Adventures and Gender: The Quest for Maturity and Independence in the works of J.K. Rowling and Philip Pullman

Diploma Thesis

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Supervisor: Ing. Mgr. Věra Eliášová, Ph.D.

Written by: Bc. Jana Fancová
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signature
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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the thesis

Both J. K. Rowling’s septology about *Harry Potter* and Philip Pullman’s trilogy *His Dark Materials* are many genres in one - fantasy saga, coming-of-age novel, love story. Both series have many faces, both authors’ use of intertextuality and story-telling are their main strengths, yet both series still remain coherent and engaging stories, full of suspense. Instead of investigating the most obvious genre of these books, namely fantasy, I will focus on the coming-of-age novels within Rowling’s and Pullman’s works. Adventure stories indicate the main protagonists’ quest for identity and the quest for identity through adventure makes up a significant part of all children’s fiction. Adventure leads to maturity and independence which both mean growing up. I will look at how adventure can be perceived from the gender perspective, using examples from the two series mentioned above.

These two cycles of novels have often been compared, not only because they were published in the same period of time (the late 1990s and early 2000s). They have other features in common; both of them belong to the most popular series intended mainly for children, but still widely read by adults too. They can be regarded as a kind of a mixture of the Bildungsroman¹, the fantasy story and the adventure story. Claire Squires says about these books: “Both are strongly intertextual and both nostalgically refer to previous works of children’s literature” (*Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller* 144). Their authors created alternative worlds for their young heroes to undergo their adventures. Both authors created “a world that was real, a world of logical internal cohesiveness, within the pages of the story.” (*International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature* 301)

The books about Harry Potter written by J. K. Rowling have won not only the praise and critique of many literary scholars but also worldwide fame as well as huge commercial success. Rowling’s works have been read and re-read by millions of children and so they have a large impact on child literacy. In an online article “Harry Potter and the Crock of Gold“, its author quotes Nicholas Clee, the editor of the Bookseller magazine, who says that “After *Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire*, when one million copies were sold overnight, we thought the Potter phenomenon couldn't get

¹ They describe the journey of their protagonists from childhood/adolescence to adulthood.
Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* has not become as popular as HP series. Nevertheless, its artistic quality was appreciated by the critics as well as readers all over the world. *The Amber Spyglass* won the 2001 Whitbread Book of the Year award, a prestigious British literary award. On his website the author of the trilogy says about the awards: “These books have been honoured by several prizes, including the Carnegie Medal, the Guardian Children's Book Award, and (for *The Amber Spyglass*) the Whitbread Book of the Year Award - the first time in the history of that prize that it was given to a children's book” (Philip Pullman). It was also long-listed for the Booker Prize. *His Dark Materials* was recognized as successful in the field of fiction in general, rather than only in the field of children’s literature. Pullman has thus gained a genre-crossing success. I will show that Pullman has approached a new trend in children's literature and its criticism. The trend has been explained by Lissa Paul in her text “Feminism revisited”. Paul suggests that it is possible to doubt the existence of “a stable identity” and that “contemporary critical emphasis is on the way we are constructed by the socialising forces pressuring us in all aspects of our lives” (*Understanding Children's Literature* 124). It can be argued that such a critical approach towards identity could be used in analysing *His Dark Materials*. I will draw attention to an example of the life-long experience for identity construction that can be found in the narrative.

Furthermore, I will argue that regarding access to adventure, the status of a male hero is privileged, whereas a female hero has to overcome a lot of obstacles in achieving the same as the male hero. I will use the examples of Rowling’s character of Harry Potter and Pullman’s character of Lyra Belacqua to prove this argument. It can be argued that literature, especially fairy tales and folk tales, reflects real life. Female access to adventure is presented as more difficult because female growing-up is more difficult. Typical male qualities in stories for children are usually those of a grand origin. In the stories with boy protagonists “the heroes usually possess positive qualities like courage, honesty, fairness etc.” (*Children’s and Juvenile Literature (Written in English)* 154) As if these qualities could not be used for women, stories with female heroines are not likely to describe such qualities openly; a reader can sometimes only guess them from the narration. An example of such hidden qualities can be found at the very beginning of *Northern Lights*. Its main character, Lyra, breaks the rules of the
Jordan College where she has been brought up and enters a room forbidden to women. Not to be caught in there, she hides in a wardrobe. From her hiding-place she witnesses an attempted murder. She resists the temptation to run away. She takes responsibility for breaking the rule and does the right thing saving the life of the potential victim. In this episode, courage, honesty and fairness are hidden under the surface and curiosity, a quality said to be typical for women, dominates.

While male heroes as representatives of the so-called stronger sex express their courage and the noble goals of their acts and reach their victory through fair fight resulting from either their physical or psychological power (or both), female heroes are usually depicted fighting just for survival (my emphasis) and using another survival tactic, which is deceit. Lissa Paul says that for a long time this tactic was associated with weak and helpless characters, women and children considered to be “others”. She also explains about the perception of different survival tactics: “As deceit isn’t a manly virtue, it has been relegated to a lower-order survival tactic, somewhere well below the dignity accorded to man who fights for his honour, or for ‘truth, justice and the American way’” (The Development of Criticism 154).

I will argue that female characters in adventure stories succeed by using flexibility. Stories with girl protagonists show this typical female quality. Generally, adaptability is significant for growing up as a female. Adaptability can be equated to the strength to adjust to the necessary changes, a person’s willingness to cope with the changes required by the circumstances. It can be argued that girls and young women characters reach their maturity and independence by being flexible. From the biological point of view, in puberty there are many more changes for a girl to go through than for a boy. Young females need to adapt to the changes of their bodies, causing them discomfort and sometimes even pain. From the social point of view, women have to balance their many life-roles. What is more, society is still mostly male-dominated, so women have to use their adaptability to find their place in the society. An online text about gender-role development says that “much has been written about how difficult the adolescent years are for girls, as they are more likely than boys to experience depression, eating disorders, and low self-esteem” (“The Development of Sex and Gender”).

The use of adaptability can be represented by some of the most famous female characters from the history of children’s literature or even fiction for adults. Louisa M. Alcott’s, character, Jo March, from Little Women, became famous as a tomboy who was
able to use her grand imagination to make up amazing games and at the same time to shoulder the most responsibility in the household. The author used the character of Jo to show that women could be kind and nurturing, and still tough and strong, able to adapt to almost every situation in life. One example of this is her willingness to cut off her hair to raise money to help her family. Another character well-known for her imagination was L. M. Montgomery’s Anne from *Anne of Green Gables*. Besides her fantasy, for which every moment was a new adventure, she was smart and fiery and never afraid to speak her mind or be herself.

In my work I will put in contrast the passivity of the character of Harry Potter and the activity of the main female protagonist of *His Dark Materials*, Lyra Belacqua. I will suggest that the male hero is allowed to approach the adventures easily but his journey is controlled and carefully watched by his mentors and other companions, so his freedom is rather relative. The female hero must be much more active to gain access to the journey but she is also allowed to act more freely. Given less guidance, Lyra makes some mistakes and even commits betrayal, during her adventures. The character of Harry Potter, as a traditional male hero, is admired from the very beginning of his adventures for already having overpowered the evil character of Voldemort and is expected to do so again and defeat the evil forever, all the adventures are just waiting for him. The character of Lyra Belacqua, a new female hero, is willing to leave her safe home and overcome obstacles to get the right to be involved in adventures, to set out on a journey which is actually her identity quest. On the whole of her journey, she must stay active and flexible, proving it many times, especially but not only through her mastery of storytelling, which she shares with Anne of Green Gables or Jo March.

Ultimately, I will argue that Pullman's work can be viewed as much more feminist than Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. By making his main female protagonist a free human being with the right to make her own decisions and to bear the responsibility for her choices, Pullman's Lyra Belacqua is a clear example of a new female hero.

### 1.2 Comparison of the two concepts of a female hero

The concept of new female hero can be explained by comparing it with the old type of a woman character. The old female hero was depicted as a helpless, oppressed and submissive person who was trapped in a closed space, both physically (the prototypical
story of the madwoman in the attic\(^2\) is a concept well-known in women’s literature criticism) and psychologically (her life was to be determined by men as the control was handed over from her father to her husband). In “Female Stories of Experience” Elizabeth Langland suggests that “the woman’s journey culminates in the passive state of being ‘loved and chosen’ by a husband on whom to base purpose and identity” (*The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* 120). As if female identity did not exist any longer after the marriage, her “journey” for identity was concluded by the wedding. The female character was then denied to keep her own ambitions and goals.

In Lissa Paul’s text “Feminist criticism: From sex role stereotyping to subjectivity” she quotes Claudia Nelson who says that girls were apparently encouraged to accept simultaneously characteristics gendered feminine - ‘purity, obedience, dependence, self-sacrifice and service’ - and, ‘an image of feminine womanhood…expanded to incorporate intelligence, self-respect, and …the potential to become financially independent’. The result was a set of ‘contradictory tendencies characteristic of femininity: reason and desire, autonomy and dependent activity, psychic and social identity. (*Encyclopedia* 104)

Furthermore, Lissa Paul suggests that “those contradictions still haunt women today” (*Encyclopedia* 104). With the struggle for their rights the demands on women have been increasing. As literature reflects the real life and the culture in which it is created, the problem of the contradiction between the two concepts of a female hero is still alive because there is still the contradiction between female roles in society and in family. In her text, Lissa Paul also points at the shift of literary criticism which is to be more focused on “the socialising forces pressuring us with all aspects of our lives: relationships with parents and families, class, gender and cultural patterns and expectations” (*Encyclopedia* 106). These “pressures” cause the abovementioned contradictions and that is why they should be in the centre of literary critics’ interest.

\(^2\) Pauline Young explains that Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar use "a Freudian model of literary history and they expound on the loneliness and alienation experienced by female artists and discuss the secret sisterhood of their literary subculture” (*Women Studies: Essential Readings* 441). In naming their concept they were inspired by Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, who placed Edward Rochester's mad wife in the attic of his manor.
As opposite to the old female hero, it is possible to view at the new female hero as a literary character who is aware of her rights and desires and is ready to fight for them. She uses her skills and knowledge to gain herself independence but is ready to accept the consequential responsibility. Among female main strengths it is possible to mention adaptability, empathy and verbal skills. The new female hero uses them for her advantage. She is able to use adaptability as the art of finding the compromise on one hand, but on the other hand not losing her own direction, her needs and ambitions. By her willingness and ability to change if the circumstances require the change, she is able to break the rules and overcome the barriers. Thus, she gains much more freedom than her historical predecessor. Her gained freedom is also shown by the possibilities to travel and experience adventures. Nevertheless, her most important goal is her inclusion in the society. The concept of a new female hero might also suggest the concept of equality – not only from the point of view of gender but as well from the point of view of race, religious and political beliefs etc.
2. Theoretical part – Background

2.1 Adventure and gender

Before considering gender perspective in the adventures described in Rowling’s and Pullman’s works, I assume it is worth to define the concept of “adventure” in its general meaning. Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary informs that adventure is “an undertaking usually involving danger and unknown risks” or “the encountering of risks” or “an exciting or remarkable experience.” Agreeing with these definitions it is possible to look at stories including adventures from different perspectives. One may regard the words “danger and risks” as the most important but another possibility is to focus on the word “experience”. For identity quest in adventure literature I reckon the latter meaning to be of a big importance. Gaining maturity and coming-of-age is closely connected to the concept of “experience”.

It is also interesting to look at the definition of the concept of “gender”. Merriam-Webster’s defines it as “the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex”. The WHO notes that gender “refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (“Health Topics”). Thus, it is the society who sets the rules for people to be followed according to their sex in order to adjust to the norm and thus become a part of the society. In The Bedford Introduction to Literature the authors introduce gender strategies and claim that “the ideas about gender and what constitutes masculine and feminine behaviour are created by cultural institutions and conditioning” (The Bedford Introduction to Literature 2094). Gender roles and stereotypes have called out a big discussion in the society as well as in the literature. The approaches in literary criticism have changed and gender criticism “expands categories and definitions of what is masculine or feminine and tends to regard sexuality as more complex than merely masculine or feminine, heterosexual or homosexual” (The Bedford Introduction to Literature 2094).

To comfort the general cultural opinions on the gender roles, writers seem to stick to the stereotypes when narrating their stories with male and/or female protagonists. In one online text, “Gender issues in children’s literature”, it is claimed that:

Many classics and popular stories where girls are portrayed usually reflect stereotypes of masculine and feminine roles. Such gender
stereotypes are prevalent not only in mainstream children's books but also in Newbery and Caldecott medal winners. Children's books frequently portray girls as acted upon rather than active (Fox, 1993). Girls are represented as sweet, naive, conforming, and dependent, while boys are typically described as strong, adventurous, independent, and capable (Ernst, 1995; Jett-Simpson & Masland, 1993). Boys tend to have roles as fighters, adventurers and rescuers, while girls in their passive role tend to be caretakers, mothers, and princesses in need of rescuing, and characters that support the male figure (Temple, 1993). (Manjari Singh)

This part of the text describes the roles of male and female heroes as they are attributed by the society and perceived as typical, thus essential. While it really can be seen throughout the children’s literature, there are of course examples of exceptions and deviations in a positive sense. I consider Pullman’s Lyra to be one of them.

In his book Ženy – muži about gender roles, their origins and development, Hartmut Karsten makes reference on the still existing clichés which appear in the books for children. He draws on an exhibition organized in Germany in 1995 which showed that only 10% of children’s books use the female character as the main hero of the story. Remaining in the stereotypes girls are usually described as weak, passive and powerless, whereas boys make active, strong and intelligent heroes. The analysis of the books also showed that the male characters are more pushful, self-confident and imaginative. A lot of books for children keep to a simple structure: the female character stays behind, whereas the male characters experience many adventures (Ženy – muži 69).

2.2 On an identity quest

In her text “Generic Fusion and the Mosaic of Harry Potter” Anne H. Alton says: “Fantasy usually involves a quest of some sort, which ties it to traditional forms of both adventure and quest romance” (Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter 156). The identity quest is the pivotal theme of both series that have become the theme of my thesis. The quest is represented in children’s literature by adventurous stories and it is depicted as the process of change of the main character from a child into a young adolescent or even a young adult. In literature a quest for maturity has several particular phases which can be traced in the stories. Very often Joseph Campbell’s pattern of literary initiations is
quoted as for example in Deborah De Rosa’s essay “Wizardly Challenges to and Affirmations of the Initiation Paradigm in Harry Potter”. She states that “according to his analysis of universal myths, the hero typically goes on a quest during which he encounters a mentor who assists him with a series of trials. The hero usually survives the arduous trials and returns home with an awareness of a new world order and a boon that he shares with his community” (qtd. in Perspectives 163).

This typical archetypal quest pattern fits Harry Potter stories very well. The series emphasize the quest for maturation. Harry enters the magic world at the age of 11, at the actual outset of adolescence. Before he can go through the ritual of initiation – the Sorting Ceremony, he undergoes a kind of initiation himself when confronted to Malfoy’s idea that “some wizarding families are much better than others” (HPPS 120). Harry openly refuses such division of the world which is new for him and thus expresses his strength and will to choose his own way in the magic world. He encounters the figure of a mentor in the character of the Hogwarts headmaster, Albus Dumbledore. Thanks to his advice, Harry learns to keep to his chosen way. Dumbledore also explains Harry about how to understand his feelings, tells him about his family history and gradually prepares Harry for his struggle with evil Voldemort. All his advice is adjusted to Harry’s age which enables the author open the secrets step by step and keep the reader in suspense.

Nevertheless, there are several ways of looking at the differences between maturity quests. When their stories begin both Lyra and Harry have got unsettled family background. For orphaned protagonists there are no roots which would tie them to existing homes, they are pushed into the adventures that make the plot of the story and which themselves represent the quest for one’s identity. More than other children orphans feel the necessity of finding the answer for the question “Who am I?” When considering possible differences between the typical child/adolescent and the orphan’s quest, De Rosa says that “the typical adolescent … struggles to liberate himself from the parental web of influence through a long period of rebellion; however, the orphan’s identity quest differs” (Perspectives 175). She quotes Sharon Stringer who argues that “for some protagonists, parental absence triggers an identity search and separation from family. Until they reconnect to [the] missing parent, orphans may feel as if an important part of themselves is buried” (qtd. in Perspectives 175). This view can be seen especially in Harry Potter series.
Harry is first met as a bullied child with almost no family roots. He feels lonely and unhappy at the Dursleys as well as at school where he has no friends or companions among his classmates or teachers. Once he learns about his origin and finds out who his parents were, he gains much more confidence. Soon after he gets on the train to take him to his new school, he is able to start a friendship which will last for the whole of his studies at Hogwarts but also for the rest of his life (as readers get to know with the ending of the series). The more Harry learns about his family, the stronger he feels in his adventures. There is a lot of evidence of this throughout the books. In *The Prisoner of Azkaban* Harry is the only one among his fellow students who is able to make the Patronus charm (a kind of a protecting charm) which takes the form of a stag, the animal his father used to transform into as an Animagus. Harry’s relationship to his dead father is projected into the form of the charm that he is able to produce.

There is also another possibility of apprehension of an identity quest. While Harry’s identity quest fits perfectly into the pattern, it is quite controversial in Lyra’s story. Harry has got his questions answered at least partially from his first entering the magic world, Lyra must look for her answers alone; none is given to her directly even though her parents are alive. The problem with the female identity quest is explained by Lissa Paul in her essay “Enigma Variations: What Feminist Theory Knows About Children’s Literature”:

> Archetypal quest romances, or identity quests, or Bildungsroman patterns are supposed to be universal. But they are skewed or blurred in the Golden Age of children’s literature, as they are in women’s literature. The problem with a ‘typical’ archetypal quest that traces the hero’s call to adventure, his descent underground, his battle with the enemy, and his triumphant return (as outlined by the typically male cartographers, Joseph Campbell, or G. C. Jung, or Northrop Frye, for example) is that it is about turning boys into men, not girls into women, or children into people. (*Children’s Literature - The development of criticism* 161)

### 2.2.1 Female identity-quest pattern

Lissa Paul points out that a female quest is different and it is impossible to use a male identity-quest pattern in a story with a female protagonist because that would make her untrustworthy. Paul suggests Annis Pratt’s idea of a five-phase pattern instead: “a splitting off from family; a green world guide; or token, a green-world lover;
confrontation with parental figures; a plunge into unconscious; and finally an
integration with society” (qtd. in The development of criticism 162). I will use Pratt’s
apprehension to the identity-quest as the main pattern for my thesis. I assume it is worth
comparing Lyra’s, as a female protagonist’s, quest to that of Harry, as a male
protagonist. Nevertheless, both of them can be perceived as quests for independence.

Lyra’s quest depicted in His Dark Materials might be compared to the Pratt’s
pattern quite successfully. At the beginning of the story she leaves the comfort and
safety of the Jordan College, which she considers to be her home and where she is
treated as an aristocrat but still given a certain amount of freedom. She overcomes a lot
of obstacles to get access to adventure. Through her adventures she gets to know some
helpful friends one of whom becomes her first love at the end of the story. As Claire
Squires suggests Lyra’s identity quest changes when she meets Will. She says that
“Lyra must unlearn some of her independence. This submission goes alongside Lyra’s
growing feelings for Will as the two pass from childhood to adolescence.” When
summarizing Lyra’s quest for maturity, Squires also claims that “Lyra’s mission
becomes secondary to, and dependent on, Will’s, and her credentials as a feminist
protagonist are arguably undermined. She must learn humility, dependence, trust and
love, virtues that make her realise that, counter to her earlier wishes, she does want
things to change, and she does want to grow up” (Philip Pullman: Master storyteller 40
- 41). By this quotation it is suggested that the quest for maturity also includes the shift
from the child-like perception of the world in which the person feels as if the centre of
the world and puts his/her goals and ambitions in the first place to the mature attitude by
which the person is able to adjust also to the needs and goals of other people.
Nonetheless, it can be argued whether this apprehension really “undermines Lyra’s
credentials as a feminist protagonist”. Even though she loses some of her independence,
Lyra gains a loyal friend who turns out to be helpful but still not limiting her in her
ambitions. By applying adaptability she is able to find the compromise between her
goals and Will’s needs without really losing her own direction.

Lyra also learns the story of her birth and the truth about her parents, who hate
each other at the time the narration of Northern Lights begins. She is confronted with
them later in the books and, in fact, she is betrayed by both of them. The moments of
meeting her parents are one of the most crucial points in the narration. At the beginning
of The Amber Spyglass Lyra is kept in an artificial sleep by her mother. This is the point
of “the plunge into unconscious” referred to by Annis Pratt. Lyra is woken up and
rescued by her friend Will and together they set for another adventure. To retrieve her betrayal of Roger, the Kitchen boy, Lyra and Will enter the world of Dead and set free the souls of dead people. As daemons cannot enter that world, Lyra has to abandon her Pantalaimon on the border. Such separation causes a lot of pain for them both and it is considered even bigger betrayal foretold by the Master of the Jordan College. As her parents watch Lyra liberating the souls of the dead and showing enormous courage, they reunify and together they defeat the Authority’s representative, the powerful angel Metatron, in their fight for the republic of heaven. Thus they enable Lyra and Will complete their mission.

2.3 The genre of children’s literature – its goals and characteristic features

For a long time in history children’s literature was marginalized by experts and public because of social rather than artistic reasons. It was perceived as a literary genre of less importance, perhaps of less artistic value and as more temporary. The aims of the children’s literature differ from those of the literature for adults as it is written for a specific target group of readers. There is a need to adjust the story to its reader. A child - or non-adult - has presumably less knowledge of the world that may be why it was believed that stories for children have only limited possibilities to talk about people’s situation, about their inner life and their role in the society. However, the goal of children’s literature is the same as in the literature for adults – to create a protagonist as a hero. Literary work helps children understand their world, give them new views and shape their personalities, their qualities, attitudes, their values and their system of values. It can also help them find their way in relationships with other people and understand basic motives of people’s behaviour and assess them.

Theory, critique and history of the children’s literature is the subject of interest for both teachers and scholars. The world of infancy is now seen as a source of inspiration; children’s fantasy is perceived by many experts as the clearest source of imagination. Another reason for the popularity of the children’s literature is the change of critical and universal perception of simplicity of stories for children. The seeming simplicity of the narration, plot and vocabulary has aroused discussions among critics. In the chapter about theory and critical approaches Karin Lesnik-Oberstein quotes an American author and critic Natalie Babbit who doubts the simplicity of the language of children’s stories when she compares successfully Kipling’s and Hemingway’s selection of vocabulary (International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s
Similarly the relativity of the plot simplicity can be questioned as many children’s books deal with serious issues such as race, poverty and freedom but also identity and maturation, relationships within families and larger social groups. *Encyclopedia* says about the new approaches that ‘resistance to the notion of the ‘universal child’ and to common assumptions of what is ‘normal’ in interpretative reading provoke new questions, especially feminist ones, in ethnography, cultural studies and social linguistics’ (*Encyclopedia* 23).

From the feminist perspective, there are many similarities between children’s literature and women’s literature. The common ground is the position of the target groups in the society. Children, like women, are regarded as helpless, powerless or dependent. This common ground is explained by Lissa Paul as follows:

> There is a good reason for appropriating feminist theory to children’s literature. Both women’s literature and children’s literature are devalued and regarded as marginal or peripheral by the literary and educational communities. … the form of physical, economic and linguistic entrapment that feminist critics have been revealing in women’s literature match the images of entrapment in children’s literature. (Children’s literature - The Development of Criticism 149,150)

In children’s literature adventures are the necessary experience which leads the protagonist of the story to maturity and independence. Nevertheless, the typical features of stories with a boy protagonist differ from those with a girl protagonist. According to the authors of *Children’s and Juvenile Literature (Written in English)* “There is a very narrow line between the boys’ and adventurous stories, very often a boys’ book is also adventurous and vice versa” (153). On the other hand, adventure in the stories with a girl protagonist is hardly ever found at the first sight. Whereas traditional male heroes are expected to defeat the evil, to gain public admiration and to get their reward for their adventures, Lissa Paul suggests that female heroes “were apparently encouraged to accept simultaneously characteristics gendered feminine - purity, obedience, dependence, self-sacrifice and service” (*Encyclopedia* 104).

Apart from the huge discussion among the experts, public growing interest in children’s literature caused an enormous commercial success. Children’s books gained popularity in media. Movies, computer games, websites on the Internet and products inspired by the themes of the books earn big financial sums all around the world. The success of children’s books is closely connected to the literary awards. A great number
of children’s books have been awarded prestigious prizes. According to Encyclopedia two oldest prizes in English speaking world are the John Newbery Medal and the Carnegie Medal. Later the American Library Association’s Randolph Caldecott Medal and the British Library Association’s Kate Greenaway Medal were established. Both are for illustrated material. Other well-established awards are the Children’s Book Award and the Guardian Award. There are also some international children’s books prizes. The most famous is probably the Hans Christian Andersen Award (International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature 501 – 506). The winning books are expected to be bestsellers and are published in greater numbers.

2.4 J. K. Rowling’s biography

Joanne Kathleen Rowling was born on July 31, 1965 in Gloucestershire to a lab technician and a chartered engineer for Rolls-Royce, Ann and Peter Rowling. Two years after Joanne’s birth her sister Diana was born. At the age of six she began narrating stories to her younger sister. The first narrative Rowling wrote down was about a rabbit called Rabbit. Short after then the family moved to Winterbourne (near Bristol) where Jo and Di became friends with Vikki and Ian Potter. She later chose this family name because “she always liked the name” (J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Novels 8).

When Rowling was nine, the family moved to Wales. Her new teacher Mrs. Morgan from Tutshill Primary inspired her for the character of Severus Snape, who bullies Harry and plays favorites at Hogwarts. She still enjoyed reading and continued to write stories. At Wydean Comprehensive Rowling met Miss Shepherd, another teacher who inspired her for a character in Harry Potter novels – Professor McGonagall. Although she created the world well-known boarding school in her books, she never attended one. As Philip Nel says about Rowling as a student: “Like Hermione, Joanne at age twelve was a good student and an avid reader” (J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Novels 13). Her favourite novel was Emma by Jane Austen. When Rowling was fifteen, her mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. After she became famous, she was a patron for the Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland. In an online article “JK Rowling gives £10m to set up multiple sclerosis research clinic” Rowling explains: "I have supported research into the cause and treatment of multiple sclerosis for many years now” (Severin Carrell).

In 1986 she graduated at the University of Exeter and started working as a secretary. In 1990 on the train from Manchester to London she got the idea for the
character of Harry Potter. Soon after this her mother died and she gave Harry all her feelings of grief. As she was trying to recover from her mother’s death, she moved to Portugal to teach English as a foreign language. In 1992 she married a Portuguese journalist Jorge Arantes and in July 1993 she gave birth to a daughter Jessica. The marriage was soon broken and Rowling returned to England, becoming a single parent and living on a public assistance. She continued to write and her sister Diana was the first person to hear Harry Potter’s story. The first book was finished in 1995 and Rowling started seeking a publisher. Christopher Little got interested in the manuscript and by late 1996 he had sold the rights to Bloomsbury. From the gender studies perspective it is interesting to point out that the British publisher’s marketing team chose a kind of nickname for Joanne - J. K. Rowling - as they were afraid that boys would not pick up the book if they saw that a woman had written it.

By 1999 J. K. Rowling had become a superstar and Harry Potter books an international phenomenon. It is quite difficult to analyze why the books gained so much popularity, even hysteria. Philip Nel argues that it might be caused by the fact that “Harry Potter novels represent the creative synthesis of a lifetime of reading…and that the books operate on many levels, with many layers of meaning (J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Novels 27) Whereas Tammy Torner-Vorbeck in her essay “Pottermania: Good, Clean Fun or Cultural Hegemony?” calls this phenomenon as “artificially manufactured” and emphasizes the need of further scrutinizing the cultural phenomenon surrounding these books (Perspectives 23). J. K. Rowling’s septology consists of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (HPPS), published in 1997, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (HPCS), published in 1998, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (HPPA), published in 1999, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (HPGF), published in 2000, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (HPOP), published in 2003, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (HPHP), published in 2004, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (HPDH), published in 2007.

Rowling’s life story can also be perceived as a story of adventure and growing up. Her own identity quest is reflected in the series. She does not hide that a lot of her personal experiences have influenced the story. She, for example, gave her own feeling of grief caused by her mother’s death to Harry when he thinks about his parents (J. K.
Rowling’s Harry Potter Novels 18). She can be seen as a female hero\(^3\) herself. After an unsuccessful marriage she went through a period of poverty, living at the subsistence level. It can only be guessed how difficult it must have been to leave her husband in a foreign country, taking care of a little baby on her own. Nonetheless, she was able to overcome the crisis and thanks to her hard work and some fortune, she was discovered as an author. By 1999 she became one of the most popular authors in the world and the real Pottermania started. The beginning of the new millennium meant a new beginning in Rowling’s life.

2.5 Philip Pullman’s biography

Philip Pullman was born in 1946 in Norwich but as a little boy grew up in Rhodesia where his father worked in a military service. He was killed in Kenya when Philip was only seven years old. As his mother got married again, the family moved to Australia in the 1950s due to his step-father’s job. He received his secondary education in Wales and then went to Exeter College, Oxford to read English. He worked as a librarian there and then trained to become a teacher. He taught at various Middle Schools in Oxford and in 1986 he taught students on the B. Ed. course.

At the time he was teacher pre-teenage children, he wrote his first book Count Karlstein (1982, republished in 2002). Then he published a quartet of books with Sally Lockhart, a young Victorian adventurer. Sally is Pullman’s first character who is an orphan with a very unconventional upbringing, who can act for herself without the constraints of the Victorian society. In the second part of the series, she lives on her own with her daughter which is very untypical for that period. She does not want to accept a marriage proposal from her friend because she does not want to give up her independence. In an online article “Philip Pullman Daemon Geezer” the series was called “pastiche Victorian thriller” (Robert McCrum). The first part of the quartet, The Ruby in the Smoke, was based on Pullman's experience as a teacher and established his position as a children’s writer.

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\(^3\) According to an online article “JK Rowling's life story to be made into film”, there is a TV film being prepared in the US which will “relate the familiar story of the author's journey from single mother on benefits to bestselling children's author” (Benedicte Page).
But it was the trilogy *His Dark Materials* inspired by Milton’s *Paradise Lost* which gained him popularity of both young and adult readers. Philip Pullman’s trilogy contains the books: *Northern Lights* (NL), published in 1995, *The Subtle Knife* (SK), published in 1997, *The Amber Spyglass* (AS), published in 2000. The first book, *Northern Lights*, won the Carnegie Medal in 1996, and ten years later it was awarded the Carnegie of Carnegies, chosen by readers from all the books that have won this medal in the 70 years since it was first awarded. The second instalment, *The Subtle Knife*, was likened, in its ambition, to Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. In 2001 the third book, *The Amber Spyglass*, became the first children’s book to win the overall Whitbread Award. Pullman continued to tell Lyra’s story in the following books called *Lyra’s Oxford* and *Once Upon a Time in the North* (2003). *The Book of Dust* is a new part of Lyra's story which readers all over the world have been waiting for.

There has been a huge discussion about Pullman’s recent book called *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*. The plot of this bestselling book, published in March 2010, is explained in an online article “Jesuit priest accuses Philip Pullman of waging war on Christianity” as follows: “[Pullman] gives Jesus a manipulative twin brother, Christ, who eventually betrays him. The miracles of the gospels are given plausible explanations, and Jesus eventually condemns the concept of a church, something he believes would make the devil ‘rub his hands with glee’” (Alison Food).

Philip Pullman lives in Oxford with his wife Jude. They have two sons, Jamie and Tom. He writes his stories in the garden shed near his house. As he lost father in his early childhood, the identity-quest of an orphan seems to be a topic appealing to him personally. Another aspect of his writing career connected with his childhood experience is his vivid imagination stimulated by Pullman’s travels to exotic places such as Kenya or Australia. In recounting Pullman’s childhood, Claire Squires, however, warns against this “mythologizing or pop psychology” quoting Parkin and

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4 This epic poem was first published in 1667 and its main story was inspired by the book of Genesis, especially by the story of Adam and Eve. According to the online guide to *Paradise Lost* “the epic also uses elements from many other parts of the Bible, particularly involving Satan’s role … A common observation is that, in his portrayal of the thoughts and motivations of Satan, Milton seems to unwittingly cast him as the hero” (“*Paradise Lost* – a brief overview”).

5 The award is now known as the Costa Award.
Jones who are against biographical readings of Pullman’s writing (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 15).

It is mainly hard work which has caused the success of Pullman’s work. When researching for a novel, he keeps to the principle “Read like a butterfly, write like a bee” (AS 549). Similarly to Rowling, he has been influenced by his favourite authors. He admits the strong intertextuality of his work in the Acknowledgements at the end of The Amber Spyglass, mentioning in particular the essay “On the Marionette Theatre” by Heinrich von Kleist, John Milton’s Paradise Lost, and the works of William Blake.

By naming her book Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller, Claire Squires emphasizes his main priority – storytelling. She quotes Pullman’s Carnegie Medal acceptance speech in which he said that “stories are vital” (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 95). Squires also suggests that “each time Pullman, as the author of the trilogy, refers to the power of storytelling and the responsibilities of the narrator and their morality, he also, inevitably, refers to his own narration” (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 95).
3. Practical part - Analysis

3.1 Splitting from home

3.1.1 Harry entering the world of Magic

Under mysterious and quite suspicious circumstances Harry Potter, the main character of J K Rowling’s books, is left as a baby at the doorstep of Mr and Mrs Dursley’s house – number four Privet Drive. The Dursleys “were proud to say that they were perfectly normal” (HPPS 7) so finding a baby – Mrs Dursley’s weird sister’s son - on their front step was not an event that they would welcome. After ten years Harry still lives with his aunt, uncle and cousin Dudley. His childhood with the foster family does not pass happily.

At the first sight Harry is not strong at all – he is described as small and skinny for his age with “a thin face, knobbly knees, black hair and bright green eyes” (HPPS 27). But there is one thing he likes about himself and that is “a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightning” (HPPS 27). Harry was told that he had got this scar in a car crash. The car crash in which his parents died. In the contrast to his physical appearance, readers soon learn that Harry is not as ordinary as he considers himself to be. Although he is not aware of his strength and he does not understand some of his abilities, at the moments of despair and anger he is able to let unusual things happen.

He is brought up without love and care as a punch-bag of his spoilt cousin Dudley. He experiences bullying from the whole of the Dursley family, spending much of his time locked in a dark cupboard under the stairs. His uncle and aunt often speak about Harry “as though he wasn’t there – or rather as though he was something very nasty that couldn’t understand them, like a slug” (HPPS 30). The hypocrisy and double-face of Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia is clear. Harry’s only way out of his misery is through dreaming. Because he has no loving family, he dreams of a relation who would come and take him away from the Dursleys. He has no one at school either because “everybody knew that Dudley’s gang hated that odd Harry Potter in his baggy old clothes and broken glasses, and nobody liked to disagree with Dudley’s gang” (HPPS 38).

It is Harry’s eleventh birthday when his dreams come true. A half-giant Hagrid comes to deliver a letter for Harry inviting him to study at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. In an online article “Why does everyone like Harry Potter?”
the school is characterized as follows: “to all intents and purposes an old-fashioned boarding-school - but with magical added ingredients” (Terence Blacker). Although Harry first did not know what to expect from a school for wizards, he knew it would be better than living with the Dursleys. The dangerous environment is set. Nevertheless, bullying from Dudley; imprisoning in the cupboard and later in his room by Uncle Vernon, or Aunt Petunia’s feeding him through a cat-flap is not that cruel as Aunt Marge remarks about his parents. Harry had undergone psychological abuse before – by Dudley’s verbal insults or Vernon and Petunia’s comments of his abnormality or their treating him as if invisible. However, Aunt Marge’s cruel insults of his heroic parents are too much he could stand. As an immature wizard, Harry reacts spontaneously and his revenge is really inflated. After he runs away, he puts himself in a rather risky situation from which he is saved by a magic Knight Bus.

The Dursleys’ household represents a place of physical and psychological abuse for Harry. Thus moving from Little Whinging to Hogwarts means moving from a dangerous setting to a secure place. Even though the magic world is full of mysteries and possible dangers, for Harry it is a place like home (my emphasis). For a lonely boy suffering from a lack of both psychical and material support entering the world of wizards means finding friendship – Harry meets his loyal companions Ron and Hermione, caring mentors Hagrid and Dumbledore and loving godfather Sirius Black. More importantly it also means revealing his own identity which was denied to him by the Dursleys who used to refuse to answer any of his questions about his family.

Before Harry gets his letter, uncle Vernon does his best to prevent him from getting it. While struggling for his family’s normality, uncle Vernon desperate fight against the magic post turns out to be abnormal. His fight comes in vain because in the end Harry is introduced to the world of magic. But as he has to spend his summer holidays with the Dursleys, the same situation repeats.

He was bearing down on Harry like a great bulldog, all his teeth bared.
“Well, I’ve got news for you, boy … I’m locking you up … you’re never going back to hat school … never … and if you try and magic yourself out – they’ll expel you!” And laughing like a maniac, he dragged Harry back upstairs. (HPCS 21)

In this short passage uncle Vernon is described as “a bulldog” guarding Harry’s normality. “His bared teeth” show how much effort he puts in the action. He actually fights for what he believes in – his family is proud to be normal and in this way he is
protecting his family. He locks Harry in his room as he used to lock him in the cupboard. He is acting like “a maniac” and this shows the reader that his attempts to prevent Harry to learn about his powers and strengths make Vernon himself mad as he knows that it is impossible to stop the progress and that he must fail in these attempts.

In the second book about Harry Potter Vernon is not the only person who does not want Harry to go back to Hogwarts. Dobby the house-elf puts also all his effort not to let Harry back to school. This causes troubles for Harry and for his friend Ron and they start their school year with a dangerous trip in Ron’s father’s flying car. There is also another mystery taken into the narration by Dobby’s warning. Although Dobby is described as a slave without any rights, he has his own magic that he is able to perform without a wand unlike human wizards. By a trick against Dobby’s master Harry gains freedom for the house-elf and so achieves a loyal friend who becomes useful in Harry’s adventures and the very essential in the final one.

“You’ve lost me my servant, boy!” But Dobby shouted, “You shall not harm Harry Potter!” There was a loud bang, and Mr Malfoy was thrown backwards. He crashed down the stairs, three at a time, landing in a crumpled heap on the landing below. He got up, his face livid, and pulled out his wand, but Dobby raised a long threatening finger. (HPCS 248)

A very powerful wizard, Dobby’s former master, is beaten by the little creature with “large bat-like ears and bulging green eyes the size of tennis balls” (HPCS 15). By Dobby’s single charm Malfoy is “thrown backwards” in such a strong way that he falls down the stairs. In this passage the house-elf’s superiority and authority over his former master is suggested by “a threatening finger” which is enough for Malfoy to change his mind and not to take out his wand – a symbol of wizard’s magic power. Not only a strong magic but also Dobby’s loyalty to Harry Potter is understood from his action. Not satisfying for the years of slavery but protecting Harry in the situation shows the clear picture of Dobby’s character. Creatures such as the house-elves, the Veela, the giants, the centaurs occur in the magical world but they are marginalised – considered as a sub-breed – or in the perspective of feminist critic they can be called “the others”. These creatures are underestimated by so-called pure-blood wizards who are the archetype of white male protestant.

On his adventurous journey towards maturity, Harry meets friends with qualities such as loyalty, bravery, fairness and intelligence. Before he finds the friendship, he first goes through strange experiences when he enters the magic world. From his first
dialogue with Hagrid about his parents Harry learns that he is famous but he is quite frustrated by the fact that he does not even remember why. As he is well-known as “a boy who lived” (HPPS Chapter One) - by all the wizard community, people bow in front of him or shake his hand; he is in the centre of people’s attention which is really surprising for a bullied child. Harry has no idea what happened in his early childhood. He is considered to be a hero but he does not know how he actually defeated the evil represented by Lord Voldemort – a person who is responsible for many deaths including those of Harry’s parents.

“Bless my soul,” whispered the old barman. ‘Harry Potter … what an honour.’ He hurried out from behind the bar, rushed towards Harry and seized his hand, tears in his eyes. ‘Welcome back, Mr Potter, welcome back.’” (HPPS 79) This part of Harry’s first entering the magical world shows the sharp difference between how he was received in the Muggle – non-magical world and how he was embraced by wizards and witches. An old bar tender shows his thrill when meeting an eleven-year-old boy in his bar by whispering his name with tears in his eyes. As if coming from a long journey Harry is welcome back to the magical world where all the adventures are waiting for him as for a privileged one. All circumstances lead him to find out about mysteries which are up to him to solve out.

He goes with Hagrid to the Gringotts Bank haphazardly on the day when it is robbed and he learns about something valuable kept in vault seven hundred and thirteen. From the following dialogue between Harry and Hagrid it is clear that the boy is given some clues for his later adventure even though he is actually refused to be given any.

“‘What’s the You-Know-What in vault seven hundred and thirteen?’ ‘Harry asked. ‘Can’t tell yeh that,’ said Hagrid mysteriously. ‘Very secret. Hogwarts business. Dumbledore’s trusted me. More’n my job’s worth ter tell yeh that’” (HPPS 84). Hagrid is asked to withdraw this very secret thing for Professor Dumbledore but he is not supposed to tell anyone about it, still he reveals a lot to Harry. The first part of puzzle takes him and his friends into their first adventure which he actually does not search for; he is pushed by the circumstances to learn more and more with a recognizable help of his friends.

While Harry can always elicit how to act, Lyra acts on her own. She uses her intuition to make decisions whereas Harry is shown the way by the circumstances or directly by his companions or mentors. Thus, Harry can be perceived as a passive hero whose path is led or controlled by the others. This passivity is the right opposite of
Lyra’s activity by which she endeavours to become a part of adventure. Adventure might be seen as the symbol of experience, necessary for an adolescent on their journey towards maturity. Lyra is thus active on her path towards independence and maturity, whereas Harry lets his environment control his growing-up.

When considering Harry’s helpful friends, especially Hermione is introduced as a very clever, honest and loyal friend whose help, knowledge and advice are always useful.

But Hermione had given Harry something else to think about as he climbed back into bed. The dog was guarding something … What had Hagrid said? Gringotts was the safest place in the world for something you wanted to hide – except perhaps Hogwarts. It looked as though Harry had found out where the grubby little package from vault seven hundred and thirteen was. (HPPS 177)

The revealed secrets enable Harry to understand what should be done next. A hint by his friend and some circumstances lead Harry to understand the mystery waiting for him. A support to this argument may be found in Farah Medlesohn’s essay “Crowning the King” in which she claims that “the role of the companions, combined with the hereditary nature of Potter’s own intrinsic qualities, creates a peculiarly passive hero to whom things happen, which he suffers and bears, but who rarely proceeds in a proactive manner” (The Ivory Tower 165).

During his studies in Hogwarts Harry’s family history shows up and it makes him follow the line from the very first urge for revenge to the need of self-sacrificing for the good of all people in both magical and Muggle worlds. While revealing the history of his early childhood, Harry gradually finds the answer for the question “Who am I?” but also “Who do I choose to be?” In his quest for identity he starts understanding the importance of making choices. His first choices are closely connected to his future friends. As Draco Malfoy attempts to provide him with the theory of pure-blood wizards, Harry refuses him straightforward with a short reply “I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks” (HPPS 120). He chooses to befriend Ron whose family is not considered to belong among the noble wizard families. Soon after, during the Sorting Ceremony, he deliberately chooses to go to the Gryffindor House although he is offered “help on the way to greatness” in Slytherin (HPPS 133). Socializing in the Hogwarts Houses represents family background which is very new and enjoyable for
the orphaned Harry. It is his first experience of sharing and care for the people of the same social group.

3.1.1.1 Female characters in Harry Potter series
Although characters of girls have a significant role in Harry Potter series, adventures are always undergone by the male characters, in very few cases accompanied by the girl protagonists as their side backing. As a kind of stereotype of male and female roles, in HP series it is very difficult for girls to gain their part in the adventures.

One of the most important female heroes in the series is undoubtedly Harry’s wise and courageous friend Hermione. Her character remains the same in the limits set in the first book of the series. From the very beginning she is introduced as an intelligent, sensible person who is still very inquisitive and has “got to go to the library” anytime she feels unsure or just wants to find out more (HPCS 189). Her passion in reading is even sometimes made fun of. There is an obvious example in The Philosopher’s Stone when Hermione comes with “an enormous book in her arms. ‘I never thought to look in here! ‘she whispered excitedly. ‘I got this out of the library weeks ago for a bit of light reading”’ (HPPS 237). Her insight and deep knowledge helps Harry and Ron on their way to the adventures as she is able to show them possible solutions and provide them with a lot of useful advice. Her feminine role is showed by her being the most practical and sensible person of the three friends. She is always expected to know more than her male friends and to be prepared for any eventuality. Even though she proves all these qualities, she is rarely allowed to take part in an adventure. In her essay Blue Wizards and Pink Witches Elizabeth E. Heilman claims that Hermione is primarily an enabler of Harry’s and Ron’s adventures, rather than an adventurer in her own right (Critical Perspectives 224). In The Chamber of Secrets Hermione gets the solution to the mystery but it is rendered impossible for her to join the adventure as she becomes petrified by Basilisk soon after. It is again Harry’s time to prove his courage and heroism in defeating the evil embodied this time in a young alter-ego of Voldemort.

Hermione’s flexibility is the major quality that helps Harry and Ron succeed in the adventures. Her ability to adjust to any situation plays also a crucial role in The Deathly Hallows. There are a number of situations solved by her flexibility, her bright intelligence and not least ability to think up various possibilities how to get out of danger. At the beginning of the seventh year of their struggle against Voldemort, the
friends are forced to run away in the middle of a wedding party. Seemingly, they are unprepared for the escape. But it is Hermione who is ready for such alternative and “who had the essentials packed… in case [they] needed to make a quick getaway” (HPDH 136). Using her instincts and intuition, Hermione is the most helpful companion throughout all Harry’s adventures. There are countless occasions where she must show quick reactions combined with some deeper knowledge of the problem. Nevertheless, when it comes to the adventurous situations, she plays only a side role.

Another important female character in Harry Potter series is Ron’s sister and later also Harry’s girlfriend Ginny Weasley. She is also described as an intelligent girl and in the subsequent instalments as a powerful witch. But still she is not given a chance for any kind of adventure. In The Chamber of Secrets Ginny is even victimized as she is hoodwinked and enchanted by Voldemort and so becomes the originator of the horror situation in Hogwarts. Some independence was allowed to Ginny in The Deathly Hallows when she and a couple of friends “tried to steal Gryffindor’s sword out of Snape’s office in Hogwarts” (HPDH 244). But the importance of this event is depicted because of the magic item that plays a significant role in the story rather than because of the protagonists of the event. For Harry and his friends need the sword as a powerful tool to destroy Voldemort’s Horcruxes, in this episode it is the sword which is of bigger importance than the agents of the adventure, as it is of the bigger importance for Harry to complete the task of his quest. In the final battle Ginny is forbidden to enter the fight with Voldemort’s Death Eaters because she is under-age\(^6\). Nevertheless, she must leave the chamber where she has been told to remain because of another Harry’s task. So Ginny is enabled to enter the fight and share both fear and pain during the struggle as well as the victorious feeling after Voldemort is defeated.

In contrast to the Harry Potter series, in Pullman’s trilogy His Dark Materials it is the female hero that goes through all the adventures and it is her initiation to overcome the obstacles and to get involved in rather risky ventures.

### 3.1.2 Lyra’s fight for adventure

Lyra Belacqua, the main character of His Dark Materials trilogy, is another character with an unsettled family background. She also grows up as an orphan. Alike Harry Potter she was told that her parents had died in an accident. Harry was shocked by the

\(^6\) It means that she is not seventeen, full age in the world of magic.
way his parents had been murdered. So was Lyra – shocked as well but in contrast to Harry’s experience, she was shocked by the reality that her parents were still alive. She lives in Oxford in Jordan College “in a universe like ours, but different in many ways” (Philip Pullman in the preview of Northern Lights). Nevertheless, the setting of her childhood may seem more pleasant when compared to Number Four Privet Drive – she is brought up and protected by scholars, but it is still childhood without love though she is given freedom to play with other children regardless their social status. She spends her time quite uncontrolled, running in the streets of Oxford with her best friend Roger the Kitchen boy, she is the person who is in control of battles with children from other colleges and the “townies” or the gyptians, being on the college roof and exploring its cellars. “So she had passed her childhood, like a half-wild cat” (NL 37). Her education has been rather unconventional – she has very limited knowledge of academic subjects, scholars give her random lectures of their preferred topics rather than of their appropriateness and Lyra’s understanding. Being used to the freedom and because of her immense curiosity she gets into a situation in which she learns about a possible danger for lord Asriel, whom she fears as well as admires. She saves his life and only by this decision she is given a chance to find out about Asriel’s explorations about the Dust.

Harry Potter’s importance is set and known in the whole of the magic world. He enters this world and immediately becomes a hero. As opposite to him, Lyra does not know and should not learn about her importance for her world. Once Harry enters the wizard world, he immediately learns about his unique position within this world. Despite of how strange he first finds this, he gets used to such turnover in his life, to the privileged role, to the fact that “he’ll be famous - a legend - … every child in our world will know his name” (HPPS 20). As he goes through the initial rituals and adventures and changes from a child into an adolescent, he learns more and more about his crucial part in the fight against Voldemort. After he witnesses the murder of Cedric Diggory and the ritual of Voldemort’s regaining a human body, Harry loses his child innocence. This loss of innocence is metaphorically described by his ability to see the magical creatures called Thestrals in The Order of Phoenix. In the following year he finally finds out the whole truth about the prophecy that had been made about him and Lord Voldemort. Harry also understands that some vague information about this prophecy actually made Voldemort murder his family. Because the circle of the events has been
closed, now it is impossible to say if it was the act of the murders or the prophecy itself which put Harry in the position of the chosen one.

In Lyra’s world some people know about her role; there are two sources of information about her importance for the world: the alethiometer, a device which enables a qualified person read the truth and an old prophecy that is kept in secret among the Witches. The scholars in Lyra’s Oxford and the Witches guard this secret. At the beginning of *Northern Lights* her role of New Eve is mentioned by the Master of Jordan College: “Lyra has a part to play in all this, and a major one. The irony is that she must do it all without realizing what she’s doing” (NL 32). From this short part it can be understood that Lyra will not be directed anyhow. She will be given a lot of freedom in making her decisions but this freedom means also a lot of responsibility for her behaviour. It is only her decision and will which lead her into the adventures. Making choices, using her common sense but also being sensitive and able to decide between good and evil take Lyra through all her stories.

To see a place forbidden to her, curious Lyra enters the Retiring Room in Jordan Collage where only Scholars and their guests are allowed in, “and never females” (NL 4). Not to get caught in this room, she hides in a wardrobe. From her hiding-place she can see the reputable Master of Jordan Collage poison wine prepared there for a visitor to the collage, Lyra’s Uncle Lord Asriel. Lyra admires her uncle but she fears him as well. That is why it is not easy for her to decide whether to stay in the Retiring Room and warn him, thus save his life, or whether to leave unseen not to get involved:

But now I’ve seen what the Master did, I haven’t got any choice. You’re supposed to know about conscience, aren’t you? How can I just go and sit in the Library or somewhere and twiddle my thumbs, knowing what’s going to happen? I don’t intend to do that, I promise you. (NL 9)

Lyra knows in her heart she is not a child any more, who would just “twiddle her thumbs” and do nothing about such a piece of knowledge. She feels responsible, she knows she “hasn’t got any choice” and she is decisive about it by showing her decision in the conversation with her daemon Pantalaimon who suggests leaving the room and going “somewhere” else. Lyra takes up all her courage and stays. Before Lord Asriel

7 There is a similarity between this scene and C S Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. In the contrast with *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lyra does not enter another world through the wardrobe but learns more about the reality of her world.
comes to the room, she has another experience with the adult world. She can watch the Butler stealing leaf from the smoking-pipe. When he is actually caught in the act by Lord Asriel, the Butler does a little favour for him not to be disclosed to the Master. These nasty things are revealed to the little girl hiding in the wardrobe. She is courageous enough to describe everything what has happened to Asriel and is allowed to stay in her hiding-place to observe what will happen next. He tells her to spy for him and lets Lyra find out about his explorations and intentions for the future. During his speech to Scholars Lyra learns about Dust and she is enabled to see photograms of Dust and of the Aurora – also called Northern Lights – in the middle of which a city of another world is visible. Lyra does not enter another world from the wardrobe as little Lucy did to Narnia but she learns about other worlds from the wardrobe. Such intertextuality is a clear example of how Pullman recalls other texts. Having witnessed Asriel’s speech, Lyra becomes interested in the North, she is eager to see everything he talked about. But Asriel cuts at her plans with the words: “You’re not coming, child. Put it out of your head, the times are too dangerous. Do as you’re told and go to bed, and if you’re a good girl, I’ll bring a walrus tusk with some Eskimo carving on it. Don’t argue any more or I shall be angry” (NL 29).

Even though she was used as a spy, Asriel still treats her like a little child; he wants her to be a good girl which she finds really annoying. She can hear about adventures but there is not a possibility for her to go through them. Traditionally, women are supposed to stay at home and be good and they are promised a reward for this – usually an insignificant trifle – e.g. “a walrus tusk”. According to Lissa Paul “Unlike men, women and children can’t stray very far from the bonds of home and gardens (at least not unaccompanied) for technicolor epic adventures on the scale of, say, The Odyssey. So physical entrapment (often connected with economic dependence) is just a fact of life” (The development of criticism 151).

Lyra rejects the way women and children are treated. As she considered the promised gift a symbol of underestimation, she got very angry but he “took no notice, it was as if he’d already forgotten her. Without a word, but with lips tight and narrowed eyes, the girl and her daemon left and went to bed” (NL 29, 30). Lyra kept silent because she could feel Asriel’s disinterest but from the description of her facial expression it is obvious that she has decided to undergo the adventure that she has learned about.
At the time when children throughout the country start to disappear (and they are said to be taken away by “the Gobblers”), Lyra meets a charming lady Mrs Coulter who proposes her to become her assistant and invites to go with her to London. She is really excited by this opportunity because Mrs Coulter mentions her intended expedition to the North which Lyra could join as her assistant. The door into the adventure seems to be wide open and the way is so simple that Lyra just cannot resist. Only after spending some time with Mrs Coulter in London, Lyra finds out that she cannot believe her new employer. The glamour of high-society London turns into a nightmare when she discovers the dark sides of Mrs Coulter character.

She didn’t finish the sentence, because Mrs Coulter’s daemon sprang off the sofa in a blur of golden fur and pinned Pantalaimon to the carpet before he could move. Lyra cried out in alarm, and then in fear and pain, as Pantalaimon twisted this way and that, shrieking and snarling, unable to loosen the golden monkey’s grip. Only a few seconds, and the monkey had overmastered him with one fierce black paw around his throat and his back paws gripping the polecats lower limbs, he took one of Pantalaimon’s ears in his other paw and pulled as if he intended to tear it off. Not angrily, either but with a cold curious force that was horrifying to see and even worse to feel. (NL 87)

The fight between Lyra’s and Mrs Coulter’s daemons shows the power and “cold force” of the lady, how flint-hearted she can be to achieve her own goals. It is her daemon who actually acts as if it presented the dark side of her character. The gloss of the monkey’s fur is in the contrast with its “fierce black paw”. When considering Annis Pratt’s pattern of female identity-quest, this struggle between Lyra and Mrs Coulter can be metaphorically perceived as Lyra’s splitting off from her parents. Lyra is to learn soon that this charming but not at all kind lady is her mother.

Lyra escapes from Mrs Coulter’s flat into the night and walks through London streets. She is able to get out of one possible danger by her strong ability of inventing stories but then she gets caught by unknown men and is saved by a lucky coincidence by her friends - gyptians from Oxford. Gyptians take Lyra to a safe place. With Pratt’s identity-quest pattern in mind, Lyra thus steps into another phase of her quest when she meets her first green world guides in the characters of Gyptians, particularly the characters of Farder Coram, John Faa and Ma Costa, who used to be Lyra’s nurse after her birth.
In the warmth of their boat they tell her the story of her birth. She comes to know about her parents – the people who have mixed up her life – Lord Asriel and Mrs Coulter. When wealthy and passionate Lord Asriel and beautiful but married Mrs Coulter had met, they fell in love and after their affair Lyra was born. Soon after her birth Mrs Coulter’s husband found out the truth and wanted to kill the baby who was hid in Asriel’s house in Oxfordshire. When defending his child, Lord Asriel killed Mr Coulter. He was punished by “confiscating all his property and all his land, and left him a poor man, and he had been richer than a king” (NL 124). After this Mrs Coulter did not want to do anything with it and she let Lyra in the hands of nuns. Lord Asriel took the girl away from the Priory and placed her in Jordan College. He went on exploring the North, randomly visiting Lyra in her new home pretending to be her uncle. He also prevented Mrs Coulter from seeing her daughter because all his anger had turned against her. Her parents’ life story and ambitions stigmatized by their relationship and their approach to Lyra is one of the main themes in Lyra’s story.

Apart of this, she is told that gyptians are also directing to the North. They are not interested in any kind of expedition or exploration. They represent home-keeping and caring characters. They want to save the kidnapped children, children taken by the so-called Gobblers. As Lyra has known, the Gobblers are directed and commanded by Mrs Coulter. She shares all her knowledge with gyptians. This is the third time when she can gain her chance and get to the North.

“But I en’t done nothing yet!” Lyra protested, as she followed the others reluctantly out of the Hall and down the cobbled road towards the jetty.

“All I done was run away from Mrs Coulter! That’s just the beginning. I want to go North!” “Tell you what,” said Tony, “I’ll bring you back a walrus tooth, that’s what I’ll do.” (NL 140)

Again Lyra’s desire to act is refused by the male characters who want to protect her and keep her safe. She is again promised a reward for being obedient and staying home. At this point Lyra feels the urge to go through the adventure, she knows she must help to rescue the kids. It is her special ability – the knowledge to read the alethiometer - which finally makes the gyptian leader to change his mind and agree to take Lyra in his ship.
3.1.2.1 The Alethiometer

Lyra had been given the alethiometer before she left for London. The Master of Jordan College gave it to her with only a brief explanation that after years of studying she would be able to read its signs which actually respond every question Lyra might have. She was also warned not to tell Mrs Coulter about this “golden compass”. Although in a few weeks’ time Lyra is able to concentrate and read the alethiometer. It amazes people around Lyra how easily she can read the symbols on the alethiometer. This ability to see the truth and to predict the future is done rather intuitively. Lyra explains about reading the alethiometer: “I just make my mind go clear and then it’s a sort of like looking down into water. You got to let your eyes find the right level, because that’s the only one that’s in focus” (NL 173, 174). For successful reading the truth, Lyra is aware of the necessity of the calm state of mind. She also compares the reading with “looking into the water” which hints “looking into the inner self”. These clues suggest that people should be able to find the truth within themselves.

This skill accompanies her throughout all her adventures and she gains advice from the alethiometer as if it were her mentor. About this unique ability Claire Squires says: “The alethiometer becomes one of Lyra’s principle weapons in the battles of *His Dark Materials*, inferring upon her the qualities of a seer, able to communicate with a consciousness that people of her own world name ‘Dust’” (*Philip Pullman: Master Storyteller* 40). Dust becomes one of the major themes of the books. Its small particles make “the physical proof of the transition which a child makes when passing through adolescence to adulthood” (*Philip Pullman: Master Storyteller* 73). By the ability of communicating with the alethiometer, Lyra shows her ability to understand the movements of the particles of Dust. Since Dust is a symbol of knowledge and experience, it may be Lyra’s intuition and inner knowledge that helps her understand the truth about the world embodied into the little device. Communicating with this device is also Lyra’s learning about herself.

At the end of *The Amber Spyglass* with losing her innocence, she also loses her ability to read the signs of the golden compass. When talking about the lost ability with Master of Jordan College Lyra says: “I wish I hadn’t lost the way of reading the alethiometer. Oh, it was so strange, Master, how it came in the first place and then just left!” (AS 542 - 543). To retrieve this ability, she decides to study at St Sophia’s College and education becomes really important to her. The golden compass again
works as a kind of a navigating device – it causes Lyra’s choice of education rather than domestic life.

3.1.2.2 Daemons

In *His Dark Materials* the identity quest is made more visible by Pullman’s genius idea of Daemons. The word “daemon” is usually connected with the meaning of evil spirit. Nonetheless, it has another meaning: “an attendant power or spirit” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Pullman obviously refers his Daemons to this meaning of the word. There is nothing evil about a human’s daemon, unless the human is evil. Daemons symbolize an omnipresent companion, a kind of imaginary friend that almost all children have. Thus, they function as a powerful weapon against loneliness. Having such “attendant spirit” creates also a possibility to discuss one’s opinion within oneself and helps develop one’s will and independence. In childhood, the changing form of a daemon reflects the immaturity of the person. Pullman himself explains that “daemons symbolise the difference between the infinite plasticity, the infinite potentiality and mutability of childhood and the fixed nature of adulthood” (qtd. in *Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller* 35). Once the person reaches their full maturity, their daemon mirrors their qualities and attitudes embodied in an animal which is traditionally connected with those qualities. In this way daemons reveal much about the personality of their human counterparts.

As Claire Squires claims, “Daemons are intimately connected to the character development, the journey from the innocence to experience, thus to questions of choice and morality” (*Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller* 36). In Lyra’s world daemons are a visible part of human’s soul, it is impossible to see a person without a daemon. By people in Lyra’s world this is considered to be repulsive, worse than any other kind of mutilation. It is a taboo for people to touch others’ daemons. Both of these strict rules – touching and even daemon’s division from its human – are trespassed in the Bolvangar Experimental Station where Lyra goes through her first adventure. Before she actually reaches the station, she can see what is done there.

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 both hands, 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. (NL 214)

Daemons are an essential part in the development of a child’s identity. The importance and the need of one’s own daemon can be understood from the very beginning of the first book of the trilogy but this scene is really heart-shaking. In this quotation the argument is supported by the idea of a small boy who was searching for a safe place to hide from the outside world, desperately looking for something important that he needs but cannot have any more. Separation from his daemon has caused that pain. After the cut he has become an injured person - “a severed child”. In this case severed means impaired – he has lost a part of himself. As a substitution he finds “a dried fish” which evokes a sad comparison because the gutted fish is the right opposite of the lively being that he had had before and the boy’s physical and mental condition may also be described as “gutted”. Nevertheless, he is “clutching” the fish to him – this shows the despair. Having met him, Lyra also feels the despair and she is holding her own daemon tight as if she was afraid of losing it by just seeing the poor boy. As the author uses the word “severed”, he suggests that without a daemon it is impossible for a child to become a healthy personality.

Although Lyra is in shock and she first feels sick, she proves to be more courageous than adults who met the poor boy and tries to cherish him and takes him to a safer place. But Tony dies on the following morning. This experience is one of the first times when she has to lose some of her child illusions. It is only her who makes decisions and when she has to undergo a frustrating experience when she is almost severed from her own daemon, she is saved only at the last minute by a very controversial character of the trilogy – Mrs Coulter.

Daemons always have a form of an animal and there are quite a lot of rules connected to them. Some of the rules are up to the readers to work out and some are said in the story. Adults’ daemons have their fixed form but children’s daemons can change their form. It is very important for the story because Lyra’s Pantalaimon can change its form according to the needs – sometimes he spies for her in the form of a little animal or uses its “animal” instinct to feel the danger, sometimes he turns into a big animal to frighten the enemies. They are of the opposite sex to their humans, and it is only in puberty when they reach their final form, which is very uncertain before, though daemons may prefer a particular form before the period of adolescence.
Although daemons seem to be separate from their human counterparts, they belong to each other, together they form whole. On his website, Pullman characterizes daemons as “seemingly fantastical but actually an expression of human personality” (“Books: His Dark Materials”). Lyra is physically and emotionally linked to her daemon but she argues with Pan very often and there is no way of deciding who is right and who is wrong. Nevertheless, humans are always the controlling party. Claire Squires considers daemons to play an important role for the children who can connect the idea with their pets or frequently invented imaginary friends. She quotes Warner who interprets Pullman’s trilogy as developing “the relation between metamorphosis as truth-telling about people, through an extraordinary dramatic device, a personal daemon accompanying every character, a kind of external soul” (qtd. in Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 35).

Another proof for the human’s necessity to have one’s own daemon is obvious in the scenes, where adults who have undergone an intercision play their part. They are described as follows: “They have no daemons, so they have no fear and no imagination and no free will, and they’ll fight till they’re torn apart” (SK 209). Such people are depicted as just machines for killing by those who have created them but Lyra looks at them with her child eyes and thinks: “these men were from her own world, and to see them without daemons was a gross and sickening horror” (SK 323). People in Lyra’s world consider the exteriorization of a human personality which shows the person’s “imagination” and “free will” a necessary part of a person and seeing a person without a daemon only evokes disgust and “sickening horror”.

### 3.1.2.3 Wizardry pets

An exact equivalent for daemons is not easy to define in Harry Potter series. Still, when creating her fantasy world, Rowling reflected to the children’s need to have a closer relationship with an animal companion. Every child coming to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is allowed to take a pet with them. In the list of the things needed for their studies students are reminded that “[they] may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad” (HPPS 77). As a present for his eleventh birthday Harry gets an owl from Hagrid. Harry “decided to call her Hedwig, a name he had found in A History of Magic” (HPPS 99). Hedwig remains Harry’s loyal friend and she is very useful too because in the magic world owls serve to carry post. This relationship grows stronger throughout the books. But at the beginning of the seventh instalment Harry loses
Hedwig in an encounter with “DeathEaters” who act under Voldemort’s commands. Despite of how strong their friendship was, Hedwig was treated as Harry’s pet, she was not that significant for his quest. There is another wizardry pet – Hermione’s cat, which plays an important role in the story of _The Prisoner of Azkaban_. Eliza T. Dresang in her essay “Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender” suggests that “the ongoing saga of Hermione’s cat, Crookshanks, is a signal from Rowling that Hermione will stand up for her rights despite ‘bucking the crowd,’ and even if it means losing one or two friends she has at that point” (The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter 227). Hermione would do what she believes is right even at the cost of being different and staying alone. Later in the same text Dresang asks if Crookshanks could stand for a kind of Pullman’s daemon and she also points out that “[Crookshanks’] determination tells us something about the character of his owner – tough, brave, and unwanted” (The Ivory Tower 228). By this notion Dresang argues that Hermione could be characterized by the acts of her cat.

There are some more human-animal relationships worth mentioning. Each of the animals depicts some qualities of their human master. Since the years he spent in Hogwarts as a student, Hagrid has kept a giant spider called Aragog. The enormous size and loyalty to friends is characteristic for both of them. Thanks to Hagrid’s love for living creatures, Harry gains another faithful friend and, in fact, a saviour for his Godfather Sirius Black. It is a magic animal – a hippogriff called Buckbeak. Another creature to mention comes from the mysterious Chamber of Secrets in Hogwarts. As well as Hagrid, young Tom Riddle (later known as Lord Voldemort) also found a loyal animal friend at the time of his studies. His Basilisk is as horrible as Voldemort himself, bringing death and horror wherever he appears. Having regained a human body, Voldemort keeps a new snake pet. Nagini is made to become a real part of Voldemort’s personality as Harry learns in his chase for Horcruxes⁸ in the sixth and seventh instalment of the series. So the snake Nagini is actually the most accurate equivalent of a daemon in _Harry Potter_ books, fulfilling some of qualities attributed to daemons, e.g. she is of the opposite sex of her master and although kept in the close distance of him most of the time, she is able to act under his commands further away.

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⁸ Horcrux is a kind of magic casket for a piece of Voldemort’s soul created especially in order to keep him immortal.
From the abovementioned examples it is evident that there are certain points in which some similarities between Pullman’s daemons and Rowling wizardry pets can be found. While daemons play a crucial role in Pullman’s world, animals in HP series are not that important for the identities of the characters. Furthermore, it can be argued that some kind of attachment to a pet is a meaningful characteristic sign of person’s immaturity. Children are more attached to their fantasy land with their pets as faithful companions, whereas adults belong to the separated world of humans.

3.2 Confronting parental figures

Generally, the process of separation of the individuality starts by splitting off from the parental figures. While a child is mostly influenced by his or her family background, an adolescent relies much more on his friends and the outer world. When considering an identity quest, it is necessary to bear in mind both family and friendship factors. Moreover, in the archetypal quest a figure of a mentor plays a significant role for the hero’s quest for maturity. Regarding the family background, parents undoubtedly contribute to the child’s development. As it has been mentioned before, both Harry and Lyra, however, grew up as orphans. Before they can split off from their parents and start their quest for independence, they both need to reassume to their family roots. Soon in both stories their parents’ characters and their importance emerge. Harry’s family history is revealed gradually throughout all the seven instalments. The story of Lyra’s birth and childhood can be perceived as the sharp contrast to that of Harry. While Harry’s parents forge picture of loving and caring Mum and Dad who sacrificed their lives in order to protect their baby son, Lyra’s parents make a very controversial couple but also by far more real. Their passion for each other alongside with pursuit for their selfish goals creates a common ground for the trustworthy depiction of their characters. It is easier to understand and believe such characters, as imperfect as humans are.

3.2.1 Lily and James Potter

At the beginning, when Harry enters the magical world, he learns about his most recent family history, about how Lily and James Potter were murdered. Gradually, he gains more and more knowledge about what really happened to his parents, the circumstances and the reasons of their deaths. Then he feels more secure because he is enabled to understand and cope with his loss. In the end such understanding helps him conquer the evil Voldemort. Later he finds out more and more details about his parents
but also from the further family history it appears that the Potters belong to the ancient traditional wizarding families. Thus, a poor bullied boy finds the connection with the world of magic. Finding his own place in the world is the final part of Harry’s quest. As Mary Pharr suggests in her essay “Harry Potter as Hero-in-Progress”:

The Potter heritage calls Harry to become a seeker whose episodic quests for knowledge are unified by the grand themes of self-discovery and selfless valor. This combination is important, for if a hero is to be complete, he must come to know more than himself and his own potential; he must also come to know the value of other creatures, great and small. (The Ivory Tower 56)

By these words Pharr points out the importance of Harry’s family heritage in his entering the wizarding world and the adventures waiting for him in this world as well as the importance of the result of his quest which is his “self-discovery” together with “selfless” respect of values of all creatures. I will look at the issue of Harry’s respect of other creatures in the chapter on his guides in the world of magic.

To get to know his parents’ characters and learn about their heritage Harry has to rely on other people’s remembrances. The heritage of his mother’s love and his father’s bravery is explained to Harry mainly by his mentor, Albus Dumbledore. Harry looks up to his father’s exemplar as to an excellent athlete and a brilliant wizard. Harry is very often compared to his father as they look very much alike. Their similar appearance seems to strengthen Harry’s pride for being connected to his dead father. When he witnesses one memory about his father, Harry first notices the physical alikeness between them:

James's eyes were hazel, his nose was slightly longer than Harry’s and there was no scar on his forehead, but they had the same thin face, same mouth, same eyebrows; James's hair stuck up at the back exactly as Harry’s did, his hands could have been Harry’s and Harry could tell that, when James stood up, they would be within an inch of each other in height. (HPOP 565)

However, he also has to cope with some negative qualities of his idealized father when he goes on watching Professor Snape’s remembrance of James Potter bullying him as a student in quite a disgusting manner. Once a bullied child, Harry could imagine exactly what his father’s victim must have felt. His feelings are described as follows:
It was that he knew how it felt to be humiliated in the middle of a circle of onlookers, knew exactly how Snape had felt as his father had taunted him, and that judging from what he had just seen, his father had been every bit as arrogant as Snape had always told him. (HPOP 573)

Such experience makes another step in Harry’s maturation. He has to change his child’s ideals to a more mature acceptance of both positive and negative sides of father’s character.

Harry’s mother is depicted as his saviour. Lily Potter gave up her life to protect her baby son. The ancient charm of mother’s love keeps protecting Harry long after his mother’s death. Lilly is described as a courageous, independent woman and despite her Muggle origin a clever witch. Harry is often reassured of how loving and caring his parents were. Their spirits help Harry when confronted with Voldemort in The Goblet of Fire. This is later explained by Dumbledore to have been a special spell which caused reappearance of the spirits of Voldemort’s victims. Their help gives Harry the possibility to escape from the venue. Even in such a dangerous situation, Harry behaves selflessly as he remembers to take the body of his murdered friend Cedric Diggory to his parents. Nevertheless, Harry is made stronger by the images of his parents at the moment of great danger.

3.2.2 Mrs Coulter and Lord Asriel

Lyra’s parents are not helpful at all and their actions actually work against Lyra, positioning her in very arduous situations and even betraying her confidence for their own purposes. Because of their rather complicated relationship Lyra’s parents, Lord Asriel and Mrs Coulter, left baby Lyra in the care of the scholars of the Jordan College. Although she believed herself to be an orphan, she did not lack care and love as “the Master of Jordan and the other Scholars, they loved [her] like their own child” (NL 128). Only when starting her puberty, Lyra found out who her parents were and that they were alive. Adapting to such findings is described in Northern Lights as follows:

Lyra had to adjust to her new sense of her own story, and that couldn’t be done in a day. 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. (131)
Lyra is again forced to use as much as possible of her flexibility. At the time when she learned the truth about “her own story”, she could remember how Mrs Coulter had charmed her at the Jordan College but she had also experienced the dark sides of her character. During her stay in London, Lyra had learned about the lady’s activities in the North. That is why she “felt confused” about the personality of Mrs Coulter and it was “nowhere near so easy” to accept a mother like that when comparing her to a good character of Lord Asriel as a father. This was Lyra’s assumption at that time which was to be changed to worse later.

Mrs Coulter’s character is worth exploring. She is depicted as “a beautiful young lady whose dark hair falls shining delicately” (NL 42). As in her world daemons make an important part of the human’s character, it is necessary to look at Marisa Coulter’s daemon as well. “He is in the form of a monkey, but no ordinary monkey: his fur is long and silky and of the most deep and lustrous gold” (NL 42). Monkeys are usually connected with qualities such as cleverness and light-handedness but also cunning, shrewdness, malice and trickery. That characterization is fitting to Mrs Coulter. Despite her delicate look, she is a very strong woman, still aware of her own ambitions and goals. Claire Squires describes the character of Mrs Coulter as follows: “Her character is an archetype of a certain dangerous yet glamorous type of femininity: the femme-fatale. It is evident that Mrs Coulter takes on this role in response to the limited options available to her in a male-dominated society” (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 75).

To gain some kind of position in “a male-dominated society”, she has tried a great number of various strategies. For a woman in her world it is impossible to get into higher politics or to become a priest to acquire a position in the Church. Her first attempt to become a person of influence was made through a marriage. She married a rich politician Mr Coulter. After the collapse of the marriage she did not give up and used all her contacts to get involved in the research of Dust, an important but sensitive issue for the Church. Establishing the Oblation Board gave her some powers from the Magisterium, the main force in their world. Under her commands the scientists of the Oblation Board (known as “Gobblers”) kidnap children to the station in the North and make experiments by separating children from their daemons. Such violent treatment of children is later followed by torturing witches who know the prophecy about Lyra’s role as the New Eve.

Very similar way of pursuit of their own ambitions is common for both Lyra’s parents. Though Lyra considers Lord Asriel to be a strong, self-confident but good-
natured man, she is forced to watch him murder her childhood friend Roger. After she saved the kidnapped children from the experimental station Bolvangar, from her mother’s hands, she takes Roger to Lord Asriel’s house in belief that he would help them. On the following morning Asriel kills the boy in exactly the same way as it would have been done in Bolvangar. Due to the huge amount of energy gained from the act of separation of a child from his daemon, Asriel succeeds to open a gate to another world. Although both her parents do not seem to keep Lyra in their minds, there are moments that disclose their parental love and care for her. When narrating about the act of opening the gate between the worlds, Lord Asriel says:

I needed a sacrifice, and the first child to arrive was my own daughter…

But when I realized that there was another child with her, so she was safe, I relaxed. Was it a fatal mistake? I didn’t consider her after that, not for a moment, but she is important… (AS 62)

With such an ambitious man it is hard to say whether he reflected to Lyra’s importance for his life or for the foreseen role of hers in his fight against the Church. Nevertheless, it is obvious from his words that to achieve his goals he would have considered murdering her if he had not had another child to sacrifice.

Mrs Coulter's story within the trilogy can also be perceived as a story of identity changing. She first seems to lack any feelings for her daughter. The reason for her attitude might be seen in her selfishness, thus immaturity. As she gets to know her daughter, whose bravery and will leads her through various adventures towards maturity, she changes her point of view, learning about her maternal love and also the necessity to act selflessly. Lyra's mother confesses: “I know I didn’t look after her well when she was young. She was taken away from me and brought up by strangers. Perhaps that made it hard for her to trust me” (AS 148). In these words Mrs Coulter proves that she is aware of the fact that she was not a good mother, allowing “strangers” to foster up her daughter. She knows how difficult it must be for Lyra to “trust” her after what she has gone through thanks to Mrs Coulter’s actions. When escaping from the cave in the mountains where Lyra was kept in a kind of enchanted sleep, her mother is sobbing and pleading: “Lyra my love! My heart’s treasure, my little child, my only one! Oh Lyra, Lyra, don’t go, don’t leave me!” (AS 169). Spending some time with her daughter recalled the maternal love in the seemingly cold character as Mrs Coulter was depicted before. She took the chance to take care of Lyra who was in position of a
helpless baby and this Lyra’s helplessness enabled her to control fully her daughter’s life.

When considering Bruno Bettelheim’s psychological analyses of famous fairy tales, it is obvious to see some symbolic connection between this story and the traditional stories in which parents try to prevent their child from sexual awakening. Comparing Lyra in the enchanted sleep with the traditional Sleeping Beauty lies ready to hand here. Bettelheim’s analysis says that “what may seem like a period of deathlike passivity at the end of childhood is nothing but a time of quiet growth and preparation, from which the person will awaken mature” (The Uses of Enchantment 232). This “deathlike passivity” is overcome by the author of The Amber Spyglass. Pullman does not deny sleeping Lyra independent will. Despite lying motionless, a part of Lyra’s mind is aware of her state and she is longing for awakening. Her thoughts show Lyra’s desire to stay active. She does not want to give up her right to make decisions even in her sleep. As her worries about her unintentional betrayal of Roger turn up and in her dream, she visits the world of dead and she talks to him. She realizes how much hope Roger puts in her and decides to help him in spite of her own fear.

In her sleep Lyra was aware of her mother’s presence somewhere near and she knew that Mrs Coulter had been hurting her. But after awakening and the successful escape from the cave, she did not remember that it was her mother who caused her enchanted sleep. What she did remember was the feeling of being held in her mother’s arms and she says: “That’s what I’d do in her place, if I had a child” (AS 194). Thus, although with very different intentions, Mrs Coulter taught her daughter a lesson about maternity, which makes an important part in a feminine maturity quest.

3.3 Green world guides

3.3.1 Mentors
Stereotypically, in identity-quest stories the parental guidance is replaced by the guidance of a mentor. The main character is provided with valuable advice on the journey by somebody who is wise and always at hand. The hero is shown his strengths and often unthought-of powers. The mentor explains the individual steps of the quest. When considering Harry Potter series, the character of Albus Dumbledore corresponds with all the features characteristic for a mentor. Harry is given advice, explanation and his life is very often saved by Dumbledore. When comparing Harry’s journey to that of Lyra, his path is safer, he is given more hints and guidance and hence he is enabled to
perform perfect acts. On the other hand, it is possible to say that Harry’s adventures and his actual quest for maturity are more controlled. Lyra is more independent; however, her freedom is paid by more mistakes that she makes on her journey, even betrayals, whatever unintentional they are. Her path towards maturity is more dangerous. Having experienced quite nasty things from people who are considered to be serious and honoured in her world, Lyra is so disappointed by the traditional views on people that she accepts Will as her friend only after she is assured by the alethiometer that he is a murderer. Despite Lyra’s freedom and lack of control, His Dark Materials trilogy includes a typical character of a mentor as a wise person giving advice in a characteristic way. The character appears no sooner than in the second instalment of the trilogy and her major role comes only at the very end of Lyra and Will’s adventure. There are several other characters that help Lyra on her way, even though their roles are not that important.

3.3.1.1 Albus Dumbledore
The headmaster of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is introduced as the most powerful and honoured wizard of all times. He plays the role of Harry’s wise counsellor throughout the series. Although Dumbledore comes out at the beginning of the story as a close friend of the Potters, eleven years later Harry does not know about his importance at all. Nevertheless, he soon gains Harry’s loyalty and admiration. In her text “Crowning the King” Farah Medlesohn compares the headmaster of Hogwarts to Merlin when she claims that “while we are told that Dumbledore is responsible to the [school] governors, in practice they appear to be in awe of him. Dumbledore is as much deferential employee as was Merlin. The employee is more powerful than the employer“ (The Ivory Tower 175). Medlesohn refers to the fact that Dumbledore had been asked to become the Minister of Magic, hence the most powerful person in the wizarding world, but he refused. He says about this: “I, meanwhile, was offered the post of Minister for Magic, not once, but several times. Naturally, I refused. I had learned that I was not to be trusted with power” (HPDH 575). From what he had experienced as a young man, he saw power to be his biggest weakness; he chose to stay in Hogwarts educating young witches and wizards. Dumbledore also often uses the exclamation “Merlin’s beard!” by which he connects himself to the personality of the famous wizard. Anne Hiebert Alton in her essay “Generic Fusion and the Mosaic of Harry Potter” describes Dumbledore as follows:
Dumbledore is kind, charismatic, and very powerful: He is not afraid to use Voldemort’s name, and many wizards believe that Voldemort is afraid of him. Moreover, he appears to be extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the world – both in and out Hogwarts – and he also exhibits a highly moral character. (Critical Perspectives 152)

In the magic world Dumbledore’s reputation is really strong and Harry says about him that “he’s supposed to be the only one Voldemort ever feared” (HPHP 73). Whatever Harry’s doubts are, they are sooner or later explained by his mentor. He is often given a clue to solve out the particular mystery and until his death Dumbledore works as a helpful advisor. The role of each of Harry’s adventures for his identity quest is clarified in Dumbledore’s office by his words full of wisdom and sympathy. For his guidance and the closer relationship that he shares with Harry or just from the position of Hogwarts headmaster, Dumbledore is entitled to set some tasks for Harry to complete. All of them are connected to the struggle with Voldemort and they are to help Harry overcome the evil.

Dumbledore’s tasks are connected to using wit and intelligence. He requires Harry to learn new things to become stronger and thus able to fight Voldemort. One of the tasks is learning Legilimency and Occlumency. At the age of fifteen it is quite difficult to control his own mind and even gain control over the rival’s thoughts, so this task is not really welcome by Harry. The fact that this art is so demanding along with the teacher in charge – Professor Snape – cause Harry’s aversion for Occlumency. Although his friend Hermione reminds him of its importance, Harry refuses to learn it. His inability to close his mind against Voldemort’s thoughts leads him and some of his friends into a mortal danger.

On another occasion Harry is asked to spy for a piece of information which makes the last part of Dumbledore’s knowledge about Voldemort’s Horcruxes. To complete the picture of Voldemort’s attempt to become immortal, Dumbledore wants Harry to capture this information from professor Slughorn. The boy does not understand why this information should be so important so he is first quite light-headed about it. The following scene describes Harry’s feelings about not fulfilling the task:

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9 These are the arts of advanced wizardry, by which wizards are enabled to read and even gain control over another person's mind and find out about their remembrances and thoughts.
A hot, prickly feeling of shame spread from the top of Harry’s head all the way down his body. Dumbledore had not raised his voice, he did not even sound angry, but Harry would have preferred him to yell; this cold disappointment was worse than anything. (HPHP 401)

Dumbledore’s authority was shown as he did not have to “raise his voice”. Harry’s appreciation for his headmaster is obvious from these lines. Only if a person is really appreciated, the adolescent is more punished by “cold disappointment” than any other penalty. Teenagers are more than younger children sensitive about their selves and the “feeling of shame” is more frustrating for them.

Harry’s relationship to Dumbledore becomes more controversial paradoxically after the headmaster’s death. When he lived, Harry’s doubts about the tasks set by Dumbledore were erased either by the mentor himself or by the events which Harry went through. After his death Harry and his friends can only guess what Dumbledore’s intentions were. Especially when they learn about the Deathly Hallows\(^{10}\), Harry starts doubting the goal of his journey. As many others before him, Harry is also fascinated by the possibility of destroying Death. When considering the possibility of seizing one of the Hallows, the Elder Wand, from Dumbledore’s tomb, Harry’s feelings are described as follows: “But the idea of Dumbledore’s corpse frightened Harry much less than the possibility that he might have misunderstood the living Dumbledore’s intentions” (HPDH 407). His appreciation of his mentor’s wisdom is again very clear. It is also very clear that Harry does his best to fulfil Dumbledore’s tasks even after his death. But learning about the Hallows and the fact that the headmaster himself investigated these items evoke Harry’s inconsistent feelings: “from time to time anger at Dumbledore crashed over him again …anger that [he] had not explained before he died” (HPDH 407). Changes of moods and feelings belong to one of the characteristic signs of adolescence.

The controversial story of young Albus Dumbledore caused a sensation in the wizarding world. Harry becomes really frustrated when he finds out that there are certain periods of Dumbledore’s life that he had no idea about. Having found out the rumours about him, he starts questioning his own feelings for his mentor and it is only Harry himself who can find the answer as his wise counsellor is dead. He learns the truth in the end but the phase of doubts and disbelief is as valuable as the truth itself. He

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\(^{10}\) Deathly Hallows are items which originated in a legend about defeating Death.
remains faithful to the person of his mentor and this makes him stronger in his final encounter with the evil Voldemort.

Rowling has been criticised for not engaging any character who would belong to either ethnic or sexual minority. This might be the reason for her later declaration that the character of Albus Dumbledore was a homosexual. There is no evidence of this statement in the story, Dumbledore is said to have had a best friend in the character of Gellert Grindelwald but no relationship beyond friendship between the two of them is mentioned there. In an online commentary “Hermione Eyre: Making a splat for the underground feminist” its author claims that “it is a shame that his vivid private life never made it on the page”. She compares Rowling's approach to that of Philip Pullman, mentioning the overt homosexual relationship of the characters of the angels Balthamos and Baruch. She also points to other examples of gay characters in children's literature who “lived quite differently beyond the public gaze”. It should be added that narrations about homosexual relationships as well as new readings of works by famous authors such as Herman Melville, Henry James, Toni Morrison and Emily Dickinson and their discovered homosexual concerns are of gender critics' intense interest (The Bedford Introduction to Literature 2095).

3.3.1.2 Severus Snape
The right opposite of the helpful character of Albus Dumbledore is seemingly Professor Severus Snape. It is quite controversial to appoint him as Harry’s mentor; nevertheless, I have chosen his character to show that even negative approach can help adolescents find their way. Throughout his studies at Hogwarts, Harry’s most detested teacher was Snape. He acted mostly as biased, favourite playing teacher. In her text “Generic Fusion and the Mosaic of Harry Potter” Anne Hiebert Alton suggests that “Professor Snape acts as an anti-role model, with his favoritism of Draco Malfoy and the Slytherins and his grudge against Harry” (Critical Perspectives 152). As the head of the Slytherin House, the biggest rival of the Gryffindors where Harry belongs, Professor Snape shows his open malice for Harry. Encounters with Snape never leave Harry indifferent. In the magic world he is known to have been one of the Voldemort’s Death Eaters. Dumbledore believes that he has left the side of the evil but due to his controversial behaviour it is difficult to decide whether he has really done so. Similarly to his reconsidering Dumbledore’s truthfulness, Harry is forced to consider Snape’s position. Terri Doughty in her text “Locating Harry Potter in ‘Boy’s Book’ Market” says that
characters in the Potter books choose to align themselves with either the
evil Voldemort or with the forces of good, led seemingly by Dumbledore.
However, this is not an absolute world, and some of Harry’s most
interesting dilemmas address the difficulty of distinguishing at times
between good and evil. (The Ivory Tower 247)

Regarding Snape’s character this difficulty accompanies Harry throughout all his
adventures. Snape’s negative attitude towards Harry along with his acts proving rather
the opposite teach Harry a lesson about who is to be trusted. Harry long out dares the
obvious proofs of Snape’s loyalty for Dumbledore and he is always satisfied if he can
find a reason to mistrust Snape. He does not understand why Snape has gained the
headmaster’s reliance. But even in an unfriendly attitude there are things Harry learns
from Professor Snape. When Dumbledore sets Occlumency lessons for Harry, he has to
meet Snape regularly. Spending some time with his teacher, Harry gets to know some of
his past. He learns that Snape had grown up in the same miserable conditions as Harry
did and that the only relationship Snape ever cared for was love for Harry’s mother Lily.
Unwillingly, Harry is fully capable of understanding Snape as he personally
experienced being bullied and unloved.

When he witnesses the murder of Dumbledore, Harry is sure that his worst
guesses about Snape were right. Even in their fight which followed, Snape reacts as
Harry’s mentor as he still tries to teach Harry some magic and give him some lessons
about how to deal with an enemy: “‘Blocked again, and again, and again until you learn
how to keep your mouth shut and your mind closed, Potter!’ sneered Snape, deflecting
the curse once more” (HPHP 562). Harry does not understand this Snape's reaction
during their struggle but later he realises that these lessons appear to be useful in his last
encounter with Voldemort in one year’s time. After the headmaster’s death Harry calls
him a coward in his anger and pain. The following lines describe Snape's reaction: “his
face was suddenly demented, inhuman, as though he was in as much pain as the
yelping, howling dog stuck in the burning house behind them” (HPHP 564). Only these
few lines suggest that Dumbledore’s death was as painful for Snape as it was for Harry.
Harry learns the actual truth about this event only after Professor Snape’s death. From
the selection of his memories, he reveals the whole story of Severus Snape and learns
that he should appreciate even people who may seem unpleasant and difficult to find a
way to.
Terri Doughty claims that “far more difficult for Harry than learning who is and is not to be trusted is learning to trust himself” (The Ivory Tower 247). Both abovementioned characters acted in such a manner that Harry was able to recognise his own personality and the path that he should take.

3.3.1.3 Mary Malone
In comparison with Harry Potter, in His Dark Materials Lyra is less advised about her path. She meets some helpful characters on her journey but they stay with her just for a little time and then she is again left independent, but alone. Mary Malone is not a character of a typical mentor. She does not guide Lyra on her journey; nevertheless, her advice plays the most important role in Lyra’s quest for maturity.

Lyra spent her childhood among Scholars at University of Oxford. She was loved and cared for by them but her education was quite fragmentary and perhaps because of her wild nature she was not given much knowledge of the world. While growing up she gained a lot of experience herself from her adventures in the street of Oxford. The Scholars did not limit her about who to befriend, though she was considered to belong to aristocracy. Only when she was leaving the Jordan College with Mrs Coulter, the Master of Jordan tried to give her some advice along with the Alethiometer. He told her: “The powers of this world are very strong. Men and women are moved by tides much fiercer than you can imagine, and they sweep us all into the current. Go well, Lyra; bless you, child; bless you. Keep your own counsel” (NL 74). From his words Lyra could not understand how dangerous are the events waiting for her. He wished to be able to protect her a little longer, but he knew about the prophecy that had been made about her role of the New Eve and he was aware of his own powerlessness to do so.

If Lyra’s role was that of the New Eve, the characters of Adam and the serpent were to be filled in too. Lyra’s “green world friend/lover” Will has become her faithful companion on her journey. Actually, their journeys for maturity have been intertwined. The part of the serpent was taken by a young scientist Mary Malone. This role may be traditionally seen as negative. Nevertheless, the true basis of the serpent’s task was to offer Eve the fruit of knowledge which might be apprehended as positive as well.

In Mary and Will’s world people have their daemons “inside them” (SK 78). Lyra finds it quite shocking first, she, however, quickly gets oriented. To find some information, she first visits a museum and then, advised by the Alethiometer, she looks
for “a scholar who knew about Dust” (SK 83). Lyra is surprised by the fact that the scholar she was led to is female but soon they start discussing the issue of their common interest. Lyra calls it Dust, Mary and her scientific team have named it Shadows. Mary says that “Shadows are particles of consciousness” (SK 92). Later she is enabled to communicate with these particles through her computer. As a former nun, Mary is educated in religion. Despite her knowledge about religion, she can’t believe her eyes when her questions are being answered on the screen and those who give the answers claim about themselves to be angels. Her question about Shadow-matter is answered as follows: “From what we are, spirit; from what we do, matter. Matter and spirit are one” (SK 260). Angels appoint Mary in the role of the serpent in Lyra and Will’s story.

Mary is advised to leave her world. She travels through the city of Cittagazze, where Will won the subtle knife and she passes into another world. This world is inhabited by friendly creatures called mulefa of a very strange physiology. Their bodies are described as follows:” their skeletons had a diamond-shaped frame, with a limb at each of the corners” (AS 128). Thanks to her friendly approach, Mary is able to communicate with the mulefa. She is amazed by their life-style and by the fact that they live in a symbiosis with their environment. Their lives depend on the life of giant trees which give them their seed-pods and oil from the pods. The mulefa use these seed-pods to move around as on wheels. Mary soon “found an adjustment being made in her mind, as the word creatures became the word people. These beings weren’t human, but they were people, she told herself; it’s not them, they’re us” (AS 129; emphasis Pullman’s). This attitude shows that Mary is not a prejudiced person. She is not repelled by the absolutely different appearance of her new friends but she rather looks for similarities with her own race. Her friendliness and openness reach the goal as she becomes one of the members of the mulefa village. Still she is aware of the role given to her by angels. She consults the symbols of I Ching¹¹, and is advised to stay. Her admiration for the mulefa is growing as she comes to know them better. She also discovers things that place them above humans, as “she enjoyed watching them, because they could discuss without quarrelling and co-operate without getting into each other's way” (AS 383).

Mary learns that even in the mulefa's world Dust is important. Her scientific interest is then again in the centre of her life. By her close friend, one of the mulefa, she is told about Dust (called sraf by the mulefa): “Ever since we have had the sraf, we had

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¹¹ I Ching is a Chinese art of predicting future.
memory and wakefulness. Before that, we knew nothing” (AS 236). This takes Mary back to Lyra and Will’s role. She is also told that the mulefa have a legend symbolizing wakefulness similar to the story of Adam and Eve. There is one more thing that places mulefa above humans; Mary finds out that they are able to see Dust. To be able to see it too, Mary makes an amber spyglass and puts a little oil from the valuable seed-pod trees on it. Only after she is able to see the Dust, Mary is asked by the mulefa to help them because their trees are dying and they are not able to prevent it. Mary climbs up to the top of the giant tree and watches the current of Dust.

When Lyra and Will reach the mulefa village, they tell Mary about their adventures. Mary discovers the connection between the invention of the subtle knife and the start of the slow death of the giant trees caused by flowing away of the Dust. She also retells the story of her life. She explains why she gave up being a nun. She remembered what it is like to be in love and she says: “It’s full of treasures and strangeness and mystery and joy” (AS 468). While listening to her story, Lyra reveals the feelings for Will hidden inside of her. She does not say anything but Mary’s story, as Claire Squires suggests, “opens Lyra’s eyes to a world of sexuality and excites her consciousness” (Philip Pullman, Master storyteller 51).

As it has already been suggested, the character of Mary Malone does not correspond with all features typical for the character of a mentor. Nevertheless, her main role was to show the need for love and to guide Lyra into the adulthood. The role of the serpent given to her was not a negative role. Her task was to offer Lyra and Will some kind of knowledge, the consciousness necessary for their maturation and Mary was able to complete her task in a very gentle and sincere way.

3.3.2 Friends

3.3.2.1 Hermione and Ron

Apart from Dumbledore’s guidance, Harry is not left all alone on his adventurous journey. According to Farah Medlesohn’s text “Crowning the King” there are two significant roles of the hero’s friends on his journey. Firstly, their skills “enable the hero to achieve specific things for which the hero and not they take the credit and the prize” (The Ivory Tower 164). Their second role is “to teach the hero life’s lessons: bring him into maturity by teaching him new skills” (The Ivory Tower 164). Both Hermione and Ron have some skills to offer on Harry’s journey and their friendship is his strongest point in his fight against Voldemort.
Lana A. Whited, with M. Katherine Grimes in their essay “What would Harry do?” suggest that “loyalty is [Ron’s] preeminent virtue” (The Ivory Tower 189). Ron does not hesitate to accompany Harry on every peril that lies in front of him. In The Philosopher’s Stone there is a game of giant chess to win to prevent Voldemort from gaining the stone. Ron sacrifices himself with the words: “You’ve got to make some sacrifices! I take one step forward and she’ll take me – that leaves your free to checkmate the king, Harry!” (HPPS 304). By sacrificing himself Ron evidently fulfils his role of the hero’s companion – his skill enables Harry to win his fight but it is not Ron who takes the credit.

His family background seems to be Ron’s biggest advantage as well as disadvantage. He comes from an old wizarding family but they are extremely poor, living at the subsistence level, taking care of five out of their seven children (Ron’s eldest brothers are already self-dependent). Despite their poverty, Harry is amazed by their home atmosphere The Weasleys give Harry the opportunity to experience the warmth of the family life. It is Ron’s younger sister Ginny who is hoodwinked by Voldemort and kidnapped to the Chamber of Secrets in the second instalment of the series. Similarly to a prince saving a princess, Harry saves Ginny and later falls in love with her. He also saves Mr Weasley’s life in The Order of the Phoenix and Ron’s life in The Half-Blood Prince. His relation to the Weasley family is confirmed by his appreciation of Ron’s parents, especially his mother who to a certain extend represents a surrogate mother for Harry. However pleasant Ron’s family background may be, it can be argued that the family is described in a traditional, stereotypical way. John Kornfeld and Laurie Prothro in their text “Comedy, Conflict, and Community” suggest that

The Dursleys and the Weasleys are the only families we get to know well and, in book after book, these two families from Rowling’s non-Hogwarts world are comical, conventional, superficial, predictable – and totally misrepresentative of the diversity of family structures in contemporary society. (Critical Perspectives 191)

The harmony of the Weasley family is quite exaggerated in comparison with the contemporary family and the relations within the family correspond only with the stereotypical features of each family member. Nevertheless, Harry’s relationship with Ron is not that far from the real links between teenage boys. Minding the poverty of his family, Ron is often jealous about Harry’s own money kept in the Gringotts Bank. His feelings are described at one occasion during the Quiddich World Cup as follows: “He
was always touchy about the fact that Harry, who had inherited a small fortune from his parents, had much more money than he did” (HPGF 86). Jealousy comes to play an important part in Ron and Harry’s friendship when Harry becomes one of the champions in the Triwizard Tournament. Only after the first task is completed, Ron understands that Harry would not enrol himself deliberately in such a peril. He admits his mistake by the following words: “Whoever put your name in that Goblet – I – I reckon they’re trying to do you in!” (HPGF 313). The difficulty to accompany a hero on his journey just as a sidekick grows as the friends get older. Ron’s growing love for Hermione causes the last argument between the friends and is again based on Ron’s jealousy but also by the tension from their quest for Horcruxes. After Ron leaves, Harry thinks: “He’s gone. He had to keep thinking it as he washed and dressed, as though repetition would dull the shock of it” (HPDH 255; emphasis Rowling’s). Only when Harry misses his loyal friend, he realises how important is the role that Ron plays in his life.

Similar to Ron’s importance is Hermione’s part in Harry’s quest. As it has already been discussed in the chapter about Adventure and gender, Hermione has to work much harder than Ron and Harry to have the possibility to get her skills involved in the adventurous tasks. She is unquestionably the cleverest of the trio. Hermione’s primary role is to help Harry by implying the knowledge gained from books. Nonetheless, she also mirrors other qualities stereotypically considered as female. On one hand, she often gives vent to her tendency to yell, shriek or sob. On the other hand, she is perceived by Dumbledore and other teachers at Hogwarts as the most responsible and the calmest of the three friends. Dumbledore confirms this when talking to Harry about Hallows: “I am afraid I counted on Miss Granger to slow you up, Harry. I was afraid that your hot head might dominate your good heart” (HPDH 577). Hermione’s care for other creatures in the magical world is represented by her fight for the house-elves’ rights. Ron finds her “S.P.E.W. - the Society of the Promotion of Elfish Welfare” rather ridiculous (HPGF 198). But Hermione has made a plan how to secure house-elves what she understands they deserve.

Without any doubts, selflessness is the quality shared by both Harry’s friends. Another feature they share is a kind of disadvantage among their peers in Hogwarts. Ron’s family evidently lacks money for good living. Rowling does not mention much about Hermione’s family. Readers learn only about her parents’ jobs and about their pride for their educated daughter. What is clear about Hermione is the origin of her
family background. She is a Muggle-born. This makes Hermione’s life in Hogwarts much more difficult, especially with some prejudiced students from the Slytherin House, such as Draco Malfoy. He knows exactly how rude it is to say this, when he first calls Hermione “Mudblood” (HPCS 86). The prejudice about pure-blood families is one of the issues coming into discussion after Voldemort regains his power. Similarly to Hitler’s treatment of Jews and other totalitarian regimes treating their both open and seeming opponents, the Ministry of Magic under Voldemort’s control started oppressing the Muggle-borns. A lot of Muggle-born witches and wizards lose their human rights symbolized by taking-away their wands and many of them are murdered or expelled. Hermione says about herself to a goblin named Griphook: “And I’m hunted quite as much as any goblin or elf, Griphook! I’m a Mudblood!” (HPDH 395). By these words Hermione acknowledges the fact that some beings are being oppressed but at the same time she claims that even if she belongs among the oppressed, she is proud to be who she is.

3.3.2.2 Will

Selflessness and loyalty are qualities also possessed by Lyra’s companion, Will Parry. While in Harry Potter series Harry’s quest is that of the biggest importance, when Will appears in the story, Lyra’s quest loses its dominance and their journeys become of equal significance and mutually intertwined. The purpose of Will’s quest is the most natural for a teenage boy. When he was a baby, his father, an explorer, got lost. Will grew up with his loving but mentally ill mother. His mother’s anxieties and several visits of mysterious men investigating his father’s past convinced Will that his father was somewhere in trouble and he needed Will’s help. Even in a great rush, Will first thinks about his mother. Once he is sure that his mother will be safe and well-cared for, he goes back to their house to get “his mother’s most precious possession” (SK 13): a green leather case containing his father’s letters. While looking for the case, two intruders enter the house. During a short fight, Will accidentally causes death of one of the men. Another small coincidence helps Will find a window into another world – the city of Cittagazze, where he meets Lyra. A cat is an important agent in both of those accidents. At the end of his maturity quest, Will is able to see his own daemon, visualised in the final form of a cat.

When they first meet, Lyra consults the Alethiometer about Will. Having learnt that he is a murderer, her thoughts are following: “When she saw the answer, she
relaxed at once… A murderer was a worthy companion. She felt as safe with him as she’d done with Iorek Byrnison the armoured bear” (SK 29). These lines describe her reverse perception of the world. After her adventures in the North, having witnessed her parents’ bad acts, Lyra is unable to feel secure with the traditional values. That is why the answer of the Alethiometer calms her down.

After their journeys are joined, Lyra listens to the advice given by the Alethiometer again and she promises Will to help him find his father. Nevertheless, when Lyra’s precious possession, her Alethiometer, is stolen, it is Will who changes the original plan and enters a great danger to earn the golden compass from the thief. He has to fight for the Subtle Knife which the thief asks in return for Lyra’s possession. As the bearer of the knife, Will gains control of this most powerful weapon and learns how to use it. By the former bearer of the knife, Will is explained: “This edge … will cut through any material in the world…The other edge … is more subtle still. With it you can cut an opening out of this world altogether” (SK 190). He is also taught by Lyra about the state of mind he must find himself in. Lyra compares Will’s work with the knife to her reading the Alethiometer. Thus, both friends are provided with an equal tool accompanying them on their journey.

Will succeeds to find his father but at the moment he is about to reach the goal of his quest, his father is killed. In the meantime, Lyra is kidnapped by her mother, Mrs Coulter, and she is kept in the enchanted sleep. The moment of Lyra’s awakening in the cave is also worth considering. Although it is Will’s initiative to save Lyra from the cave, there is a girl from the local village who knows how to awaken Lyra. Unlike the traditional fairy-tale ending, unlike Harry’s act of saving Ginny in The Chamber of Secrets, it is not Will who awakens Lyra from her enchanted sleep. It can be argued that Pullman suggested that the awakening would be a very strong symbol for emotional and sexual approximation and it was not the right time for the two friends to get so close yet.

In the cave Will loses his concentration, for a while he imagines his mother, and this causes that the subtle knife breaks. After their escape from the cave, Lyra’s friend Iorek Byrnison helps the children forge the knife again. As experience in the work with metal, he is immediately able to see how dangerous the knife is. He says: “I don’t like that knife… I fear what it can do… Sometimes in doing what you intend, you also do what the knife intends, without knowing” (AS 190 – 191; emphasis Pullman’s). By
these words Iorek is indicative of the possible dangers that the Subtle Knife may cause. Will and Lyra will find out about the hidden intentions of the knife.

During her sleep Lyra dreams about the world of dead. After they are safe, Lyra suggests the journey into that world. She wants to help her friend Roger there. Will accepts her idea, because he wants to accompany her and, furthermore, he hopes to meet his father again. After a long and painful journey in the final battle ghosts of John Parry and Lee Scoresby and other dead soldiers and warriors helped the children against Spectres, defined as “ethereal vampires” (AS 82). When the battle is over and Lyra and Will find again their lost daemons, Will says goodbye to his father’s ghost with these words: “You said I was a warrior. You told me that was my nature, and I shouldn’t argue with it. Father, you were wrong. I fought because I had to. I can’t choose my nature but I can choose what I do. And I will choose because now I’m free” (AS 440; emphasis Pullman’s). Will explains his gained certainty that he has the possibility to make a choice about his own life and shows his decision about making his own choices. He expresses his unwillingness to admit an existence of a fate or a destiny determinated in advance.

3.3.3 Other companions and helpers

Both Harry’s and Lyra’s worlds are full of creatures invented by the authors of the stories. Some of the characters are those who help the heroes on their journeys, some come in their way with malicious intentions to harm. When comparing the features of those characters, it can be argued that in the worlds of His Dark Materials all different creatures are equal to people. There is not an evidence of humans’ disrespect to creatures such as mulefa, armoured bears, Gallivespians, the witches or angels. On the other hand, Rowling’s world shows all signs of traditional class system. The Harry Potter series conform to the existing hierarchy in the society, thus suggest that the hierarchy, characterized by racial prejudice or mistreatment of women, children or sexual minorities, is acceptable. In their text “Images of the Privileged Insider and Outcast Outsider” Elizabeth E. Heilman and Anne E. Gregory claim:

In the Harry Potter books, Rowling has created an ideological world presenting privileged insiders and outcast outsiders across a wide range of signifiers. These include gender, […] social class, peer group affiliations, race, culture, and nationality. (Critical Perspectives 242)
Magical creatures other than witches and wizards are treated as sub-breeds, literally “the other”. Their lower position in the society is symbolized by the impossibility to possess a wand. At the first sight, wands are seen as symbols of the magical power, nevertheless, it is necessary to consider them as symbols as a certain social status which is awarded to human magicians only. As a kind of compensatory power, each of the magical breeds has their own magical power. These forces are underestimated by most wizards and so they are really surprised when they witness the effects of such powers. Nevertheless, it is just an additional magic that non-wizards can produce. When discussing the unfair treatment of other breeds, the goblin Griphook explains about his magic: “That is immaterial! Wizards refuse to share the secrets of wandlore with other magical beings, they deny us the possibility of extending our powers!” (HPDH 395). By this statement Griphook confirms the ways of oppressing other breeds by wizards. He, however, admits the existence of another kind of magic, which can be described as compensatory to that produced with a wand. Nevertheless, the underestimation of such supplementary powers plays also a notable role in Harry Potter’s adventures. He is appreciated as “an unusual wizard” (HPDH 393). His respect of other magical breeds is rewarded by their support in his fight with the evil.

3.3.3.1 The house-elves
The most evident surprise for wizards was caused by underestimation of magical force of Dobby the House-Elf. In the magic world house-elves embody service and humility. They work as underpaid slaves in rich wizarding families but also at Hogwarts. They do all the household chores unseen, mostly at night. They live their lives without holidays, sick leave or pensions. Hermione sees this terribly unfair and wants to help them but they do not want any help as they feel perfectly all right with their position. Ron claims that “They like being enslaved!” (HPGF 198; emphasis Rowling’s). There is one exception; one house-elf who does not like to be enslaved and is happy to be free. Dobby first appears as a funny character who wants to save Harry’s life in The Chamber of Secrets. He is later liberated from his master, Mr Malfoy, by Harry. Paradoxically, their former house-elf turns away from them and uses his own magic to save Harry, Ron and Hermione from the Malfoy Manor. Dobby personifies the desire for freedom as well as the strength of independent will. He sacrifices his life while rescuing Harry and his friends. When he is accused of defying his masters, Dobby squeals: “Dobby is a free elf, and Dobby has come to save Harry Potter and his friends!” (HPDH 384). The
language of house-elves as well as Hagrid, the half-giant, and other non-wizards is not standard English. The authors of the essay “Images of the Privileged Insider and Outcast Outsider” compare them to “other marginalized peoples in England and the United States” (Critical Perspectives 244). Heilman and Gregory also say that “these messages are deeply disturbing as Rowling reinscribes and normalizes the marginalized status of the immigrant or dialect speaker” (Critical Perspectives 245).

3.3.3.2 The Veela

In the fourth part of Harry Potter series, Rowling introduces magical creatures called the Veela. They are the Bulgarian team mascots in the Quiddich World Cup. Mascots should attract fans for their team. And the Veela are attractive… They are described as creatures with skin shining moon-bright and white-gold hair who look like beautiful young women: “The most beautiful young women Harry had ever seen…except they weren’t – they couldn’t be - human“ (HPGF 93). “Once they start singing and dancing, the minds of the listeners go blank, they stop worrying about anything. All that matters is to keep watching the Veela” (HPGF 94).

The Veela are creatures descended from the ancient Greek legends – the sirens of the Odyssey. In the commentary “Harry’s Girls: Harry Potter and the Discourse of Gender” it says:

The sirens support a view of gender as a binary, as a set of two opposite and antagonistic categories of unequal worth and power. What is obvious in the siren story, so obvious that we all know it as common sense is that girls are alluring and irrational sexual beings and that boys had better watch out. (Meredith Cherland)

Cherland explains that perceiving gender as two “antagonistic categories” suggests inequality. Confronting qualities typically male and typically female is quite misleading. Stereotypical apprehension of girls as “alluring” and “irrational” and possibly dangerous for boys is wrongful. Similarly, true masculinity should not be symbolized by physical strength, tolerance of pain and natural leadership skills.

When describing the Veela at the Quiddich World Cup, Rowling refers to the texts that readers are probably familiar with, she underlines Harry’s humanity and last but not least she foreshadows the arrival of Fleur Delacour, a young witch of French origin. Fleur’s grandmother was a Veela, whose hair has been wound into the core of
Fleur’s wand, giving it special power. Together with rose wood such wand has probably the most feminine wood-and-core combination possible.

In *The Goblet of Fire*, Fleur becomes one of the competitors in the Triwizard Tournament. All the other competitors are boys, considered to be strong and clever. Fleur is taken according to the stereotype - as attractive but not quite clever. Her appearance always makes the present boys to lose their heads and stare blankly at her. One scene describes the male losing his head for her beauty. When boys are supposed to invite a girl for a winter ball, Ron tries to invite Fleur. He later notices that he did not know what made him do it. Harry then points out: “She’s a part Veela…It wasn’t your fault. I bet you just walked past when she was turning on the old charm” (HPGF 348). Such explanation is a clear example of the use of gender stereotypes in the series. Fleur is obviously aware of her power over men. In the Triwizard Tournament she fails to fulfill one of the tasks, which is saving her sister from the underwater world. Stereotypically she acts in a nervous and panicky way. In a very tight time limit Harry succeeds to complete this task for her and she expresses appreciation again in a traditional way as “she kissed Harry twice on each cheek (he felt his face burn and wouldn’t have been surprised if steam was coming out of his ears again)” (HPGF 439). In this scene again Fleur’s sexual power over men is emphasized.

Throughout the fifth and sixth part of HP series Rowling gives a description of her as a rather stupid and possibly false character. Fleur falls in love with Ron’s brother Bill and they get engaged. Ron’s mother and sister do not like Fleur at all – the traditional stereotypic relationship of a mother-in-law and a wife is described in *The Order of Phoenix* and *The Half-Blood Prince*. The shallowness of Fleur’s character can be considered as convincing. The more surprising was Fleur’s reaction at the end of the sixth part. Her fiancé was seriously wounded by a werewolf. It was not possible to cure his scars completely so he lost some of his handsomeness. Mrs Weasley expects Fleur to give up the marriage because of this. Fleur does not seem to understand why she should do so. She thinks her mother-in-law means that Bill would cancel the engagement. But she does not hesitate for a moment; she is strongly decided to marry him despite of what he looks like. She says: “You thought I would not weesh to marry him? Or per’aps you ‘oped? What do I care how ‘e looks? I am good-looking for both of us, I theenk! All these scars show is zat my husband is brave! And I shall do zat!” (HPHP 581).
Fleur’s foreign origin is emphasized by the language. She speaks English with a very strong French accent. Although she was described as a shallow character, important and empowered only by her appearance, descendant of the Veela, by this decisive and strong behavior, Fleur becomes one of few female characters in HP series who can follow their own will and who can fight for what they want.

3.3.3.3 Friends and enemies from different universes
In his trilogy Philip Pullman has suggested the existence of different universes. Some worlds are quite similar, such as Will’s and Lyra’s Oxfords, and some worlds are entirely different, for example the world of the mulefa or, even more strikingly, the world of dead. These universes are inhabited by different characters and creatures. It is important to say that most of the breeds are not either just positive or negative. As in real life, there are friends and enemies among each of the kinds. Some of the friendly characters are: the armoured bears led by Iorek Byrnison; some witches, especially the clan of Serafina Pekkala; the rebel angels Balthamos and Baruch; and many others. Obviously, Lyra and Will also meet some true enemies on their journey; the example of them may be the harpies from the world of dead, who, nonetheless, later overturn their attitude; the cliff-ghasts; the priests of the Magisterium, especially the assassin father Gomez, who makes tracks for Lyra in order to kill her; and not least the Specters of Indifference from the world of Cittagazze, who feast on “a conscious and informed interest in the world” (SK 292). These creatures could be compared to Rowling’s Dementors, who personify depression and are fed by joy and happiness.

Lyra’s best friend Iorek Byrnison, the armoured bear, is first met as an outcast serving as an indentured labourer. He is being mistreated as he was tricked and stolen his armour. His armour symbolizes his soul, the same as a daemon for a human. Lyra helps Iorek win his armour back and after her mission at the Bolvangar experimental station she helps him again. With his armour, his position of the king has been stolen from Iorek. By her true mastery and love for storytelling, Lyra is able to hoodwink Iofur Rakinson, the false king of Svalbard. For she knows about his obsession to gain a daemon, thus become a human-like, she pretends to be Iorek’s daemon and suggests that Iofur can win her in single combat. The feeling of her power over the king is described as follows: “The great bear was helpless. Lyra found her power over him almost intoxicating, and if Pantalaimon hadn’t nipped her hand sharply to remind her of the danger they were all in, she might have lost all her sense of proportion” (NL 343).
Thanks to her mastery that helped her trick Iofur into a combat with Iorek, who could win back his kingdom, Lyra is given the name “Silvertongue” (NL 348, my emphasis). This “intoxicating power” of storytelling seems to follow her throughout all her adventures. Cheating and lying is Lyra’s most powerful weapon. Although deceit might be stereotypically considered as cowardice, Lyra is very proud of her skill. When she thinks about Will and appreciates his courage and fearlessness, she also adds: “…but he wasn’t good at lying, betraying and cheating, which all came to her as naturally as breathing. When she thought of that she felt warm and virtuous, because she did it for Will, never for herself” (AS 180). On one hand, these thoughts reveal Lyra’s pride of her skills of deceit. On the other hand, they also show a genuine selflessness of Lyra while using these skills.

Nevertheless, as she grows older and more experienced, her freedom to tell lies seems to shrink. The most important lesson in storytelling is given to Lyra by the harpy No-Name guarding the entry in the world of dead. Being offered a story, No-Name promises to let Lyra and her friends in. However, once Lyra starts telling an invented story, the harpy gets really angry and screams: “Liar! Liar! Liar! […] so that she seemed to be screaming Lyra’s name, so that Lyra and liar were one and the same thing” (AS 308; emphasis Pullman’s). After this bad success, as if she had lost something precious, Lyra is desperate and doubts about herself. She says: “I can’t tell lies! I thought it was so easy – but it didn’t work – it’s all I can do, and it doesn’t work!” (AS 309). It can be argued that these incipient doubts about herself, about the skills that she used to consider as a part of her personality and her nature suggest Lyra’s coming-of-age and her maturity.

The harpies’ malicious attitude towards the intruders to the world of death changes as they listen to Lyra’s true stories. They admit that they find the truth nourishing. They had been created “to see the worst in every one, and [they] have fed on the worst ever since, till [their] blood is rank with it and [their] very hearts are sickened” (AS 331). The harpies explain their own rage and violence caused by this power to see

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12 In the introductory chapter Pauline Young claims that “within a patriarchal culture, women have learned to lie well and convincingly, for dishonesty has sometimes been the price of our physical survival”. She, nevertheless, continues by quoting Adrienne Rich, who suggests that “our future as women depends upon our making known our versions of reality, so that the false power gained through lying can be replaced by truth to experience” (qtd. in Women's Studies: Essential Readings 434).
the worst in every person who enters the world of dead. Their hunger for stories can be compared to the hunger of “a languishing queen who only revives when fed ‘tongue meat’, something that turns out to be a metaphor for stories” in one of Angela Carter’s favourite stories (according to Lissa Paul in the chapter “Feminist criticism: from sex-role stereotyping to subjectivity”). Paul also suggests that “[stories] establish an alternative feminist tradition – one that hadn’t been visible before” (Encyclopedia 103). Lyra’s mastery of storytelling might be, thus, apprehended as one of the feminine compensatory skills arisen from “an alternative feminist tradition”.

After negotiating their rights and honour, as soon as they are promised to be told each ghost’s story before the ghost is freed from the despair of that world, the harpies help Lyra and her companions find the way out. On the journey, Lyra’s life is saved by the harpy No-Name. With the deep gratitude, Lyra gives her the name “Gracious Wings” (AS 405). Within Lyra’s adventure in the world of dead, Lyra starts to appreciate even the creatures, who initially evoked fear and disgust. She could find the path to the harpies, acknowledge their rights and overcome her own fear. When saying goodbye to Gracious Wings, Lyra says: “And if I know you’re here, I shan’t be afraid” (AS 405).

The harpies, symbolizing a marginal minority, are given their rights in such a way that is not harmful to anybody else. When creating the characters of the rebel angels Balthamos and Baruch, Pullman is forthright about their sexual orientation and thus he has acknowledged the rights to another minority. Balthamos and Baruch accompany Will on his journey to save Lyra. Balthamos becomes Will’s and Lyra’s guardian after his partner’s death. The angels are introduced to be in deep love for each other. They are introduced as beings with fears, hopes and desires. Balthamos is human-like in his despair when he learns about Baruch’s death, so is he in his fear to fight as he is described to be “cowering against the wall of the cave, back in his angel form, trembling and whimpering” (AS 165). By letting the character of a male angel “tremble” and “whimper”, Pullman seems to break the gender stereotypes about masculinity. It is worth mentioning that both sexes are introduced in the kind of angels.

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13 In an online article “Driven by daemons” its author quotes Philip Pullman who speaks about the two gay angels: “they love each other, I have no idea of their sexual orientation” (Sally Vincent). By these words Pullman emphasizes the role of love over the role of sex.
When explaining about the first angels, Balthamos says: “The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was first of all. He told those who came after him that he had created them, but it was a lie. One of those who came later was wiser than he was, and she found out the truth, so he banished her” (AS 33 – 34, my emphasis). Not only is it suggested that there are both male and female angels and that they were originated from Dust, the particles of consciousness. But it is important to consider the idea of the first rebel angel (traditionally called Lucifer or Satan), who is, according to Balthamos’ explanation, a female who was “wiser” than the Authority.

Similarly breaking stereotypes is Pullman’s implementing the characters of Chevalier Tyalis and Lady Salmakia. They belong among the author’s most original creatures. Their kind share common characteristics: “the Gallivespians had few of the qualities of good spies, except, of course, their exceptional smallness: they were so proud and touchy that they would never have remained inconspicuous if they had been of Lord Asriel’s size” (AS 60). Despite their smallness, they can afford to be “proud and touchy” because the Gallivespians are “armed with poisonous sting in the spurs of [their] heels” (AS 60). Their poisonous sting along with their ability to communicate with one another by using the lodestone resonator and move quickly on their dragonflies make them dangerous enemies but helpful companions. Chevalier Tyalis and Lady Salmakia are first introduced as Lord Asriel’s spies, but later on they become valuable helpers for Lyra and Will as they accompany them to the world of dead and use all their courage and strength to protect the children. On their dragonflies they are able to look all around and find Lyra’s friend Roger among all the ghosts. It is Chevalier Tyalis who is not afraid to speak to the harpies about their rights and start negotiations with them. When watching him, “Lyra marvelled at the nerve of the little spy. How did he dare speak to these creatures as if he had the power to give them rights? […] And yet he stood, proud and fearless, making a bargain with them!” (AS 333). The pride and fearlessness are characteristic for the Gallivespians. With these qualities, despite their size, they are able to enforce respect from other races.

More than other breeds, the witches are representatives of both positive and negative characters in the story. Each of their different clans is independent. Claire Squires suggests that the witch clan “represents an all-female society” (Philip Pullman, Master Story-teller 75). They often choose a human husband, but, as Squires says, because of their longevity “the difficult nature of female witch and human male sexual relation is evident” (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 76). Despite their wisdom and
experience gained through their long lives, they take humans as equal. They keep their Consul in the human world and some of the clans are willing to fight at Lord Asriel’s side in his battle against the Authority. For Lyra the clan of Serafina Pekkala, especially their leader, represents protection and also a picture of female sexuality. It is Serafina herself who first explains Lyra about love for men and marriage. Perhaps it is also her story which later helps Lyra with her own sexual awakening. She tells her:

And there are men we take for lovers and husbands. You are so young, Lyra, too young to understand this, but I shall tell you anyway and you’ll understand it later: men pass in front of our eyes like butterflies, creatures of brief season. We love them; they are brave, proud, beautiful, clever; and they die almost at once. They die so soon that our hearts are continually racked with pain. We bear their children, who are witches if they are female, human if not… (NL 314)

In her words Serafina expresses her ability to love and feel the pain caused by the loss of love but she also admits her strength to overcome the pain and, most strikingly, to carry her independence. It might be the example of a witch’s life which helps Lyra bear her separation from Will at the end of the story.

3.4 Plunge into unconscious

It can be argued that plunge into unconscious is a crucial part of the hero’s quest for maturity. In her text “A Feminist Study of Mythic Structures” Anita Moss claims that “most often the youthful protagonist progresses from innocence to experience after having endured a period of initiation” (Children’s Literature Association Quarterly). Such period of initiation is usually connected with some kind of deadly experience. Both Harry and Lyra have to go through some pain before they can actually reach their maturity. Both Rowling and Pullman have chosen the concept of death and mortality to be the means of their protagonists’ maturation. While Harry is willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the others, Lyra sets off to the world of dead with the intention to help her dead friend and come back. Although this can be apprehended as more practical, or even earthbound, Lyra’s journey is not of the less importance than that of Harry. As a traditional hero, Harry undergoes the last of his adventures on his own, whereas Lyra is accompanied with her friend Will and the Gallivespians. Nevertheless, she has to live through the moment of the peril danger, when she is seemingly sure to die, alone.
3.4.1 Harry meeting death

The theme of death and immortality seems to be one of the central issues of the *Harry Potter* series. Children find this theme fascinating, probably even more because it is often tabooed. As a very young child, Harry has to cope with the death of his parents, later he learns that they were murdered. During his adolescence he must put up with a great number of deaths. He witnesses murder of Cedric Diggory, his companion in the Triwizard Tournament. Soon after he gets to know his godfather and is enabled to establish a relationship with him, Sirius Black dies, in front of Harry’s eyes again. Probably the worst experience for Harry is to witness the murder of the Hogwarts headmaster, Albus Dumbledore.

Not surprisingly, after all the murders that Harry has witnessed, he is amazed by the idea of defeating death. In the legend about the Peverell brothers Harry learns about Hallows, presents given to the brothers by Death. Harry is staggered by the idea at first. It is so striking that it almost misguides him from the quest for Horcruxes which must be destroyed in order to defeat Voldemort. It is paradoxically another death which shows Harry the right journey designed for him by Dumbledore. Dobby’s bravery and self-sacrifice compel Harry to stop and to decide not to act: “The enormity of his decision not to race Voldemort to the wand still scared Harry. He could not remember, ever before, choosing not to act” (HPDH 406; emphasis Rowling’s). Despite what Harry thinks in this extract, it can be argued that his choices to act have been often influenced by the intentions of his mentor.

As it has already been suggested, all of Harry’s adventures are somehow designed for him. Harry can be actually perceived as a kind of passive hero. According to Farah Medlesohn’s essay “Crowning the King”: “Potter does not search out trouble, nor does he willingly enter upon quests, yet he is presented at various times as a shining prince” (*The Ivory Tower* 165). This opinion is more or less true during the whole series. Harry’s path is carefully planned and controlled by his guides, Dumbledore and Snape. Harry is led by Albus Dumbledore even after the headmaster’s death. Thanks to the magical Pensieve, Harry is enabled to watch Professor Snape’s memories in which he finds the explanation of the things so-far mysterious as well as the solution of the last encounter with the evil Voldemort. With strong emotions he listens to the conversation between Snape and Dumbledore about him being Voldemort’s seventh Horcrux. As soon as he learns the truth, Harry thinks: “Dumbledore’s betrayal was almost nothing. Of course there had been a bigger plan; Harry had simply been too foolish to see it, he
realised that now. He had never questioned his own assumption that Dumbledore wanted him alive” (HPDH 555). At the end of his journey, Harry is willing to believe in “Dumbledore’s betrayal” as he assumes that the headmaster’s plans for the greater good did not consider a human’s life as important. This last lesson is to be taught in Harry’s seeming death. Rowling has named this state of mind “Kings Cross” (HPDH 565). Somewhere in between death and life Harry meets his wise mentor and discusses all the matters with him. He is given the final explanation of the issues of life and death, of love and hatred and not least, of power. Another explanation is also possible. It can be argued that this dialogue is led between Harry and Dumbledore only seemingly. The most crucial questions might be answered by the boy himself. The point of maturation is thus the point when Harry finds all the answers within himself. The evidence for this argument might be Dumbledore’s last words to Harry: “Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?” (HPDH 579).

3.4.2 Lyra in the world of dead

It is Lyra’s independent choice to enter the underworld. She is aware of the dangers of such journey as well as of the necessity to undergo them in order to pay her debt to Roger, her friend killed by Lord Asriel. Lyra interprets his death as her betrayal of him. To enter the world of dead she must commit treason again. Since it is impossible to enter the world with her daemon, she must abandon Pantalaimon at the border. Lyra can feel the separation as physical pain, so can Will, who has not been aware of his own daemon by that moment. This moment of betrayal might be interpreted as Lyra’s plunge into unconsciousness for she leaves a part of herself, her soul, behind. Both of Lyra’s betrayals have been foreseen at the beginning of the trilogy by the Master of Jordan: “she will be the betrayer, and the experience will be terrible. She mustn’t know that, of course…” (NL 33; emphasis Pullman’s). As it has been foretold, this experience is “terrible” for Lyra and it is only the beginning of the most difficult part of her journey.

By the entry into the underworld, Lyra meets the harpy No-Name who reveals the liar in her. This is another shaking moment for Lyra’s personality. Weakened by the loss of her daemon, she starts doubting the skills closest to her nature. They are the skills of inventing stories and storytelling. Once the Gallivespian friends find Roger among the ghosts and Lyra is enabled to apologize (even though Roger himself feels guilty), she gains back some of her courage and certitude. When she is asked again to tell stories, she recalls what she knows best - the streets of Oxford, and she starts talking
about the world of her childhood in details. In the world of dead Lyra is telling stories of her childhood and all the dead and the harpies are listening to her. It can be suggested that this point of narration symbolizes Lyra’s farewell to her childhood.

On the journey to liberate the dead, at one moment Lyra feels like a careless child once again. The light-heartedness is almost mortal for her as she slides on the stones and almost falls over the edge into an abyss. At this very moment Lyra had to experience that “her whole being was a vortex of roaring fear” (AS 378). Such mortal danger and the fear for life led Lyra to the final phase of her quest.

3.5 Integration with society and defining one's identity

3.5.1 Making choices

I have already suggested that both the Harry Potter series and His Dark Materials are the stories of various genres. Besides the most obvious ones – the fantasy story and the adventurous story, both of them include the coming-of-age story. Thus a quest for independence and maturity can be found in both series. The stories include looking for the characters' identity and asking the question “Who am I?” or rather “Who do I choose to be?”. Both Rowling and Pullman depict choices as crucial for their characters' quests. In The Chamber of Secrets Dumbledore reveals to young Harry Potter: “It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities” (HPCS 245). Dumbledore emphasises the importance of choosing one’s acts as opposed to innate abilities. He also wants to calm down Harry's fear of his own nature. Harry had learned that his abilities are comparable to those owned by the evil wizards, heirs of Slytherin, and it makes him dubious about his place at Hogwarts. His school means the whole world for Harry. Having been directed on his journey, Harry makes the right choices to emphasize and strengthen his position of “the chosen one”. The most difficult choice seems to be Harry's decision not to go after the Deathly Hallows but to continue in the path that Dumbledore had designed for him and his friends – the quest for Voldemort's Horcruxes. During his state of unconscious, at his imaginary meeting with Dumbledore, the issues of choices are discussed again as Harry has to decide whether to die or to go back to life meaning another struggle with evil. Again it is Dumbledore who suggests what should be done. Harry obeys although he thinks that “it was warm and light and peaceful here, and he knew that he was heading back to pain and the fear of more loss” (HPDH 579). This choice to attempt to overcome evil leads Harry to the last direct encounter with Voldemort. For some good luck and trickery but mainly for Harry's
unceasing bravery, Voldemort is defeated. But before that he learns that Dumbledore “chose his own manner of dying, chose it months before he died, arranged the whole thing…” (HPDH 593). Voldemort is apprised of his blindness caused by the false feeling of the overall power. The theme of personal choice is emphasized in this way even during the last battle scene. Voldemort's character can be perceived as paradoxically immature in comparison with much younger but wiser Harry. During his speech to Voldemort Harry proves that he has gained maturity by going through the adventures but mainly thanks to his mentor, Albus Dumbledore.

In His Dark Materials choices are pivotal for Lyra and Will's story as well as for the constructing of the narrative itself. In the trilogy Pullman has created more universes, some of which are similar to ours but some are absolutely different. Claire Squires says that the universes can be seen as canvas for Lyra and Will's adventures but also as a literary metaphor of the scientific notion of “phase space”\(^\text{14}\) (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 53). The idea of decisions not taken and choices not made has been an inspiration for many writers – apart from Robert Frost quoted by Squires, there is for example Iva Pekárková\(^\text{15}\) in Gimme the Money who was attracted by the idea of various possibilities ruined by our decisions. Pekárková's heroine reconsiders all her “minor decisions, forming a Gordian knot of possibilities” and her thoughts are described as follows:

Gin was painfully aware that with every YES she loses a NO, with every RIGHT TURN she loses a LEFT TURN or KEEP GOING STRAIGHT, that behind every chance there is a whole mob of other chances hiding, chances that had escaped Gin forever” (Gimme the money 63; emphasis Pekárková's).

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\(^\text{14}\) Philip Pullman explains that “phase space is a term from dynamics, and it refers to the untrackable complexity of changing systems. It's the notional space which contains not just the actual consequences of the present moment, but all the possible consequences” (qtd. in Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 53).

\(^\text{15}\) Iva Pekárková is a Czech postmodern writer who “has gained a considerable reputation at home and abroad” and whose “heroines seek comfort as well as adventure in exploring 'the whole big world', which makes their own troubles and pains seem suddenly quite small” (according to Věra Eliášová and Simona Fojtová in an interview with Iva Pekárková).
Pullman himself describes this idea in the scene in which Will, accompanied by the angels Balthamos and Baruch, is thinking over his choices:

When you choose one way out of many, all the ways you don't take are snuffed out like candle, as if they'd never existed. At the moment all Will's choices existed at once. But to keep them all in existence meant doing nothing. He had to choose, after all. (AS 14 – 15)

Will, unable to decide for a moment, reconsiders all his possibilities. He is, however, strong enough to accept the necessity of making his choice. It is possible to see different universes as results of various possibilities of our decisions. Some worlds – like Will's and Lyra's Oxfords – can even be seen “like transparent images on two sheets of film being moved closer and closer until they merged; although they would never truly touch” (AS 532 – 533). This point made by the female angel Xaphania leads Lyra and Will to their idea to go to Botanical Garden in their worlds every year at the same time and sit on the exact bench and “pretend [they] were close again” (AS 537).

Choices accompany Lyra and Will throughout their entire journey. From the first choice made by young Lyra in the Retiring Room and Will's choice to look for his father it is obvious that taking decisions is an important theme in His Dark Materials. When Lyra decides to help her friend Roger in the underworld, she must also experience the pain caused by her decision as she has to abandon her daemon at the entry to the world of dead. Will's decisions are similarly important – he decides to save Lyra from Mrs Coulter's cave and to accompany her to the underworld.

Will and Lyra's relationship can be apprehended as a clear example of equality of a relationship of two people. Initially, Lyra and Will's companionship might be perceived as purely coincidental but later on they become a team. Lyra's strength of reading the Alethiometer is well-balanced by Will's skill and the power of the Subtle Knife. Two different tools of equal power given to both Lyra and Will can be seen as a metaphor for the equality of their relationship. Gradually, the intimacy of their talks grows up during their journey. The shared ideas about their mothers or Lyra's sincere description of her state of mind while working with the Alethiometer make the two friends get psychically closer to each other. The adventures and dangers themselves also conclude in a mutually close relationship.

Lyra's daemon Pantalaimon and Will's Kirjava have to make a choice too. After their lonely wanderings through all various worlds, they find out what Lyra and Will must do to renew the equilibrium. Although this decision is painful for them, they are
aware of its necessity and they are told by the witch Serafina Pekkala: “I know that you and Lyra and Will are going to think hard and painfully, and I know you will make the best choice. But it is yours to make, and no one else's” (AS 503). In Serafina's words the importance of making one's own choices is connected to other crucial prerequisites for gaining maturity. They are independence and selflessness.

3.5.2 Selflessness

Another feature shared by Rowling and Pullman is the emphasis of selflessness for integrating with the society. While Harry is depicted as a selfless person from the very beginning, he does not seem to look for his personal profit or prize and this selflessness comes as his main feature in every instalment of the series, the child Lyra is described as a more trustworthy character. At the beginning of her story, she behaves selfishly in some situations; such description is closer to real life. Children usually perceive themselves as the centre of the universe and they are very often focused mainly on their interests. This child's selfishness is not a negative quality; it is typical for immature personalities. Lyra regards herself as the centre of the world during some of her adventures but she soon realises that there are also other people who she should care about. A clear example of such imbalance is her visit in the Retiring Room where she saves Lord Asriel's life after an argument with Pantalaimon. She must decide whether to stay hidden and not to say anything, thus selfishly saving her own neck, or warn Asriel overtly but also undergo the risk of punishment.

While Lyra sometimes forgets about the rest of the world because of her current interests (as she forgot about her friend Roger kidnapped by the Gobblers when she became excited about Mrs Coulter and the new opportunities which the lady opened for her), it does not happen to Harry. His selflessness stands out strikingly among all his friends and schoolmates in Hogwarts. In her essay “Harry Potter as Hero-in-Progress” Mary Pharr suggests that “by abusing Harry, [the Dursleys] predispose him to identify with the abused” (The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter 57). Harry's sympathy with all the creatures of both the wizarding and the Muggle world can be traced throughout all the books. It can be seen in Harry's approach towards Dobby the House-Elf or even the untrustworthy goblin Griphook. The goblin points out Harry's special treatment of “the others” when saying: “You dug the [Dobby’s] grave…You also rescued a goblin…you are a very odd wizard” (HPDH 393). Unlike the supercilious wizards, Harry as a
traditional hero appreciates other races in the magic world and this selfless attitude comes as an advantage on his journey.

Harry's lack of egocentrism is also acknowledged by Dumbledore in their final discussion. He tells his student about his family history and compares his own selfish goals to Harry's quest: “…but I was selfish, Harry, more selfish than you, who are a remarkably selfless person, could possibly imagine” (HPDH 573). Harry's selflessness is connected by his willingness to self-sacrifice for the good of the others.

A selfless decision is also made by Lyra and Will but it is not a sacrificing decision. At this point of the narrative Pullman suggests that it is necessary to keep to one's own place in the world. To restore a natural order in all the universes of the trilogy and to find their true place in the world, the main protagonists have to separate from each other and destroy the only tool that may enable them to see each other in the future – the Subtle Knife. Before their final choice, they are told about different universes by Will's father's ghost in the underworld: “We can travel, if there are openings into the other worlds, but we can only live in our own…we have to build the republic of heaven where we are, because for us there is no elsewhere” (AS 382). John Parry explains that escape is not a solution for life. He insists on keeping to one's own world. In the narrative this necessity is dramatized by John's own experience. Unable to find the window leading back to his home universe, he had to stay in Lyra's world but got terminally ill within ten years. His heart disease is an obvious metaphor for his broken heart as he was forced to live in a different world than he belonged to without his beloved wife and son Will.

Thus, it can be argued that Lyra is more prone to development when compared to Harry Potter. She starts out as childishly selfish, but ends as a mature, selfless person but there is not much of individual development which can be traced in the Harry Potter series.

### 3.5.3 Paradise Lost for teenagers

Lyra and Will's separation appears to be even more painful because their friendship has broken out into the first love. They find the depth of the feelings for each other only after listening to Mary Malone's story about her own first love. Mary's narration about her first innocent experience with a boy awakens Lyra's feelings for Will. On the following morning they set off to look for their lost daemons. Exhausted by walking, the two children have a rest near a stream and have something to eat. Lyra
offers Will some red fruit: “And she lifted the fruit gently to his mouth. She could see from his eyes that he knew exactly what she meant, and that he was too joyful to speak” (AS 492). Similarly to Eve in the Garden of Eden, Lyra offers Will the fruit as a metaphor of the fruit of consciousness and he accepts “joyfully”. Then they share their love and “around them there was nothing but silence, as if all the world were holding its breath” (AS 492). Claire Squires describes this scene as “a celebration of love and adolescent sexuality” (Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller 78). Their love has an enormous impact on the flow of Dust. While they are coming back to the mulefa village, Mary Malone is watching them and she does not need her amber spyglass any longer to see that “they would seem to be made of living gold…the Dust pouring down from the stars had found a living home again, and these children-no-longer-children, saturated with love, were the cause of it all” (AS 497). Even though Pullman is very open about many questions related to religion, politics, violence and sex, the physical love between Lyra and Will is not described in details. It can be only guessed whether they became lovers.

Nevertheless, what is emphasized in the trilogy is the importance of human body. When talking about the Catholic idea of the three parts of a human, Will points out:”...the best part is the body” (AS 463). Another example of Pullman's emphasis of the sensual part of a human is Mary's experience. While she was watching the Dust on top of her tree, she reached a strange state of mind. Her soul lost the contact with her body and she realised that she was flying away from her body with the tide of Dust. Longing to get back to her physical self, she recalls a number of sensual memories, “tasting an iced Margarita…, sitting under a lemon tree…, scraping the frost off the windscreen of her car...” (AS 386). These memories help Mary remember what it is like to have a body and she is able to change the direction of herself, the particles of Dust carry her back. When she finally reaches her body, she is “suffused with a deep slow ecstasy at being one with her body” (AS 386).

As I have suggested in the chapter about Philip Pullman's biography, in the Acknowledgements in The Amber Spyglass he has openly expressed the strong intertextuality of the trilogy. His great ambition was to retell the story of John Milton's Paradise Lost in the story of His Dark Materials. In the same chapter I also pointed out that he is a skilful storyteller and storytelling has also become one of the major themes of the trilogy. Telling stories comes back in a closed circle – starting from Lyra's great ability of inventing stories, even lying, through which she was able to get out of some
dangerous situations and also to win a kingdom for her friend, Iorek Byrnison. The
circle continues to Will's remembrances of his mother “singing nursery rhymes, telling
him stories, and as long as her dear voice was there, he knew he was safe” (AS 194). Will's happy memories are in sharp contrast with those of Lyra who “had never been
read in bed; no one had told her stories or sung nursery rhymes with her” (AS 292).
Perhaps the lack of more love and care during her childhood had made Lyra a liar.
Later, when learning more about life, love and pain – having the part of herself lost at
the entry to the underworld, she understood more. She also had to go through another
painful experience in the underworld and her attitude to storytelling has changed thanks
to the Harpies. Only then she could recognise the importance of truth telling. In that
world Lyra teaches the dead how to retell the stories of their lives to the Harpies. When
the souls are liberated in the world of the mulefa, the dead tell Mary about the Harpies
and how to feed them: “Tell them stories… But they need the truth” (AS 455). Mary
gets inspired and tells her true life and love story to Lyra and Will. Thus the circle
becomes closed, stories and truth telling help Lyra understand herself.

3.5.4 Reversed endings
Quite paradoxically, in the Harry Potter series Rowling, despite being a female author,
keeps to the pattern of the typical archetypal quest ending, whereas Pullman makes the
conclusion of His Dark Materials trilogy much more feministic. Following the
traditional end in the series, Rowling thus acknowledges the only possible solution,
while Pullman offers more versions of the ending of Lyra's quest.

Despite their deep love, Will and Lyra make the most difficult choice of their
lives and get separated. They learn that every window which has been opened between
the worlds creates a Spectre. Spectres are beings that attack only adults as they are fed
by consciousness. In this way they actually cause the imbalance of the worlds and the
tide of Dust that is flowing away from worlds. The cause of Spectres' emerging is the
invention of the Subtle Knife. That is why they decide to destroy the knife which really
acts on its own as Will had been warned by the bear king Iorek Byrnison. There is
another interesting point made by Pullman in his idea of Spectres. By the story about
creating the Subtle Knife, which originated in the world of Cittagazze, the author of the
trilogy seems to suggest that human images of themselves as masters of the universe is
not only wrong, it is by far the most dangerous idea that can emerge. The invention of
the Subtle Knife led the world of Cittagazze into the downfall. The inhabitants of that
world stopped producing and used the knife to enrich themselves only by stealing various goods from other worlds. There is a big difference between that world full of dangerous Spectres and desperate children abandoned by their indifferent adults and the world of the hard-working mulefa people who care for each other as well as for their environment and who brought Mary Malone to the utter amazement. Not surprisingly at all, Lyra and Will paradise-like love story takes place in the mulefa world, the atmosphere of which is very close to that of the Garden of Eden.

The choice that must be made by the two young adults lead them to their original worlds, where their daemons belong. Although humans cannot see their daemons in Mary and Will's world, they both have gained the ability to see them. I believe this to be their greatest reward. Thus, the adventure was not only Lyra and Will's maturity quest. It was also Mary's quest for further knowledge. It can be argued that by her story the author points out the necessity of the life-lasting quest for knowledge and leaning more about world and one's self. Mary offers Will her help and adult guidance in taking care of his mother and solving the case of his escape. Will comes back to his world and he also comes back to the responsibility for his ill mother.

Especially by Mary's story, *His Dark Materials* trilogy approaches the new trend in children's literature and the children's literature criticism. The notion of the identity quest becomes more controversial. According to Lissa Paul's text “Feminism revisited”, it could be doubted “that there was such a thing as a stable identity” (*Understanding Children's Literature* 124). The pressures on our lives coming from family and friends, gender or class along with our self-development cause the reconsideration of our identities and their continuous changing. Mary's finding new sides of her identity can be predominantly seen in her new ability to see her daemon, a metaphor for a significant part of her personality.

Lyra's return home to the Jordan College symbolizes her new life goal. She decides to regain the skill of reading the Alethiometer. As a metaphor of a navigating device, she compares her lost ability with not knowing what to do with her life: “Well, suddenly finding I've got the whole life to live, but no…no idea what to do with it, well, it's like having the alethiometer but no idea how to read it” (AS 543). Motivated by the alethiometer, Lyra starts thinking about her future, which also can be perceived as a kind of mature approach. Another sign of this is her acceptance of systematic institutional education and books. She recognizes her possibilities to live with her friends in their home-lands but she says: “I'm not a bear and I'm not a witch, so I
wouldn't really fit in there, much as I love them” (AS 544). By this point Lyra returns to John Parry's advice given to her and Will in the underworld. In Jordan as her home and St Sophia's as her school, Lyra decides to build “the republic of heaven” (AS 548).

It can be argued that the ending of the trilogy is quite ambiguous. There is not a happy ending for Lyra and Will's love but there is a happy ending for them as individuals. Although they arrange their imaginary meetings in the Botanical Garden, Lyra also suggests: “if we meet someone that we like, and if we marry them, then we must be good to them, and not make comparisons all the time and wish we were married to each other instead…” (AS 537). This suggestion shows Lyra's maturity because she accepts the possibilities of both her and Will's further development and change of mind. She also points out the necessity of fair treating their future partners as she emphasizes “not comparing” them with the first love. At the same time both characters claim their everlasting love for each other. Will's true feelings for Lyra appear when he is to break the Subtle Knife. When he had broken it for the first time unintentionally, it had been the image of his mother which had caused his loss of concentration. When he intended to break the knife for the second time, it was the thought of Lyra which made “the knife shattered and the blade fell in pieces to the ground” (AS 540). Shattering of the Knife meant shattering of all possibilities for Will and Lyra to reunite.

It is possible to point out that Pullman has become much more feminist in His Dark Materials trilogy than Rowling in the Harry Potter series. Pullman gives his characters equal rights and opportunities. It can be suggested that all the characters of the trilogy are provided with liberation and autonomy. This is true for both the main protagonists and the side characters, e.g. the spirits of the dead in the underworld. While Pullman gives the female character the right to make her own decisions and to have her free will as well as the responsibility connected to her freedom, the stories about Harry Potter are concluded in a very stereotypical way. Lyra, without being denied the possibility to love, is to start her life educating herself, having her motivation and goal in self-development, whereas after his final encounter with Voldemort Harry's only path to the adulthood is shown through marriage and raising children. Paradoxically enough, Lyra as a female character is given more freedom than Harry, more similar to the princesses of traditional fairy-tales, living happily ever after. At the conclusion of the Harry Potter series the image of a happy couple accompanying their children to the Hogwarts Express on the first school day and meeting their family and friends at the station is rather too commercial-like. It should be admitted that Rowling has
implemented a great number of stereotypes in her narrative. Reading the *Harry Potter* series might be compared to reading a familiar story over again. Although there are a few surprising moments, on the whole the story-line is quite predictable. The author conforms to the existing hierarchy in the society and thus she might be perceived as approving it. She gives very little power to women and her female characters are depicted very stereotypically. In the HP series the marginalized groups remain aside; they are still treated as “the others”, whereas in Pullman's universes there is not an evidence of “the others”. He has created a great number of various races and fantasy beings but they are all treated as equals. In his interview for a website kidsreads.com Pullman overtly acknowledges the intentional creating characters who cannot be perceived stereotypically good or bad. He points out that such characters are untrustworthy because in real life nobody is purely good or purely evil. He also explains that “a moral story is not one where the good guys do good things and the bad ones do bad things; it's one in which people like ourselves do things, or are tempted, and then have to deal with the consequences” (“An interview with Philip Pullman”).
4. Conclusion

In my thesis I have focused on the coming-of-age novels within adventure stories. Going through an adventure implies a quest for identity, leading the main character to maturity and independence. I have summarized and evaluated the progress towards maturity through the adventures of the main protagonists of two bestselling world-renowned series. They were both originally intended as literature for children and young adults but their fame and importance have gone beyond such narrow limits and they belong among those books which have caused strict literary distinctions to be blurred. As both Rowling's and Pullman's works have exceeded their frame of reference, they have reached the interest of the readers of all ages. In connection with the commercial success of these books, I have referred to the growing popularity of books for children, aroused by media, the Internet and not least the number of literary awards. Prize-winning books enjoy large print runs and are expected to become bestsellers.

Considering the goals of children's literature and defining its characteristic features has made an important part of my thesis. Although children's literature was marginalized in the past, this approach has changed. New approaches in literary criticism show resistance to the notion of the universal child. Asking new, especially feminist questions has become critics' main focus. Even though children's literature is written for a specific target group, it can be argued that its goal is the same as in the literature for adults: to create a protagonist as a hero. Furthermore, I have shown some similarities between children's literature and women's literature as there are similarities in perception of these groups, which have been regarded as marginal. The images of entrapment revealed by feminist critics fit both children's and women's stories. I have described an example of such entrapment in the analysis of His Dark Materials. In this particular example Lyra, the main protagonist of the trilogy, is not satisfied with such treatment, she rejects it and follows her own ambitions and goals.

By comparing the phenomenon of Harry Potter with the less famous but more appreciated trilogy His Dark Materials I have looked at how adventure can be perceived from the gender perspective. Harry Potter represents a traditional male hero and is compared to Pullman's character of Lyra Belacqua as a female hero. I have made an attempt to find some evidence of and demonstrate the still existing differences between a male and a female hero, especially regarding their quest for maturity through adventures. As the female quest differs from that of a male hero, it is impossible to use a
male-quest pattern in a story with a female protagonist because it would make her untrustworthy. For the description of the quest I have used the five-phase pattern by Annis Pratt, which I have found more helpful for analyzing female heroes than the patterns of male quests created by Joseph Campbell, C.G. Jung or Northrop Frye.

When considering the differences between the typical adolescent struggle for independence and the orphan's identity quest, it is necessary to bear in mind that the latter is more specific because of the parental absence. Traditionally in literature, they are replaced by a surrogate parental figure or a mentor. That is why I have analyzed the role of parents, mentors, friends and other companions in both *Harry Potter* series and *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

My aim was to argue that access to adventure itself is much more complicated for a female hero. I have suggested that a male protagonist is more privileged in his access to adventures, and thus to experience, whereas a female protagonist has to overcome a lot of obstacles to achieve the same opportunity to gain experience. It was also my aim to describe and analyze why it is so complicated for a female hero to access adventure, when she finally reaches the goal and which details and qualities are necessary to lead her to adventure. Traditionally, female characters are not described as having the same grand qualities such as courage, honesty and fairness, which are usually attributed to male characters. Male heroes often fight for noble goals and reach their victory through fair fight. However, female protagonists are stereotypically depicted as fighting just for survival and deceit is their traditional survival tactic. Lyra is sometimes forced to use some kind of deceit but very often she also uses flexibility and adaptability as the main means of reaching her goals. I have argued that adaptability and flexibility are typical female abilities necessary for them to succeed. I understand adaptability to be the art of finding compromise but not losing one's own direction and the flexibility to remain open to being influenced and educated, bearing in mind one's own goals and needs rather than being stuck in one's routines.

I have defined the concept of “adventure” and concluded that for analyzing adventure stories as identity quests the meaning of “experience” within the concept should be considered crucial. I have also looked at the concept of “gender” and drawn attention to the depiction of male and female protagonists in children's literature where their portrayals usually reflect the stereotypes of masculine and feminine roles. Nevertheless, it is possible to find some exceptions, such as Pullman's Lyra, who is depicted as active and independent.
I have shown that despite the relative ease of his access to adventure, when compared to Pullman's heroine, Harry Potter can be seen as a kind of a passive hero, whose path is carefully controlled by his mentors and who is driven mainly by circumstances. Although his access to adventure is quite easy, he is given less freedom in the end. It is possible to perceive him as a passive character, who is empowered by the knowledge and skills of the others but finally gets the reward himself. His passivity is in sharp contrast with Lyra's activity. I have suggested that Rowling's stories show the overall power of destiny and people's lives being determined by a kind of superior force. While her hero's journey is planned by someone else than him – which is why he seems passive - Pullman emphasizes the strength of human will. His character's freedom is closely connected to the idea of responsibility for her acts. In spite of the number of obstacles that she has to overcome, Lyra is given more freedom because her path is not controlled by other people. Consequently, she also makes more mistakes, even betrayals, than Harry but is enabled to retrieve her mistakes and learn from them.

As Lyra is given more freedom and the right to make her own decisions, she might be apprehended as a new female hero. I have explained the possibility of seeing the difference between the concepts of the old female hero and the new female hero. The old female hero's journey for identity was usually concluded by a wedding. Typically, she found herself entrapped in a marriage and her own goals and needs were subjugated by the goals and needs of her husband. I have suggested that Lyra can be seen as an example of the new female hero, who is aware of her rights as well as her responsibilities. The concept of the new female hero evokes the concept of equality.

Equality is also an important theme of the story of *His Dark Materials*. While Pullman has created his worlds of equality where armoured bears, the very little but proud breed of Gallivespians or homosexual angels are treated as equal as humans, Rowling keeps to the stereotypes, to the traditional hierarchy, but also to gender and racial prejudices in which “the others” are still marginalized and the role of the female characters is minimized in the adventures themselves, although they play a significant role in leading the male characters towards the adventures.

The common feature for both *Harry Potter series* and *His Dark Materials* is the emphasis of selflessness as the sign of maturity. While Rowling sees selflessness in willingness to self-sacrifice, Pullman rejects this idea as well as the idea of any external authority. He proposes that everyone should be responsible for their “republic of heaven” consciously. He emphasizes the strength of the will of the individual as well as
their responsibility in making decisions and dealing with the consequences of their acts. Both Rowling and Pullman depict choices as crucial for their characters' quests. Still, even in his choices Harry seems to be led by his mentors or companions. Lyra, on the other hand, has to make her choices led first only by the intuition, later by her experience and her newly formed responsibility.

Rowling's tendency to keep to stereotypes is also evident at the end of the *Harry Potter* series. The series is concluded by Harry's overcoming the evil and “living happily ever after“. The conclusion of *His Dark Materials* is much closer to the postmodern style of writing because the author does not give a definite solution and the ending of the trilogy can be perceived as ambiguous. Since there is not a happy ending for the pair of the main protagonists but there is a happy ending for them as individuals, the final of the trilogy expresses the strong ideas of the author.
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Dictionaries


Resume

The diploma thesis is designed as a comparative analysis of two quests for maturity and independence. It focuses on the coming-of-age novels within J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

It looks at how adventure can be perceived from the gender perspective as it compares the quest of a male character, represented by Rowling's Harry Potter and that of a female character, represented by Pullman's Lyra Belacqua. The main argument draws on the assumption that there are still differences between a male and a female hero, especially regarding their quest for maturity through adventures.

The main body of the thesis consists of three chapters. The first one gives theoretical background, in which the goals and characteristic features of children's literature as well as the concepts of adventure and gender are explained. It also explains the differences between various kinds of quests. It suggests the concept of new female hero comparing it with the old type of a woman character. The second chapter focuses on the analysis of Harry's and Lyra's quests, using Annis Pratt’s idea of a five-phase pattern. The final chapter summarizes and generalizes the main arguments of the thesis. It points out the similarities and stresses the differences between the analysed literary works.
Resumé

Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na srovnání dvou příběhů hledání dospělosti a nezávislosti. Zabývá se příběhy dospívání v sérii o Harry Potterovi spisovatelky J. K. Rowlingové a v trilogy Philipa Pullmana *Jeho temné esence*.
