

Univerzita Karlova v Praze
Pedagogická fakulta

**Cultural, religious and philosophical references
in Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass***

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Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury
Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Mark Robert Farrell, B.A.
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KATEDRA (ÚSTAV) Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

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ABSTRAKT: Cílem této práce je rozbor knihy Jantarový dalekohled od Philipa Pullmana. Kniha se řadí k dětské literatuře, avšak mnohé dějové linie, postavy, příběhy a myšlenky jsou odkazem na klasická díla světové literatury, filosofické myšlenkové proudy a kulturní či náboženské reálie. V praktické části této práce budu jednotlivé odkazy rozebírat a hledat paralely ve fantastickém světě, popsaném v knize, s příběhy a událostmi z oblasti literatury a světové historie.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA: náboženství, věda, prvotní hřích, vědomí, poznání

TITLE: Cultural, religious and philosophical references in Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass*

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this study is to analyse the book *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman. The book belongs to children's literature, but many story lines, characters, stories, and ideas are referring to the classic works of world literature, philosophical schools of thought and cultural and religious realities. In the practical part I will discuss the various links and search for parallels in fanciful world described in the book with stories and events from the area of literature and world history.

KEYWORDS: religion, science, original sin, consciousness, knowledge

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1. Introduction:

The topic of the work was chosen mainly due to the complexity of themes which the book in question deals with. The ability of incorporating questions of religion, world's history and philosophical thoughts into the fictional story, which is gripping for children as well as for adults, represents the peak of the craft of writing. Creating a work of fiction within these contours requires broad knowledge in various areas. In the thesis, I would like to apply the knowledge obtained in both branches of study (English language and literature and Social sciences) and interconnect them. The crucial aim of the thesis is to prove that Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass* is not only a literature for children but can be viewed as a more complex work which can appeal to wider audience.

2. Theoretical part

2.1. Philip Pullman

Philip Pullman is one of the most famous British writers of children's literature. Among his most famous works belongs the quartet about *Sally Lockhart*, *Grimm Tales: For Young and Old* and of course *His Dark Materials* trilogy. The author puts many autobiographical features in this trilogy, of which also *The Amber Spyglass* is a part.

Philip Pullman was born on 19th October, 1946 in Norwich, England and spent his childhood travelling to many places all around the world thanks to his father's occupation as a Royal Air Force pilot. However, the journeys were taken without the presence of his father since Flight Lieutenant Alfred Pullman died in Kenya when his son was only 7 years old. Her mother re-married only one year after Alfred Pullman's death, but she kept on travelling with her son all around the world. He therefore could see many different countries, cultures and people which served him as an inspiration for various worlds in which the stories of his books are settled.

Another important location is Oxford from which the two main characters of the book *His Dark Materials* come. Pullman has been living there with his family since 1963 until present. Vivid descriptions of the city are provided in couple of chapters of the trilogy. Oxford, however, does not function only as the place where the stories are settled, the genius loci of the city influenced Pullman in many other aspects. It provided him the possibility of encountering some famous works of art, especially with the paintings and poets of William Blake who is an immense inspiration for *His Dark Materials* as well as for other Pullman's works. He published his first work in 1972 (*The Haunted Storm*) and continued to publish mainly books which have children as a primary audience. Since 1996 Pullman has been a full-time writer, before that he worked as a teacher.

Besides all this, there is one more relevant point of author's life that should be mentioned and it is his religious views. Philip Pullman is known for his atheistic attitude and refusal of the Church as an institution which is strongly reflected in *His Dark Materials*. His attitude towards religion is sometimes viewed as controversial.

Pullman, not only in his fictional worlds, challenges dogmas and everything that disguises itself as one hundred percent sure, truthful and undeniable. He believes that these are aspects of religion as well and that is why he is confronting in in his works of fiction. The thesis, therefore, focuses on Pullman's view of religion closely in its practical part.¹

¹ Facts in this part were obtained from the author's official website, Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature and in the comments presented in the trilogy *His Dark Materials* itself.

2.2. Bible and religion in children's literature

The Bible is in the Western culture the main literary source. One can easily find certain allusions (Paradise Lost by John Milton, A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters by Julian Barnes) where The Bible functions as a direct source of intertextuality as well as those where it operates as a remote source of inspiration (Animal Farm by George Orwell – The commandments of the ruling party). Cullinan and Person point out that: “The Bible's influence in literature can be illustrated in at least four distinct settings: (1) exact Biblical reprints and retellings; (2) Biblical quotes and references used in a story; (3) fictitious stories that are based on or relate to some aspect of the Bible; and (4) the Bible based holidays and other special events” (80).

However, The Scripture can be seen as a base for many books of the children literature as well. “Since the Bible has been retold more than any other book, it has influences authors and illustrators of children's literature for centuries. Many children's literary works are written with the assumption that children will already have some knowledge of Biblical history, characters, parables, incidents, poems, and proverbs and can, therefore, better understand the literary work” (Cullinan and Person 80).

The usual concept of God in children's literature is quite an expected one. God can be an almighty character, a traditionally viewed notion of a deity who another character of the book is communicating with (as for example in Are You There, God? It's me, Margaret). In the literature primarily for children, one can also distinguish among the fictional works which allude to the Scripture directly or more metaphorically. The former can be represented by The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis whereas the latter might be shown for example in Charlotte's Web by E.B. White. However, the notion of the divine character depicted in Pullman's work is radically different as will be discussed later in the thesis.

2.3. Philosophical background

Pullman's trilogy contains a number of direct or more hidden philosophical allusions. The author managed to incorporate into his novels some interesting philosophical notions which will be discussed in this chapter.

The most obvious philosophical concept that can be seen in the trilogy is the constant search for the origin of the world and of life as such (in the book the main protagonists search for the origin of Dust which is to be discussed in the practical part of this thesis). It has been an immemorial struggle of philosophers to search for the origin of things, for the origin of soul, or all the principles which keep us, as the humankind, living.

The Antic philosophers as the founders of philosophy as we know it today, turned away from the mythos and drew their attention to the search for the origin of all the abstract and concrete matters. "The first group of Presocratic philosophers were from Ionia. The Ionian philosophers sought the material principle (*arché*) of things, and the mode of their origin and disappearance" (Kirby). This approach is also incorporated into the characters of the trilogy. The fictional search for the origin of the Dust is a parallel to the search which was done by the Greek philosophers. When the Dust is mentioned and its different manifestation in different worlds one can see a similarity with the approach of Anaximander of Miletus (approximately 611 – 547) who, as the first writer of philosophy, assumed that: "the first principle is an undefined, unlimited substance (*to apeiron*) itself without qualities, out of which the primary opposites, hot and cold, moist and dry, became differentiated" (Kirby). Heraclitus of Ephesus designed a thought which also resembles the notion of the fictional Dust presented in the books. He believed that all things are in perpetual flux and that: "All things originated from fire, and return to it again by a never-resting process of development. The perpetual flux is structured by *logos* – which most basically means *word*, but can also designate *argument*, *logic*, or *reason* more generally. The *logos* which structures the human soul mirrors the *logos* which structures the ever-changing processes of the universe" (Kirby). The logic, or reason are also the characteristics which are incorporated in the Dust. When the secret of the Dust is partly revealed the reader can surmise that it really

symbolizes the free will, reason and logic. Very important notion mentioned in Heraclitus's reflection is also *flux*. The Dust is an everlastingly flowing mass which is starting to mysteriously disappear.

Philosophy is one of the basic grounds on which Pullman built his story. The Antic philosophy, however, is obviously not the only philosophical school which served as an inspiration for the fictional world. There are some philosophical movements that influenced the books more remarkably than the others, though. Another undeniable source, as far as philosophy is concerned, is the philosophy of humanism and enlightenment especially the English one.

English enlightenment is mainly represented by the approach commonly known as empiricism. It was mainly Roger Bacon who as the first one called for considering experience as the source of actual and real knowledge. Empiricism was an attack directed towards the ossified middle age scholastic. The similarity is quite straight forward in this case. The fictional Church represents the old-fashioned notion of the mentioned scholastic which does not want to open itself to any new ideas and especially those that represent free thinking. Even though the middle age scholastic has made an undeniable contribution to the development of philosophy and education there is one reproach that can be objected. Hans Joachim Störig points out that: "they believed in ghosts, demons or witches" (201). It was also an era of witch hunting and burning of women who allegedly formed an alliance with Satan. The witch hunting slowly stopped during enlightenment when philosophy focused more on the rational side of human than the religious one. Pullman's institutions, represented symbolically by the parents of the main character, resemble the two approaches greatly. Lyra's mother can be viewed then not only as a leading member of the Church but also as the embodiment of the middle age scholastic. On the other hand, humanism is symbolized by Lyra's father who devotes his life to eliminate the Church and set a new world order based on science, facts and industrial development.

Pullman's religious views are well known, therefore it is not a surprise that the book seems to be written in the favour of the latter approach. There were many geniuses operating in the age of enlightenment, one of those is undoubtedly the physicist Isaac Newton who "not only elaborated on the works of his predecessors but, above all,

greatly unified the ideas and approaches of his fellow scientists.” (Störig 263 as translated by Renáta Ježová).

Another important philosopher of enlightenment who can be seen as a great source of inspiration is John Locke. He promoted the idea of common sense being the most important approach to cognate things. Störig points out that: “The base of Locke’s reflections is the cognition that there should be an investigation of the abilities of reason, wits and sense prior to the philosophical thinking” (264). In other words, Locke’s questioning the capacity of human mind, whether it is capable of certain processes. He also proposes the idea that a person should scrutinize and deal with such notions and things which he or she is able to understand.

As the third philosopher/scientist, who influenced the trilogy in question greatly, should be mentioned David Hume. Störig argues that: “For Hume, as well as for almost all his contemporary thinkers who remembered religious wars and who had the development of natural and social sciences in front of their eyes, his main aim was to establish a safe base for human knowledge” (268). Religious wars, and the dogmatism of religion and the Church, is the main danger in the fictional world as well. Hume’s idea was not so aggressive but he also promoted the thought of focusing the energy on human minds and on their achievements rather than on an abstract concept of God.

3. Practical part

3.1. Plot of the book

The story starts in a fictional setting which is different from the real world especially in one particular aspect, which is, that every human has his or her demon (see above). The main protagonist Lyra overhears a conversation about the Dust and starts a voyage to search for its origin. During this journey she is, of course, as is common in the fictional world, accompanied by her demon.

She reaches the North where she meets many characters who play a key part in her task to discover the origin of the Dust. As she finds out here, with the Dust one is able to produce an immense amount of energy which can be used to open a way to a different world. This event is realized towards the end of the first book when Lyra travels through a gate to a new world.

In the book, Pullman operates with an idea that there is an infinite number of worlds existing next to each other (or within each other) and that each of these worlds have its specific notions. These fictional places then differ according to these notions.

In the beginning of the second book, Lyra enters the world, where, at the first sight, only children reside. She meets a boy named Will. He comes from the world which is a reflection of our real one which we know. Will's world represents more or less our reality. After many struggles Will becomes the bearer of a magical knife which opens gates to other worlds. They both return to Will's Oxford where they meet a physicist called Mary who searches for the origin of the Dust as well. Lyra is kidnapped by her mother in the end of the second book.

The third book starts with a revelation that Lyra is kept by her mother in a cave in Himalayas. Lyra is rescued by Will. Lyra's father, who is planning to kill God himself, is trying to find Will in order to capture the magic knife. The church, led by Lyra's mother, tries to find and kill Lyra because of the faith which has been predestined to her. She is supposed to commit the original sin and, therefore, recreate the origins of knowledge and free will. Lyra and Will wander through a number of worlds including the world of the dead or the world of creatures called Mulefa where

they meet Dr. Mary again. Together they discover the origin of the Dust and stop its leaking. Mary fulfils her faith (she was told that she will function as the Serpent) and shows the boy and the girl what it means to love, thus, fulfilling their destiny as well.

Very important aspects of all three books are the magical objects. In the second book, as mentioned above, Will is in the possession of a magical knife. The plot of the first book does not revolve only around the main protagonist Lyra but also around an object which she uses. The thing is an alethiometer or a golden compass. The compass is an extremely sophisticated gadget which one can use only after years of studying, however, Lyra has a natural gift to read the symbols is able to use it after a short while. The third book then centres around so called amber spyglass which Dr. Mary uses to see and analyse the Dust. All three objects, which are used by the main characters, are of use only when the holder is able to find a certain symbiosis between himself or herself and the object. The most important thing is to find a mind balance, a certain state of mind in which one is able to get the gadget to work.

As this is a novel trilogy there are, of course, many other protagonists and cameo characters as well as a great number of smaller or bigger plot deviations. The main story line, however, was pictured so that the arguments which are stated throughout the thesis can be supported. Even though the plot itself makes the book a page-turner there are more layers to be discovered in this work.

3.2. Struggle between science and religion

The story presented in the book comes along with the everlasting struggle between religion and science. Religion is represented by the Christian Church - the old men with conservative attitudes towards knowledge and development, determined to keep the humankind unconscious and to cease the sin in all worlds (sin standing here for everything that science presents). On the other hand science is pictured as a development, openness of mind, knowledge and freedom. Pullman puts the Christian Church into position of villain and he attributes all the negative qualities and deeds to it. Science and development is on the contrary pictured as a force predestined to save the world.

Pullman joints the two powers, religion and science, in the character of Doctor Mary Malone. She used to be a nun but circumstances made her change her mind and she became a scientist afterwards. She works on the case of the mysterious particles, which are called Shadows or Shadow particles. The particles communicate with her through the computer and claim to be angels. Mary becomes confused by the contrast of the image of angels presented by the Church and by how they actually exist in form of conscious particles. This brings further doubts in her view on the Catholic Church and the religion itself:

“If you were a scientist,” said Will, “I don’t suppose that was a good thing for them to say. You might not have believed in angels.” “Ah, but I knew about them. I used to be a nun, you see. I thought physics could be done to the glory of God, till I saw there wasn’t any God at all and that physics was more interesting anyway. The Christian religion is a very powerful and convincing mistake, that’s all.” (Pullman, 1019)

Mary also condemns the obstinacy of the Church to decide what one should think. What is missing is freedom of thinking and of deciding for oneself. On the contrary, science provides freedom of choice, space to explore, and space to make one’s own conclusions. That is the reason why she turned away from religion to science, so that she is able to think outside the boundaries that the Church sets:

“When I first saw you, in your Oxford,” Lyra said, “you said one of the reasons you became a scientist was that you wouldn’t have to think about good and evil. Did you think about them when you were a nun?” “H’mmm. No. But I knew what I *should* think: it was whatever the church taught me to think. And when I did science I had to think about other things altogether. So I never had to think about them for myself at all.” (Pullman, 1024)

Pullman directly indicates the thinking of the Church as an example of foolishness and opponents of the Church as representatives of wisdom. It is mentioned repeatedly how the Church tries to keep people in the unawareness whereas the rebels are trying to enforce freedom of thought:

“[...] and I met an angel [...] she told me many things... She said that all the history of human life has been a struggle between wisdom and stupidity. She and the rebel angels, the followers of wisdom, have always tried to open minds; the Authority and his churches have always tried to keep them closed. She gave me many examples from my world.” (Pullman, 1054)

The scientist Richard Dawkins remarked in one of his books *The God Delusion* that “[...]one of the truly bad effects of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding.” (126), which perfectly captures the approach of the Church in Pullman’s work.

Pullman in simplified way divides humanity into two categories, the Church and others. The following paragraph describes the ongoing fight for every bit of knowledge. It may indicate that the Church does not close itself completely from knowledge, but does not want to make it accessible to someone other than the representatives of the Church. Followers of God want to rule through the control of the human mind and by deciding on what an individual can and should know:

“There are two great powers,” the man said, “and they’ve been fighting since time began. Every advance in human life, every scrap of knowledge and wisdom and

decency we have has been torn by one side from the teeth of the other. Every little increase in human freedom has been fought over ferociously between those who want us to know more and be wiser and stronger, and those who want us to obey and be humble and submit.” (Pullman, 623)

As a major representative of resistance of the Church and also the fighter for freedom and knowledge is constructed the character of Lord Asriel, who is the father of the main protagonist Lyra. Asriel is described as a fearless, strong man ready to fight for the truth. His contempt for the Church and God is depicted in the extreme. Pullman gives this character the greatest challenge and that is the destruction of God and the defeat of the Church (the destruction of God is to be discussed in the next part of this thesis):

“Well, Lord Asriel has never found himself at ease in the doctrines of the church, so to speak. I’ve seen a spasm of disgust cross his face when they talk about sacraments, and atonement, and redemption, and suchlike. It’s death among our people, Serafina Pekkala, to challenge the church, but Lord Asriel’s been nursing a rebellion in his heart for as long as I’ve served him, that’s one thing I do know.” [...] “I think he’s aiming a rebellion against the highest power of all. He’s one a-searching for the dwelling place of the Authority Himself, and he’s a-going to destroy Him. [...]” (Pullman, 392)

Pullman uses the division of characters that was already introduced in John Milton’s *The Paradise Lost*; he puts God into the position of not entirely positive character, whereas Lord Asriel, who leads rebellion against God, as Satan does in Milton’s work, is pictured as the noble one. Lord Asriel is also put into contrast with his mistress Mrs Coulter, Lyra’s mother, who on the contrary sympathizes with the Church. Even though as a woman she cannot represent the Church as an official, she powerfully rules them. The positions of rulers of the two struggling powers held by the parents of the main character Lyra emphasizes the juxtaposition.

3.3. Pullman's Church, God and destruction of God

The book is the reflection of one of the author's long term attitude – attitude towards religion and God. Pullman is an atheist, one of the most well-known in the Great Britain. His opinion is described as following: "Pullman has also championed his atheism in a plethora of interviews and articles about the trilogy. Of theology, religion, and God, Pullman has said many things, including "I don't profess any religion; I don't think it's possible that there is a God;" [...] Though here Pullman might give God an inch, his disdain for religion is clear: even if there is a God, no one has evidence to support this claim, and people who believe in God use this belief to do terrible things" (Freitas, King, xvii). The terrible things mentioned in the extract are included into *His Dark Materials* as well. Pullman is not afraid of incorporating into the fantasy novel the topics which have always started heated discussions. He includes the themes that can seem remote nowadays such as hunting of witches as well as those that are talked about at present days as intervention against children and their growing up in mental sense of way:

“And he invited us to join him, sisters. To join his army against the Authority. I wished with all my heart I could pledge us there and then: I would have thrown my clan into the war with a happy heart. He showed me that to rebel was right and just, when you considered what the agents of the Authority did in his name... And I thought of Bolvangar children, and the other terrible mutilations I have seen in our own south-lands; and he told me of many more hideous cruelties dealt out in the Authority's name - of how they capture witches, in some worlds, and burn them alive, sisters, yes, witches like ourselves... He opened my eyes. He showed me things I have never seen, cruelties and horrors all committed in the name of the Authority, all designed to destroy the joys and the truthfulness of life.” (Pullman, 581)

The term “Bolvangar children” refers to events from the first part of the trilogy. The Church sets up an experimental station, where they keep kidnapped youngsters and practice a (so far unknown) method of surgery on the children and their dæmons.

During the procedure they cut off the dæmon from the child. This might be a parallel to circumcision practiced in the actual world. Circumcision is done for various reasons, but especially for the religious ones. It represents a sort of covenant with God; it should make the connection with God closer and make the individual more obedient and faithful. The same is supposed to happen at Bolvangar, as the doctors try to make children more docile in the name of God.

The author brings the character of God into the novel. To bring a deity character into a fictional world might seem daring on its own, however, Pullman goes even further depicting God in an surprising, extraordinary manner. He is not in the position of ruler of the worlds as he is replaced by a younger and stronger angel in these regards: “With the regent at the reins. He’s concealed himself well, this Metatron. They speak of him in the apocryphal scriptures: he was a man once, a man called Enoch, the son of Jared – six generations away from Adam. And now he rules the kingdom” (Pullman, 961). God’s role remains purely representative and furthermore Pullman describes God as an old, senile and frightened man, who can barely cogitate:

Will cut through the crystal in one movement and reached in to help the angel out. Demented and powerless, the aged being could only weep and mumble in fear and pain and misery, and he shrank away from what seemed like yet another threat. “It’s all right,” Will said, “we can help you hide, at least. Come on, we won’t hurt you.” The shaking hand seized his and feebly held on. The old one was uttering a wordless groaning whimper that went on and on, and grinding his teeth, and compulsively plucking at himself with his free hand; but as Lyra reached in too to help him out, he tried to smile, and to bow, and his ancient eyes deep in their wrinkled blinked at her with innocent wonder. Between them they helped the ancient of days out of his crystal cell; it wasn’t hard, for he was as light as paper, and he would have followed them anywhere, having no will of his own, and responding to simple kindness like a flower to the sun. But in the open air there was nothing to stop the wind from damaging him, and to their dismay his form began to loosen and dissolve. Only a few moments later he had vanished completely, and their last impression was of those eyes, blinking in wonder, and a sigh of the most profound and exhausted relief. (Pullman, 993)

It is an exact opposite of Christian conception of God as the almighty, strong, omniscient, indestructible being. In addition, the children find him in his crystal litter fallen in dirt, mud and blood of formerly killed creatures, which puts him in an undignified position and undermines his authority even more. He is pictured as incapable of thinking and so he is blindly following children's innocence and kindness out of his shelter on some primary instincts. Here comes another disgraceful moment, when God is destroyed by a gust of wind. The debate about the destruction of God was led earlier by Mrs Coulter, who from the beginning sympathized with the Church, but after culmination of the events and new revelations she joined the side of Lord Asriel in his rebellion. She criticizes the cryptical behaviour of God:

"I assume he's after that knife. You know it has a name? The cliff-ghasts of the north call it the god-destroyer," he went on, crossing to the window and looking down over the cloisters. "That's what Asriel is aiming to do, isn't it? Destroy the Authority? There are some people who claim that God is dead already. Presumably Asriel is not one of those, if he retains the ambition to kill him." "Well, where is God," said Mrs Coulter, "if he's alive? And why doesn't he speak any more? At the beginning of the world, God walked in the garden and spoke with Adam and Eve. Then he began to withdraw, and Moses only heard his voice. Later, in the time of Daniel, he was aged - he was the Ancient of the Days. Where is he now? Is he still alive, at some inconceivable age, decrepit and demented, unable to think or act or speak and unable to die, a rotten hulk? And if that *is* the condition, wouldn't it be the most merciful thing, the truest proof of our love for God, to seek him out and give him the gift of death?" (Pullman, 922)

All the attributes that the character of God possesses show the author's attitude towards religion seeing it as something old, ancient, incapable of evolving and weak. On the other hand the strong elements of religion and the reason that religion is able to survive are people and angels who carry on spreading the teaching of once powerful God who is now more of an abstract notion than a powerful ruler. Hence, when Lord Asriel wants to kill God the target of his mission is not the weak creature hiding in an unreachable place, he aims to destroy the religion as such.

Pullman also challenges the Christian teaching that puts God in the position of the creator of all, the whole world (in the case of this book, worlds). God, on the contrary, among other conscious beings (particles), is attributed only primacy in self-awareness. The rest of his existence and existence of other beings is therefore a lie, which God presents about the creation:

“Tell me, then,” said Will. “Tell me about Metatron, and what this secret is. Why did that angel call him Regent? And what is the Authority? Is he God?” He sat down, and the two angels, their forms clearer in the moonlight than he had ever seen them before, sat with him. Balthamos said quietly, “The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty - those were all names he gave himself. He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves - the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are, and Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself. Matter loves matter. It seeks to know more about itself, and Dust is formed. The first angels condensed out of Dust, and the Authority was the 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. We serve her still. And the Authority still reigns in the kingdom, and Metatron is his Regent.” (Pullman, 671)

Another interesting thing that is mentioned in this extract is the fact that angels who do not follow God say to serve *her*. It means that Pullman puts in the position of divine rival of God a woman.

As was already mentioned above, the author challenges not only the existence of God but the function of the Church that serves in the name of God as well. One of the features that Pullman attributes to the Church is the fear of everything unknown. This is illustrated on the example where one of the Church representatives from the world of Lyra comes into the world of beings called *mulefs*:

“He was so close to success now that for the first time he found himself speculating on what he would do afterwards, and whether he would please the kingdom of heaven more by going back to Geneva or staying to evangelize this world. The first thing to do

here would be to convince the four-legged creatures, who seemed to have the rudiments of reason, that their habit of riding on wheels was abominable and Satanic, and contrary to the will of God. Break them of that, and salvation would follow.”(Pullman, 1040).

When seeing mulefas and their means of motion for the very first time, he immediately condemns this way of life. He claims that is contrary to the will of God, even though he has never encountered a given phenomenon before. In this short episode Pullman indirectly questions the Western civilization and its ethnocentrism. The arrogance of the Western civilization is manifested by the character of Father Gomez who instantly thinks of colonizing the *mulefas* tribe. The reader is therefore exposed to a parallel in the real world which can be seen in the politics of colonization which was roofed under the seemingly noble idea of Christianising the African, Asian or Caribbean countries. Father Gomez as a representative of a Christian missionary wants immediately to impose the Christian values as the only valid ones without considering the beliefs or the needs of the *mulefas*. Pullman promotes cultural relativism in the context of various worlds. He juxtaposes all the worlds showing the virtues and vices of each one which provides the reader with a notion that all the worlds are more or less equal rather than that there is one which sets the norms.

Another controversial subject which can be brought to the question as regarding the Church is the relationship between the priests and children. When her daughter Lyra is involved, Mrs Coulter expresses her contempt for men who are united with the Church. Once more it might be the author's view of the Church as an institution and his disagreement with its actions. Pullman broaches here the delicate issue of sexual abuse in the ranks of the Church. What is put under scrutiny in these parts is the self-righteous behaviour of a Caucasian Christian male as a self-centred figure:

“If you thought for one moment that I would release my daughter into the care – the *care!* – of a body of men with a feverish obsession with sexuality, men with dirty fingernails, reeking of ancient sweat, men whose furtive imaginations would crawl over her body like cockroaches – if you thought I would expose my child to *that*, my Lord President, you are more stupid than you take *me* for.” (Pullman, 921)

The last but not the least point that is involving unfavourable behaviour of the Church emphasized in Pullman's book is the desire to control every sphere of human life. From the extract it is obvious that the Church is frightened by the possibility of independence. Metatron, as a symbol of the highest authority of the Church, on behalf of God therefore wants to impose a system of constant harsh controls:

“... The Authority considers that conscious beings of every kind have become dangerously independent, so Metatron is going to intervene much more actively in human affairs. He intends to move the Authority secretly away from the Clouded Mountain, to a permanent citadel somewhere else, and turn the mountain into an engine of war. The churches in every world are corrupt and weak, he thinks, they compromise too readily... He wants to set up a permanent inquisition in every world, run directly from the kingdom. And the first campaign will be to destroy your republic...” (Pullman, 696)

All the above mentioned arguments prove the view that the author is a fierce critic of not only the religion itself but mainly the representatives who act in the name of God often without any regard of humanity. In the quest for their own intentions they are willing to use such methods that virtually contradict the religious teaching that they try to spread. The chapter shows that various references can be found across the book.

3.4. The Dust

The Dust is one of the symbols which appear in the whole book. It is discussed in many contexts and from different perspectives. Particularly different perspectives, from which the Dust is seen, are essential for this analysis. In the book reader looks at it through the eyes of the main characters Lyra and Will - children on the verge of puberty, which represent innocence and curiosity; Lord Asriel and his empire, which presents progress and fight for freedom; Mrs Coulter and the Church, who are rejecters of the Dust and are trying to destroy it; and last but not least through the ideas and discoveries of physicist and former nun Dr Mary Malone.

The question of the Dust was introduced already in the first book of the trilogy. Since the first moment the Dust becomes driving force of the events which form the story of the trilogy. In the first part, *Northern Lights*, the idea of mysterious Dust is for the first time introduced to Lyra. She is searching for the meaning and origin of the Dust. On her search for the answer she is provided with different explanations. On one hand it is the explanation by Mrs Coulter, who is allied with the Church: "Dust is something bad, something wrong, something evil and wicked." (Pullman, 240). As for this she tries to keep Lyra unaware of anything that is connected with the Dust. On the other hand Lord Asriel gives more in depth explanation:

"In one way the Church has always been aware of it. They've been preaching about Dust for centuries, only they didn't call it by that name. But some years ago a Muscovite called Boris Mikhailovitch Rusakov discovered a new kind of elementary particle. You've heard of electrons, photons, neutrinos and the rest? They're called elementary particles because you can't break them down any further: there's nothing inside them but themselves. Well, this new kind of particle was elementary all right, but it was very hard to measure because it didn't react in any of the usual ways. The hardest thing for Rusakov to understand was why the new particle seemed to cluster where human beings were, as if it were attracted to us. And especially to adults. Children too, but not nearly so much until their dæmons have taken a fixed form. During the years of puberty they begin to attract Dust more strongly, and it settles on them as it settles on

adults. Now all discoveries of this sort, because they have a bearing on the doctrines of the Church, have to be announced through the Magisterium in Geneva. And the discovery of Rusakov's was so unlikely and strange that the Inspector from the Consistorial Court of Discipline suspected Rusakov of diabolic possession. He performed an exorcism in the laboratory, he interrogated Rusakov under the rules of the Inquisition, but finally they had to accept the fact that Rusakov wasn't lying or deceiving them: Dust really existed. That left them with the problem of deciding what it was. And given the Church's nature, there was only one thing they could have chosen. The Magisterium decided that Dust was the physical evidence for original sin. [...]" (Pullman, 314).

Comparing those two descriptions, Lord Asriel's can be considered as more objective, presenting rather the historical facts (that author invented for this story), whereas in Mrs Coulter's there can already be felt the indication of the attitude – the attitude of the Church and so the Dust is presented as something negative. For Lord Asriel the Dust represents infinite possibilities of human development. What he and Mrs. Coulter have in common is that they are able to sacrifice almost everything in order to find out what the Dust really is and how to control it. The main difference, however, is that they want to gain this knowledge for completely different reasons. Lord Asriel sees the Dust as a key to all the possible worlds which are depicted in Pullman's book as well as a new means of communication since Lord Asriel is aware of the fact that the Dust consists of conscious particles. Later on, Doctor Mary Malone, finds out that the Dust (in her world called the Shadows) is not only conscious but is able to communicate. Lord Asriel devotes his whole life, power and energy to tame, to acquire or to analyse the Dust for he sees it as an element of the biggest imaginable power and biggest advantage in his war against the Church. The Dust presents the means not only of crossing the physical boundaries of his world but also of crossing the abstract boundaries in the sphere of research.

Mrs. Coulter on the other hand wants to control the dust for reasons that are more driven from the fear of unknown. She, and therefore the Church, is aware of the fact that the Dust is an extremely powerful matter. The concerns of the Church are presented in the book directly as well: "All that I can tell you is that where there are

priests, there is fear of Dust.” (Pullman, 270). The Church dogma, which attributes the origin of everything to God and in which it is important to keep one’s eyes closed before anything new and where everything unknown is dangerous and sinful, there is no room for conscious particles. The Church is presented here as an institution that operates through unawareness and ignorance and thus tries to destroy the Dust to prevent knowledge, progress and development.

“Whatever we learn about Dust, though,” the President went on, “we must bear our purpose firmly in mind. The Oblation Board sought to understand the effects of Dust: we must destroy it altogether. Nothing less than that. If in order to destroy Dust we also have to destroy the Oblation Board, the College of Bishops, every single agency by which the Holy Church does the work of the Authority – then so be it. It may be, gentlemen, that the Holy Church itself was brought into being to perform this very task and to perish in doing of it. But better a world with no church and no Dust than a world where every day we have to struggle under the hideous burden of sin. Better a world purged of all that!” (Pullman, 705).

As it can be seen here the Church tries to cease the Dust, which for them means the original sin. Mrs. Coulter is depicted as an egoistic and vicious character, therefore, one can argue that her reasons for understanding the Dust are not purely connected with the Church that she is an unofficial member of. Towards the end of the trilogy, when the readers are encountered with the world of *mulefa*, the importance of the Dust is explained further:

And if it wasn’t stopped, all conscious life would come to an end. As the *mulefa* had shown her, Dust came into being when living things became conscious of themselves; but it needed some feedback system to reinforce it and make it safe, as the *mulefa* had their wheels and the oil from the trees. Without something like that, it would all vanish. Thought, imagination, feeling, would all wither and blow away, leaving nothing but a brutish automatism; and that brief period when life was conscious of itself would flicker

out like a candle in every one of the billions of worlds where it had burned brightly. (Pullman, 1029)

Mrs. Coulter, as a member of the Church, virtually supervises the intersection of the dæmon from a child (the procedure mentioned in the previous chapter). The human being without a dæmon (as argued later in the thesis – without a soul) is purely a moving shell incapable of own decisions. This being does not attract the Dust anymore and is more or less a vegetable which blindly follows the orders which are given to him or her. Arguably, this is precisely what Mrs. Coulter wants to achieve – an artificial empire filled with unconscious followers who would do as they are told. Since the Dust presents the exact opposite – that is independence, knowledge, creativity or self-expression – she naturally needs to know its power and, if possible, eventually destroy it.

Another different approach towards the Dust is depicted in the character of Doctor Mary Malone, a scientist. She is also enormously interested in the Dust and as well as for Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter the analysing of the Dust is what virtually occupies her whole life. She and her co-worker, Oliver Payne, call the particles Shadows. Her interest, however, differs from the two already described in the sense that her approach is not at all egoistic. Her main driving force is her desire to understand, to gain knowledge. As an instrument through which she analyses the Shadows she uses a computer, a device which is incomparably different from all the other objects that are used in all the different worlds. It is actually through a computer that she finds out that the Shadows are conscious. Needless to say that even though she uses what is considered to be the most advanced means of analysing, she is not more successful than her colleagues in the other worlds. Only after she enters the world of *mulefa* is she able to clearly see the particles. However, she does not use a computer or any modern device, she is able to see the Shadows through a spyglass which she created on her own: “She could see Shadows. [...] Among it all was the world she could see with the naked eye, the grass, the river, the trees; but wherever she saw a conscious being, one of the mulefa, the light was thicker and more full of movement. It didn’t obscure their shapes in any way; if anything it made them clearer”(Pullman, 840). This fact shows that the Dust has been in the fictional world ever since and is able to adapt on the new

conditions and evolves alongside the humankind. Despite the fact that she was exposed to the world of the Shadows firstly through a computer, she is able to finally understand it and worked with it only when she temporarily lives in a culture which resembles a not so developed (from the self-righteous Western point of view) society. That is the culture of *mulefa*.

Consciousness plays a big role in the activities of the Dust. Observers from all worlds find that only conscious beings, capable of thinking (or the results of the work of these beings) attract the Dust particles. As was already mentioned in former parts of the thesis, conscious beings from different worlds meet in the course of the story and they all are familiar with the particles. The difference is in the names and also in the attitudes which representatives of different worlds have towards them. In the world of *mulefa* which can be compared to a primitive tribal culture, the Dust has a crucial role for their everyday life. It is called *sraf*. Doctor Mary Malone on the other hand observes the particles from the scientific point of view. When the *mulefa* Atal and Mary Malone meet and get to the discussion about the particles, those two perspectives are juxtaposed:

[...] Mary thought: If this became fossilized, and a scientist in ten million years found it, they could still find Shadows around it, because I've worked on it. She drifted into a sun-doped reverie until Atal asked: *What are you dreaming?* Mary tried to explain about her work, her research, the laboratory, the discovery of Shadow-particles, the fantastical revelation that they were conscious, and found the whole tale gripping her again, so that she longed to be back among her equipment. She didn't expect Atal to follow her explanation, partly because of her own imperfect command of their language, but partly because the *mulefa* seemed so practical, so strongly rooted in the physical everyday world, and much of what she was saying was mathematical; but Atal surprised her by saying, *Yes – we know what you mean – we call it ...* and then she used a word that sounded like their word for *light*. Mary said, *Light?* and Atal said, *Not light, but...* and said the word more slowly for Mary to catch, explaining: *like the light on water when it makes small ripples, at sunset, and the light comes off in bright flakes, we call it that, but it is a make-like. Make-like* was their term for metaphor, Mary had discovered. So she said, *It is not really light, but you see it and it looks like that light on*

water at sunset? Atal said, Yes. All the mulefa have this. You have too. That is how we knew you were like us and not like the grazers, who don't have it. Even though you look so bizarre and horrible, you are like us, because you have – and again came that word that Mary couldn't hear quite clearly enough to say: something like sraf, or sarf, accompanied by a leftward flick of the trunk. Mary was excited. She had to keep herself calm enough to find the right words. What do you know about it? Where does it come from? From us, and from oil, was Atal's reply, and Mary knew she meant the oil in the great seed-pod wheels. From you? When we are grown-up. But without the trees it would just vanish again. With the wheels and the oil, it stays among us. When we are grown-up... Again Mary had to keep herself from becoming incoherent. One of the things she'd begun to suspect about the Shadows was that children and adults reacted to them differently, or attracted different kind of Shadow activity. Hadn't Lyra said that the scientists in her world had discovered something like that about Dust, which was their name for Shadows? Here it was again. And it was connected to what the Shadows had said to her on the computer screen just before she'd left her own world: whatever it was, this question, it had to do with the great change in human history symbolized in the story of Adam and Eve, with the Temptation, the Fall, Original Sin. In his investigations among fossil skulls, her colleague Oliver Payne had discovered that around thirty thousand years ago, a great increase had taken place in the number of Shadow-particles associated with human remains. Something had happened then, some development in evolution, to make the human brain an ideal channel for amplifying their effects. She said to Atal: How long have there been mulefa? And Atal said: Thirty-three thousand years. She was able to read Mary's expressions by this time, or the most obvious of them at least, and she laughed at the way Mary's jaw dropped. Their laughter was free and joyful and so infectious that Mary usually had to join in, but now she remained serious and astounded and said: How can you know so exactly? Do you have a history of all those years? Oh, yes, said Atal. Ever since we have had the sraf, we have had memory and wakefulness. Before that, we knew nothing. What happened to give you the sraf? We discovered how to use the wheels. One day a creature with no name discovered a seed-pod and began to play, and as she played she – She? She, yes. She had no name before then. She saw a snake coiling itself through the hole in a seed/pod, and the snake said- The snake spoke to her? No! no! It is a make-like. The story tells

that the snake said What do you know? What do you remember? What do you see ahead? And she said Nothing, nothing, nothing. So the snake said Put your foot through the hole in the seed-pod where I was playing, and you will become wise. So she put a foot in where the snake had been. And the oil entered her foot and made her see more clearly than before, and the first thing she saw was the sraf. It was so strange and pleasant that she wanted to share it at once with all her kindred. So she and her mate took the first ones, and they discovered that they knew who they were, they knew they were mulefa and not grazers. They gave each other names. They named themselves mulefa. They named the seed-tree, and all the creatures and plants. Because they were different, said Mary. Yes, they were. And so were their children, because as more seed-pods fell, they showed their children how to use them. And when the children were old enough, they began to generate the sraf as well, and as they were big enough to ride on the wheels, the sraf came back with the oil and stayed with them. So they saw that they had to plant more seed-pod trees, for the sake of the oil, but the pods were so hard that they very seldom germinated. And the first mulefa saw what they must do to help the trees, which was to ride on the wheels and break them, so mulefa and seed-pod trees have always lived together. (Pullman, 833)

Apart from the different perspectives of two characters that can be seen in the extract, there are also some parallels. The *mulefa's* story is remarkably similar to the story of Eve and the temptation by the Serpent. Instead of an apple there is a medium of seed-pod which is supposed to give the first mulefa the knowledge. She shares it with her mate as Eve does with Adam in original story. Another important remark is pointed out as well and it is the difference between adults and children. The significant feature of the Dust is the different form of activity that it produces when adults and when children are involved. Grown-ups attract the particles much more, whereas, youngsters are barely marked by the presence of the Dust. This is the proof for the fact that the Dust stands for the complex way of thinking and all the related processes that develop during the life and are not that advanced in childhood.

When the reader gets to know the world of *mulefa* it is in fact the closest he or she gets to the actual understanding of what it is. The *sraf* as it is called in this world is not only the source of consciousness or independence it is the very source of life.

Mulefa, to Mary Malone's surprise, are able to see the *sraf* without using any tool. These creatures have always lived in a symbiosis with the nature and with the Dust itself and consider it as an inseparable part of their world and history. Therefore, their approach towards the particles is one of the purest and again vastly different from the others. *Mulefas* do not want to study it, they do not want to capture it, quite the contrary, their intention is to cherish it and live alongside this mysterious matter. *Mulefas* represent a style of living which is based on a mutual respect with the nature. They need the nature and the *sraf* in order to be able to live. Hence, when Mary Malone arrives to their world and is told that the *sraf* is floating away she is faced with no smaller task than to save the whole culture of *mulefas*:

I could see that there is a current of *sraf* high in the tree-tops, she went on, and it moves against the wind. The air is moving inland off the sea, but the *sraf* is moving slowly against it. [...] the trees are filtering the *sraf* as it moves through them, and some of it is attracted to the flowers. I could see it happening: the flowers are turned upwards, and if the *sraf* were falling straight down it would enter their petals and fertilize them like pollen from stars. But the *sraf* isn't falling down, it's moving out towards the sea. When a flower happens to be facing the land, the *sraf* can enter it. That's why there are still some seed-pods growing. But most of them face upwards and the *sraf* just drifts past without entering. The flowers must have evolved like that because in the past all the *sraf* fell straight down. Something has happened to the *sraf*, not to the trees. (Pullman, 877)

In regards of the history of the Dust, it is period of three hundred years ago that is mentioned in the text for several times, for example:

Something has gone wrong with the world. For most of the thirty-three thousand years that there have been *mulefa*, we have taken care of the earth. Everything balanced. The trees prospered, the grazers were healthy, and even if once in a while the *tualapi* came, our numbers and their remained constant. But three hundred years ago the trees began to sicken. We watched them anxiously and tended them with care and still we found them producing fewer seed-pods, and dropping their leaves out of season and some of them

died outright, which had never been known. All our memory could not find a cause for this. (Pullman, 842)

There was supposed to be a change in the activity of the particles. Assuming that the fantasy world, that parallels the actual one, is also dated in the same period of time, remarks point to the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is the era of the culmination of the Enlightenment period, which is also called The Age of Reason. It is a period of great discoveries and advances in science and philosophy, but also a period of enstrengthened struggle between religion and science. Immanuel Kant describes it in his essay *What Is Enlightenment?* By motto “Have the courage to use your own understanding.” He talks in his essay about an unintentional ongoing state when an individual is satisfied with what he has already been presented and dare not to create his own conclusions or to think outside these boundaries. The change of this state comes in form of The Enlightenment an epoch when people should have the courage to use their wits and thus it brings a lot of progress. He describes here everything that stands as opposite for the approach of Pullman’s Church in *His Dark Materials*.

In this period of inventions the magical knife (with which the main characters cut windows into other worlds and travel between them) comes into existence as well. Firstly the links between the activity of the Dust and inventions of the Enlightenment period are mentioned with doubts. At the end of the book the reader learns that the knife is responsible for the loss of the Dust that actually disappears in the windows opened by the knife. This may be an example of how science can become dangerous if it does not explore all the possibilities (possible effects of an instrument) and in the hunt for progress all the possible consequences are not taken into account:

Three hundred years, the mulefa had said: that was how long the trees had been failing. Given that the Shadow-particles passed through all the worlds alike, presumably the same thing was happening in her universe too, and in every other one. Three hundred years ago, the Royal Society was set up: the first true scientific society in the world. Newton was making his discoveries about optics and gravitation. Three hundred years ago in Lyra’s world, someone invented the alethiometer. At the same time in that strange world through which she’d come to get there, the subtle knife was invented.

[...] What happened three hundred years ago? Was it the cause of Dust-current, or was it the other way round? Or were they both the results of a different cause altogether? Or were they simply not connected at all? (Pullman, 954)

The origin and the nature of the Dust is finally explained in the end of the book ““Understand this,” said Xaphania: “Dust is not a constant. There’s not fixed quantity that has always been the same. Conscious beings make Dust – they renew it all the time, by thinking and feeling and reflecting, by gaining wisdom and passing it on.”” (Pullman, 1065). All those ideas, opinions and attitudes help us to understand that the Dust represents quest for knowledge, learning and creativity which are products of the free will, freedom itself and open mindedness.

3.5. Retelling the story of Adam and Eve

The story of the main protagonist Lyra and her friend Will, whom she falls in love with eventually, is partly a retold story of Eve and Adam which originally comes from Bible, book of Genesis. Lyra and Will happen to come to a peaceful world where *mulefas* beings live. *Mulefas* are equivalent to human beings in Lyra's and Will's world, they are conscious and form their own culture. This idyllic world reminds the reader of the Garden of Eden – the paradise. They meet Doctor Mary Malone, whom they know from Oxford where Will comes from, living amongst *mulefas* there. Mary was told by the Shadow particles which she manages to communicate with before she leaves her own world that she should take over the function of the serpent: “Find the girl and the boy. Waste no more time. You must play the serpent.” (Pullman, 563). The serpent in the original story tempts Eve to eat the fruit of forbidden tree and after she gives in - and Adam as well – they are both expelled from the paradise. In Pullman's story the events take different direction.

Lyra has been predestined to the fate of Eve for long time. When the representatives of the Church find out this fact, they are naturally trying to prevent the event, as in the past the deed of Eve caused the emergence of original sin:

““I beg your pardon, truly. The child, then, is in the position of Eve, the wife of Adam, the mother of us all, and the cause of all sin.” [...] “Please, remember- the alethiometer does not *forecast*; it says *`If certain things come about, then the consequences will be –`* and so on. And it says that if it comes about that the child is tempted, as Eve was, then she is likely to fall. On the outcome will depend ... everything. And if this temptation does take place, and if the child gives in, then Dust and sin will triumph.”” (Pullman, 702).

Mrs Coulter, who is Lyra's biological mother and who is at beginning forming an alliance with the Church, also wants to avoid the repetition of biblical story: ““I was going to keep her safe until the danger had passed.” “What danger would that be?” he

said, handing her a glass. “Oh, I think you know what I mean. Somewhere there is a tempter, a serpent, so to speak, and I had to keep them from meeting.”” (Pullman, 921).

Mary, who tempts the children by telling them the stories about her first love, makes them understand what they feel and what they should do. They kiss and they cross the threshold of childhood, but instead of this meaning the repeated creation of the original sin, it is the deed that saves the Dust and thus the existence of all the worlds: “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” (Pullman, 1046). In the end of the book Pullman puts into the position of the greatest power love. It wins over the pursuing of the Church and over the devastating consequences of usage of the magical knife (that stands as a symbol for science). This partly, in an idyllic way, solves the struggle of religion and science, as another equally strong force is presented. It indirectly indicates the withdrawals of the other two powers; the inventions should be done with care and good intentions and the privilege of leading those who believe should be used to be a support, not as a mean to manipulate.

3.6. Three parts of human beings

Another element in Pullman's work, which has its roots in the Bible, is the triple essence of human being. These three parts are body, soul and spirit. Will and Mary Malone, who come from our world, know only the material form of the first part - the body. After meeting with Lyra they discover another part of the man that can be physically present and it is the soul. In Lyra's world it exists in the form of a dæmon. Dæmon is an animal that accompanies human life. Before the child grows up, the dæmons may change their forms, and after reaching puberty the form becomes steady in a way that best expresses the nature and characteristics of the person. So the dæmon takes over the function of expressing the character, but also one's conscience and will. Taking Lyra as an example, we see that with the dæmon she often discusses her ideas and goals, but since the dæmon is part of her it rather presents thought-currents carried beyond the mind of human. In the world where Lyra grows up it is also taboo to touch another person's dæmon. This fact supports the argument that the dæmon is a soul, something untouchable and personal. As was already mentioned in the first part of this thesis, the members of the Church try to make an intervention against children at the experimental station, where the doctors cut off the children's dæmons from them in order to prevent the sin from influencing the youngsters. Projecting this into the idea of triple essence of the body, they cut off the soul of the individual and turn children into obedient, blind followers. As the dæmon is the part that attracts the Dust, the Church manages to complete the goal that is set for it and that is to cease the sin. It is arguably one of the most horrifying ideas presented in the book as this is the reflection of influencing individuals in very young age and manipulating them before they have the ability of deciding for themselves and preventing them from developing free will. Richard Dawkins addresses and criticizes this issue in his book as well: "Faith can be very very dangerous, and deliberately to implant it into the vulnerable mind of an innocent child is a grievous wrong." (308).

Will becomes aware of the existence of his soul for the first time at the moment when he and Lyra are leaving for the journey to the land of the dead, and Lyra is forced

to leave her dæmon on the shore before they cross the lake that separates the land of the dead from the other worlds:

“Will said, “That’s not right. We don’t have to leave part of ourselves behind. Why should Lyra?” “Oh, but you do,” said the boatman. “It’s her misfortune that she can see and talk to the part she must leave. You will not know until you are on the water, and then it will be too late. But you all have to leave that part of yourselves here.”” (Pullman, 883).

Later in the story Lyra and Will discover the possibility of existence of a third part of human being of which they were not aware before. They distinguish body and soul so far, but realize that neither of those parts presents the function of thinking or cognising. This provides space for existence of another part of human:

“Yes,” she said, “but it’s a strange place, Will ... *So* strange... Could we really do that? Could we really go to the land of the dead? But – what part of us does that? Because dæmons fade away when we die – I’ve seen them – and our bodies, well, they just stay in the grave and decay, don’t they?” “There must be a third part. A different part.” “You know,” she said, full of excitement, “I think that it must be true! Because I can think about my body and I can think about my dæmon – so there must be another part, to do the thinking.” “Yes. And that’s the ghost.” (Pullman, 786).

The idea of triple essence of the human is explicitly mentioned in one of the chapters when Mrs Coulter undergoes the inspection by Regent Metatron: “... and she stood naked, body, and ghost and dæmon together...” (Pullman, 982) and it is also presented by Dr Mary Malone while having discussion with Lyra and Will on the subject: “ “[...]the church – the Catholic Church that I used to belong to – wouldn’t use the word dæmon, but St Paul talks about spirit and soul and body. So the idea of three parts in human nature isn’t so strange.”” (Pullman, 1017). The allusion in the citation points to the verse from the Bible “May the very God of peace sanctify you completely. And I pray to God that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Thessalonians 5:23), where the idea of the triple

essence is presented for the very first time, as far as our culture is concerned. The symbolism of number three is very common in Christian religion (for example the Holy Trinity), even though in the regard of the essence of a human it is more usual to divide a human being only into two parts, body and soul. In Christian religion it is usual to combine the soul and the spirit part into one entity, whereas Pullman tries to strictly distinguish between soul and spirit, showing that these two elements of human nature are not interchangeable.

4. Conclusion:

In my work I have pointed out the major references and allusions which can be found in *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman. This evidence proves that even though the book is considered as a piece of children's literature, the author aims beyond this label and appeals on wider audience. The book can be read simply as an exciting fantasy narrative but it can be read as well as a partly philosophical novel evoking the plethora of well-known timeless dogmas, long-lasting issues and controversial stories. The author is not afraid to address the topics which are considered worthy causes, mostly connected with religion and belief in God. In the work I tried to support the arguments with relevant citations from *The Amber Spyglass* and from the works written by the thinkers and authors that either might have served as an inspiration for the trilogy or are associated with the same area of interest.

Firstly, the thesis deals with the theoretical grounds on which the whole story was built. The aim of the theoretical part was to offer relevant sources of inspiration from philosophy, history and religion. The theoretical part also provides parallels between the fictional world and the real one. Last but not least the theoretical part functions as a basis for the later practical scrutiny of the novel. It also functions as vital evidence which supports the idea that *The Amber Spyglass* is not only a book for children.

Secondly, in the practical part I have touched the issue of the dispute between two large discourses that have always influenced mankind; science and religion. The author's approach is strongly pro-scientific and anti-religious. This argument was pointed out by analysing the crucial points of the novel. The practical part focused on explaining the main aspects and crucial symbols of the novel. In this part, it was also proved that underneath the gripping story one can find a number of philosophical, religious and scientific allusions. The relevant allusions were studied. One of the main aims of the thesis was to scrutinize the reflection of author's atheistic approach which is elaborated on mostly in the second part of this work as well.

The thesis showed that even though *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman is considered children's literature, the novel has depths which surpass this category and therefore can read as appealing to wider audience including the adults.

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