": "To testify—to vow to tell,

to promise and produce one's own speech as material evidence for truth—is to accomplish a

speech act, rather than to simply formulate a statement" (13). Marjane internalizes a

responsibility toward the past, and various forms of remembrance permeate the text (Nabizadeh

159). This graphic memoir is read all around the world and utilized as an educational tool meant

to enlighten Western audiences about a mysterious and distant culture that has been stigmatized

as an "Eastern Other" (Barzegar 4). Therefore, she accomplishes her mission and ameliorates the

intersubjectivity between the people of two cultures by introducing them to each other. This

leads to a move out of solipsism for both herself and other Iranians.

Moreover, in the two novels discussed, the thematic interrelations between individual

solipsism and cultural or social solipsism are explored through narrative motifs of the double and

displacement. Both these motifs exhibit the social construction of subjectivity and designate

positions of otherness in relation to cultural or social structures. Both Lyra and Marjane are

depicted as fragmented, multiple and dependent on social discourses and practices. They

problematize notions of unified selfhood. Lyra's shifting daemon-soul — essentially her double

— represents the internal fragmentation and alienation of the subject and the internalization of

the intersubjective relation between self and other. Marjane's double images in the mirror and

her mirror inversion represent the process of fragmentation that occurs as she vacillates on the one hand, among apparent various versions of Iran and the West: ancient, modern, Westernized, Islamic etc. and on the other hand — the West and its religious, political, and sexual values. Thereby, both novels articulate the complexity of ways in which the subjectivity of female adolescents is formed in dialogue with different social discourses, assumptions and practices which constitute the cultures of East and West. In a way, this is a challenge to Kipling's well-known tragic adage: "OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (The Ballad of East and West).

Lyra's daemon is part of her identity, her internalized other whom she uses to define her selfhood. The double in Pullman's trilogy is mainly represented as an aspect of the developmental process and maturation of his characters. It symbolizes the difference between the infinite plasticity, the infinite potentiality and mutability of childhood and the fixed nature of adulthood. This relates to the settling of daemons — assuming a fixed single shape — as she passes through adolescence into adulthood on her journey from innocence to experience. Marjane, on the other hand, tries to piece together a divided identity out of a more complex set of influences. What is most dramatic about Marjane is that she feels pressure to conform to an identity required of her either in the West or in Iran. She perceives the world and others as acting upon her, and her inability to conform to these expectations leads to a breakdown. Marjane's journey is incomplete, and we are left with a sense that Marjane is still in the process of becoming a complete subject by the end of the novel. Marjane becomes fully Marjane when she assumes her neither-nor and both-and identity in the complex modern world. Thus, Marjane is less of a fairy-tale character than Lyra.

These two characters are displaced from their families or their pasts, or from familiar social or cultural surroundings. They are situated within alienated subject positions: either as the cultural other within an alien society or as the socially marginal other in relation to their own society in a specific time period. For a time, displacement prevents Lyra from forming intersubjective relationships with others, and the relationships between her and society make her unable to carry out her earthly tasks and mission. This leads to solipsistic alienation. Lyra is represented as more passively constructed and thus disempowered by the social contexts in which she is positioned, which makes the experience of displacement partially disempowering. However, as pointed out earlier, at the end of her adventure, she frees the souls of humanity into the multiverse and brings about the spiritual transformation of the world. This turns out to be her liberation too. Thus, Lyra comes back home at the end having gained a strong sense of identity and purpose. Pullman paints a complex picture of the human condition where the path of the female is still a work in progress.

On the other hand, Marjane tries to be a Western woman when she is displaced, as if complete cultural displacement were possible. Her socialization into Austrian society does not involve resistance so she is for a while passively assimilated by this society. In fact she assimilates much of Austrian culture and thus alienates herself from her own culture. The result is the experience of cultural in-betweenness where identity becomes impossible. Such a process reflects and emphasizes Marjane's identity crisis and psychological difficulties in life during her coming-of-age period. Therefore, Marjane's first displacement out of her familiar surroundings destabilizes her sense of identity and hence undermines notions of selfhood. It is when Marjane leaves her family and country in the latter part of the novel for a second time that she realizes

that there are other things she wants to do with her life and that she must and (can) leave her country in order to construct a sense of her own self — as both agent and subject. Whereas on her first trip, Marjane's subjectivity is represented as replication or assimilation, in her second trip her subjectivity is represented as one of cultural exchange — transcendent of the alien social context. She is depicted as a person learning, decoding and interpreting alien social codes and discourses along with her familiar ones. Both heroines learn, teach and experience the excitement of life.

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CV:

Educational Qualification

2015-2017   **M.A in Comparative Literature**

Western University, Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures, Canada

2008   **M.A in English Language and Literature**
Azad University, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Iran

 2001   **B.A in English Language & Literature**
Azad University, Faculty of Languages, Iran

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

■ 1 full year Experience in Teaching Assistantship in "**Introduction to Film Studies**" at University of Western Ontario (2015-2016).

■ 4 full year Experience in Teaching "Translation" at University of Applied Science / Iran (2010-2014).

■ About 10 years' experience in translating a variety of written materials such as books, correspondence, reports, articles and etc. from English into Persian and vice versa in the field of literature, art and training issues as a translator (2006-2016).

Selected Publications

Translated Books:

■ **Iceland** by: **Nicolas Billon**, in the process of performing / Iran (2016)

■ 6 essays of the book "Representing Religion in the World Cinema: Filmmaking, Mythmaking, Culture Making (Religion/Culture/Critique) by: S. Brent Plate (2014)

■ **Two plays** of **Donald Margulies**, Afraz Publishing Co., Iran (August 2011-July 2014)
    - Dinner with Friends
    - Time Stands Still

■ **Two Works** of **Martin McDonough** / Afraz Publishing Co., Iran (August 2011-July 2014)
    - The Cripple of Inishmaan
    - In Bruges

■ **Creative Drama in the Classroom** by Nellie McCaslin / **Manzoomeh Kherad Publication** / Iran (February 2011- August 2011)

■ **Discipline without Shouting or Spanking** by Jerry Wyckoff, Barbara C. Unell, **Hengam Publication** / Iran (January 2010-July 2010)

■Translated the following books for children and Young adults from Persian to English, **Amirkabir Publication Institute** / Iran (August 2009-January 2010)

      - **The Last Song of the Scarecrow** by Jamaleddin Akrami
      - **In the back of that Blue wall** by Sousan Taghdis
      - **In Another Way** by Shadi Beizai
      - **My Beautiful Horse** by Sousan Taghdi

■ **The Red Balloon** by Albert Lamorisse / **Amirkabir Publication Institute** / Iran (April 2008-August 2008)

■ **Flowers for Algernon** by Daniele Keyes / **Amirkabir Publication Institute** / Iran (January 2008-April 2008)

HONORS and AWARDS

*The Selected Book award for translating the book "**Flowers for Algernon**" as the Selected Book for the children with Special Needs from Children's Book Council of Iran **(IBBY)**. (2010)

 * The Season Book Prize for translating the book "**Flowers for Algernon**" as the selected book at the 5th Spring Book Award. (2008)

*The best translated book for children and young adults at Parvin Etesami's Prize for the book "**Flowers for Algernon**" **(Nomination).** (2011)

*The best translated book for children and young adults at the Book of the Year for the book "**Flowers for Algernon**" **(Nomination).** (2010)