

From Innocence to Experience: Philip Pullman's Bildungsroman

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Bachelor Thesis
2014



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur
akademický rok: 2013/2014

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Lenka GORNÁ**
Osobní číslo: **H10268**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Od nevinosti ke zkušenosti: Vývojový román
Philipa Pullmana**

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Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Bobby, Susan Redington. Beyond His Dark Materials: Innocence and Experience in the Fiction of Philip Pullman. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012.

Lenz, Millicent, and Carole Scott. His Dark Materials Illuminated: Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008.

Pullman, Philip. Northern Lights. London: Scholastic, 1995.

Pullman, Philip. The Subtle Knife. London: Scholastic, 1997.

Pullman, Philip. The Amber Spyglass. London: Scholastic, 2000.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Vladimíra Fonfárová

Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

29. listopadu 2013

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

2. května 2014

Ve Zlíně dne 22. ledna 2014



doc. Ing. Anežka Lengalová, Ph.D.

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce *Od nevinosti ke zkušenosti: Bildungsroman Philipa Pullmana* popisuje vývoj, zrání a dospívání hlavní protagonistky Lyry v trilogii *Jeho temné esence* a analyzuje, zda se dospívání reflektuje ve zvolených fantastických prvcích, což je také hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce. V první části je popsána fantastická literatura, život a dílo autora, elementy, které ovlivňují jeho tvorbu, děj trilogie a literární žánr Bildungsroman. Druhá část práce se zabývá rozborem vývoje Lyry a již zmíněnou analýzou vztahu mezi fantastickými prvky a dospíváním hlavní protagonistky.

Klíčová slova: Philip Pullman, fantastická literatura, Bildungsroman, nevinost, zkušenost, *Jeho temné esence*

ABSTRACT

Bachelor Thesis on *From Innocence to Experience: Philip Pullman's Bildungsroman* describes the development, maturing and coming-of-age of the main protagonist, Lyra, in the trilogy *His Dark Materials* and analyses if the coming-of-age process is reflected in chosen fantastic elements, which is also the main aim of this thesis. The first part describes the fantasy literature, author's life and works, elements which influence his work, plot of the story and the Bildungsroman literary genre. The second part deals with Lyra's development and the analysis of the relationship between the fantastic elements and the protagonist's maturation process.

Keywords: Philip Pullman, fantasy literature, Bildungsroman, innocence, experience, *His Dark Materials*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the advisor of my bachelor's thesis, Mgr. Vladimíra Fonfárová, who gave me a lot of beneficial suggestions and comments and was truly supportive and patient. I would also like to thank my family, my boyfriend and my friends for their enormous support throughout my studies.

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INTRODUCTION

These days, there are many authors who are trying to provide readable and interesting books for children from all over the world. It is not easy to get children to read, especially where they are surrounded by devices like computers, tablets, iPads and many other media, so when a writer manages to succeed and children are willing to read his or her stories it is a sign of good-quality work.

The British author, Philip Pullman, is one of those writers who have succeeded into drawing people's attention and as a result, his books have become popular and famous and many people, not only children - but also adults, started to get familiar with his pieces. Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials* is a perfect example of twenty-first century fantasy literature. This trilogy composed of the novels, *Northern Lights* (1995), also known in America as *The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and the last one is *The Amber Spyglass* (2000).

The study of the fantasy literature genre will be essential for this paper as there are many elements within the trilogy which are focused around the genre of the fantasy literature. This will be the major topic of the first chapter - as well as the life, awards and books written by Philip Pullman – the author of the trilogy himself. This chapter will also briefly cover the plot of each book of the trilogy and the characterization of the main female protagonist, called Lyra. A great part of the first chapter is also devoted to three elements that represent the most prominent influence of Philip Pullman's work and which are clearly visible, not only in his other works, but primarily in the trilogy. Since there are many elements of Bildungsroman in this trilogy, one chapter will be dedicated to this type of literature and its main features will be described.

Moreover, this thesis will deal with the development of the main protagonist – from innocence to experience, which is one of the central themes of the trilogy. It is necessary to scrutinize this development to discover if the maturation of the protagonist is reflected in the fantasy elements from the trilogy. The characters that have the main impact on the protagonist's maturation process will be described - including situations that form Lyra. The end of the analysis will be dedicated to chosen fantasy elements in order to explore if they truly reflect the maturation process or not.

1 PHILIP PULLMAN IN THE CONTEXT OF POSTMODERN FANTASY LITERATURE

Philip Pullman is mainly known because of his trilogy that includes not only, but mostly, fantasy elements and therefore, these books can be labelled as works of fantasy literature. Below, there will be a treatment of how the fantasy literature genre is described.

1.1 Characteristics of fantasy literature

Fantasy literature has its roots in times when literature itself began. For example, myths and medieval romance are considered as predecessors of fantasy literature.¹ Fantasy literature does not want to moralize or teach - its main aim is to take an ordinary reader to new locations, to the world of fantasy, imagination and unlimited possibilities and to give the reader true reading pleasure.²

The main trait of the story is the presence of a supernatural element (e.g. a supernatural being or magic) when speaking about fantasy literature.³ This element can also be found, for example, in fairy-tales and myths but, unlike them, fantasy literature does not separate the real world from the magic one; these worlds are connected in one unified unit which is both real and fantastic at the same time.⁴

The *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů* describes fantasy literature as an antipole to science fiction. Those genres have a lot in common and both of them belong to speculative fiction, but they are distinguished by being based on specific themes and sources.⁵ Fantasy is defined as literature that evokes various feelings and affects our emotions,⁶ not our intellect. This is rather, the aim of science fiction literature, which draws on scientific motifs and where technology plays an important role as well.⁷

While science fiction deals with science and technology, it attempts to discover the future possibilities and tries to rationally explain its motifs; fantasy fiction on the other hand, deals with mystery and magic and fairy-tale themes, feelings and emotions are used.

¹ See Dagmar Mecná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů* (Praha: Paseka, 2004), 187.

² See David Pringle, *Fantasy: Encyklopedie fantastických světů* (Praha: Albatros, 2003), 19.

³ See Ivan Adamovič, *Slovník české literární fantastiky a science fiction* (Praha: R3, 1995), 6.

⁴ See Ladislava Lederbuchová, *Průvodce literárním dílem: Výkladový slovník základních pojmů literární teorie* (Jinočany: H&H, 2002), 93.

⁵ See Dagmar Mecná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 187.

⁶ See David Pringle, *Fantasy: Encyklopedie fantastických světů*, 8.

⁷ See Dagmar Mecná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 188.

It is a contrast to rationally-built sci-fi. Several elements that are repeated, and are therefore, typical for fantasy literature are recognizable. These include, for example, that the main protagonist (or a larger group of protagonists) is accompanied on his/her/their way by a companion who complements the protagonist and assists when it is needed. Then there appears to be some master or mentor who suggests the direction which the hero should take. There is also the rival, or sexual object, which may become a motivation for the hero and eventually any kind of fantastic creature appears.⁸

The main characters of a fantasy story are mostly young protagonists - and Karen Patricia Smith explains why this is so significant for this kind of story - youth provides the possibility of not following logic and that is why an adolescent protagonist is able to believe in the unbelievable.⁹

As Mocná and Peterka claim in their book, the motive of the journey could be defined as fundamental, which basically represents an adventure but also a commission. On the one hand, this key expedition could be considered a symbolic formulation of a life's pilgrimage and on the other; it could be an insight into the mind of the character and their attitude towards the world.¹⁰

Fantasy has also its own characteristic type of places and there are three of these. A fantasy story can be set in a space which is an imitation of our world, but distinguishing features appear. However, the story more often takes the reader into a completely different space, which can be a pseudo-history of the real world or a creation of an imaginary world where magic occurs as the main element, and where often, its social system is feudal and pre-technical and religion can also play a key role.¹¹

As Jiří Šrámek mentions in his book, fantasy stories do not represent an unfettered literary structure in which the author is allowed to do anything and where they can freely unleash their creative imagination. A fantastic story does not provide incredible events in random order or sequence, but is intended to deliberately assemble a narrative scheme,

⁸ See Dagmar Mocná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 187-188.

⁹ See Millicent Lenz and Carole Scott, *His Dark Materials Illuminated* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 138.

¹⁰ See Dagmar Mocná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 188.

¹¹ See *Ibid.*

whose task is to organize the position of particular relevant themes in the plot so that the fantastic appears not only acceptable, but even probable.¹²

1.2 Philip Pullman's life and published works

A British author, born as Philip Nicholas Outram, is one of those writers who have managed to succeed and his books have become popular and into consciousness of many people. To honour his step-father he took his last name and became Philip Pullman.¹³ This author, who had written fantasy fiction works which are described in the chapter above, was told: "You'll never make it. You'll never earn a living. Get a decent job and forget all about it. There's no future in it."¹⁴ But these words never discouraged him.

Philip Pullman is a well-known author because of his best-selling books, most notably because of his fantasy trilogy called *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), which is considered to be the most prominent of his works. Not only is he an author of fiction, non-fiction and picture books, but he is also a playwright. He is also labelled as a representative of British Atheism.¹⁵ This label is partially given to him because of his participation in organizations such as the British Humanist Association (BHA) or the National Secular Society (NSS).¹⁶ The first organization is, evidently according to its name, based on the humanistic approach of non-religious people who want to fully live their lives built on reasons and society. In 2011, Philip Pullman was given a BHA prize for his services and long support of this organization.¹⁷ The NSS is based on secularism, so the members strive to show people that religion and state should be separated so that all the people (anyhow religiously oriented or atheist) could perfectly coexist without any influence of the church.¹⁸

¹² See Jiří Šrámek, *Morfologie fantastické povídky* (Brno: Masarykova univerzita v Brně – filozofická fakulta, 1993), 46.

¹³ See Paul Simpson, *The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 14.

¹⁴ Ibid, 11.

¹⁵ See Laura Miller, "Life and Letters: Far from Narnia," *The New Yorker*, December 26, 2005, accessed April 7, 2014, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/12/26/051226fa_fact?currentPage=all.

¹⁶ See Stoyan Zaimov, "Atheist Author Philip Pullman: Jesus Is Important for Child Education," *The Christian Post*, March 19, 2013, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheist-author-phillip-pullman-jesus-is-important-for-child-education-92108/>.

¹⁷ See British Humanist Association, "Philip Pullman awarded for services to Humanism," British Humanist Association, June 18, 2011, accessed April 7, 2014, <https://humanism.org.uk/2011/06/18/news-832/>.

¹⁸ See National Secular Society, "About the National Secular Society," National Secular Society, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.secularism.org.uk/about.html>

Thanks to Philip Pullman's work, many readers, not only children, were brought back to reading books and have developed a fondness for being embodied in an imaginary world that he creates for them. He is also a winner of the Guardian's Children's Book Award, the Booker Prize and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award and he was awarded the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2005.¹⁹ The Whitbread Book of the Year Award, which Pullman got in 2001 for his third book of the trilogy (*The Amber Spyglass*), was - for the first time in history, given to a book intended for children. Usually books for adults predominate in this category. This trilogy was not meant to be only for children but also for adults. This is also demonstrated by the fact that all three books were published with different front cover versions – for children there are covers with the main protagonists (Lyra and Will) and animals, whereas covers designed for adult readers contain artefacts according to the title of each book (e.g. an amber spyglass).

Philip Pullman was born on 19 October 1946 in the county town of Norwich in Norfolk which is situated in the South East of England but the Outram' family moved a lot, firstly from England to Zimbabwe, then to Australia, and later on to Wales.²⁰ According to Robert McCrum Pullman did not have an easy childhood because he and his younger brother lost their father, who was a Royal Air Force fighter pilot, when Pullman was just seven years old. After that sad event, the rest of the family returned to England and Philip spent a lot of time with his grandfather who was a clergyman and Pullman was influenced by him and his Bible story-telling.²¹ After graduating from school, 25-year old Pullman discovered another skill of his, which was teaching. In 1986, he began to teach at Westminster College where he had worked for eight years.²²

As Philip Pullman states on his official website, his first book intended for children was *Count Karlstein* published in 1982, and republished again in 2002. Then the first part of *The Sally Lockhart Quartet* was published. The first piece, called *The Ruby in the Smoke*, was published in 1985. After this one another volumes called *The Shadow in the*

¹⁹ See Philip Pullman, "About Philip Pullman," Philip Pullman, 2009, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.philip-pullman.com/about.asp>.

²⁰ See Ibid.

²¹ See Robert McCrum, "Daemon Geezer," *The Guardian*, January 27, 2002, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jan/27/whitbreadprize2001.costabookaward>.

²² See Philip Pullman, "About Philip Pullman," Philip Pullman, 2009, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.philip-pullman.com/about.asp>.

North (1986), *The Tiger in the Well* (1990), and *The Tin Princess* (1994). He had conducted deep research about the background that was used in these four publications.²³

He also wrote many fairy-tales like *The Firework-Maker's Daughter* (1995), *Clockwork, or All Wound Up* (1996), *I Was a Rat!* (1999), which are significantly shorter, but Pullman himself finds them really likeable, but still extremely complicated to write.²⁴

1.2.1 Influences

Philip Pullman himself confesses in his book that a lot of ideas were borrowed from books he has read. The major merit is given to Heinrich von Kleist, John Milton and William Blake.²⁵ There are some clearly visible elements that influence the work of Philip Pullman.

One of the matters that influenced Pullman's work is the Victorian Era. The Victorian Era started when Queen Victoria took over the throne in 1837 and ended with her death in 1901 and, for the British Empire, it was a time of prosperity, industrial innovation and also the time of women's limited power.

In terms of books written by Pullman for example, the whole *Sally Lockhart Quartet*, written from 1985 to 1994, is set in typical Victorian world with all its characteristic features. Pullman's interest in this historical period is obvious. *His Dark Materials* Lyra's world is also an out-and-out picture of the Victorian Era where women have some restrictions, and many new devices are invented and used (e.g. the projection lantern used by Lord Asriel in the first book) and the Church is very powerful and wants to maintain its power. As Paul Simpson states in his book: "The central narrative of the Victorian Age was a coming together of the old and the new, the agrarian and the industrial – in a sense, of innocence and experience – and this is vital to the backdrop of *His Dark Materials*."²⁶

As regards the trilogy, for example, women are not allowed to enter the Retiring Room where only men can stay. "Only Scholars and their guests were allowed in here, and never females. Even the maidservants didn't clean in here. That was the Butler's job alone."²⁷ Even the fact that a senior male servant, known as a butler, serves in Jordan College suggests the connection between Lyra's world and the Victorian world because there were

²³ See Philip Pullman, "About Philip Pullman," Philip Pullman, 2009, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.philip-pullman.com/about.asp>.

²⁴ See Ibid.

²⁵ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass* (London: Scholastic, 2000), 550.

²⁶ Paul Simpson, *The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*, 211.

²⁷ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights* (London: Scholastic, 2007), 4.

a large number of butlers in this era. The whole attitude to exploration and science in this trilogy is all very Victorian.²⁸ The majority of the main characters (e.g. Mrs Coulter, Lord Asriel, Lee Scoresby) do a lot of travelling to explore the earth using hot-air balloons, steam trains or zeppelins.

Another influence that is clearly visible is the author's atheistic approach. *His Dark Materials* has plenty of special and significant symbols and features, but the fact that Pullman is an atheist is the most provable one. There are several traces of "not believing in God" or, in other words, a few concerns about the function of the Church throughout the *His Dark Materials*. The whole plot contains indications of atheism. Lord Asriel gives out his best to reach his dream, which is to form a Republic of Heaven and to bring down the power of the Church. Paul Simons claims in his book that "Instead of God, Pullman gives us that quasi-mystical mysterious enriching matter he calls Dust."²⁹ The Dust represents a main matter and appears throughout the whole trilogy.

The Dust is described as elementary particles that are not visible to people unless they possess devices to uncover them. For example, when the amber spyglass (in *The Amber Spyglass*) is used, a scientist called Mary is able to see the Dust: "And when she looked through, everything was changed. She could see Shadows. ... Everywhere she looked she could see gold, just as Atal had described it: sparkles of light, floating and drifting and sometimes moving in a current of purpose..."³⁰ According to the trilogy, the Dust is a unique conscious part of the world and it had come before even life on Earth started, and the Authority (another name for God) and first Angels arose from it. The Dust starts setting on people as they grow older, as they mature. Gaining experience and knowledge is how people become conscious, and that is why the Church considers the Dust to be a representation of an original sin so they want to separate children from daemons because they believe that this will stop the Dust from spreading.

The Church in this trilogy is labelled as a fairly dictatorial and cruel association which wants us to believe that innate matters such as foresight, maturing and sexuality are

²⁸ See Paul Simpson, *The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*, 212.

²⁹ Ibid, 163.

³⁰ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 243.

absolutely unnatural.³¹ They even set up the General Oblation Board (also called Gobblers) which is intended to cut children and their daemons apart to prevent sin.

Susan Redington Bobby points out that Pullman's central theme and the main idea of the trilogy describes the picture of innocence in a completely different way than how the church describes it. He claims that human innocence cannot be lost through original sin, because it can be retrieved again. The main idea of this is that there must be some loss in life so that innocence can be regained.³² Bobby also claims that Pullman once explained: "We lose the innocence that we were born with, and then go on through life. But if we work hard, and if we train ourselves ... if we undergo all kinds of discipline, pain, suffering, and so forth, then the point is that we can regain grace".³³ Throughout the trilogy, we can see that grace is considered to be of equal importance as innocence, because if innocence is preserved then grace can be regained. This may give us a clue about Pullman's view on Christianity. He does not like the idea of God, as the one we must boundlessly believe in, and the fact that a human can be blessed only if God decides to.³⁴ After all, what can be better proof than Pullman's own words: "I am of the Devil's party and I know it."³⁵

The same concept about innocence and experience is used in poems by William Blake. Pullman's fondness for William Blake's work is another indicator of this influence. Besides the epigraphs used in *The Amber Spyglass*, the connection and similarity to Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Experience* (1794) is visible. These poems are full of children's innocence that is influenced by the world itself, and every child becomes experienced, formed, matures and loses their childhood energy. In *His Dark Materials* Lyra and Will begin as pure children but after undergoing all these stages they are no longer children at the end of the trilogy. Laurie Frost states in her book: "*His Dark Materials*' depiction of the Magisterium, and the idea of establishing a Republic of Heaven in the

³¹ See Millicent Lenz and Carole Scott, *His Dark Materials Illuminated*, 45.

³² See Susan Redington Bobby, *Beyond His Dark Materials: Innocence and Experience in the Fiction of Philip Pullman* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012), Kindle edition.

³³ Ibid, Kindle edition.

³⁴ See Susan Redington Bobby, *Beyond His Dark Materials: Innocence and Experience in the Fiction of Philip Pullman*, Kindle edition.

³⁵ Helena de Bertodano, "I am of the Devil's party," *The Telegraph*, January 29, 2002, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3572490/I-am-of-the-Devils-party.html>.

world in which we live, are examples of ways in which the spirit of Pullman's books is similar to that of Blake's."³⁶

There are examples of the chapter-opening epigraphs of the last book that indicate that there is a great influence of William Blake's works: "While the Beasts of Prey, come from Caverns Deep, Viewed the Maid Asleep..."³⁷, "Frowning, frowning night, O'er this desert bright, Let thy moon arise, While I close my eyes."³⁸, "I was Angry with my Friend; I told my wrath, my wrath did End."³⁹

These are only three out of ten epigraphs written by William Blake and used by Philip Pullman in his book *The Amber Spyglass*.

1.3 *His Dark Materials*

Philip Pullman's trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, is a perfect example of twenty-first century fantasy literature. This trilogy consists of the following novels, which are *Northern Lights* (also known in America as *The Golden Compass*), *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*. Pullman shared a comment on his official website: "I thought it would be hard to find an audience for this story, and I've been astonished and delighted by the reception it's had all over the world. I don't want to say very much about it here, because I'd like it to speak for itself."⁴⁰ Maybe there were more people who thought that this set of three books would not be as successful as they are nowadays, but it is clear that many people from all over the world are truly interested in fantasy literature and in the adventures that it offers.

1.3.1 The main character

The main character of *His Dark Materials* is Lyra Belacqua, a twelve-or-so year-old orphan girl living in Jordan College, Oxford, who is brave but rash at the same time, and is raised by scholars. *His Dark Materials* books are set in a world very similar to ours but there is one main difference in Lyra's world – everybody has their own daemon.

³⁶ Laurie Frost, *The Elements of His Dark Materials: A Guide to Philip Pullman's Trilogy* (Buffalo Grove: The Fell Press, 2006), 519.

³⁷ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 1.

³⁸ Ibid, 168.

³⁹ Ibid, 267.

⁴⁰ Philip Pullman, "Books," Philip Pullman, 2009, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://www.philip-pullman.com/pages/content/index.asp?PageID=51>.

Daemons (dæmons) are the external manifestation of the soul separated from a human's body and that manifestation is represented by a co-existing animal. Daemons can change their forms into any kind of animal as long as their owners are children. Once the child matures; the form of the daemon settles and is fixed in the form which reflects the personality of the owner. Daemons in Lyra's world cannot go too far from their owner because it causes unbearable pain to both – owner and daemon. This animal is able to speak and think independently. Each daemon feels exactly the same as their owner does - both mentally and physically, so when an idea comes into the mind of an owner, their daemon is able to read their mind or when the owner is afraid of something the daemon feels the same. On the physical level, when the owner is hurt, it hurts daemon as well. It follows that when the owner dies, his/her daemon dies simultaneously, but there is no daemon's body left, he or she just disappears. One taboo occurs within the trilogy - and it is the prohibition of touching someone's daemon. When a human being finds a soul-mate and only when two humans have feelings for each other there is a possibility of touching their daemon. Another fact determines the issue about daemons and it is their gender. If the owner is female then, most frequently but not always, the daemon is male, and vice versa.

As mentioned previously, Lyra is an orphan so her family is represented by the scholars and other workers at Jordan's College, and even though she has an uncle called Lord Asriel (afterwards she finds out that he is her father), she stays at the college all year round and her best friend is a kitchen boy called Roger. Lyra always breaks the rules and does not respect the reminders given by scholars.

1.3.2 Northern Lights

The first book tells about the Dust, also called Shadows, which is explored by Lyra's uncle. The scholars provide Lord Asriel with financial help so he is able to do better research about the Dust and so he sets out on a journey to the northernmost areas of the world. The group of people known as the Gobblers appears. They kidnap children and Roger is one of those victims too. Lyra decides to rescue him so she goes to Bolvangar where kidnapped children are kept. The golden compass called "Alethiometer" is given to her before she leaves and this device gives her the opportunity to see the truth. During the journey Lyra meets Mrs Coulter (afterwards she finds out that she is her mother), a beautiful woman, kind and caring at first sight. Lyra is offered the chance to stay with her, but when she finds out that Mrs Coulter is the head of the Gobblers, she escapes. Even though she is

successful and she rescues Roger, with the help of the Alethiometer and of Iorek Byrnison (an armed bear who killed the king of his clan so he was exiled); in the end Roger dies by the hand of Lord Asriel and thanks to that, Lyra's uncle is able to create a bridge from his world to another one. Lyra follows him to this new world.

1.3.3 The Subtle Knife

The second book does not take place in Lyra's world anymore. A new character called Will Parry, living in a place known as Oxford in a world very similar to ours, appears. Even though his mother is sick he is forced to leave her behind. While escaping from his home he finds something abnormal – a hole – like a window to another world, and he goes through. Will meets Lyra, who is hiding there. Lyra is surprised by the fact that people in Will's world do not have their own daemons. The two of them meet other kids, who notify them about the fact that the city they are in is called Cittágazze and is under the control of creatures called spectres which feed on the Dust which forms a human's soul. Children cannot see them, but if an adult comes across them, it is even worse than death. After the attack of a spectre, there is only a lifeless body without a soul left. Lyra and Will leave Cittágazze and go to Will's world where they try to discover some more information about the Dust and also about Will's father – John Parry, who vanished when Will was only a baby. Along the way, Will becomes the possessor of a very powerful weapon – known as the subtle knife – which not only creates windows to other worlds but is also a weapon strong enough to kill the Authority. At the end of the second book, Mrs Coulter finds out about the prophecy that Lyra is meant to be the new biblical Eve, falling from grace, which the Church describes as the ruining of mankind. That is why Mrs Coulter wants to save Lyra from the Church which is determined to kill Lyra in order to prevent another fall from grace. In this book, a new character appears – Mary Malone, a scientist and physicist. She examines the Shadows in Will's world. She manages to create a computer program which enables her to communicate with the Shadows. Via this device, she finds out that she is meant to play the role of biblical serpent, which means that she is predestined to debauch Lyra.

1.3.4 The Amber Spyglass

In the final book, Lyra and Will decide to go into the World of the Dead, where Lyra wants to find Roger and ask him for forgiveness because she feels guilty about his death. In the World of the Dead Lyra is forced to leave her daemon behind. She finds it unimaginable

because of the pain it causes both of them, but she must do it. They promise to find each other again afterwards. Will also feels not only unbearable physical but also psychological pain. He feels that part of him stayed on the coast and he realizes that it must have been his daemon. In the World of the Dead, Lyra finds Roger and all the dead people are able to escape from this world through the window which Will created with his subtle knife. All of the dead people turn into the Dust and become a part of the living. In the meantime, Mary Malone finds the window to a new world, the world of Mulefa, and she manages to create an amber spyglass that is useful for watching the movements of the Dust. The novel culminates with the death of the Authority and the fight between Metatron, the Angel and the Regent of Heaven, who became even more powerful than the Authority himself; and Lord Asriel alongside his love Mrs Coulter. At the end of the story Lyra and Will recognize their love and also find their daemons, who have already reached their permanent forms. Lyra loses her ability to read from the Alethiometer and the couple also learn that the Dust escapes through windows created by the knife and in order to rescue the whole world, these windows must be permanently closed. Lyra and Will agree to be separated forever and promise each other that they will never forget. Lyra and Pantalaimon remain together and make a promise that they will build the Republic of Heaven together.

To sum up, there is a structure of five key high fantasy conventions that can be used for Pullman's trilogy according to Karen Patricia Smith: The first element is an important life mission fulfilled by a worried young character (or more of them). The mission can be described as an ethereal adventure to another world with many obstacles. - In this case, the young character is Lyra and she makes a journey to other unrecognized worlds. The second element to appear in the trilogy is an unearthly world, a fantasy world, with its own boundaries that can be seen as abstract, or on the other hand, more real. - The trilogy takes place in other worlds; for example Will's Oxford, Cittágazze, the World of the Dead, the Mulefa world. The third element describes perilous journeys, which are connected with mind and cognition in life, leading to transformation of different events and (after-) effects. - The perilous journeys undergone by Lyra are, for example, the rescue journeys to Bolvangar, or to Svalbard to rescue her father or to the World of Dead. The fourth element is about major characters and their relationship with other adults who are supposed to guide them, offer them help, advice and useful information. - In the case of the trilogy there are a few guides who help to Lyra (for example Farder Coram, John Faa, Iorek Byrnison). Concerning the last point, it summarizes all of the previous points. The main idea is about

returning to a primary world, but with all possessed knowledge, findings and above all – things, and the capability to resolve problems caused by the protagonist(s).⁴¹

⁴¹ See Millicent Lenz and Carole Scott, *His Dark Materials Illuminated*, 136.

2 BILDUNGSROMAN

Philip Pullman's trilogy is not only a representative of fantasy literature. *His Dark Materials* is also an example of Bildungsroman and shows many features of the coming-of-age period. Readers can see the development of the child protagonist, or in other words, the development of the child protagonist might be seen as that of a character who acquires knowledge and is formed. Speaking of Pullman's trilogy, it was pointed out earlier that there is a noticeable resemblance with William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and even in the fact that in these poems there are elements that could be found in the novel of education too.

2.1 Characterization

Before describing a novel of formation or a novel of education, it has to be said that the novel, as such, is definitely the most widely read literary genre nowadays. The novel of education has its own specific features, but this does not necessarily mean that elements of one type of novel cannot appear in another.

The novel of education also called as the novel of formation or Bildungsroman (German equivalent) has spread widely lately, and there are many books that deal with the main protagonist's life development. According to the *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů* the Bildungsroman is described as being the most clearly defined genre of novels dealing with personality. An attention is given to developing a character with a rich inner life, whose fate creates the plot-line of the novel. The author aims to describe a thoroughly motivated person in an emotional, moral, psychological and philosophical dimension. In the ideological area, it demonstrates the trust in the power of education, the self-improvement abilities of the human and the great principle of evolution.⁴²

The novel of education offers a look at the protagonist's life, which is full of expectations. Throughout the reading process, a reader gets the opportunity to observe the protagonist's life even from their youth, which forms the largest part of the novel itself. The protagonist goes through many changes; he/she must accept himself/herself and reach new cognitions that contribute to changes in his/her character.⁴³ In a simplified way, a boy

⁴² See Dagmar Mocná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 681.

⁴³ See Ladislava Lederbuchová, *Průvodce literárním dílem: Výkladový slovník základních pojmů literární teorie*, 248.

(girl) turns into a man (woman). The development of the main character is progressive and frequently, very complicated. The initially naive protagonist learns about the bittersweet life and loses their illusions. Thanks to that their life is shaped, they are able to grow up and to find their own place in society or accept themselves and the world.⁴⁴ Buckley also states in his book the fact that all of the protagonists of the novel of formation mostly mature under certain conditions: “Yet each of these young men experiences privileged moments of insight, epiphanies, spots of time, when the reality of things breaks through the fog of delusion. And each then feels a responsibility for change ... each is guided by a sense of duty to the self and to others, a sense perhaps inculcated or sharpened by parents and childhood conditioning, and perhaps never freely admitted, but nonetheless remaining latent and strong through all the rebellions of adolescence.”⁴⁵

It should be taken into consideration that the protagonist is not the only one who evolves. In the preface of the book *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Eduard Goldstücker states that the nature of the Bildungsroman itself requires every feature of the story to be an ordinary event, and the educational means of the protagonist (as well as the reader's) at the same time. Then, it carries a symbolical meaning.⁴⁶ The meaning is that not only the hero, but the reader himself should form and make some progress.

⁴⁴ See Dagmar Mocná and Josef Peterka, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, 681-682.

⁴⁵ Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 22-23.

⁴⁶ See Eduard Goldstücker, *Introduction to Viléma Meistera léta tovaryšská aneb Odřikání; Viléma Meistera divadelní poslání* (Praha: SNKLU, 1961), 28.

3 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

In the theoretical part of my bachelor thesis I described how to distinguish fantasy literature from other types of literature and which elements are typical for this literature. In this practical part of my bachelor thesis, I want to analyse the whole trilogy in terms of the main protagonist's development. Throughout *His Dark Materials*, the development of the main character Lyra can be seen. The process is caught from her innocent childhood up till her early maturity that contains of course, new knowledge and experiences. The main goal of this bachelor thesis is to discover if the trilogy heroine's development is somehow related to, or reflected in, the fantasy elements and if there is some relation then to find out which. I will focus on chosen parts of the story that I consider to be the most significant moments and events in Lyra's life. I presume that these characters and events form her character and her view on the world.

In the first section of the practical part, I will concentrate on characters and events that have, I believe, the main impact on Lyra's development. I will concentrate on the parts of the books that can show Lyra's maturation and transformation from a child into a young woman. I will also summarize Lyra's development in separated chapter to point out key points where we can see her formation. And also some Bildungsroman features will be pointed out in this part.

In the second part of the analysis I will focus on the main fantastic elements, which are Lyra's daemon Pantalaimon, Alethiometer and the Dust. I chose them because their presence in the trilogy is significant and therefore the relationship can be observed in-depth.

4 CHARACTERS AND EVENTS

In the first book Lyra is described as fearless, mischievous, sometimes even cheeky, nevertheless an intelligent girl. Because of the fact that she is an orphan, she grows up among scholars that represent authority for her. Still, she frequently does not obey their commands and does things at her sole discretion. The one and only true authority, which Lyra on the one hand respects, and on the other hand also fears, is her uncle Lord Asriel. As was mentioned in theoretical part, another very important character is Roger, a kitchen boy at Jordan College. He is Lyra's best friend, it may be said that she considers him almost like the brother she never had. They spend most of their free time together climbing Jordan's roofs or playing with kids from the neighbourhood.

At the beginning of *Northern Lights*, we meet Lyra when she tries to sneak in to the Retiring Room at Jordan College, where only scholars and their visitors have access, and women are strictly banned. She is followed by her inseparable companion – her daemon called Pantalaimon. Pantalaimon, in contrast to Lyra, gets really jumpy when Lyra tries to break the rules and he struggles to bring her to her senses. “‘Happy now? Can we go?’ he whispered. ‘Don’t be silly! I want to look around!’”⁴⁷ responded Lyra.

Lyra and Pantalaimon are disturbed by the Master of Jordan College and his Butler so they are forced to hide themselves in the wardrobe, from where they can look out all around the room. Thanks to that, they become witnesses of the Rector pouring white powder into a decanter with wine which is prepared for her uncle Lord Asriel who is supposed to come for a visit. When Asriel ends up alone in the Retiring Room for a few minutes, Lyra informs him about the fact of the poisoned wine. Although he is angry with Lyra because of her breaking rules, he orders her to hide in the wardrobe again and to stay calm and quiet. The whole gathering then concerns the research Lord Asriel undertakes and the main subject is the Dust.

The author describes Lyra as a girl who likes to make things up. It is one trait of her character – she loves it when people listen to her stories which are not always based on the truth. Her imagination, however, has no limits. Although she is a trickster, she is also on the other hand innocent and not self-seeking and therefore Lyra behaves like a typical child who tests how far she can go and what she can afford. I consider the mysterious

⁴⁷ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 4.

disappearance of Roger as the first critical point. He is kidnapped by the group known as the Gobblers. Lyra, as Roger's best and most faithful friend, decides to go on a rescue mission to Bolvangar where the kidnapped children are held. It is the first moment when Lyra feels completely helpless and scared as well. Her best friend was kidnapped and she is immediately determined to rescue him. Basically, it is also the moment of Lyra feeling threatened – Roger is so far from her and she does not know what is happening to him. Suddenly, the world seems no more to be as safe and easy as it did before. This is where her journey - full of surprises, traps and sorrows, begins.

4.1 Lord Asriel Belacqua

Lord Asriel Belacqua occurs right in the first chapter of the story. He is described as an honoured man, a member of an aristocratic class, a man who is an explorer and a traveller and he evokes not only admiration but also fear. During her life at Jordan College, Lyra assumes that Lord Asriel is her only living blood-relation – a brother of Lyra's father who died in an air crash. Later on, Lyra learns about the fact that Lord Asriel himself is her father – but since there were expeditions he had to accomplish, he was not able to look after Lyra and so he charged Jordan's scholars to do that. In the course of the story, the relationship between Lyra and her uncle undergoes many changes. Lord Asriel represents an authority for Lyra and she respects him. When Gyptians tell Lyra that Lord Asriel is her father, it is quite acceptable for her, even though she is really surprised at first. With time the fact that this successful traveller and explorer is her father makes her proud and Lyra finally finds a human model, somebody she can look up to and adore. Before, she perceived him with less intensity, but when she finds out that Lord Asriel is her father, she thinks about him much more frequently. "...Lyra felt the shame he must be feeling, as well as a deep glow of pride in her brave father."⁴⁸ In the first book the author describes many times that Lyra has really positive thoughts about her father, she calls him brave and a great father.⁴⁹ Lyra's daemon, Pantalaimon, even takes the form of a snow leopard (the same form as Lord Asriel's daemon has) in situations when they want to induce respect.⁵⁰ As with Farder Coram, Lyra again finds somebody she wants to be like and to have the same

⁴⁸ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 137.

⁴⁹ See *Ibid*, 182.

⁵⁰ See *Ibid*, 219.

life, full of adventures. The most amazing fact for Lyra is that her father wants to create a bridge between two worlds: “A bridge between two worlds...This was far more splendid than anything she could have hoped for! And only her great father could have conceived it.”⁵¹ But, at the end of the first book, true breakout occurs. Lord Asriel is a disappointment for her daughter right after she comes into his room and he yells out: “Get out! Turn round, get out, go! I did not send for you!”⁵² Lyra is confused and devastated by the fact that her own father does not want to see her and even drives her out. She describes her feelings: “You en’t human, Lord Asriel. You en’t my father. My father wouldn’t treat me like that.”⁵³ and everything culminates in the moment when Lord Asriel kills Lyra’s best friend Roger because of the creation of a bridge to a new world. In that moment, Lyra experiences betrayal for the first time in her life, and it evokes new feelings, much stronger than the kidnapping of Roger – mainly, she feels real rage. “She felt wrenched apart with unhappiness. And with anger, too; she could have killed her father: if she could have torn out his heart, she would have done so there and then, for what he’d done to Roger. And to her: tricking her.”⁵⁴ Here, we can see that the anger and thirst for revenge start to wake up in Lyra. Her child’s view of the world - which is perfect and full of adventure, starts to fall apart.

4.2 Marisa Coulter

Marisa Coulter is considered to be the main antagonist of the trilogy. She is described as a young, very charming woman. The relationship between Lyra and Marisa changes throughout the story. When Lyra meets Mrs Coulter for the first time, she is enchanted by her appearance and when Lyra finds out that Mrs Coulter is an explorer, she falls for every word she tells her about the expeditions and adventures she has experienced. “That was it; nothing and no one else existed now for Lyra. She gazed at Mrs Coulter with awe, and listened rapt and silent to her tales...”⁵⁵ Later, during the conversation with Master, she even says: “She’s wonderful. She’s the most wonderful person I’ve ever met.”⁵⁶ We can

⁵¹ See Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 191.

⁵² Ibid, 362.

⁵³ Ibid, 366.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 395.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 69.

⁵⁶ See Ibid.

see that Lyra, as a child, naive and especially trustful, is completely astonished by Mrs Coulter and she does not even think about the possibility that Mrs Coulter could represent a threat. Soon after starting to live with Mrs Coulter, Lyra learns about the fact that this nice and interesting lady has a darker side to her. Lyra finds out that Mrs Coulter is the head of the Gobblers who kidnap kids and so she runs away. But when she meets the Gyptians and they tell her that Lord Asriel is her father, they also add that Mrs Coulter is her biological mother. “To see Lord Asriel as her father was one thing, but to accept Mrs Coulter as her mother was nowhere near so easy. A couple of months ago she would have rejoiced, of course, and she knew that too, and felt confused.”⁵⁷ Here we can notice that Lyra, as a child, is confused and does not understand the problems that she would understand if she were an adult, full of knowledge. Particularly, as a child, she does not understand her ever-changing feelings. Later on in the trilogy, we can read that although Lyra has had enough time to get used to the fact that Mrs Coulter is her mother, she does not consider herself her daughter, above all because she is scared of Mrs Coulter. “Lyra feared Mrs Coulter and thought about her often. And whereas Lord Asriel was now father, Mrs Coulter was never mother.”⁵⁸ Not only Lyra’s feelings are important – Pantalaimon’s feelings play a very big role, because he hates Marisa’s daemon – a crafty golden monkey.⁵⁹ This hatred, aimed at the monkey is basically the discord between the souls and minds of Lyra and Mrs Coulter. The turning-point comes in the third book when Lyra wakes up in the arms of her mother, who hides her from the Church – although Lyra runs away with the help of Will, she comes back to her in her mind frequently and she starts to understand the bond that exists between mother and daughter and also the importance of parents in her life. “I know she’s done terrible things, but I really felt she was loving me and looking after me.”⁶⁰ She has realized something that she could not have realised when she was just a kid.

4.3 Farder Coram

One of the other characters that, in my view, influences Lyra’s development and has an affect on Lyra’s character is Farder Coram. He is an old and a very wise man, a seer of Gyptian origin. The author describes this character as a shaking old man with a walking

⁵⁷ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 131.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 230.

⁵⁹ See *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 194.

stick. Farder Coram is the first (but not only one) that becomes Lyra's role model, protector and mentor, simultaneously. He teaches Lyra how to use the Alethiometer and how to correctly interpret the meaning of the device's symbols. With the passage of time, Lyra starts to respect this man, because he listens to her, gives her advice and therefore, he begins to appear like a father figure for Lyra. Thanks to Farder Coram, we can see the first, bigger development of Lyra's character – now there is somebody who respects her and takes her and her actions into consideration. This fact can be supported by the dialogue between Lyra and her father, Lord Asriel, when she avows that she loves Farder Coram more than her own father.⁶¹ Farder Coram listens to Lyra, he perceives her - and in return, for that, she obeys his orders, accepts him and lets Farder to help her when working with the Alethiometer. The fact, that Lyra was charmed by Farder supports that she was equally charmed by his daemon. Lyra continuously thought about the feeling when touching the fur of the cat called Sofonax, and about the feeling of sinking one's face into it. This indicates that even though touching another's daemon is taboo, Lyra desires to be closer to Farder Coram as a friend, or even, as a daughter. Lyra's thoughts about Farder Coram are always positive. "His mind was sharp and clear and powerful, though, and soon Lyra came to love him for his knowledge and for the firm way he directed her."⁶² Lyra gradually gains the feeling that she has somebody to rely and lean on, as well as somebody who will give her good advice and will guide her in the right direction – as parents should do for their children.

4.4 Iorek Byrnison

Iorek Byrnison is another character that occurs in the story and has a great influence on the main protagonist's development. Although, Iorek is an armoured bear, not a human, soon Lyra and Iorek have a close relationship which is very hearty and really important for Lyra. From the first time, when Lyra sees him, she fears this giant creature - but she also feels sorry for him because armoured bears do not have their daemons. "She felt a profound admiration and pity for the lonely creature."⁶³ Iorek and Lyra become friends, but not only this. Lyra constantly compares Iorek's fate to her father's, who was, just like Iorek, a high-

⁶¹ See Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 366.

⁶² *Ibid*, 144.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 179.

ranking, honoured and rich person, but like Iorek, Lord Asriel killed someone and the whole of his property was taken from him. Iorek was expelled and became an outcast. Lyra, as a true friend, is determined to change his destiny and assure that he will be king again. So she meets Iofur Raknison – the king of the armoured bears – and with fine words, she succeeds in making the king fight Iorek, who wins after all and ascends the throne. After this, Iorek nicknames Lyra “Lyra Silvertongue”, as a reference to Lyra’s skill at telling lies. The fact that Lyra matures and becomes conscious can be based on her ability to hide her feelings; to be more precise, to hide her sense of fear when she thinks that Iorek will die in a fight with Iofur, just because she wants to encourage Iorek so her true feelings will not weaken him in the fight.⁶⁴ Children do not have the capacity to understand their own feelings – let alone the feelings of other people, which means that a child is not capable of adapting his/her feelings according to the situation. But thanks to Lyra’s pretended emotion to encourage Iorek, we can see another indication of her emotional growth and development. Iorek represents a guardian for Lyra. Whenever she ends up in danger, she thinks about him and calls his name repeatedly, as if she hopes that all of a sudden Iorek will emerge and rescue her.⁶⁵ Iorek represents a very similar place in Lyra’s life as her father, or Farder Coram do. In some ways Iorek completes them, because while Lord Asriel is the source of pride and self-esteem which Lyra sees in him, Farder is the source of wisdom and experience which he passes on to Lyra; while Iorek, as was mentioned earlier, has the role of a guardian and represents safety and protection for her – all three of these male characters together, create the perfect father figure, at least till Lord Asriel disappoints and betrays Lyra.

4.5 Roger Parslow

Roger Parslow, Lyra’s best friend, lives just like her at Jordan College, but he works in the kitchen. Five generations of the Parslow’ family have lived and worked at Jordan College and so young Roger works there as a kitchen boy. For the first time in the trilogy, we notice Lyra’s anxiety, when she has not seen Roger for a long time and because the Gobblers are wandering around, she figures out that Roger has become their victim and was kidnapped. She also searches for him in the kitchen. “They got him! Them bloody Gobblers, they

⁶⁴ See Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 350.

⁶⁵ See Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife* (London: Scholastic, 2007), 155.

oughter catch ‘em and bloody kill ‘em! I hate ‘em!’”⁶⁶ As an impulsive child, Lyra decides to set out in the world to rescue Roger at any costs. Nevertheless, Lyra is a typical child. A child that becomes enthusiastic about something and so, when anything new and interesting comes in her way, it displaces thoughts about Roger. That is exactly what happens when Lyra meets Mrs Coulter, who offers Lyra chance to move to London. At this point, Lyra - as a quintessential child, completely forgets about the promise she has given to herself, and she enjoys the novelty that is provided by Mrs Coulter for several weeks. Soon, Lyra decides to fulfil her promise about saving Roger and she really succeeds and rescues him from Bolvangar. At the end of the first book, Lyra and Roger meet Lord Asriel. Lyra’s Alethiometer constantly indicates that something in her possession is meant to be delivered to her father and she thinks that it is the Alethiometer, which should help him to find a way of creating a bridge between two worlds. However, it turns out it was not the Alethiometer, but Roger himself – he was supposed to be the “object” that gives Lord Asriel the opportunity to create a bridge. The connection between a child and his/her daemon produces huge amounts of energy. Lyra is not able to prevent the intercision (name for separating a child from its daemon) so Roger dies in her arms. At this point, Lyra is angry with her father and she blames him but, with time, it is her who starts to feel guilty – it is a responsibility that Lyra feels, definitely the sign of her transformation from a child into a young woman. Children, unlike adults, despite the fact they also feel guilt, they not so aware of their responsibility. Lyra feels so much guilt that, in the last book, she decides to go to the World of the Dead to find Roger and to apologize for what has been done to him and to get him out of the place where only nothingness is. Lyra’s sense of guilt is supported by this extract: “It was me that took him there, to Svalbard, where he got killed, it was my fault he was dead...And I went to Bolvangar to fetch him safe home, only I made it worse, and if I don’t say sorry it’ll all be no good, just a huge waste of time.”⁶⁷ Here, we can see that it is vitally important for Lyra to have an opportunity to meet Roger again and to ask him for forgiveness. It is also visible that Lyra really feels responsible for what happened to Roger.

⁶⁶ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 61.

⁶⁷ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 175.

4.6 William Parry

William Parry is considered to be the second protagonist of the trilogy, even though he does not appear in the first book. Will is described as a twelve-year old boy, who is reasonable, moral and decisive. He becomes the possessor of a subtle knife which means a huge responsibility. At his age, Will is responsible and also independent because he has had to take care of his ill mother from a very early age. Unlike Lyra, who always attracts attention and believes that she is able to lie her way out of anything; Will is a person who relies on his inconspicuousness and his effort to always blend into the crowd. Lyra's behaviour towards Will changes throughout the trilogy and, by his side, she grows up into a young woman while he matures into a young man. At the end of the trilogy, Will becomes Lyra's lover, but we have to take into consideration that he is not the reason for her development. Will is a mirror through which we can see her maturing. Their relationship is the reflection of changes that Lyra undergoes. Of course, William also has an impact on Lyra – for example, he teaches her that it is not possible just to take, but we also have to give. When Lyra and Will dwell in the city called Cittágazze, which is a deserted city with empty buildings, Will leaves money for clothes and food in a shop. At that moment, Lyra does not understand why he left the money there – she thinks that if no-one (no owner) is there, there is no need to pay for the goods. It is obvious that she does not understand the value of property and the necessity of paying for things. Every single child has this feeling and, with time, he/she gains a better knowledge about these matters. Lyra teases Will for behaving too maturely.⁶⁸ But in the third book, Lyra's development is obvious. She used to mindlessly take what did not belong to her but later; we can see that she acts completely differently. “You should always pay for what you take,”⁶⁹ she said. Subsequently, we can observe that Lyra gives precedence to her own interests over Will's, even though she promises to help him with finding his father, which is what the Alethiometer tells her to do. But she is not careful enough; she makes a mistake and begins to solve her own issues first. Although she lives with a strong sense of betraying her own friend (Roger), she fails her friend again and it is even worse to live with this burden of guilt. She realizes, more and more, how betrayal can impact and change the friendship of two people – that is what

⁶⁸ See Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 63.

⁶⁹ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 258.

children do not realize. Later on, Lyra starts to deal with Will's interests and she also empathizes with him. Contrary to children, for whom their own intentions are the priority, Lyra demonstrates that she has changed, matured in one way. As with Iorek Byrnison, there are situations even with Will, where Lyra does not want to show any weakness, overtiredness or fear, she wants to be strong and brave in Will's eyes: "But I don't want to let Will down! I don't want him to think I'm weak and holding him back."⁷⁰ Thanks to William, we can also see that Lyra is no longer that girl who must lead somebody for example, as she did when she freed children from Bolvangar, but now she has Will who leads her and she lets him to and follow his orders.⁷¹ "I'm going to do what you ask, from now on. I thought of doing it (using the Alethiometer) last night, but I never did. And I won't either unless you ask me to."⁷² Suddenly, what stands before us is no longer the same young child reluctant to obey a scholar's orders.

Also Lyra's attitude towards her ability to lie changes throughout the trilogy. She used to consider telling lies to be a good thing, because it was her tool which provided her the opportunity to be interesting and, of course, as a child, she did not realize the consequences of lying. But during our readings we learn that Lyra starts to see her lies as a necessity which she must do in order to help Will⁷³, to whom she would not be able to lie. Another factor of Lyra's maturation is experiencing shame - which she starts to feel in the presence of Will - when he takes off his clothes, she is ashamed and leaves the room.⁷⁴ It is not the feeling of shame that we gain thanks to parental upbringing, which determines when we should be ashamed - this type of shame is based on Lyra's feelings; she begins to realize an intimacy which is typical for every adolescent person, although everybody has different limits. Lyra herself also begins to become aware of her own body, and even though it was not a problem for her to have a swim with Oxford's girlfriends to be naked in front of Will, is inconceivable.⁷⁵ At the end of the third book, Lyra and Will become lovers, they both start to realize their feelings for each other and, as a proof of the fact that Lyra has founded her soul mate and a partner, we can consider her intentionally touching Will's daemon.

⁷⁰ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 184.

⁷¹ Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 26.

⁷² *Ibid*, 223.

⁷³ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 276.

⁷⁴ See Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 223.

⁷⁵ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 458.

Will touches Pantalaimon as well which is for Lyra, even though they are in great danger at that moment, very exciting.⁷⁶ At this point in her life, Lyra gains an understanding of herself and mostly, her own feelings which makes her confused. She is no longer a child, whose mind is substantially less complicated, if not completely simple and clear. However, the first kiss with Will shows which way her feelings go: “And now I know what I must have felt all the time: I love you, Will, I love you ---”⁷⁷ As for the feelings, Lyra’s confusion about them is replaced by clarity and certainty, because now she is able to identify and experience her own emotions which she had never felt because, as a child, she was not capable of feeling them – a romantic love.

4.7 Summary

Being only a child, Lyra lets go of the Jordan’s College’s safety and leaves for London, the city, where she finds nothing but disappointment. This is how Buckley describes one of the typical Bildungsroman features in his book – the main character leaves his home, being extremely positive and naive, but the city brings only disappointment,⁷⁸ just like in Lyra’s case, who runs away from London and Mrs Coulter. Lyra expects that London will offer adventures, experiences, a better life, but the only thing she really finds is the previously mentioned disappointment. Another fact, both the Bildungsroman feature and Lyra’s development, is the moment when she learns about her parents’ identity - as mentioned earlier, she cannot accept Mrs Coulter being her mother as easily as the fact that Lord Asriel is her real father. Also, Farder Coram steps in, and is interested in Lyra. He passes his experiences and wisdom to her; and according to the Buckley’s book – the child usually looks for a substitute for a parent or mentor⁷⁹ – in this very case, it is Farder Coram, to whom Lyra looks up. Everything is possible for a child like Lyra and she is even more confident when she finds out that Lord Asriel is her father. As an example, we can look at the part where Lyra tries to penetrate the mystery of the Alethiometer and understand the pictures on it: “Why shouldn’t she work them out? Wasn’t she Lord Asriel’s daughter?”⁸⁰ Lyra also not only has to deal with Roger’s death and the betrayal of her father, but mainly,

⁷⁶ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 439.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 492.

⁷⁸ See Jerome Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, 49.

⁷⁹ See *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁰ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 133.

with her own feelings of guilt. As the story goes on, we can see that Lyra suffers more and more, and it is very important for her to gain forgiveness, for which she is able to sacrifice quite a lot. Lyra becomes more cautious, she remembers the moment when Mrs Coulter appeared at Jordan College for the first time; and the enthusiasm she evoked in Lyra once she saw her. But Lyra is no longer the incautious child who can be easily tricked; now, she is more careful, realizes her faults and tries to learn the lessons from them. She hesitates whether to rely on her first impression - which can be sometimes deceiving.⁸¹ As a young woman, Lyra finds herself in situations which she is not very confident in; sometimes she is doubtful about herself and her capabilities. We can see that at the end of the third book, where Lyra has the feeling that she has lost her best ability – to lie. Up to that time, Lyra looks at almost everything with her special perspective. In my opinion, she tries to seek her place – she makes up stories about her non-existing parents or adventures just to feel that she belongs somewhere. At first, the children from Oxford are her listeners, later on - for example, the Suburbs of the Dead inhabitants and eventually, she has the opportunity to tell her story to the harpy, who promises her to let her go to the World of Dead in return, but the harpy knows immediately that Lyra is only telling her made-up stories, full of lies - and starts yelling at her: “Liar, Liar!”⁸² Lyra is completely devastated because her ability to lie is not able to help her and she has the feeling that she has lost the only thing she was really good at, and that means that she is worthless.⁸³ As time passes by, she grows to realize that lies do not lead us anywhere. Children who lie and make things up cannot imagine the impact of their behaviour (they are only aware of the possibility of punishment) that is something where they differ from adults, who are perfectly able to realize how lies can influence their surroundings and it is up to them, whether they choose to speak the truth or just the opposite.

The evident sign of growing up and becoming a young woman is the fact that Lyra experiences parental feelings. She realizes that she missed the relationship with her mother, someone who would comfort her; and at this point, there is a wish that wakes up deep inside of her – a wish that some day, she would have her own daughter, to whom she

⁸¹ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 337.

⁸² Ibid, 308.

⁸³ See Ibid, 309.

would sing good night lullabies.⁸⁴ These feelings are of course, caused by Lyra falling in love for the first time in her life and those change her. A great decision awaits Lyra and Will at the end of the book – which corresponds with Buckley's description of Bildungsroman. He claims that at the end of the story, the main character stands in front of a big decision⁸⁵ - in this case, Lyra and Will have the opportunity to leave one window to another world open – of course, they figure out that this way, they could stay together forever, because they could visit each other in their worlds. I maintain that the final sign of Lyra's transformation from innocence to experience is the fact that she decides to be absolutely unselfish and gives up; leaving her first love behind, for other people's sake (the only window that remains open is the window for the ghosts in the World of Dead). For clarification – a child would most probably not be able of such an unselfish act. In the case of Lyra, I think that it is a clear demonstration of Lyra's altruism,⁸⁶ which we can observe throughout the trilogy.

⁸⁴ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 292.

⁸⁵ See Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, 23.

⁸⁶ A term for an unselfish behaviour

5 FANTASY ELEMENTS

The protagonist's transformation from innocence to experience described in the previous chapter gives us an image about the journey she had to make to gain the knowledge and maturity. After I have analysed how the protagonist matures and transforms, I would like to analyse the reflection of the transformation in the fantasy elements. I will focus on three fantasy elements which I consider to be the main ones, and analyse whether there is some relation between the development of the main protagonist and these chosen fantasy elements. I have chosen Lyra's daemon, the Alethiometer and the Dust to be the most important elements for this study.

5.1 Pantalaimon

Pantalaimon (Pan in short) is Lyra's daemon (more about daemons in the "The main character" subchapter). Every single daemon can change its form when their owner is only a child. But the moment when that child attains their maturity, the daemon's form settles and their ability to change form disappears. This fact corresponds with natural human development – children grow up, develop and frequently change their attitudes and decisions but mainly they have a huge imagination, which enables them to see things differently, in a way that adults often cannot. Despite the fact that a daemon is considered as being the manifestation of a human's soul, Pantalaimon appears to be Lyra's opposite. In the first volume, Lyra herself calls Pantalaimon coward - and he only replies: "Certainly I am."⁸⁷ In situations that appear to be dangerous or bad for Lyra, Pantalaimon tries to make her turn around, go away and avoid doing this or that. However, in many cases, she does not listen to these recommendations and does things according to her own opinion. Still, we should not see Pantalaimon just as Lyra's contrast, they are one. Pantalaimon proves to be more of a little voice (an intuition), that in danger situations tries to suggest to pulling out of this situation – we have only the sense of fear, which we decide to ignore or follow; but Lyra has Pantalaimon, who can really give her advice or help. Pantalaimon represents a closer friend, a being that completes and guarantees that she is never alone and she refers to Pantalaimon as being the most precious "thing" in the world – her own soul.⁸⁸ In the

⁸⁷ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 9.

⁸⁸ See *Ibid*, 277.

second volume, we learn that after intercision in Bolvangar, a human without a daemon, becomes fearless with lack of imagination and free will⁸⁹ – this implies that Pantalaimon represents all of that in the case of Lyra.

In the first book, Lyra and Pantalaimon get into many dangerous situations, but the most perilous situation is when Lyra nearly gets cut off of Pantalaimon with the guillotine specially made for the needs of the Magisterium, whose members believe that this separation of a human and their daemon in childhood can stop sin from spreading. This moment is very intensive and terrifying for Lyra and a human-being separated in that way appears to Lyra to be: “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.”⁹⁰ This demonstrates that the possibility of being separated is absolutely unimaginable for Lyra and several times, Lyra’s thoughts about the denial of the possibility of abandoning her daemon occur in the story – she thinks that this is just not possible. Nevertheless in the third book, we become witnesses of Lyra abandoning her Pantalaimon on the banks of the river in the World of Dead – the contrast, between Lyra as a child who does not become aware of so important situation for her that it requires the abandoning of Pantalaimon of her own free will, is clearly visible. Despite causing unbearable pain to both (Lyra and Pantalaimon), she leaves him alone, because unlike a child, who by every means available tries to avoid punishment for the wrong actions, she is capable, as a maturing woman, of paying the penalty for her decisions.⁹¹ By this, Lyra punishes herself because she still feels guilty for betraying Roger. The abandonment of Pantalaimon is not a child’s act; it is an act of a maturing woman because even though she loves Pantalaimon, she wants to fulfil a promise given to Roger and save him from the World of the Dead. Even a description of the appearance of the abandoned Pantalaimon, when Lyra leaves him on the bank (“He seemed to be so young, a cub, a puppy, something helpless and beaten.”⁹²), can be interpreted as a proof of Lyra leaving there a piece of the child hidden in her. Even though Lyra and Pantalaimon are reunited at the end of the trilogy, their bond is not so strong anymore and they can even move away from each other.

⁸⁹ See Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 199.

⁹⁰ Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 214.

⁹¹ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 298.

⁹² See *Ibid*, 298.

As was mentioned earlier, Pantalaimon can be seen as a representation of Lyra's intuition, which is not connected with an intellect but more than anything, with feelings and emotions, which Lyra and Pant share.

Pantalaimon can be also seen as Lyra's subconscious. When William is forced to go through a difficult test using the subtle knife for the first time, which requires a lot of concentration, he feels miserable and Pantalaimon can see it – so Pantalaimon decides to lick Will's injured hand and put his head on Will's leg. Lyra herself does not believe her eyes.⁹³ In my view, it is Lyra's subconscious, there represented by Pan, who does only what she wills to do, but she does not have the courage to do that. Then, when Lyra and Pan recall this moment, Lyra wants to know why Pan did that and he replies strongly: "I did it because he didn't have a daemon, and he needed one. And if you were half as good at seeing things as you think you are, you'd've known that." As a reply, Lyra admits: "I did know it really."⁹⁴ Throughout the whole story, Lyra really sympathizes with others, which usually motivates her to help them. But in this case, Pantalaimon was the one who shows his courage and overcomes a taboo, because it is a more intimate act for Lyra – her affection for William is something that she still does not understand, but, as was mentioned in the "Summary", she is going to realize it and attain the knowledge.

5.2 The Alethiometer

The Alethiometer, also known as the golden compass, is described in the book as a device that is able to reveal the truth. The reading of it, which is really difficult, requires the study of many books, and some people may not ever manage to learn how to use it. Lyra is given the Alethiometer by the Master of Jordan College and she is almost immediately able to use it and see the symbols' connection. Later on, Farder Coram helps her with using Alethiometer, gives her valuable advice and Lyra becomes more and more experienced when using it. I believe that she is so successful at using the Alethiometer, because she is a child who has, compared to an adult, a simplified view of the world and also an enormous imagination.

At the beginning, Lyra considers using the Alethiometer to be dangerous because she realizes that the power which drives the Alethiometer must be extremely intelligent, and

⁹³ See Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 183.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 259.

that scares her.⁹⁵ As time goes by, Lyra becomes more confident because of the Alethiometer and the feeling that whenever she wants to, she can ask the device a question, which is truly answered almost immediately, provides her with a sense of certainty. At the end of the first book, when Lyra and Pan decide to set out on the journey to the other world, they admit that even if they will be in danger, they are never alone, having each other – but Lyra adds: “And we’ve got the Alethiometer.”⁹⁶ It is clearly visible that the compass gives Lyra assurance and also the determination to begin the dangerous expedition.

Using of the Alethiometer gives Lyra the opportunity to learn a lot of information; but, in the last book, we can observe how Lyra progressively loses her ability to read it.⁹⁷ “The power was just leaving me, it was just fading away...Oh, it’s gone, Will! I’ve lost it! It’ll never come back!,”⁹⁸ we learn from Lyra right at the end of trilogy. This loss of vision and the ability to read from the Alethiometer can be seen as the interconnection with Lyra’s maturation because her view of the world becomes more complicated and she realizes that things are not just black or white. A little child relies much more on their intuition – he/she believes that something is either good or bad and does not see other options. An adult, who is influenced by his/her own experiences, much less relies on intuition and is far from seeing the world as only black-and-white – he/she is aware of the fact that we are always given more options, and tries to choose the best one. It means that even though people do not lose intuition, with time, they rely more on the reason, and their rational approach predominate over the emotional one. The Alethiometer can be interpreted as an intuitive element. The intuition that Lyra has, as a child, fairly developed, fades away after all because of the experiences that she goes through. This intuition cannot be learned again or more precisely, regained, because an adult is, once and for all, modified by what he/she has experienced. That is why the study of using and understanding the symbols of the Alethiometer, is so hard for a grown man.

⁹⁵ See Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 148.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 396.

⁹⁷ See Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 403.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 518.

5.3 The Dust

In the book, the Dust is described as elementary particles which begin to cluster around people at the time when they mature, or, in other words – when they gain experience and wisdom. The Dust itself is described as a materialization of human consciousness. The Dust is not “attracted” by children, because they are not experienced, conscious and have a very narrow view of the world. The Dust and daemons are influenced by each other, because, as long as a daemon is able to change their shape, his/her owner had not attained maturity yet, and so the Dust does not “sit” on this person. And vice versa, if the person matures and his/her daemon gains their settled form - at that moment, the Dust, comes to a person as knowledge and wisdom. Throughout the trilogy, Lyra herself understands that there is a connection between Pantalaimon’s setting and her own transformation. “Hey, Pan, when I change, you’ll stop changing.”⁹⁹ This extract shows us that at the time of Lyra’s settling (becoming a young woman with her own opinions and view of the world), the shape of her daemon also settles into a form that corresponds the most with Lyra’s character.

In the third book, the scientist Mary Malone is successful in creating a device called the amber spyglass, which is designed for watching the Dust. After using the amber spyglass, Mary describes the Dust as small golden lights floating in the air¹⁰⁰. At the end of the third book, soon after Lyra and Will understand and realize their love for each other, the Dust begins to settle on them, Mary Malone is the one, who sees them coming hand in hand with each other: “There was no need for the glass; she knew what she would see; they would seem to be made of living gold.”¹⁰¹ Atal, from the Mulefa world, described the Dust (the Sraf in the language of Mulefa’s people) as memory and wakefulness – before that, they knew and remembered nothing.¹⁰² In the trilogy, we repeatedly learn that Lyra is supposed to be a new biblical Eve, the woman connected with temptation, the fall and the original sin. Although we do not see any signs of the Dust and its connection with the protagonist’s development, we can with certainty say that at the end of the story the Dust

⁹⁹ Philip Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 258.

¹⁰⁰ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 243.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 497.

¹⁰² See *Ibid*, 236.

shows us that Lyra transforms from a little child to a young woman full of knowledge, experience and wisdom.

5.4 Summary

To sum up, the fantastic elements are inseparably connected with the development of the main protagonist and they also serve as a reflection of this development. Being visible from the analysis of three main fantastic elements, Lyra's development is truly reflected in these elements. At the beginning of the story - there is a small girl, a child, who makes things up and yearns for adventure and - at the end of the story; we have this nearly-matured woman who is determined to be a better person and to build the Republic of Heaven.¹⁰³ Thanks to Pantalaimon, the Alethiometer and the Dust we have a chance to see Lyra's maturation in details and more precisely. There are many manifestations of the coming-of-age reflection on these elements – for example the settling of Pantalaimon, the Dust which drifts down on Lyra, or the loss of her ability to read from the Alethiometer. These are only three elements of evidence out of many which I have analysed and they clearly show that Lyra's development, maturation process and the journey from innocence to experience is reflected in the fantasy elements and based on my analysis, it can be proved.

¹⁰³ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, 548.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to discover if there is a connection or relationship between the maturing process of the main protagonist and fantasy elements from the trilogy.

The first part of the bachelor's thesis started with the description of fantasy literature and the features that are characteristic. *His Dark Materials* author's life and works were described. A brief definition of the Bildungsroman literary genre can be also found in the theoretical part. Then, in the second part, the analysis was made.

The analysis was based on the main protagonist's maturation process, which is clearly described through the characters and events that occur and which have an effect and influence on Lyra's coming-of-age process. Based on the description of the main protagonist's maturation process, the main part of the analysis could have been done.

Pantalaimon, being Lyra's daemon, gives us the opportunity to see the main character's development in detail. As her loyal friend, subconscious and intuition, Pant gives us a chance to see how Lyra thinks and how her thinking and approach goes through changes with time.

The Alethiometer, on the other hand, gives us an idea about how other people and their behaviour, or our own personal experiences, can change our view of life, how our rational and emotional approach can change our judgment and that all of that can be important when seeing the truth.

The third of the analysed fantastic elements is the Dust, which appears to be the clear proof of Lyra's maturation. Throughout the story, it is stated exactly that these elementary particles start to settle only on a matured human being – not children. And that is what happens to Lyra at the end of the story – she becomes mature and the Dust settles on her.

By studying the trilogy, i.e. the relationships in it, as well as other books and materials, I was able to analyse the main matter of my thesis. To sum up, this thesis comes to the conclusion that there is an obvious connection between the main protagonist's coming-of-age and the chosen fantasy elements and it can be stated that they reflect the maturation process and there are many proofs and evidence of this mutual relationship.

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