

## Metaphysic Paradox upon Daemon Character as Delineated in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*

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### Abstract

*Philip Pullman's Northern Lights delineates how the paradox figures out some improper ideas toward the usage of metaphysic domain particularly the daemon delineation in its story. The existence of paradox is realized by the writer since what happen toward daemon character put in the novel is in contrast to the general understanding of daemon as a part of metaphysic itself. The purpose of this research is to find the evidences of paradox in the novel and to elucidate the significance of each paradox found in the novel. In accordance, this research applies philosophical approach on the idea of René Descartes' dualism as the domain of body and spirit discussion. As it is a library research, it involves the data required from some references. Therefore, in composing the research of this writing, comparative qualitative method is applied to elaborate and to arrange the data concerned to the problem analyzed. In conclusion, the research results some metaphysic paradoxes upon daemon as immaterial essence, life creature's spirit, and life determiner. Finally, all those paradoxes lead to the nuance of circumstance in which physic (material) and metaphysic (immaterial) can be hooked up as the resolution. So that the premise which one is the real truth is no longer exist because both of them are the truth.*

**Key Words:** *daemon character, dualism, metaphysic, paradox, physic.*

### Introduction

The civilization of human being or social life will never be detached from the concept created by them. Etymologically, it occurred through the human philosophy that has a literal meaning of friend in wisdom or knowledge. In the beginning of modern philosophy, René Descartes (1596-1650) viewed and added the most important area within philosophy as belonging to the social phenomena. Descartes through his "*Dualism*" insists that body and spirit are two different things and have different function. Body is a machine that consists of its parts complexity; meanwhile spirit is an undividable, an indefinite of space and time, signed by spiritual act such as thinking, willing, and etc. Even though they are different, body and spirit have a close relationship one to another as like as a ship and its officer (Papineau, 2009: 48).

This French philosopher was really famous with the argument "*je pense, donc je suis*" or in Latin "*cogito ergo sum*" ("I think therefore I am"). Hence what becomes the idea of Descartes is what makes human realize about what is happening and existing upon what they believe in, what they see, and what they feel is because they are thinking. There are six main branches of philosophy that suppose to be known such as epistemology, metaphysic, logic, ethic, esthetic, and philosophy about many kinds of science, but in this research the writer will focus on the discussion of metaphysic domain.

Literally, metaphysic is defined as something that beyond the physics or immaterial (Moseley, 2008: 142). For example is in social fact: the existence of something beyond the physics cannot be denied as time passes, because people believe in immaterial essence (god) or even certain particular concept such as supernatural and invisible as '*daemon*' in which according to ancient Greek religion and mythology, *daemon* (daimon) is the synonym of '*psyche*' (soul, person, spirit) given to people in born that will determine their life. While according to Peake (2008: 7) he stated that the daemon can under certain neurological circumstances, guide and assist its ignorant partner when it feels it is needed. Therefore, at the end the writer concludes that the daemon is the divine creature which is used as someone's spirit inclination which is given immaterially to the people when they born that will determine their destiny and it also under neurological circumstances to guide and to assist its human body along the life.

In the other wise, sometimes people also do a contradiction toward the thing which is implemented by them according to the concept that they believe in as the time went by. This phenomenon is called as '*paradox*'. In here, this concept refers to the thing that seems in contrast within logic or general understanding or a seemingly sound piece of reasoning based on seemingly true assumption that leads to a contradiction (Audi, 1999:643). As a literary

device, paradox has been defined as an anomalous juxtaposition of improper ideas for the sake of striking exposition or unorthodox insight. It also has a tight relation to the idea of deconstruction, because based on Kaoh Siung's journal (1994: 145) stated that the aim of deconstruction method is to point out the failure of absolute truth presentation, and to trace the weakness and contradiction of ulterior agenda behind texts.

One of the novels of Philip Pullman entitled *Northern Lights* (1995) is one of the example that uses 'metaphysic' as a part of content to represent the idea of human 'daemon' delineation. In this case, the writer sees that a metaphysic paradox is hypothetically appeared inside the story. Hence, because of those reasons, the writer gets interested in discussing the paradox of metaphysic domain from the novel in order to give some analysis about the metaphysic paradox by using philosophical approach and some supported definitions and concepts.

### Method

The library research and comparative qualitative method are applied in this research. Library research is the method of conducting this research by collecting, reading and analyzing the data relates to the research. Meanwhile comparative qualitative means the analysis is not using the statistics process which deals with the numerical result, but it is the comparison described by words and by using data which are collected by words or pictures. Based on Feys in Bakker and Zubair (1990: 87), there are three comparison methods in the comparative research: asymmetric, symmetric, and triangle.

In accordance, the triangle method of comparison is applied in conducting this research. Firstly the research is done by elucidating some relevant concepts and approach in the theoretical framework as the first view in the research. Then, it is continued by comparison between the first view and the second view (primary data earned from primary data source) along with elucidating the description of the second view in the analysis part. Afterwards, the result of comparison will be extended by putting deconstruction method in order to earn more comprehensive analysis and to attain another more aspect in this research.

### Discussion

#### Metaphysic Paradox upon Daemon Character in Pullman's *Northern Lights*

Based on Kainz the paradox in metaphysic will trigger circumstance of affair that is simply considered contradictory within the metaphysic concept itself. Therefore, regarding to this research the writer proves the metaphysic paradoxes as follow:

#### 1. Paradox upon Daemon as Immaterial Essence

As in immaterial discussion, daemon is also included as something whose form cannot be seen by the sensory. In this case, the writer tries to find certain quotation to prove the delineation of daemon in the novel:

Lyra and her daemon moved through the darkening hall, taking care to keep to one side, out of sight of the kitchen.....Lyra stopped beside the Master's chair and flicked the biggest glass gently with a fingernail. The sound rang clearly through the hall. "You're not taking this seriously," whispered her daemon. "Behave yourself."

(Pullman, 1995: 2-3)

The quotation above explains how the existence of daemon appears in the story. In that quotation also emphasizes the role of the daemon toward a character named Lyra is as same as the concept that the writer has explained previously. However, the analysis of this research will not stop until that point, because the writer would like to prove the delineation of metaphysic paradox in order to answer the problem formulation in this research. In accordance, the writer quotes a quotation related to this case:

"Her daemon's name was Pantalaimon, and he was currently in the form of a moth, a dark brown one so as not to show up in the darkness of the hall."

(Pullman, 1995: 3)

According to that quotation, the writer indicates that there is a significant distinction between the concept of daemon as a part of metaphysic understanding in general and the concept of daemon applied in the story. The writer assumes that the tangible form given to daemon disavows the concept of metaphysic itself. In accordance, the writer arranges a comparison to proof the existence of paradox in this case:

#### List 1: Comparison in Daemon Form Case Analysis

<b>General Concept of Metaphysic (A<sup>1</sup>)</b>	<b>Analysis (A<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Result (A<sup>3</sup>)</b>
Spirit inclination	No daemon	No spirit
No spirit = Death	Alive	No spirit = Alive

In this case the paradox appears through disavowing the concept of metaphysic that supposes to be beyond physic and immaterial, to be in physic and material.

## 2. Paradox upon Daemon as Life Creature's Spirit

In this case, the writer tries to find certain quotation to prove the delineation of daemon as life creature's spirit proven otherwise in the novel:

"... "Who is Iofur Raknison?" said someone. "The king of Svalbard," said the Palmerian Professor. "Yes, that's right, one of the panserbjørne. He's a usurper, of sorts; tricked his way onto the throne, or so I understand; but a powerful figure, by no means a fool, But the Palmerian Professor went on: "For all that, I tell you that Iofur Raknison would be capable of doing this to Grumman. At the same time, he could be flattered into behaving quite differently, if the need arose."  
(Pullman, 1995: 12-13)

The quotation above explains how another phenomenon also appears in the story. That quotation tells the existence of a character named Iofur Raknison as the king of Panserbjørne whose characterization is in the same level of human being character, such as human behavior, civilization, and logic.

"Indeed I do. Do you know what he wants above all else? Even more than an honorary degree? He wants a daemon! Find a way to give him a daemon, and he'd do anything for you."  
The Scholars laughed heartily.  
(Pullman, 1995: 13)

In fact the ice bear character is delineated as daemon-less life creature in the novel, which means that they do not have spirit delineated by the author. It is proven by the eagerness of Raknison to have a daemon during his life. The writer assumes that the daemon-less life creature disavows the concept of metaphysic itself. In accordance, the writer arranges a comparison to proof the existence of paradox in this case:

### List 2: Comparison in Daemon-Less Case Analysis

<b>General Concept of Metaphysic (A)</b>	<b>Analysis (-A)</b>	<b>Result (-A)</b>
Spirit inclination	No daemon	No spirit
No spirit = Death	Alive	No spirit = Alive

Therefore, in this case the paradox appears through disavowing the concept of daemon as a part of metaphysic domain that supposes to be inherent as the spirit inclination and brings to live, to be not inherent as the spirit inclination of life creature and created a possibility that life creature can live without spirit in its body. Beside this, the writer also has second level analysis regarding to one of paradox's definitions as a situation where two odd statements (in contrast to each other) both look righteous, and both must be accepted through action.

He wants a daemon! Find a way to give him a daemon, and he'd do anything for you."  
The Scholars laughed heartily.  
(Pullman, 1995: 13)

He's a usurper, of sorts; tricked his way onto the throne, or so I understand; but a powerful figure, by no means a fool,  
(Pullman, 1995: 12)

Those two quotations delineate how the character of Iofur Raknison has willingness and also flow of logic when he does something in his life. Since this life creature is delineated to not have spirit (daemon), how he is alive and having willingness or thinking in the story is questionable. There must be something which sees, feels, and influences inside this character's body which has already existed since the beginning of their life as what becomes the general metaphysic view discussed previously. Hence the question would be; what if that is spirit?

This circumstance is like two different faces in a coin; in one side it proves the disavowing of metaphysic view, but in the other side it also proves this circumstance supports the general view of metaphysic existing. In accordance, the writer arranges a comparison to prove the existence of paradox in this case:

*List 3: Comparison in Inconsistence of Daemon as Material Essence*

<b>Daemon Concept in the Novel (A)</b>	<b>Analysis (-A)</b>	<b>General Concept of Metaphysic as the Result (-A)</b>
No spirit = Can think, will, and eager	Can think, will, and eager	Something that think, will, eager is spirit
No spirit = Alive	Alive	Alive needs spirit
Material	No depiction	Immaterial
Outside the body	Must be something which brings the life to the body	Inside the body as spirit inclination

By answering the metaphysic paradox in daemon-less case circumstance, the writer also finds another paradox that proves an inconsistence of daemon form stance in the novel. Therefore, in this case the paradox appears through agreeing the general concept of metaphysic view proven by the disavowal toward the daemon form case delineated in the novel.

### 3. Paradox upon Daemon as Life Determiner

In the discussion of metaphysic, daemon is always considered as spirit of life creature stayed inside the body of the creature itself and as something that determines all acts done by the owners of the daemon themselves.

"No, you're wrong, Adam," said Farder Coram. "He weren't there at all. The witches have the power to separate their-selves from their daemons a mighty sight further'n what we can. If need be, they can send their daemons far abroad on the wind or the clouds, or down below the ocean."  
(Pullman, 1995: 69)

Through the quotation above, the writer tries to find further understanding about in fact the witch characters can be separated from their daemon in the novel, which means that they can be detached from something that brings them to live. It refers that the daemon of the witch is delineated as spirit which is not absolutely stayed by the owner. Furthermore, the writer finds that the phenomenon of daemon separation does not occur toward the witch clan only, but it also occurs toward the human clan as well. In accordance, the writer has quoted this delineation as follow.

"The little boy was huddled against the wood drying rack where hung row upon row of gutted fish, all as stiff as boards. He was clutching a piece of fish to him as Lyra was clutching Pantalaimon, with her left hand, hard, against her heart; but that was all he had, a piece of dried fish; because he had no daemon at all. The Gobblers had cut it away. That was intercision, and this was a severed child."  
(Pullman, 1995: 90)

It is depicted when the Gobblers had taken the boy's daemon in the quotation above. It means that the little boy can be detached from something that brings him to live in this case. The writer assumes that the daemon separation disavows the concept of metaphysic itself. In accordance, the writer arranges a comparison to prove the existence of paradox in this case:

*List 4: Comparison in Daemon Separation Case Analysis*

<b>General Concept of Metaphysic (A)</b>	<b>Analysis (-A)</b>	<b>Result (-A)</b>
Inherently stayed in the body	Can be separated from the body	Not inherently stayed in the body
No spirit = Death	Alive	No spirit = Alive
One unity	Stand individually	Not in one unity

Therefore, in this case the paradox appears through disavowing the concept of daemon as a part of metaphysic domain that supposes to be inherently stayed in the body as one unity and brings to live, to be not inherent as one unity between body and spirit of life creature and created a possibility that life creature can live without spirit in its body.

### **The Significance of Paradox in Pullman's *Northern Lights*: A New Vista on Daemon in the Story**

All paradoxes revealed in this research indirectly have a role in influencing the figuration of metaphysic view, precisely the delineation of daemon existence in the story. In this analysis, the writer concerns to investigate the meaning of paradoxes and their influence toward the story in the novel. This analysis will involve particular resolution that is implicitly formed and leads the story to stand in the level of truth that cannot be seen in surface. In accordance, through deconstruction method the writer finds a new different vista behind all paradoxes found in Northern Lights novel.

#### 1. Resolution of Daemon Form Case

The "Daemon Form Case" is the first paradox found in this research. This paradox implies that immaterial essence as the basic values of general metaphysic does not exist in the story. The position of this paradox is really influential in the story of Northern Lights novel, because it leads to a resolution in which the disavowal of daemon form as immaterial essence is proven otherwise. As the writer has proven previously, the present of tangible physical form toward daemon is absolutely disavowing the concept of metaphysic that supposes to be beyond physic.

"Her daemon's name was Pantalaimon, and he was currently in the form of a moth, a dark brown one so as not to show up in the darkness of the hall.....and Pantalaimon fluttered ahead and through the slightly open door of the Retiring Room at the other end of the dais. After a moment he appeared again".  
(Pullman, 1995: 3)

It seems that materialism has crossed to the domain of immaterialism, which means that the concept of physic that always deals with idea of the truth is measured by material form, replaces the role of metaphysic in its domain. In this case, this paradox gives a significance to a resolution that metaphysic does not have any sovereignty anymore, even if in the usage of metaphysic domain itself.

#### 2. Resolution of Daemon-Less Case

In the "*Daemon-Less Case*", the paradox leads to an ambivalent circumstance to the story. In the first level, this paradox implies that there is a possibility of life creature to be alive without daemon, or in this case is spirit inclination, but in the other hand this paradox also supports to prove otherwise in the daemon form case. The position of this paradox is also really influential to the story of *Northern Lights* novel, because it leads to a resolution in which one disavowal of metaphysic concept, will also disavow its body or another disavowal of metaphysic concept. As the writer has proven previously, the delineation of daemon-less life creature is absolutely disavowing the concept of daemon as the spirit inclination of life creature to make dead body to be alive.

"Who is Iofur Ragnison?" said someone. "The king of Svalbard," said the Palmerian Professor. "Yes, that's right, one of the panserbjørne. He's a usurper, of sorts; tricked his way onto the throne, or so I understand; but a powerful figure, by no means a fool,"  
(Pullman, 1995: 12)

"Indeed I do. Do you know what he wants above all else? Even more than an honorary degree? He wants a daemon! Find a way to give him a daemon, and he'd do anything for you."  
The Scholars laughed heartily.  
(Pullman, 1995: 13)

It seems this circumstance wants to emphasize that life creature (represented by ice bear clan) can be alive even if it does not have any daemon as spirit inclination, but whenever the analysis gets further; it will reveal another circumstance due to the definition of daemon itself. In this case, the writer questioning how they can be alive meanwhile they have no daemon. Through those quotations above, it is concluded that there must be spirit which can determine their life such as deciding willingness, eagerness, and ambition. Since there is no tangible description of their spirit form in this story, it is also concluded that it is indirectly pointed to immaterial essence.

This paradox influences to a resolution as the proof of inconsistency established in the story, as in a circumstance of two faces in a coin. In this case, the paradox shows the disavowal toward daemon concept as spirit inclination, but in the other hand it also reverse back the view of materialism explained in daemon form case above that not all spirit can be measured from its material form.

#### 3. Resolution of Daemon Separation Case

Meanwhile in the "*Daemon Separation Case*", the paradox will leads to a stronger stance of ambivalent circumstance in the story. This paradox implies that there is a possibility of life creatures to be separated from their daemon, or in this case spirit is neither inherently stayed in the body of its owner, nor as something which can bring

to live, and nor as one unity between body and spirit. It also refers to the meaning that there is a possibility that life creatures can live without spirit. The position of this paradox is also really influential to the story of this novel, because it leads to a resolution in which there is no inevitability existing in the stance of the story.

“The witches have the power to separate themselves from their daemons a mighty sight further'n what we can. If need be, they can send their daemons far abroad on the wind or the clouds, or down below the ocean.”

(Pullman, 1995: 69)

“The little boy was huddled against the wood drying rack where hung row upon row of gutted fish, all as stiff as boards. He was clutching a piece of fish to him as Lyra was clutching Pantalaimon, with her left hand, hard, against her heart; but that was all he had, a piece of dried fish; because he had no daemon at all. The Gobblers had cut it away. That was intercession, and this was a severed child.”

(Pullman, 1995: 90)

It seems that the inevitability of both physic and metaphysic does not exist any longer, which means that the concept of physic or metaphysic will not be a problem anymore in order to prove the existence of daemon in this novel. Depicted in those quotations above, whenever a daemon is separated from its body, it means that it cannot be determined whether or not this body has a daemon. Another assessment can also be seen by considering the situation when a live body does not seem to have daemon because it is separated consciously or forcedly. In this case, this paradox influences to a resolution that both physic (material) and metaphysic (immaterial) are not absolutely and inherently as the unicameral stance in the story. In the other wise, even they have a symbiosis dependant one to another to prove their existence in the novel.

In accordance, a new different vista behind all paradoxes has found through deconstruction method in *Northern Lights* novel. As what has discussed previously, deconstruction is intended to the free critical reading method, in order to find gap and contradiction in the text that is conflicting to the author's meaning sense. Upon this method, reading the text is no longer intended to catch meaning that the author aims for, but to produce the new plural meanings, without an absolute or a universal claim.

In this case the writer has found a new vista that is not explicitly stated in all text in the novel, but it is found by tracing further upon all paradoxes found in the novel. Through deconstruction method, the writer finds that the exigency of debating which one is better between physic (material) and metaphysic (immaterial) is improper in the first place. In this story of *Northern Lights*, the essence of both physic and metaphysic does not absolutely stand contradictory; in otherwise even they have a symbiosis dependant one to another because each concept can cross the border one to another. There is no premise of both concepts that can be absolutely stroked one to another; each stance is both true in this novel. Through this analysis the writer comprehends that whatever the daemon forms is and wherever the daemon stays in, as long as the life creatures still alive, it means that their daemons do exist and belong to them. Therefore, all paradoxes in the novel have influenced the story to be flexible and to not take side to one premise between physic and metaphysic; furthermore it shows the harmony between those two concepts.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, there are some delineations of metaphysic paradox upon daemon character in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* which are supported by philosophical overview. The analysis leads to understand all paradoxes existence occurred in the story of *Northern Lights*. Some improper circumstances that bridge to negate and to support the general understanding of metaphysic also have already well traced. All paradoxes in the novel have influenced the story to be flexible and to not take side to one premise between physic and metaphysic; furthermore it shows that those two concepts can be hooked up in the same time.

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**Note**

A<sup>1</sup> : The concept of general metaphysic understanding of daemon explained in theoretical framework (first concept).

A<sup>2</sup> : The concept of daemon character delineation analyzed in the novel researched (second concept).

A<sup>3</sup> : The result of analysis that proves the meaning of paradox existence (result of comparison/paradox delineation).