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## Developing the modern heroine of fantasy literature: An examination of Lyra from "His Dark Materials" and Clary from "The Mortal Instruments"

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DEVELOPING THE MODERN HEROINE OF FANTASY LITERATURE:  
AN EXAMINATION OF LYRA FROM *HIS DARK MATERIALS*  
AND CLARY FROM *THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS*

A Thesis  
by  
DIANA AILEEN BORGHOLS HERRERA

Submitted to the Graduate School of  
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December 2014



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## ABSTRACT

Borghols Herrera, Diana Aileen. Developing the Modern Heroine of Fantasy Literature: An Examination of Lyra from His Dark Materials and Clary from The Mortal Instruments. Master of Arts (MA), December 2014, 95pp., references, 328 titles.

This work looks at the figure of the heroine as present through the characters of Lyra Belacqua in *His Dark Materials* and Clary Fairchild in *The Mortal Instruments*. The characters will be analysed within the fantasy genre and the tradition of the heroic figure. By defining the hero and the heroine, two types of characters with different traits, I will show that the heroic archetype for the female is not entirely set. Lyra and Clary share some similarities but their relation to their respective role is perceived and fulfilled through varying degrees of commitment. The analysis will be contained to the first book of *His Dark Materials* trilogy and to the fifth of *The Mortal Instruments* series. In these books the characters show very specific qualities that start to define the still growing archetype of the heroine.





## DEDICATION

My degree and thesis could only be accomplished through the support of my family. They gave me the encouragement to succeed. They provided the means to reach the goal. My friends who rooted for me from far away. They were there to share the discoveries. To my family and friends who helped me envision my dream.



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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION

*We bring you his body as proof  
that your hero is gone.*

J. K. Rowling

The hero has played an important role in our society, fulfilling the ideal of the perfect member of the community. This figure has modelled acceptable behaviour and created a role to admire and to emulate. Literature presents all kinds of heroes, from Achilles to Harry Potter. These characters have provided and created the archetype of the ideal model; however, the model has also produced stereotypes. Heroes are supposed to be perfect, incorruptible, and excellent leaders. However, they are not perfect; their flaws stand in contrast with their redeeming qualities. These redeeming qualities make them stand out and seem perfect: they are admired and followed as role models. Luffy, a pirate from the manga series by Eiichiro Oda, defines a hero as one who will sacrifice personal desires for others, and for that reason he does not wish to be one.<sup>1</sup> Characters are aware of the traits that define a hero; some will strive towards heroism and others will utterly reject it. Heroes can also fail and must prove their true nature. Science fiction and fantasy have appropriated this role, producing remarkable heroes. The heroic character has become one of the most important elements of these genres, as supernatural and futuristic elements allow exploration of all kinds of traits and decisions that create the idealized state which heroes represent. The several tasks presented throughout the hero's journey

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<sup>1</sup>Luffy tells another character, when offered the chance to become a hero: "For example, you have some meat, right. Pirates will feast on the meat, but a hero will divide it amongst the people! I want to eat that meat" (Vol. 64, C 634).

transform the characters into heroes. The journey tests the hero's limits and tests his commitment to his ideals, which becomes part of the narrative element which explores the reasons that motivate anyone to sacrifice all personal desires for the greater good.

Very few qualities that are praised in heroes are the same as those praised in heroines. Both must be brave and achieve a state of selflessness, for example. However, most heroes are portrayed as morally oriented, not forgetting that some may fail and must redeem themselves. However, a heroine must define herself through the consequences of her actions, and her methods often appear to be less moral.

As feminist and egalitarian as heroines are being modelled in recent fantasy literature, they give the impression that after all their achievements they can only settle for second place. The heroic female characters could be said to disappear from the public scene, whereas heroes become mentors for the next generation or guardians to protect the future; they gain thrones or leadership in their society. In the movie *Brave*, Merida is one of the few heroines who will later gain a throne. *Artemis Fowl* provides another exception; unlike most heroes who achieve wide acclaim, he only gains recognition from his friends and, to a lesser degree, from the elves and pixie communities. The rest of the world and most of his family are completely unaware of what he accomplished.

A reason that may turn most heroines to a quieter life is the strain caused by battles. Whereas most heroes overcome this strain, heroines become overwhelmed. Heroines are victorious and then disappear from public life. Faris, in *A College of Magics*, decides to focus on her role as Guardian of the North, rejecting the rebel's offer for the kingdom, and places the future of her duchy into the hands of her baby cousin when the girl turns of age. One of the

reasons Faris turns away from the throne is the sacrifice of the memories of her homeland.<sup>2</sup> She uses those memories to feed a void in the fabric of reality. The sacrifice overwhelms her emotions. Heroines turn also to family life and to love interests, with varying degrees of commitment, from marriage to only casual union. The heroine of *Graceling* clearly states that as much as she loves Po, she won't marry him. But she can accept him as her lover. Some heroines see that marriage binds them, that it can restrain and force a distraction from responsibilities; for others, marriage provides a safe place. Heroes simply get married to women who range from submissive to independent; heroes do not question how the marital relationship may affect their role. Garion, of the *Belgariad* by David Eddings, must marry Princess Ce'Nedra to fulfil his destiny, and he does so with no qualms and no restrictions. Marriage, even as imposition, does not limit Garion's image of himself. Heroines accept marriage or feel trapped by it.

There are cases where heroines are only developed as far as narrative produces an emotional response from the reader rather than bringing balance to their fictional world; in these cases it appears the heroic structure for heroines is inconsistent with that for the hero. There are exceptions. It seems that heroes are created to fulfil a destiny, while some heroines take the role only because they have the necessary qualities, but not to answer the initial call for justice. Katsa from *Graceling* provides an exception; at very young age she creates an underground society to bring about justice. However, she starts it mostly out of spite against the treatment she receives from her uncle. On the other hand, Naruto, from the Japanese manga of the same name, only wants to be acknowledged in his ninja village but is led to search for true justice/peace to achieve his dream.

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<sup>2</sup> Faris discovers a fracture in the veil between worlds. She uses her memories to feed the void being created to stop magic being seeped out of the world.

In literature, heroines are growing in importance. An analysis is required to find what makes them so attractive to readers and what kind of development can be produced in future novels. I wish to analyse the figure of the heroine, how it is being constructed, and how it stands in relation to the figure of the hero. I will define the hero, and use this definition as a base to define the heroine. As heroes have been the most important figure in science fiction and fantasy literature so far, heroines take them as role models; however, heroines introduce some differences in how they relate to the heroic journey. I will apply my analysis to Lyra Belacqua from *His Dark Materials*<sup>3</sup> by Philip Pullman and Clary Fray from *The Mortal Instruments*<sup>4</sup> by Cassandra Clare.

Most heroines in fantasy literature, and in some cases of science fiction, are intended for young adult (YA) readers. YA fantasy literature is a genre that has regained popularity in the last decade after the success of the *Harry Potter* series. Heroines allow female readers to identify with a strong character, but they are also defining how to discover one's identity from beyond a shallow archetype and narrow roles. This new depth is derived from the development of some of the now more complex heroines. One of the most important traits of heroes is that they are warriors, a role that society has not entirely deemed acceptable for females. But warring heroines also exist. In recent years, heroines are starting to compete against heroes and to define the heroic for females. However, I believe this emerging figure is not entirely developed, as some heroines follow the same path that forms heroes, while many others still cling to the role of damsel in distress. This damsel in distress has the tools and/or power to control her own fate, but does not use them, which leads to her being rescued and chastised most of the time by her love

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<sup>3</sup> Henceforth each book will be abbreviated: *Northern Lights* (NL) (1994), *The Subtle Knife* (SK) (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (AS).

<sup>4</sup> *City of Bones* (CB) (2007), *City of Ashes* (CA) (2008), *City of Glass* (CG) (2009), *City of Fallen Angels* (CFA) (2011), *City of Lost Souls* (CLS) (2012), and *City of Heavenly Fire* (CHF) (2014).

interest. This seldom, if ever, happens to the hero,<sup>5</sup> and stands in contrast to heroes who fail and get kidnapped by the antagonist but who later actively participate in their own rescue.

After the success of the *Harry Potter* series and the movie adaptations of the books, an interest in fantasy grew among YA and adult readers alike; several books gained attention such as *The Inheritance Cycle* (2003-11), *Artemis Fowl* (2001-12), and *How to Train your Dragon* (2003-13). With the appearance of the *Twilight* novels (2005-08), attention was turned towards heroines. *The Hunger Games*, though it arguably belongs to science fiction, showed an interesting heroine who stood in stark contrast with Bella, the heroine of *Twilight*. Bella has to be rescued and protected by her vampire boyfriend; whereas Katniss is completely independent, able to face the competition of the Hunger Games. The fantasy heroine has finally stepped up. This character has been present for a long time,<sup>6</sup> but in the last decade it has gathered more attention as it is being developed to represent the ideals of feminism.

Males have an older tradition of heroic presence in literature than females in representing the idealized figure of a protector and warrior. Several aspects of his character lead the hero to fulfil his destiny through the “hero path.” The path of the hero consists of several tasks that test the hero’s ability, and to some extent, his commitment to his role. He is guided by a mentor, usually in the form of a wise old man such as Gandalf or Dumbledore. Against the hero, the antagonist stands for chaos. Examples are Sauron and Voldemort against Frodo and Harry, respectively. There are other elements that lead the hero to fulfil his destiny, such as the magical helper, a magical object, and the lady or love interest, among others. Not all elements are present in every story or are entirely supernatural.

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<sup>5</sup> As an example, Will Turner from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* saga starts as a very weak character who requires saving. However, in the second and third movies he develops into a darker, more complex hero.

<sup>6</sup> *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) by George MacDonald or *The Princess Bride* (1973) by William Golding are two examples.

On the other hand, heroines may take all or just some of the traits that characterize a hero. I will look at each element to expose what kind of heroic path is expected of heroines. With the help of this definition, I will be able to state if the heroine is inconsistent as an archetype or rather evolving in its development. The archetype seems to be inconsistent, as not all heroines share the same traits. In some cases, the antagonist is not entirely defined; it could be a person or a representation of the values of the society. Some heroines are reflected/doubled by the antagonist, but not all of them have this double figure with which, to a certain degree, to empathize.

The differences among heroines could lead to a new concept more consistent with contemporary social values or keep changing to be less stereotyped than heroes. In recent years, heroes have become less defined by their absolute morality. They make more “evil” decisions. And antagonists are being redeemed. The film *Megamind* (2010) starts with an antagonist who turns good, and the character plays with the expectations of what a hero is supposed to be and achieve.<sup>7</sup> With the appearance of so many heroic characters in recent years, there is the possibility that a “perfect” heroine could be created, after which other characters will be modelled, just as Achilles has been considered the ultimate hero.

The methods used by heroines to achieve balance in their worlds can be morally questionable. Lyra lies to save her own life and the life of Iorek Byrnison. Tris of the *Divergent* series is willing to send her brother to die out of revenge. For heroines, the goal, saving their worlds, turns out to be more important than the methods used to fulfil it. In contrast, most heroes are tied by a code of honor and try to avoid any shady methods.

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<sup>7</sup> He gains admiration from the entire city and the girl. Before redemption he says, “I’m the bad guy! I don’t save the day, I don’t fly off into the sunset, and I don’t get the girl! I’m going home” (*Megamind*. Dir. Tom McGrath. 2010).

Both heroines and heroes are in the middle of something greater than themselves and must act as no one else dares. They have the right quality for the situation. Because of that quality, an entirely moral attitude must be maintained or the rest of the characters start to question the heroism, regardless of their achievements and sacrifices.

### Introduction to Fantasy

The fantasy genre is characterized by the presence of, among other things, dragons, elves, wizards, princesses, and knights. Warriors and knights fight against evil lords to bring peace and prosperity to the lands. In very general terms, that is the structure of the genre. It needs a hero, an antagonist, and a confrontation to bring balance. “To many, Fantasy, this sub-creative art which plays strange tricks with the world and all that is in it, combining nouns and redistributing adjectives, has seemed suspect, if not illegitimate” (Tolkien 74). Fantasy has been perceived as an escapist genre; however, it has its roots in fairy tales, legends, and myths that provided answers to life. Now, the genre is gaining legitimacy, and may be considered as a reflection of modern ideals of values, with some nostalgia for the past, and still idealizing heroes, who can protect our lifestyle against any threat.

The genre relies on the supernatural as a principal element. It can be a magical object or the entire setting. Neither the characters nor the readers can doubt its reality. Otherwise, it would fall into the category of fantastic as described by Todorov.<sup>8</sup> The fantastic allows the questioning of events, whether or not anything supernatural is happening. The marvellous, a subgenre of the fantastic, is where the characters accept the supernatural as real without question. In both the marvellous and fantasy, the appearance of an elf is taken as real, whereas in the uncanny it could be a product of imagination. In her analysis of fantasy fiction, Lucie Armitt says, “It is in this

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<sup>8</sup> He makes two distinctions: the “uncanny,” where it all could be a product of the mind, and the “marvellous.” The marvellous can include fantasy.

complex relationship between geometric precision and utter sense of the impossible that the essence of fantasy fiction in general is born: a hyperbolic, endlessly expansive desire for the uncontainable, trapped within the constraints of a literary genre in which narrative closure is ruthlessly effected” (Armitt 4). This quote can include other genres, as it does not entirely delimit the characteristics of fantasy. The genre shares similarities with science fiction and horror. Science fiction differs by being able to explain the seemingly supernatural by scientific methods, whereas horror does not use portals or Secondary Worlds,<sup>9</sup> and its final intention is to produce fear in the reader.

Fantasy finds its origins in fairy tales, from its supernatural elements to most of its structure. Vladimir Propp recognizes thirty functions in the fairy tale that describe what prompts the character for his search and ends with the defeat of the antagonist, the hero being rewarded with riches and most of the time with marriage to a princess. Several fantasy novels retain this structure such as *The Belgariad*; *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn*; *Harry Potter*; *Fire and Hemlock*. *The Saga of Darren Shan* has a twist at the end; the antagonist has manipulated the destiny of the hero, and Darren’s victory would lead to the destruction of the world. However, the elements that do not disappear in fantasy, regardless of the variations, are the character types and the call to adventure. Vladimir Propp created a list of “character functions,” from which the structure of the story stems. Most of the functions can be recognized as present in fantasy, where the easiest to recognize would be:

- 7 Victim is deceived
- 10 Hero accepts/chooses a quest
- 16 Hero and antagonist battle
- 29 Hero takes new appearance
- 31 Hero marries and gains throne (Propp 37-85)

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<sup>9</sup> These two elements will be discussed further on.



These functions represent the call to adventure, the tasks imposed upon the hero, the steps taken to solve the problem, and the final battle.

The setting for the genre is usually in a medieval landscape. Kings and knights set the hierarchy with (pseudo) religious<sup>10</sup> institutions. The characters can ally themselves with all kinds of people, from thieves and beggars to princes and wizards. If the setting is to be in the real world, characters have to face the transformation of ordinary things into wonderful objects or “the fantastic”: “Fantasy for this purpose: in a sense, that is, which combines with its older and higher use as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of unreality, ... of freedom from the domination of observed ‘fact,’ in short of the fantastic” (Tolkien 69).

The structure and characters do not entirely define fantasy, as other genres may borrow the same elements. In “What Is Fantasy,” Brian Laetz and Joshua Johnston say there are four important things to consider:

First, fantastic narratives are fictional. [...] Second, the sort of things that can make a work fantastic, like wizards and dragons, must be prominent in the work—they cannot be minor details. [...] Third, the sort of content that can make a work fantastic must not solely be viewed as symbols for things that are not fantastic. [...] Fourth, the relevant content must not solely be mocked or lampooned within the work. (Laetz and Johnston 162).

Within fantasy there is parody that mocks the stereotypical roles into which characters are thrown. The characteristics are exaggerated but the world is bound by certain rules, as in any other fantasy. Fantasy is ruled by “[m]agic [that] produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration in the Primary World. It does not matter by whom it is said to be practised, fay or mortal, it

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<sup>10</sup> There are institutions that resemble religious organizations with clear godlike figures or concepts of Light and Dark. For example, the Aes Sedai (Servants of the All) serve the Light and are also the women who control magic in the world of *The Wheel of Time* by Robert Jordan.

remains distinct from the other two; it is not an art but a technique: its desire is *power* in this world, domination of things and wills” (Tolkien 73). Fantasy does not mock the supernatural.

The genre represents the battle between evil and good, where the reader feels secure that regardless of the difficult tasks and almost impossible situations, heroes will save the day. J. R. R. Tolkien calls this *eucatastrophe*, (85) the happy ending that will ensure the triumph of good over evil. Authors may play on how that happy ending is delivered,<sup>11</sup> creating a sense that all can be solved given enough time.

### Subgenres

Fantasy can be divided into several subgenres. Among the most common and well known are high and low fantasy, epic fantasy, dark fantasy, and sword and sorcery. Farah Mendlesohn creates four categories: [t]hese... are determined by the means by which the fantastic enters the narrated world. (Rhetorics of Fantasy, xiv). The categories are *portal-quest*,<sup>12</sup> *immersive fantasy*,<sup>13</sup> *intrusive fantasy*,<sup>14</sup> and *liminal*.<sup>15</sup> (xix-xxiv) She also includes the “irregulars,” which mix traits from the other four categories.

For the purpose of this work, I consider that the subgenres of high and low fantasy can be encompassed in Mendlesohn’s categories. To use Pullman as an example, both *His Dark Materials* and *The Mortal Instruments* belong in the portal-quest. *Northern Lights* has the clearest example of portal, with the appearance of the city of Cittàgazze in the lights of the Aurora. In the other two novels of the series, the characters travel through openings between worlds created by a knife. Lyra imposes a quest on herself when she decides to deliver the

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<sup>11</sup> In *The Inheritance Cycle*, balance is restored but Eragon, the principal character, must abandon friends, his love interest, and his homeland to remain an impartial force in the new governments.

<sup>12</sup>When the characters enter a portal or the moment they start a quest it is considered as the starting point for the supernatural.

<sup>13</sup> “[is] overwhelmingly concerned with the entropy of the world (61), the familiar becomes uncanny.”

<sup>14</sup> Characters start with denial and finally must accept the supernatural.

<sup>15</sup> What is strange in any other circumstance becomes easily accepted, while the familiar turns stranger.

alethiometer. In *City of Bones* there is no clear portal, as only Shadowhunters are able to perceive the supernatural; however, normal humans like Simon cannot enter Shadowhunter places, such as the City of Bones.

The portals are means of traveling between the Primary World and Secondary World.<sup>16</sup> The Primary World is the real world where supernatural events are not supposed to happen. Witches and dragons belong in the Secondary Worlds. However, there are several novels that show that the Primary World is also inhabited by all kinds of creatures. The *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series and its sequel *The Heroes of Olympus* show that gods and creatures from Greek and Roman mythology are still around; *The Wyrd Museum* in London is the hiding place for one of the roots of Yggdrasil against Odin; *Artemis Fowl* fights alongside elves and dwarves against pixies, demons, and Russian Mafia. Sometimes the portals are only meant as doors between the normal world and the supernatural. Platform 9 ¾ in King's Cross is the first step to reach the world of witches and wizards in the Harry Potter series.

The Secondary World is set in an alternate world/dimension where the supernatural is the natural state of things. Not all its inhabitants may have the ability to manipulate magic or there may not be magical creatures. *Sebastian Darke* by Philip Caveney has no supernatural element, unless the buffalope Max's ability to speak is counted, but it is the world as a medieval setting, where magic is acknowledged rather than seen, and the presence of elves. The principal character is half elf.

In portal-quest fantasy, the Secondary World can be accessed from the Primary World and vice versa. Usually the characters from the real world are the ones who travel to the second one; they may return accompanied by inhabitants of the Secondary World. This new place has its

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<sup>16</sup> Terms introduced by Tolkien in his essay "Tree and Leaf."

own rules, which may appear ridiculous or unintelligible to those of the Primary World. To survive in the new environment fast adaptation is required.

The principal character of the genre is the hero, or antihero in some cases, who is given the task to bring balance to the world. He or she is the only one able to do it, because the hero has a special ability to oppose the enemy. However, not every fantasy text has this duality. In some cases, characters are faced with a supernatural event and must deal with the consequences.

The antagonist sometimes can be a more complex character; his reasons for opposing the hero can produce empathy.<sup>17</sup> When the story is placed in a secondary world, usually the antagonist belongs, or previously travelled, to this secondary place. The enemy is one of the principal reasons heroes are forced to travel between worlds. The final confrontation with the hero is the only method of bringing balance. In the cases where the antagonist is not a clear entity,<sup>18</sup> in very general terms it can be considered that the problem is the moral decision that a character must take to solve the problem. In *Dragonflight* by Anne McCaffrey a parasite plant is threatening to destroy life. The fire of dragons is the only thing able to destroy this threat; but the population has decreased after years of almost no danger and the mysterious disappearance of several hundreds of riders and dragons a few centuries previous. Lessa faces the mistrust of the inhabitants as riders' efforts are insufficient.

There are other characters that play an important role in the genre, such as the mentor, love interest, and (magical) companions. The role of these particular characters is to introduce heroes and heroines to their mission, explain their powers, and introduce them in the rules of the supernatural, more so if it occurs in the Secondary World.

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<sup>17</sup> “*Dark Lord*. There is always one of these in the background... attempting to ruin everything and take over the world. He will be so sinister that he will be seen by you only once or twice, probably near the end... [Y]ou will not be surprised to find he is black and shadowy and probably not wholly human. ...” (Jones 50).

<sup>18</sup> Spirit, human, elf, dragon or alien race, to mention a few examples.

I consider that the most important novels in the fantasy genre are *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*. *Lord...* has served as an example for later novels; some imitate the creatures or inhabitants of the worlds, such as dwarves and elves, or the quest where a powerful object must be recovered and/or destroyed.

Harry Potter's fame brought fantasy to greater attention and publicity. Several books were published attempting to replicate *Harry Potter's* success, using Rowling's work as a standard, promising greater quality or provoking the same enthusiasm for adventure. Blurbs are added to fantasy novels where reviewers and well-known authors praise the new book comparing it to *Harry Potter*, for good or bad. Potter's renown has reawakened the interest for fantasy, which led to a wider acceptance of the genre. The books are still very recent but references to them appear in all kind of genres and the series is becoming an icon,<sup>19</sup> easily recognizable by any contemporary reader of fantasy. The heroes of both Tolkien's and Rowling's novels have shortcomings,<sup>20</sup> and yet are the most influential in the genre.

There are other novels that can represent the genre, such as in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time*, C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, among others. These series have inspired other novels and also played an important role in developing the fantasy genre, but most authors take *Lord of the Rings* as forefather of the genre.<sup>21</sup> The success, mostly economic, of *Harry Potter* helped the genre to gain attention and

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<sup>19</sup> In January of 2014, during a diplomatic discussion between China and Japan, Voldemort was used as insult.

<sup>20</sup> Frodo is overcome by the Ring just moments before throwing it into Mount Doom, while Harry is very vain and reckless.

<sup>21</sup> But "*The Lord of the Rings* seems, with each passing year, increasingly central to the literature of the twentieth century, establishing a new paradigm for fantasy that has haunted every later writer who has presumed to work in this genre" (Hatlen 76) Hatlen, Burton. "Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, a Challenge to the Fantasies of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, with an Epilogue on Pullman's Neo-Romantic Reading of *Paradise Lost*." Lenz, Millicent and Carole Scott. *His Dark Material Illuminated*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2005. pp. 75-94.

made it more accessible. Afterwards, several novels were adapted in to films<sup>22</sup> and TV series;<sup>23</sup> others were hailed as HP's heirs, such as *Artemis Fowl* and *Tunnels*, in which they would continue a tradition of heroes.

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<sup>22</sup> *Eragon* (2006), *The Seeker: the Dark is Rising* (2007), *Spiderwick Chronicles* (2008), *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010), *Twilight* series (2008-2012), *Ga'Hoole* (2010) *Jack the Giantlayer* (2013), *Vampire Academy* (2014).

<sup>23</sup> *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003-2004)/*Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* (2009-2010); *Avatar The Last Airbender* (2005-2008); *Supernatural* (2005-2014); *The Legend of the Seeker* (2008-2009); *Game of Throne* (2011-2014); *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2014); *Avatar The Legend of Korra* (2012-2014); *Attack on Titan* (2013).

CHAPTER II.  
HERO AND HEROINE

Hero

*Long ago I yearned to be a hero  
without knowing, in truth,  
what a hero was.  
Lloyd Alexander.*

A hero is someone who has reached an idealized state of compassion, humility, and self-mastery. A hero can be admired and feared. At some point this role became an idealized figure that took on very specific qualities. Heroes have changed; some are still warriors but others are the masterminds behind the salvation of the world. Warriors have played an important role in society. “One look at real-life heroes and you realize that they are simply normal people singled out by extraordinary circumstances” (Jak 42). They are there to save all from cruel lords, mad scientists, evil spirits, twisted tyrants, and even against gods. They can discover the weak link in apparent utopias, overthrow abusive rulers, master all kind of powers. The hero is an archetype of the mind that has pervaded from myths to modern days. “The archetypes to be discovered and assimilated are precisely those that have inspired, throughout the annals of human culture, the basic images of ritual, mythology, and vision” (Campbell 14). As archetype, the hero is a figure that will hardly disappear as it is still admired, even if many heroes belong to fantasy settings.

Fantasy is a genre where heroes can show off their skills and earn respect through feats such as defeating dragons, reaching their destinations unscathed while being hunted by armies, and solving prophecies that tell how the enemy can be defeated. However, it is not their powers, skills, or greatness which defines a hero. Heroes have several elements that create the role. They must be virtuous, honourable, and able to understand that their own greatness is only the general perception that they exist for the greater good. Heroes become heroes when they start the hero's journey.

A hero is someone who dares the odds because he believes that there is unbalance in his world. He may have been prophesied, forced by circumstances, or become involuntarily involved, but the moment he chooses to act, it transforms him.

The hero can be considered as an omnipotent figure. He may not be the most powerful being in his world, but he achieves all the ideals, surpasses expectations, and earns the respect of his elders. Within certain limits he seems limitless, as there is no task that he cannot fulfil. The achievements and perfection are what has made the hero such an idealized archetype.

The stereotype of what a hero is supposed to be involves fame, easy adventures, fortune, and being the most handsome. This ideal is undermined in *A Game of Thrones* “[S]he'd been sure she was about to see Old Nan's stories come to life. Ser Gregor was the monster and Ser Loras the true hero who would slay him. He even *looked* a true hero, so slim and beautiful, with golden roses around his slender waist and his rich brown hair tumbling down into his eyes” (Martin 472-473). The stories the hero has heard, and the fantasy novels in a game of intertextuality, present the hero as perfect, which forces him into a role model figure. The hero has to discover what it really means to be a hero. In reality, heroism is all about responsibility and making the hard right choices. The hero learns to cope with the situation and shoulder those



responsibilities. Even if he is motivated by rewards by the end of it, he may still feel unworthy of boons.

The hero is anyone willing to sacrifice all, one who dares to test his limits, one who can risk losing everything and expect nothing in return. He may find himself doubting his resolve, but he does not abandon his task. Every task and test shows his true nature; all his efforts will protect someone else and bring balance to the world.

### Who Is a Hero?

In general terms, heroes have been delimited to certain behaviours that correspond with his good intentions. The stereotype of the hero is that of a kind person ready to lay down his life for someone else and fight any threat. It is after this great achievement that he becomes a hero, a title conceded by society. “The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms” (Campbell 14). The hero has passed through all kinds of tests; his values, ideals, physical strength, and skills have been taken to the limit without failure. He may have committed mistakes, but he has proven himself.

### Traits of Heroes

A hero's behaviour seems to be set by kindness and humbleness. The story may start with a proud man that has been marked for something greater; the hero's journey transforms him. A curious transformation appears when the character does not decide consciously to behave kindly; rather, his actions are kind. The hero has every reason not to take responsibility against every extraordinary event that could kill him; his choice to act defines him. He decides to sacrifice personal gains for everyone else. “Most of us are lucky not to be Kings and Heroes because we do not have to make the choices that Kings and Heroes have to make” (Cowell, *How to Betray a*

*Dragon's Hero* 24). Hiccup's actions are not done because he will be admired, simply because it is the right thing to do. Harry Potter exhibits the same quality.

Harry looked from Cedric to the Cup. For one shining moment, he saw himself emerging from the maze, holding it. He saw himself holding the Triwizard Cup aloft, heard the roar of the crowd, saw Cho's face shining with admiration, more clearly than he had ever seen it before... and then the picture faded, and he found himself staring at Cedric's shadowy, stubborn face.

'Both of us,' Harry said.

'What?'

'We'll take it at the same time. It's still a Hogwarts victory. We'll tie for it.' (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire* 555).

Harry Potter shares his victory with a classmate against the temptation to be the sole champion.

As the youngest, and under age, competitor, his victory would have been a proof of his superiority. But he turns things by deciding that such honor is not what he wants. Potter, as a hero, falls into the stereotype of a good person. This tends to give an aura of perfection.

However, heroes also have flaws and commit terrible mistakes. The Triwizard Cup is a portkey<sup>24</sup> transporting both boys into Lord Voldemort's trap. Cedric is killed as he is unnecessary for Voldemort. Harry's good action works against him, as he carries guilt for Cedric's death.

However, heroes can redeem themselves by their actions and ultimately, by sacrifice, give their most valuable possession<sup>25</sup> or their life. In the last book of the series, Harry goes willingly to his death if it will save everyone.

#### External Factors

A hero is usually marked since birth for great deeds. Prophecies announce his coming to save the world. In other cases, his ancestry proclaims his power for redemption. Heroes are born from ancient or royal families, but may not be aware of it. As part of the process of becoming a

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<sup>24</sup> Magical object that transports people from one place to another.

<sup>25</sup> This object ranges from weapons and jewels to feelings and memories.

hero, he learns about himself and what he can do. His origins may play a very important role as it may give weapons or powers specific to his family. Percy Jackson is the son of Poseidon, so his powers are related to the ocean. He can control seas and rivers, be healed with contact to water, create storms, and communicate with sea animals. Percy cannot inherit his father's throne, but he can influence the gods of Olympus because of his achievements in the Titan War.

The hero is raised without knowing his origins for several reasons. Usually he has been abandoned by his parents, stolen by an antagonist, his parents are dead, or the family has forgotten its ancient lineage. Then he is raised by humble strangers or a relative. The relative can be aware of certain aspects of the hero's destiny. This relative may prepare the hero or try to hide his abilities. In the case of the stranger, this person can be entirely unprepared to help the hero or may become the mentor. In *Prydain Chronicles*, Taran is raised by Dalben, a powerful enchanter, without Dalben knowing who the boy is. "I could not have told you your of your parentage, even had I wished to," Dalben continued, "for I knew it no more that you did. ... As you grew to manhood, so our hopes grew, though never could we be certain you were the child born to be High King" (Alexander 240-241). There are several exceptions where the parents are alive and may know the hero's destiny. However, they do not influence the hero as much as the mentor. Artemis Fowl rescues his father, never telling him what really happened. His mother suspects some of the things he has done. The mentor usually plays the role of fatherly figure, but in a few cases, the parents act as mentors.<sup>26</sup>

The lineage gives the hero the right to rule people and bring balance; as Campbell states, the hero "is the 'king's son' who has come to know who he is and therewith has entered into the

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<sup>26</sup> An example can be found in the two versions of *How to Train Your Dragon*. The book presents Old Wrinkly, Hiccup's grandfather, as the hero's mentor. He supports Hiccup's eccentricities, even finding explanations for them. The movie adaptation makes Stoick, the father, a mentor. Hiccup is one of the few heroes who is aware of his true parentage, and future responsibilities as heir, but his destiny remains a mystery.

exercise of his proper power” (31). The hero represents justice, which he starts to enforce with his actions. When the hero is a future king, the other characters come to him for justice, to solve squabbles or divide lands. The hero’s victory also affects the world physically. Winter, scarce food, and sickness abate, affected by the hero’s passage. Sometimes the hero must bring an object or create a spell to heal the land, resulting in the rebirth of the land.

The hero is usually ignorant of his true identity and is completely unaware of his role and powers. He starts by learning to control his powers or how to use weapons, to be able to survive in any environment. While the hero is too young or vulnerable, there is someone to protect him. As the hero learns of his tasks, his ideals are transformed, lending him the strength to be able to sacrifice everything for the greater good. In some cases, the hero does not believe he is the chosen one and may point to his inabilities. The reluctant hero may point his weaknesses and mistakes against more experienced people and doubt himself as he does not fit the idealized role model. However, it is one of his overlooked abilities that saves the rest of the group, in most cases. In *DragonCrown War* by Michael Stackpole, Will is the illegitimate son of a noble who was thought to be the prophesied hero. Will is the one who fits the prophecy but is rather reluctant to become the hero. He pays the least attention to his mentor’s teaching, angering nobles and princes. However, he saves a dragon that Will’s father-turned-minion tries to kill, proving his truly heroic nature. He is transformed into a golem losing his own will, but he does it willingly. It is at the worst moment when the heroic nature surfaces, which may include strong resolutions or the discovery of new powers. Hiccup, in *How to Betray a Dragon’s Hero*, provides insight into the hero’s awakening: “It may not look like it, as he lies there, broken on the beach, having lost the things, having lost Toothless, having lost everything, but this was the moment the Hero was made” (Cowell 363).

## Heroic Flaws

Sometimes, the hero is absolutely unprepared to face his responsibilities. Eragon<sup>27</sup> as the last Dragonrider has a basic understanding of magic language and accidentally curses a baby; all free kingdoms and rebels try to force him into fealty. Even his training as Dragonrider is basic. It is only after he is mentored by Oromis that Eragon finally can master his arts and himself to face friends and foes.

There are vain and humble heroes, but all enjoy the attention they earn through their exploits. However, the effect the path has on the hero changes the perspective of friends and observers. His companions may have granted the hero some leadership of the company or over armies. The hero is careful, but still may take reckless action, confident of his power. If he is only recognized for his actions and not given new missions, the hero is far more reckless because he has vanity and wants to prove his invincibility. *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn* by Tad Williams has Simon knighted after rescuing a lost sword. He is bored after the king does not give him new missions or ask him to be part of the council. He escapes the encampment to search for the princess and gain more fame. In Rowling's series, Harry is angry after seeing Voldemort come back and being left behind by the Order of the Phoenix. He feels he knows more than everyone, he has to be consulted.

YOU'VE STILL BEEN TOGETHER! ME, I'VE BEEN STUCK AT THE DURSLEYS' FOR A MONTH! AND I'VE HANDLED MORE THAN YOU TWO'VE EVER MANAGED AND DUMBLEDORE KNOWS IT – WHO SAVED THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE? WHO GOT RID OF RIDDLE? WHO SAVED BOTH YOUR SKINS FROM THE DEMENTORS?' (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 78).

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<sup>27</sup> *Inheritance Cycle*

The hero is not wise, at the beginning. It is after the final battle that true wisdom is achieved. The hero is intelligent, but his youth makes him reckless. His state of innocence is perhaps one of the most important aspects of his character. He is trusting and, up to a point, quite gullible. The innocence is a bit dependent on his ignorance. If he was raised in a very secluded place, the outside world appears wonderfully dangerous. The innocence allows him to empathize with the antagonist, which can be the only way to defeat the enemy. The hero is not exempt from vices, which are redeemable by sacrifice. Artemis sacrifices his life, in *The Last Guardian*.<sup>28</sup> He uses his superior intelligence to achieve his own ends; little by little his goals encompass the wellbeing of others and ultimately that of the world. “The green mist was sucked backward into the Berserker Gate as though drawn by a vacuum. For a moment Artemis was left standing, unharmed, and Butler dropped Holly to rush to his charge’s side. Then Artemis’s fairy eye glowed green, and by the time Butler caught the falling boy in his arms, Artemis Fowl’s body was already dead” (326). Artemis pays with his life for any crime he may have committed. But his actions are not consciously made for redemption; all he cares about is to save his family, friends, and the world. The hero’s sacrifice is never meant for himself, but for the greater good.

The hero is a natural leader. He can lead thousands of men from atop a horse or lead a small band through enemy’s territory without abusing his authority. However, there are heroes that take by force the mantle of authority. Their reasons are pure, but in the eyes of everyone else, they are transformed into monsters, the new tyrants. When the hero is forced to this, it is because there are no more options to ensure the safety of the people. Lelouch, in the anime *Code Geass*, makes a coup d’état against his father, defeats the rebel army he had raised, and kidnaps several leaders and government officials of small nations to become a symbol of hate and truly

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<sup>28</sup> Deceiving Opal, the archenemy for most of the series, Artemis ends trapped in a magical portal as he has a fairy eye after all his time traveling experiences.

unify his world. At the end of the anime he stages his own death with his friend, seemingly turned loyal knight of the Emperor. Suzaku dons the Zero costume, created by Lelouch when he started his rebellion, to murder Lelouch as he parades his defeated captives.

The hero faces his dark self in the antagonist. The antagonist represents all the doubts and vices of the hero, but the hero's moral standard and choices set him apart. The hero may question himself, whether his actions are worthwhile or if there really is a difference between him and the antagonist. Harry Potter wonders about this as he finds several similitudes with Voldemort;<sup>29</sup> and Harry was almost placed in Slytherin, Voldemort's house. Dumbledore sets the definition of hero's actions when he says, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 245).

The hero is not comfortable in his role as tyrant, when he plays the part, but his commitment is strong and he is willing to sacrifice his morals to achieve his ends. His ideals become symbols. Power for the sake of power is never the goal. Heroes earn power rather than search for it. In contrast, the antihero may wish for power.

#### Antihero

On the other hand, antiheroes are less in the spotlight than heroes. They also work for the balance and are willing to sacrifice their lives. But their flaws are more notorious than their virtues. "The anti-hero's all-too-realistic-shortcomings are totally forgivable, especially when his repressed code of honor is allowed to blossom" (Jak 49). The antihero is interested in personal gain or at least claim for a recompense, which he may reject afterwards. Antiheroes can transform into heroes by redeeming past actions or transforming their goals.

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<sup>29</sup> Both are orphans, have dark hair, and are able to speak Parseltongue (language of snakes).

Antiheroes can also share traits with antagonists. Artemis Fowl is the main antagonist through the first two books, as he wishes to steal the elves' gold and at first only cooperates against a criminal pixie in exchange for help to rescue his father.

Luffy, as previously mentioned, is a pirate who is not interested in being a hero. However, all his actions make him one. He saves towns and kingdoms, expecting nothing in return, simply because someone from the attacked place asks for help. He is loyal to his crew and does not care to defy the authority when one of them is taken prisoner. This action is double edged. He is a pirate, which implies he must defy authority, but the government is corrupt and the charges against Robin are unfair.<sup>30</sup> Luffy is a reluctant hero. Another hero who is defined by his actions is Lelouch, from *Code Geass*, an exiled prince who wants revenge against his father for the attack that left his sister paralyzed. The moment he obtains a power that allows him to order anyone into doing whatever he wants, his coup d'état starts with a rebel group. However, his success gives hope to all the tyrannized people, which begins to change the politics of the entire world. He discovers that what he started is bigger than the love for his sister or his revenge. He sacrifices his life to achieve peace.

Lelouch and Luffy can be seen as antiheroes, but it is their commitment to their causes that proves their status. Heroes are willing to give everything they have to achieve the greater good.

#### Mentor and Magical Helper

The hero is guided by an older and wiser person, usually a man. This mentor is the guide to the unknown; he has gone before along this path, but for one reason or other he has failed.<sup>31</sup> He is a

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<sup>30</sup> She has been hunted for 20 years because she is the last archaeologist able to decipher *poneghlyps*, the language of a lost civilization, but also because she is the only survivor of a massacre and its witness.

<sup>31</sup> In *Prydain Chronicles* by Lloyd Alexander Tarrant was not the prophesied hero, however he was far better prepared than everyone else. Tarrant had faced his dark self; In *Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf's source of power does not allow



fatherly figure who can protect and nourish the hero. “That which has to be faced, and is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious— though unknown—, surprising, and even frightening to the conscious personality— makes itself known; and what formerly was meaningful may become strangely emptied of value...” (Campbell 46). The mentor has all the knowledge the hero lacks and needs to survive. The mentor’s prowess is on a par with that of the antagonist, and he becomes the role model for the hero. The mentor has a limit as to how much knowledge he can impart. It is common to find the death of the mentor, an occurrence that forces the hero to take responsibility or assume leadership.

The stereotypical mentor has inherited Gandalf’s traits as an old wise man. There are a few exceptions where the mentor is a female, such as in *The Wheel of Time* where Moiraine Damodred starts the search for the Dragon Reborn. Susan Price places, in the case of *Elfgift*, Jarnseaxa. She trains Elfgift to recover his throne and teaches him magic. *Septimus Heap* by Angie Sage has Marcia Overstrand, who is the first to notice Septimus’ powers; before his true identity is discovered, she trains him to be her successor. Another kind of exception is the case of the *Nightrunner* series; here, the mentor is an older man who is also the love interest of Alec. “For the ogre aspect of the father is a reflex of the victim’s own ego— derived from the sensational nursery scene that has been left behind, but projected before; and fixating idolatry of that pedagogical nothing is itself the fault that keeps one steeped in a scene of sin, sealing the potentially adult spirit from a better balanced, more realistic view of the father, and therewith of the world” (Campbell 107). The mentor represents a kinder fatherly figure, without the threat of annihilating the hero, but allowing him to surpass the mentor’s experience.

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him to interfere directly in the world. In *Harry Potter*, Dumbledore found himself tempted by power and decided to step down from any powerful position. Dumbledore failed in his use of the *Deathly Hallows*. Whereas Harry used them to strengthen his resolve and protect his loved ones.

A character inherited from fairy tales is the magical helper. In fantasy, the magic helper can be an object, a person, or an animal. In some cases, it is the magical person who introduces the hero to the secondary world or reveals the presence of the supernatural. The magical helper can also serve as the hero's sidekick. Grover is Percy's protector and the one forced to reveal the existence of Greek gods, demigods, and monsters.

### Heroic Path

Traditionally the hero starts a journey that should bring out the best of him, which in turn will represent the greater good that is needed to bring balance to the world. The hero must stand against evil. The evil, represented by the antagonist, threatens that which the hero respects and tends to represent.<sup>32</sup> In *The Hero of a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell defines the aspects of the hero's journey, present in every myth and legend. Campbell develops the archetype and how it is present in each myth.

The path of the hero takes him through tests that reveal the true nature of the hero. His humility, helpful attitude, and willingness to sacrifice are tested through events that seem like quests or adventures. The hero may be rewarded for his actions; this is an element taken from fairy tales, where the antagonist may rebuke an old lady receiving some sort of punishment, while the hero receives gifts or counsel that may serve him further on.

The heroic path includes several events, which can be simplified as follows: the call to adventure; search or rescue into underground; learning/controlling powers/knowledge; and final confrontation with the antagonist. These elements can be more metaphorical in the sense that the hero may never leave a specific place, but when he gets involved in a situation, it means his call to adventure. The series *Tunnels* occurs mostly underground, in this case; when Will is forced to

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<sup>32</sup> The hero can represent order, law, and peace, to mention some concepts.

go much deeper and starts to find some information about the antagonists, it can be considered as the underground element.

### Call to Adventure

The call to adventure starts when the hero decides to take action. This varies depending on the situation of the hero. The adventure may start when he crosses a portal accidentally, escapes from servitude, or learns a bit about his origins. The hero has to adapt quickly to understand the new world or reinterpret his own world with the perspective of the supernatural. The appearance of the supernatural prompts the call to adventure. Usually the mere existence of the hero is interrelated with the problems, for example the unbalance of magic. It may take some time for the hero to learn of his role, but even unconsciously every action has an effect. By his actions, he discovers the dark side of the world; the protected environment in which he lived is under threat if he does not act. "The first stage of the mythological journey ... signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and has transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (Campbell 48). The hero has only seen one side of reality. If a slave, he discovers the beauty of freedom and wishes to protect it. If a spoiled prince, he faces poverty and desires to alleviate it. The antagonist, in contrast, would do nothing to change this regardless of his own situation; he would act only to better his own comfort.

The hero starts to discover his world, expanding his understanding of it while finally facing all kinds of dangers. It is part of his growing process, one that can force him to take cruel actions- For example, in *Blood of the Fold* Richard says: "What kind of plans would the Master Rahl have? I plan to conquer the world" (Goodkind 93). Richard, Master Rahl, takes advantage of his title<sup>33</sup> to force the Midlands into submission. This action is perceived by almost everyone

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<sup>33</sup> Equivalent of emperor for the D'Haran Empire.

as the common struggle for power of D'Hara. He gives an ultimatum: they join or they will be conquered by force. However, his conquests are not for power, but rather to ensure the loyalty of the people and in exchange protect them from Dream Walkers, specifically from Emperor Jagang, who otherwise would be able to infiltrate people's minds.

## Underground

One of the most important aspects on the hero's path is the underground experience. In most cases, the hero has to recover an object that will help him in his mission. However, it is an aspect of fantasy that defines the hero. The underground confronts him with moral decisions and forces him to make a stand. "And so it happens that if anyone – in whatever society– undertakes for himself the perilous journey into the darkness by descending, either intentionally or unintentionally, into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth, he soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolical figures (any of which may swallow him), which is no less marvellous than the wild..." (Campbell 84). It can be represented as the hero battling his own darkness. The hero sees his dark self through meditation or the magic properties of a place that materialize the darker self. "For the story we have been part of, it turns out, has not just been about the making of a Hero, but also the making of a villain" (Cowell, *How to Steal a Dragon's Sword* 313). By these means, the hero discovers the similarities he shares with the antagonist and defines himself.<sup>34</sup>

... 'We *are* your friends.'

Even as he said it, Percy felt like a liar. He'd left Bob in the Underworld and hadn't given him a thought since. What made them friends? The fact that Percy needed him now? Percy always hated it when the gods used him for their errands. Now Percy was treating Bob the same way. (Riordan, *The House of Hades* 231).

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<sup>34</sup> Some examples of heroes and villains sharing traits would be Harry Potter with Tom Riddle, who later becomes Voldemort. Luke Skywalker fights himself in Dagoba. Similar is Naruto meditating in front of a fall that allows the dark self to question the self.

The battle with the self is one of the most appealing traits of the hero. It represents the acceptance of one's failures and of the dangers of darkness. It is the edge that can transform a hero into antagonist and vice versa. "The hero whether god or goddess, man or woman, the figure in a myth or the dreamer of a dream, discovers and assimilates his opposite (his own unsuspected self) either by swallowing or being swallowed... Then he finds that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one flesh" (Campbell 89). The character is tested through his own virtues; he can be as cruel as the antagonist, as Percy misbehaved, until he reveals his failures. The antagonist does not try to amend his errors, whereas the hero does. This is the principal difference; the hero knows he has a choice and takes it.

#### Final Battle

The hero knows he has made mistakes but he can choose to follow a moral code, having a choice in his actions. He must understand and accept that everything has a consequence, and fighting for others, even if it means his own destruction, is worthwhile. The greater good surpasses his personal desires and doubts.

"The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died" (Campbell 74). The hero does come out of the underground. He could have given up at that point, but if he passes the hero is committed to his mission. It does not assure his victory, but makes a difference in his attitude. The underground passage looks as if it will mean victory to the antagonist due to the uncertainty of the hero coming out, and for the hero's supporters it can test their faith, as in this passage in *Deathly Hallows*:

“Harry Potter is dead. He was killed as he ran away, trying to save himself while you lay down your lives for him. We bring you his body as proof that your hero is gone.’

[...] He waited. Any moment, the people for whom he had tried to die would see him, lying apparently dead, in Hagrid’s arms” (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 728-729).

After a series of trials the hero has proven himself and is ready to face his antagonist. He has gained all weapons and has his powers under control. And he is there of his own will. He is not looking for revenge for all he has lost, but seeking to protect his loved ones and bring balance.<sup>35</sup> The battle may require sacrifices, he may lose his powers while defeating the antagonist, and the hero is changed. He is never going to be the same person ever again.<sup>36</sup>

#### Conclusion

The hero is a character that has defined our cultural values. He is the one that will keep our society safe.

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<sup>35</sup> Simon, *Memory, Sorrow and Thorn*.

<sup>36</sup> Darren Shan is transformed into a *Little People*, a soul re-stitched into a body, after he dies defying Destiny. If he had won the battle, he would have a fulfilled a prophecy to destroy the world. Destiny makes a deal with Darren and gives him a chance to set the outcome of the battle in someone else. Darren is one of the heroes who passes through a greater change, which is a sacrifice he willingly gives to ensure the final victory for someone else. “The key events of the past can’t be changed, but the people in it can. [...] While I couldn’t alter the course of my history, I could remove myself from it” (Shan, *Sons of Destiny* 2194).

## Heroine

*I wonder if he thinks he's  
the hero or the villain?  
J. R. R. Tolkien.*

### Introduction.

The heroine stands between several roles, that of a special person who has the power to defeat dark forces, a fighter who trusts only herself, or even the companion of heroes. The way she faces the threats has changed; modern heroines are warriors who fight on their own, in comparison with older characters that depended on others to fight while their powers defeated the antagonist. While the hero is rarely a passive person, heroines are creating their own model in fantasy and science fiction. *The Hunger Games* is one of the most well known examples of the changes. Katniss is an excellent archer and can easily survive on her own. Peeta, her companion and love interest during the Hunger Games, learns some skills but turns to her for support and protection in some cases.<sup>37</sup> The hero has gained female companions who support him instead of just waiting to be rescued. Annabeth is the voice of reason for Percy Jackson; Kahlan introduces Richard to the lands beyond the boundaries; Terelle helps Shale to expand his powers.<sup>38</sup> The inclusion of Tauriel in the film adaptation of *The Hobbit* develops the idea of the female as warrior. However, women have not gained all the characteristics of heroes. Some heroines still remain passive and some can be questioned in their methods, even within antiheroic traits. The female archetype of the hero is less defined or still ambiguous.

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<sup>37</sup> “I’ve nine arrows left in all. I debate leaving the knife with Peeta so he’ll have some protection while I’m gone, but there’s really no point. He was right about camouflage being his final defense but I still might have use for the knife” (*The Hunger Games* Collins L 3261).

<sup>38</sup> *Percy Jackson* by Rick Riordan; *The Sword of Truth* by Terry Goodkind; *Stormlord* by Glenda Larke

*The Heroine's Journey* by Maureen Murdock, while not focused on the supernatural aspect of heroes, places part of woman's failure in her desire to follow the same steps as men. "I knew that the stages of the heroine's journey incorporated aspects of the journey of the hero, but I felt that the focus of female spiritual development was to heal the internal split between woman and her feminine nature" (Murdock 2). Murdock integrates some aspects of the hero's journey and adds her own.

Science fiction has drawn attention towards heroines with examples such as the trilogy *Divergent*. Fantasy is still creating the archetype, from previous examples and playing with the heroic ideal. In the last years, several YA series have been published focusing on a supernatural aspect. In most cases, the principal character finds something uncommon and from that point becomes involved. Or she may follow a mysterious person who may reveal to her an innate power.

Who Is a Heroine?

**HEROES.** These are mythical beings, often selected at birth, who perform amazing deeds of courage, strength, and magical mayhem, usually against huge odds. The Rule is that the Hero is always Out There. If you get to meet a so-called Hero, she/he always turns out to be just another human, with human failings, who has happened to be in the right place at the right time (or the wrong place at the wrong time, most likely) (Jones, 88).

A heroine has the same goals as the hero: she is willing to sacrifice all for the greater good. She faces any danger to bring the balance, regardless of the danger to herself or the things she could lose. However, the hero path, the construction of the character and the rewards, if present, are quite different from those of the male counterpart. The final rewards are not the same. The hero gains thrones and, most of the time, a wife. In fairy tales, the hero has faced several tests to gain the hand of a princess. The heroine of fairy tales has to regain the trust of her husband, one who



chose her for her beauty, and in some cases for her intelligence.<sup>39</sup> The modern heroine is set on the edge; while some follow a traditional role and marry, some completely reject marriage.

The meeting with the goddess (who is incarnate in every woman) is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love (charity: *amor fati*), which is life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity.

And when the adventurer, in this context, is not a youth but a maid, she is the one who, by her qualities, her beauty, or her yearning is fit to become the consort of an immortal. Then the heavenly husband descends to her and conducts her to his bed— whether she will or no. (Campbell 99).

Katniss states several times that she would not want to marry anyone; for the sake of the appearances and to win the Hunger Games, she takes part in the farce of marrying Peeta. At the end, she discovers she truly loves him, granting his wish to have children. “But Peeta wanted them so badly. When I first felt her stirring inside of me, I was consumed with a terror that felt as old as life itself. ... Carrying him was a little easier, but not much” (Collins L 15144). On the other hand, in *Graceling*, Katsa only takes a lover as her only solution to not having children and marrying. “She couldn’t have him, and there was no mistaking it. She could never be his wife. [...] belong to another person, be answerable to another person, build her very being around another person. No matter how she loved him” (Cashore 233). The heroine finds part of her definition is through the power someone else has over her. In these two examples, marriage is interpreted as power; Katniss complies against her own wishes, while Katsa will not surrender in any way. “Women who have seen their mothers as superstitious, religious, or old-fashioned discard the murky, mysterious, magical aspects of the feminine for cool and logic and analysis. A chasm is created between the heroine and the maternal qualities within her...” (Murdock 23). The possibilities for the heroine are extremes; accepting or rejecting motherhood/marriage is an act which in and of itself defines what they could become.

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<sup>39</sup> “The Six Swans,” Brothers Grimm. In this short story, the youngest sister must weave shirts with nettles to save her brothers, cursed to transform in swans.

## Traits of Heroines

As saviour of the world, she is faced with her moral code, which is constantly tested. Her perspective can modify the way she faces her world and her internal self to fulfil her role. A heroine is anyone who discovers that the greater good surpasses her personal goals. In *Vampire Academy* series, Rose becomes aware of her role: “It truly, truly hit me then that I was in the real world. Fear slammed into me. I’d taken on the title of guardian when I graduated, but had really understood what it meant? ... There would be no detention for this. This was real. This was life and death” (Mead, *Spirit Bound* 203). As any heroic character, there comes a sobering moment that contrasts beliefs with the real consequences of every action. She must realise what she fights for and how will be judged by everyone, to be taken as example or as a revolutionary. The heroine must realise this to grow into her role or otherwise fail.

The heroine relates to her world differently; perhaps based on the character’s experiences, she finds it difficult to empathize. For *A College of Magics*; “What Faris liked best about Greenlaw was that no one paid her the least attention. She took Odile’s advice about keeping to herself” Stevermer 24). Faris’ approach is through strength; whatever threatens her, she thinks she has to second-guess other’s actions and attack first. Or she misunderstands the situation. Sometimes her heroic path forces her to reevaluate her ground. In *Brave*, Merida only perceives her possible marriage from her own perspective; she hardly tries to evaluate the consequences for the kingdom. She needs to feel independent and rarely asks for help. The heroine has to define herself within her world or society. As she discovers her role as heroine, she can be limited by the stereotypes or laws of her society. Her actions may be praised, but also she feels bounded towards how she is regarded by others. Her age or experience can also be held against her. The hero seldom faces these problems of the heroine. Tsunade, the Hokage and one of the most

powerful ninjas,<sup>40</sup> fights a reincarnated Madara<sup>41</sup> with the help of four other Kages. Madara easily deflects her attacks. He says that her powers may be similar to those of her ancestor, but she is weaker and “only a woman” (Kishimoto 20-23).

The heroine does not actively participate in government, or have any force to change the opinions of the ruling powers. If she is a princess or has any rank, it turns out to be that she is underage with no true power. The adults in her life make the important decisions; they may inform her or not. Her prowess and real power are found in her actions to bring balance, set justice, and serve as moral example against the opinion/law of most adults. Korra in *The Legend of Korra*, as the Avatar, is a respected figure. She has the attention of the President of Republic City and the Councilmen who represent the other Element-Nations, but she is dismissed based on her age. She is useful as a symbol; she resents their treatment of her and usually ends doing things her way. Her status as Avatar also prevents her from being a ruler; she is a neutral force.

The heroine has to prove herself fighting stereotypes or defining how she wants to fit in her society. She is seen as a rebel, because her goal is the greater good. Any injustice grates against her moral code.

#### External Factors

The prophecy<sup>42</sup> sets the same destiny for the heroine as for the hero. It marks the heroine’s coming and the roles she has to fulfil. It is up to the heroine to allow the prophecy to control her. In *Beautiful Creatures* Lena lives in fear of the prophecy that sets her future for good or evil.

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<sup>40</sup> Title given to the leader of the ninjas in Konohagakure, setting for *Naruto*.

<sup>41</sup> A ninja feared for his powers who was against the creation of ninja villages.

<sup>42</sup> **PROPHECY** is used by the Management to make sure that no Tourist is unduly surprised by events, and by **GODDESSES AND GODS** to make sure people do as the deity wants. All Prophecies come true. (Jones 150-151).

The prophecy marks the heroine with all kinds of special signs, but it is up to her to prove she is The One. The prophecy reveals the person, but does not make a heroine. In *The Naming*, Maerad is saved from slavery by Cadvan, who suspects she is the person named in an old prophecy because she shows extraordinary powers and descends from a disappeared Bard House<sup>43</sup>.

*“I, Lanorgil of Pellinor, here set down my dream, so that those to come may know of it when I have gone through the Gates to the Uncircled Open. [...] A mist obscures the bright river, a mist on which no eye can fasten its sight, a mist that confuses the brave, and casts down the [...] small in fear and trembling. ... All is in darkness and despair: corruption assails the High Seats of Annar, and those who truly follow the light are cast into shadow. Seek then one who comes Speechless from the Mountains: a Bard unschooled and yet of this School. Seek and cherish the Fire Lily, the Fated One, which blooms fairer in dark places and sleepeth long in darkness; from such root will blossom the White Flame anew, when I seems its seed is poisoned in the center. Note the Sign and be not Blind! In the Name of the Light and in anxiety for the Speech, whose roots lie in the Treesong that nourishes all. Thus spake the Voices of Dream to Lanorgil, on this Dhorday, seventh of the month of Luminil, in the year 316 in the Annaren calendar” (Croggon 170-171).*

Maerad’s ignorance, a product of her upbringing, could have prevented her from becoming the heroine, regardless of her power. It is her actions and decisions that prove her status, which reveals to her the duties inherent to her role.

Whether the heroic figure has been foreseen or not, the coming of the heroine is an anticipated event as it will bring changes and freedom for the enslaved, or simply a kinder future. The prophecy plays an important role because it confirms the possibility of a heroine, makes it easier to identify her, but above all promises that everything will be better someday. It is the promise of the *eucatastrophe*.

Like the hero, the heroine can belong to an old lineage or not be connected to a lineage at all. However, I consider that her lineage has less weight within her society compared to the hero.

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<sup>43</sup> In the series of Pellinor Bards are not singers but a sort of magician.

If anything, it only underlines that she is different from others. Her rank means privilege, but very few characters act deferentially. If her parentage is unknown, after learning of it, she still is treated as a commoner. Most heroes are forced to place a certain barrier for their rank, even against their own humility, but for the sake of hierarchy. In *Graceling*, “Whatever the Graceling Lady Katsa might be, she was not a criminal who lurked around dark courtyards at midnight, disguised. And besides, she was supposed to be en route east. Her uncle Randa, King of the Middluns, had seen her off just that morning, the whole city watching, with Captain Oll and Giddon...” (Cashore 9-10). Her actions define her in the others’ eyes rather than her ascendance, and most of the kingdom’s people recognize her as the king’s assassin, an activity forced by her unique power. Katsa’s lineage may carry some weight in certain circumstances, but against the rest of her actions, it is one of her lesser attributes. Quite early in the novel, she abandons all royalty to find her own role.

Discovering her inheritance is as much as a reward for the heroine as for the hero. But while the hero is certain to rule, the heroine is only left with the knowledge of her ancestry. If she gets to rule, it is left to the imagination of the reader. The film *Tangled* (2010) reveals that Rapunzel is the lost princess, but as her parents are still alive, her only reward is recovering them. Another example is *Laberinto del Fauno* (2006), where a faun comes to Ofelia and reveals to her that she is a princess. She is set a few tasks that will confirm her identity, finally revealing it to be true. The heroine may obtain the throne, but I consider that she does not have the same authority in comparison with heroes. Most heroines allow someone else to take a position of power.

Like the hero, the heroine is raised in an ignorant state. It is the call to adventure that forces her to action, which can be as varied as for heroes. She needs to redress an accusation, save a loved one, or a stranger may discover her powers, if she has them.

### Heroic Flaws

Most heroes become warrior or proficient with weapon,<sup>44</sup> whereas heroines are faced with learning to fight stronger, male, opponents or use their intellect. When facing a female antagonist, the heroine is superior in skill. The heroine is equally strong in magical power, where being female is not a disadvantage.

Usually, heroines are not as proud as their counterparts. In the course of their growing and learning experience, they must discover their true strength. While some heroes may overestimate themselves, heroines are faced with doubts about the trust others place on them. Simon, in *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn*, takes it upon himself to rescue princess Miriamele; he feels that he is not receiving tasks important enough for him. On the other hand, Sophie from *Howl's Moving Castle* seems unaware of her own powers until she sees clear results, while the surrounding characters fear and admire her for her innate powers.

Another difference from the hero is that the heroine's antagonist is a completely different entity from the heroine. While heroes find an uncanny resemblance with their antagonists, coming to doubt their virtues, rarely do heroines face the same self-questioning about their own dark self. Nor is there a double or dark self in most cases.

The heroine's antagonist can be said to be a random character that by any circumstance represents a danger to her. The antagonist rarely has any relation to the heroine by family, teachers, or ideals. The heroine stands against the antagonist because she has the skills or power

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<sup>44</sup> With some exceptions, such as Artemis Fowl who delegates all fighting to his butler and bodyguard, Butler. Or Henry Atherton of *Faerie Wars* by Herbie Brennan, who has basic surviving skills.

to face them. In some cases, a family member may appear to be the antagonist, but later it may be revealed that they were being used by another force. Korra, in the second season of *The Legend of Korra*, discovers her uncle's attempts to destroy the spiritual places of the poles. However, it is revealed that he had been working with the Spirit Vaatu to bring chaos.

The heroine is only faced with darkness if her actions backlash, hurting innocents. Sometimes her temper may get the best of her, allowing her to make rash decisions. But otherwise, she rarely shows any dark tendency. Rose,<sup>45</sup> in *Vampire Academy*, has a unique bond with her friend Lissa that allows Rose to absorb the madness created by Lissa's powers. The madness makes Rose angry and depressed, but it reaches a limit:

I felt what Sonya had warned about: the catalyst. The spark that would ignite the darkness I'd gathered and gathered from Lissa.  
... I sprang at him, fuelled by rage and adrenaline, leaping out of the epicentre of shaking ground that threatened to seize me. Once more, I threw myself at him, but we didn't hit the ground. [...] we hit the concrete wall [...] His head bent at the impact. I heard an odd cracking sound, and Victor slumped to the ground. (Mead 6 450-451).

It takes Rose great effort to regain control of herself. Her friends diminish the importance of the act, after all the manipulation and hurt Victor had placed on Lissa and Rose.

The film *Maleficent* (2014) stands as exception. While the principal character turns to evil and is entirely bent on revenge, her relationship with Aurora turns to be her redemption. But she does not face herself. She comes to regret her actions and wishes to reverse them.

Mentor and Magical Helper.

The mentor figure for the heroine is completely different from the hero paradigm, as the mentor does not represent the father figure, or even the mother. The heroine's mentor is the one

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<sup>45</sup> In this world there are vampires who drink from willing people, the Moroi. Dhampir, the original offspring of human and Moroi, but now of Moroi and Dhampir. The Strigoi kill their victims; they are more like the traditional vampire.

who has the knowledge that she lacks. “The traditional idea of initiation combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties, and prerogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of his emotional relationship to the parental images. The mystagogue (father or father substitute) is to entrust the symbols of office only to a son...” (Campbell 115). The heroine finds guidance in her love interest. The love interest is an experienced man who already belongs to the supernatural world. Or he is far more experienced. In *Vampire Academy*, Dimitri is a highly trained Dhampir who serves as instructor to the younger generations; he offers himself as private instructor for Rose, from which starts his relationship with her.

The relationship starts as that of mentor and student, regardless of the few years of difference, and he is the first to recognize her heroic nature. The mentor motivates the heroine to develop her talents, and in some cases, shows her the hidden physical and emotional strength, which she believes she lacks.

[A] woman wishes to identify with the masculine or to be rescued by the masculine. [...]

Our heroine looks for role models who can show her the steps along the way. These male allies may take the form of a father, boyfriend, teacher, manager, or coach; of the institution granting the degree or salary she seeks; or of a minister, rabbi, priest or God. (Murdock 36).

The mentor becomes the heroine’s example of excellence, which she tries to imitate. She tries to appropriate the values she admires– his courage, bravery, leadership– in an attempt to be a heroine. Most of the time, she is not aware she already possesses those abilities. Rose becomes little by little the guardian she is supposed to be. When she and Lissa are forced to return to Vampire Academy, she is far more responsible than her younger self. After meeting Dimitri, she models her behaviour with him in mind. Other characters start to note how she now thinks before acting.



In few cases, instead of an older man, an older woman takes the role of mentor. This woman, as figure, is less physically impressive than Gandalf as role model for mentors. Luna is the mentor in the anime series *Sailor Moon*. She is tasked with finding the sailors and training them. She is depicted as a cat, rendering her figure a bit less impressive. Hulda in the *Stork* trilogy provides more mysteries than answers; her appearances are random leaving Katla to discover her powers on her own.

The mother figure is mostly absent, as mentor and parent. “The mother/daughter relationship and the separation from the mother is so complex that in most women’s literature and fairy tales the mother remains absent, dead, or villainous” (Murdock 18). The mother is perceived as an enemy, sometimes for the generational clash. The heroine’s mother is mostly not as idealized as the hero’s parents.

There are also older men who hold no emotional attachment to the heroine. Their roles are more to support and guide, rather than to teach the heroine how to fulfil her role. In the *Hunger Games* series, Cinna understands Katniss’ lack of empathy with the world,<sup>46</sup> he helps her to use her mistrust as part of her charisma during the public displays. Julius Root supports Holly’s career in the *LEPrecon* in the *Artemis Fowl* series. Korra is one of the few heroines who has a traditional mentor in Tenzin.

There are also some cases where there is no clear mentor, in the sense of an elder that has the heroine’s confidence. Faris, *A College of Magics*, has several guides: her friend Jane, her bodyguard and love interest Tyrian, and the Warden of the West. Each character helps her in her duties but does not provide the guidance she needs as heroine.

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<sup>46</sup> She feels every action from the people around her is a threat against her. She thinks she has to second-guess every word; she cannot believe people would love her or care for her.

Fairy tale heroines find a magical helper to counsel them. Fantasy heroines find in their closest friend that guidance. Animals with magical properties have all but disappeared. A unicorn, in *Spellhorn* by Berlie Doherty, brings Laura, a blind girl, to another world. In this world, Laura can see and is chosen by the unicorn to be the leader of the Wild Ones.

On the other hand, the friend of the heroine does not necessarily have to have magical properties. Penny, in *Stork*, introduces Katla to life in Norse Falls unaware of any magical aspect in the town. After Katla loses her Stork powers, Penny becomes the new Stork. Mako and Bolin befriend Korra, for *The Legend of Korra*, both being element benders. They help her to solve any mysteries in Republic City that may threaten the city or her as the Avatar.

#### Reward

The heroine emerges as a powerful person, recognized and admired, next to her loved one.<sup>47</sup> There is nothing else for her. The heroine does not obtain thrones and lands; she is not given an honorary or interim post in government; she does not become an advisor for the new government. Rose as Lissa's bodyguard will have access to the government, but it is very unlikely that anyone will ask her opinion or act accordingly to her suggestions about government. Faris inherits her dukedom, but her duties as warden and the emotional price she paid in the final battle hinder her from returning; she gives the inheritance to her baby niece, when the girl comes of age.

My perception is that due to the heroine's actions, the world has changed for the better, for a short while, but she is discarded as soon as peace is achieved. The world will need a new heroine, forgetting the sacrifices of the previous one. The heroine is not regarded if it comes time

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<sup>47</sup> *Divergent* is one of the exceptions. Before the final mission, Tris and Tobias break off their relationship.

for new heroic actions. It is my interpretation that male heroes<sup>48</sup> remain in leadership capacities. The heroine is destined to return to a humble position while the hero is offered a leadership role but may turn down the gifts due to his humble nature.<sup>49</sup>

### Heroic Path

As any other saviour, the heroine is tested on her moral ground, commitment, and understanding. However, the path differs from heroine to heroine and may not encompass the same aspects as the hero's path. As mentioned before, the heroine's mentor has varied outcomes after the heroine's success. Being the love interest almost always ensures his survival. On the other hand, for the hero his mentor's disappearance means shouldering responsibilities on his own without having someone to protect or save him. The heroine's mentor is her moral support and her reason to succeed and in most cases is involved in the task of the underground experience. The heroine has no self-darkness to fight.

I believe that there should not be so much difference between the journeys as archetype for the hero/heroine, but rather that if there should be a difference it has to be dependent on each character and their "personal" experiences. Every hero faces the underground experience, while very few heroines do so. In this case, regardless of gender, the character can face the underground if it will create the perfect conditions for the character to become the idealized saviour of the world. The heroine has no idealized archetype. She can be presented as healer, warrior, leader, queen, mother, sage, or figure of authority, but there is no definitive idea. Some characters reject the idea of motherhood or marriage in part against the idea that "[w]omen emulated the male heroic journey because there were no other images to emulate" (Murdock 10).

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<sup>48</sup> Harry Potter is still famous and occupies an important post at the Ministry of Magic. Another example is Percy Jackson who is viewed as the real leader of Camp Half-blood instead of Dionysus.

<sup>49</sup> Hercules turns down becoming a god after saving Athens in the *Hercules* (1997) film.

Other characters find in the call to adventure the process to discover themselves; they define their limits within a very strict society or recreate their own perspectives. “In the land of Ingary, where such things as seven-league boots and cloaks of invisibility really exist, it is quite a misfortune to be born the eldest of three” (Jones, *Howl’s Moving Castle* 1).

### Call to Adventure

Her heroic nature allows the heroine to notice the chaos, not necessarily obvious, of her world. In *The Naming*, Maerad is plucked from her life of drudgery by the sudden appearance of Cadvan. His presence is magical to her, something that does not belong in the cow byre where she works. “A mere glimmerspell. What is interesting is that you saw me” (Croggon 8). This represents her call to adventure, and her accepting it provides some answers to her mysterious past but, still, it does not reveal her heroic role.

“The journey begins with the heroine’s struggle to separate both physically and psychologically from her own mother and from the mother archetype, which has an even greater hold” (Murdock 17). The heroine can be trapped by the expectations of the previous generation, which can encompass roles from motherhood to rebellion.

He’d agreed it wasn’t fair I couldn’t do the things other girls my age could, but that was the price I paid for my future. [...] High school things ... dances ... boyfriends ... what did they matter in the grand schemes of things? Everything at the Academy seemed so trivial– unless it was making me a better guardian.  
(Mead, *Shadow Kiss* 154-155).

Rose is a warrior in her society and limited to it. Her bond to vampire Lisa, and her best friend, provides a reason for Rose to remain as her bodyguard. Her call to adventure interferes with personal wishes, so accepting it makes her heroic. Her honourable nature has her come back to Court knowing the consequences, after she is accused of murder. Rose unravels several mysteries to clear her name and to give Lissa political power.

The heroine has to battle the monsters, but the heroine's approach is less physical than that of the hero. Sophie deals with them intellectually, she has to discover the deal between Howl and Calcifer; Polly faces the Fairy Queen's test to save Tom; Chihiro unravels the mystery of Haku's name and releases him.<sup>50</sup> Part of the heroine's nature is her innate ability to discern right from wrong, whether it be moral questions or tests posed by the antagonist. "She is alone at night metaphorically, wandering the road of trials to discover her strengths and abilities and uncover and overcome her weaknesses" (Murdock 46). The heroine should pass the same tests in order to prove to the world she is the saviour. She is tempted by the antagonist to surrender and join in exchange for her loved ones' safety and a comfortable life. Rarely is she given the choice of shared power with the antagonist in exchange of surrendering or even helping her antagonist. The final choice always lies within the heroine. Her moral compass is her only guide in such situations.

#### Underground Experience

The heroine seldom passes through the underground experience. Annabeth travels in Hades with Percy, threatened with the possibility that one could stay behind. Both are presented as equals; however, so far, the final acknowledgment always goes to Percy.

The heroine makes more morally ambiguous choices or her methods may be less virtuous than those of the hero. The ends justify the means for some heroines, even if they had to lie and deceive innocent people. Deceiving the antagonist or minions is less judged; but attacking the side of justice is done when the heroine is falsely accused. "And unless the First Circle is restored under Nelac, which seems a faint chance, we are outlawed now. We'll have made some powerful enemies tonight" (Croggon 463).

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<sup>50</sup> *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986) and *Fire and Hemlock* (1984) by Diana Wynne Jones; *Spirited Away* (2001) dir. Hayao Miyazaki.

## Final Battle

The final battle is the restoration of order that occurs after the heroine proves her character. She faces the antagonist in more varied forms. While the hero has a direct confrontation, some heroines never face their enemies. Sophie goes to the Witch trying to rescue Miss Angorian and solve the problems she has caused; however, she finds herself trapped. “Howl has caused me even more trouble. He got away once. I’ve had to use a curse to bring him. [...] And now when I bring you here, you wave your stick and argue. I have worked very hard for this moment, and I am not to be argued with” (Jones 407). Moments later, Howl arrives, finally defeating the Witch. Sophie retains a passive role, even with her great powers and kind intentions.

The figure of anti-heroine has not been developed in YA fantasy novels, but it is present in several comics. As Jak characterizes the heroine, “She can, and should, operate outside the normal societal parameters for women in her culture, but remain feminine. She can be an outcast by virtue of her own actions, or the actions of others...” (49). There may be a few characters that may fit the description, but are finally redeemed one way or another. Women so far are portrayed as more devious but at the same time more devoted to a moral code. This may be the reason for the lack of anti-heroines.

## Conclusion

The heroine is creating her archetype, where there are still weak aspects to the character within the narration. The development of the character has much to offer to create a new ideal and values to represent our modern standards. In some cases, the story love of the heroine is quite dependent on her success as saviour. Perhaps, this aspect could be reworked to take full

advantage of her heroic qualities. The hero is not a standard but it can help to model the heroine's traits to create a figure that can become symbolic of our generation's values.

CHAPTER III.  
THE LIAR HEROINE

*She told the story of each one,  
and Lyra felt her heart stir  
with admiration for these great,  
brave, distant heroes.*  
Philip Pullman

Introduction.

*His Dark Materials*<sup>51</sup> trilogy by Philip Pullman sets Lyra Belacqua and Will Parry on a mission to save several parallel worlds. The two children represent a new Eve and Adam, where the new temptation and their choice can doom all those worlds. Scott insightfully notes: “As the anticipated ‘second Eve’—a young girl replacing the usual Christ figure as second Adam— Lyra’s role focuses the book upon the battle of good and evil for the soul of humankind ...” (96).<sup>52</sup>

The trilogy has attracted attention for its take on God and His death, the awakening of sexuality in both principal characters, and the characterization of the self in the daemons. The story portrays a new kind of heroine, including a new kind of companion, Will.<sup>53</sup> Females throughout the trilogy have stronger roles than males. Every female character is given an important role, some with interesting twists, while others remain a bit stereotypical, such as Ma Costa as motherly figure.

“Pullman has also challenged traditional gender hierarchies by giving women central roles in his trilogy: Lyra is our quest hero; throughout much of the book the principal villain appears to be Mrs. Coulter; in *The Amber Spyglass* Mary Malone moves into a central role; and witches ... are important throughout

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<sup>51</sup> *Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000).

<sup>52</sup> Scott, Carole. “Pullman’s Enigmatic Ontology: Revamping Old Traditions in *His Dark Materials*” Lenz, Millicent and Carole Scott. *His Dark Material Illuminated*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2005. pp. 95-105.

<sup>53</sup> “Pullman’s innovations on the traditional heroic roles centre on the sharing of quests between Will and Lyra” (Lenz 157).



the trilogy” (Hatlen 79). The author plays with the clichés that plague fantasy; he takes advantage of recognizable elements and transforms them, such as the presence of talking animals (Zettel).<sup>54</sup> The alternate worlds provide the opportunity to play with cultures, showing how the cultures perceive themselves and how they stand in the greater scheme of things with the battle against the Authority.

Pullman inherits<sup>55</sup> part of the ideals of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, in regards to fantasy. Pullman’s ideal Eve is a response to Lewis’ *Space Trilogy*.<sup>56</sup> Lewis’ Eve is made and guided to avoid the fall, to save Venus from the same fate as Earth; “the Adam and Eve of Perelandra are able to resist the temptation offered by Dr. Weston, so that this time the Fall never occurs” (Hatlen 85). Lyra rebels against the religious impositions of her worlds and, most importantly is encouraged by other characters towards the fall, which in this case is the only option to save the consciousness of all living beings.

The story starts under smaller pretences in an alternate world where humans can see part of their souls in the form of daemons.<sup>57</sup> Lyra<sup>58</sup> accidentally hears her uncle and protector, Lord Asriel, talking with the Masters of Jordan College about *Dust*<sup>59</sup> and a city over the Northern Lights. “‘It’s coming down,’ said Lord Asriel, ‘but it isn’t light. It’s Dust’” (NL 16). Afterwards,

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<sup>54</sup> Zettel, Sarah. “Dust to Dust” Yeffeth, Glenn. *Navigating the Golden Compass*. Dallas, TX: BenBella, 2005. Pp. 39-48.

<sup>55</sup> Pullman is also influenced by *Paradise Lost*. Several quotes and the title of the trilogy come from this poem, “[t]he intricate threads of relationship interweaving the three sources [Milton, Blake, and the Bible] make the examination of Pullman’s ontology remarkably complicated, incorporating a many-layered intertextuality” (Scott 6).

<sup>56</sup> *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength* (1945). *Perelandra* is set in Venus, where a new Eve and Adam are born to the planet. Eve will be tempted again, in this case by a scientist from Earth who travelled there. However, Eve has Dr. Elwin Ransom to help and guide her towards the right choice.

<sup>57</sup> “In ancient Greek belief a divinity or supernatural being of a nature between gods and humans. An inner or attendant spirit or inspiring force” (Oxford Dictionaries).

<sup>58</sup> Her daemon is called Pantalaimon, Pan, still unsettled but usually taking the form of a snow white ermine, moth, and wildcat depending on Lyra’s emotions.

<sup>59</sup> “The mysterious cosmic life-force of all conscious life” (Halsdorf 177).

Asriel disappears mysteriously and Mrs. Coulter<sup>60</sup> decides to take Lyra with her. Before Lyra leaves, the Master of Jordan gives her an *alethiometer*<sup>61</sup> with the warning to keep it safe. Lyra believes that she must deliver it to Lord Asriel.

Besides her worries about Asriel and Dust, Lyra wants to discover the reason for children's disappearance done by the Gobblers. Two of her friends have disappeared: Billy, a Gyptian boy, and Roger, the son of a servant at the College.

Lyra is lulled by the spoiling nature of Mrs. Coulter when she comes to take the girl away. However, after she discovers Mrs. Coulter's involvement with the General Oblation Board, where the initials stand for the Gobblers, she decides to run away. “*Sacrifice* is a rather dramatic way of putting it. What's done is for their good as well as ours. And of course they all come to Mrs. Coulter willingly. ...’ [...] She and Pantalaimon could sense each other's horror” (NL 84). Lyra is rescued by the Gyptians, who she later joins for the rescue mission on all the missing children. As they travel north, she meets Iorek Byrnison, an exiled *panserbjørne*. Later, Lyra is taken prisoner by the Tartars and taken to the Gobblers' hide out. There she discovers that the children are parted from their daemons as part of an experiment to define the relation of Dust and human maturity. Lyra stages an escape, made successful by the arrival of the Gyptians and Iorek.

Lyra, Iorek, Roger, Mr. Scoresby, and Serafina Pekkala keep traveling to reach Lord Asriel. They are attacked by Cliff-ghasts and separated. Lyra and Iorek are reunited, and she

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<sup>60</sup> Mrs. Coulter is a complicated character who first appears as the antagonist but later transforms into a caring mother, willing to sacrifice her life for her daughter. “Beautiful, intelligent, gracious and graceful—Mrs. Coulter is all of those things and much more. A caring mother, a competent ally, a sophisticated social butterfly, she has boundless fine qualities...” (Rabe 89). Coulter's qualities and vices are described ironically. Her vices work against her enemies, while her qualities can barely redeem her from the allies. Rabe, Jean. “Letter to the Editor: In Praise of Mrs. Coulter” Yeffeth, Glenn. *Navigating the Golden Compass*. Dallas, TX: BenBella, 2005. pp. 89-95.

<sup>61</sup> An object that resembles a compass that can answer almost any question with the use of several symbols. “It's an alethiometer. It's one of only six that were ever made. Lyra, I urge you again: keep it private. [...] It tells you the truth. As for how to read it, you'll have to learn by yourself” (NL 66-77).

helps him recover his throne by deceiving the usurper. “‘I can become your *daemon*,’ she said, ‘but only if you defeat Iorek Byrnison in single combat. Then his strength will flow into you, and my mind will flow into yours, and we’ll be like one person, thinking each other’s thoughts; ...’” (NL 278). Lyra uses her alethiometer to achieve the mirage of her connection with Iorek; she also answers a few questions of Iofur Raknison to seem to have powers that make her all-knowing as “*daemon*.”

She finally reaches Asriel, only to discover that he needed a child to finish his experiments. Using the same technique to separate child and daemon, he takes Roger to create the energy necessary to open a portal between worlds; “*the energy that links body and daemon is immensely powerful*; and to bridge the gap between worlds needed *a phenomenal burst of energy*” (NL 311). Shocked by the circumstances, Lyra determines to investigate the Dust and why everyone is so interested on it. “‘We’ve heard them all talk about Dust, and they’re so afraid of it, and you know what? We *believed* them, even though we could see that what they were doing was wicked and evil and wrong... We thought Dust must be bad too, because they were grown up and they said so’” (NL 325).

The second book places her meeting with Will, who runs to another world after he accidentally kills an intruder. He is searching for his father, and the box he protects is the only clue to him. Lyra<sup>62</sup> joins Will in Cittàgazze which is haunted by specters who consume adults’ souls. The city is almost abandoned but for children. Will and Lyra decide to work together to find Will’s father. Lyra visits Will’s world after a reading from the alethiometer tells her there is someone who can teach her about Dust. Soon, she is being hunted by the same men who are after Will. As she escapes a man offers her a ride and steals the alethiometer. Back in Cittàgazze, Lyra

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<sup>62</sup> She starts to present herself as Lyra Silvertongue, after Iorek named her for her deceptiveness.

and Will face a crazy teenager. Will fights him, gaining control of the Subtle Knife<sup>63</sup>; the mark that reveals him as the new owner is the loss of two fingers: “[h]is little finger and the finger next to it fell away with the rope” (SK 471). With the knife both children are able to recover the alethiometer. Serafina finds the children and escorts them. Mrs. Coulter and the man, who turns out to be from Lyra’s world, follow them. Mrs. Coulter finally discovers Lyra’s role in the world and sets out to save her. While Will meets his father and accidentally kills him, Mrs. Coulter kidnaps Lyra.

The third book AS has Will trying to rescue Lyra with the help of two angels, Balthamos and Baruch. Meanwhile, Lord Asriel prepares his armies from several worlds to strike against the Authority, the oldest angel who claimed to have created the world, and the Church that supports him. Mrs. Coulter later joins him under her own agenda to keep Lyra safe. On the other hand, Mary Malone the doctor, who explained to Lyra about Dust, also travels to another world where she becomes an honorary member of the *Mulefa* tribe. There she learns more about Dust and her own role as guide.

Will’s mission succeeds but leads Lyra and the two Gallivespians, sent by Asriel, into the world of the dead. Both children are forced to leave their daemons. Will’s is still invisible and unacknowledged, but gives him a bit of insight. The dead are guarded by harpies bent on making the experience very miserable. However, Lyra convinces the harpies to allow the dead to pass on in exchange for their life’s story. Will opens another portal that allows the souls to become one with the universe.

Then both children have to find their daemons. They travel to the world where Lord Asriel has gathered his forces. Several of the dead remain with them to shield them from the

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<sup>63</sup> “In that hand was a knife, not a special-looking knife, just a dull blade about eight inches long, and he’d thrust it forward, slice it sideways, feel forward with it, jab up and down, all in the empty air” (SK 467).

specters. The witches and the bears also join the fight. Asriel and Mrs. Coulter fight Metatron to protect Lyra; as they force the angel to fall into a pit, both sacrifice their lives to achieve saving their daughter. Both Asriel and Mrs. Coulter sacrifice themselves as it also provides personal gain. It is not fame or power, but destroying their enemies: “Lyra’s parents are simply unique: nothing like them exists in the history of children’s literature. They are neither benevolent nor benign. They are integral to the story and have an active role throughout. They are powerful, ambitious characters who twist events to their own advantage. And they are very, very bad” (Giardina 146).<sup>64</sup>

Lyra and Will encounter the Authority, as his crystal litter. They free him feeling pity for the frail being, but that disperses his energy and he dies. “Lyra, the new Eve, is breaking through his boundaries. Freeing the dead, she breaks out of an enclosed territory instead of being expelled from one as was the traditional Eve. ... It is important to note that this new Eve’s arrival signals the end of the Authority’s reign but does not actually cause it” (Russell 220).

Will and Lyra manage to get out of the underworld to the same world where Mary is. Mary becomes their mentor in regards to the feelings they have developed for each other. They wish to remain together, but they have to close every open portal, as this was what created the specters in the first place. They can only leave one open, which seems like their only hope, but that would leave the dead stranded in the underworld. They decide that the dead need it more.

They say goodbye to each other. Lyra is starting to lose the uncanny ability to read the alethiometer. Her maturity, while a stage highly praised by society, takes away any possibility for her of becoming a superior being. As she no longer has any special quality, she is cast away.

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<sup>64</sup> Giardina, Natasha. “Kids in the Kitchen?” Yeffeth, Glenn. *Navigating the Golden Compass*. Dallas, TX: BenBella, 2005. Pp. 139-149.

Lyra has to relearn everything with the unlikely possibility that she will achieve the same mastery. She becomes ordinary.

Lyra's facility with the alethiometer is the clearest evidence of the comparability of Pullman's vision of innocence to that of Blake's, giving her an intuitive ability to employ the instrument's truth-telling in a way that adults must dedicate untold hours and effort to achieve. Her loss of this gift as she reaches maturity asserts the impact of experience, and is in accord with innocence, or lack of Dust, that keeps children safe from Specters... (Scott 103).

On the other hand, Will breaks the knife so no one else will use it. He remains undefeated.<sup>65</sup> "It is also arguable that Pullman's naïve heroes never fully achieve their transition to adulthood and satisfactory heroic status" (Cardew 36).<sup>66</sup>

Why is Lyra a Heroine?

I will focus on *Northern Lights* (NL) because Lyra behaves independently. In the first book her achievements are more highlighted. The story told is a test to prove that she is the right one, which I believe can be interpreted as testing her as a heroine. I consider that the other two books in the trilogy give more power to Will as decision maker. Lyra decides to follow him and only reads her alethiometer if he asks her.<sup>67</sup> Will has a more aggressive nature, in part developed by his strange childhood where he took care of his mother, which makes him more able to survive in any circumstance. Lyra links him to her image of Iorek, but it is this fierceness that quells her energy. A few lines later, as they try to decide on a plan of action to rescue the

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<sup>65</sup> A similar idea is present in the seventh book of *Harry Potter*. Harry gains the Elder Wand: "I'm putting the Elder Wand," he told Dumbledore, who was watching him with enormous affection and admiration, "back where it came from. It can stay there. If I die a natural death like Ignotus, its power will be broken, won't it? The previous master will never have been defeated. That'll be the end of it" (Rowling 749).

<sup>66</sup> Cardew, Phil. "When I Grow Up I Want to be..." conceptualization of the Hero within the Works of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien and Philip Pullman" Barfield, Steven and Katharine Cox. *Critical Perspectives on Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011.

<sup>67</sup> When Lord Boreal steals the alethiometer, Lyra feels it is punishment for her reckless behaviour, "... [it] told me I had to stop looking for Dust, and I had to help you. I had to help you find your father. And I *could*, I could take you to wherever he is, if I had it. But I wouldn't listen. I just done what I wanted to do, and I shouldn't..." (SK 455).

alethiometer, Lyra is silenced, when she taunts him on his bravery: “Will was just looking at her, and she quailed. She would have quailed in the same way if the armoured bear had looked at her like that, because there was something not unlike Iorek in Will’s eyes, young as they were” (SK 456).

### General Traits

Lyra does not start as a heroine, in the sense of making a conscious effort to be a powerful figure. Her first concerns were to rescue Roger, while getting closer to her uncle and bring him the alethiometer. After the betrayal of her uncle, she decides to go after Dust. However, at this point her mission gets side-tracked by meeting Will. Seemingly their encounter has little to do with her goals. Both children have unconscious power over the future of Dust. Lyra does achieve learning about it; at times it seems she has all but forgotten as she sets to find Will’s father, while traveling to the underworld, and being separated from Pan.

She fulfils her role as saviour as the prophecy claimed, in two proportions: the minor one as saviour of the children and daemons, while the bigger one sets her as bringer of a new era, “the republic of heaven” (AS 1016). However, her final actions are less active and conscious. The act of saving comes from her acknowledging love for Will. Fantasy relies on the use of epic battles, where thousands of soldiers fight for their ideals and culture.<sup>68</sup> The heroes are the leaders of these armies or directly face the antagonist. *His Dark Materials* twists the final battle into a final decision from which depends everything.

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<sup>68</sup> Be they forces of good or evil. It may be considered that if the evil voices were given a chance to express themselves, they would have a reason to support their leaders.

There is a final battle in *His Dark Materials*, but neither hero participates in any way. Will and Lyra are hunting for their daemons. They cross through the battlefield<sup>69</sup> completely unharmed, as Iorek and his bears and the ghosts protect the children. Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter are the ones who directly face Metatron:

The cry was torn from Lord Asriel, and with the snow leopard beside her, with a roaring in her ears, Lyra's mother stood and found her footing and leapt with all her heart, to hurl herself against the angel and her daemon and her dying lover, and seize those beating wings, and bear them all down together into the abyss. (AS 925).

Lyra's parents are the ones to defeat the forces that would destroy Dust, the freedom of consciousness. This twist allows readers to retain the idea that the heroes cannot die. Lyra can go on and fulfil her role. Otherwise, if she had faced Metatron she would have failed. If anything, in the traditional sense of fantasy, Lyra and Will do kill, albeit accidentally, the Authority. He was the symbol of the Church, and both children destroy any chance of regrouping. "Between them they helped the ancient of days out of his crystal cell" (AS 926). Pullman gives Lyra the last word, as with her innocence she wanted to help but ends destroying an era with the death of the Authority.

I believe that Lyra's truly heroic act comes from choosing to remain in her own world, not learning about love. If she had decided to leave an opening to meet Will, Dust would keep leaking. Most critics of the book focus on the importance of love, Lyra's sexual awakening, and her thirst for knowledge,<sup>70</sup> which starts the adventure. "The Dust pouring from the star had found

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<sup>69</sup> "But they had no time to wonder about it, because another head-wrenching throb of nausea told Lyra that Pan was in danger again, and then Will felt it too, and they stumbled blindly through the puddles and the mud and the chaos of wounded men and fighting ghosts, helpless, terrified, and sick" (AS 912).

<sup>70</sup> Most of the female characters are in search of knowledge, "[f]or all Pullman's Eves, knowledge is an approved goal. Marissa Coulter and Mary Malone, associated with knowing and capable of a resisting outsider stance, each provide Lyra, albeit in different ways, a surrounding context for her journey to self-knowledge" (Russell 214-215). Coulter and Malone serve as Eve examples for Lyra. The idea of woman as related to knowledge, or wisdom, seems to be present in The Song of Solomon. "For wisdom is more moving than any motion: she passeth and goeth through all



a living home again, and these children-no-longer-children, saturated with love, were the cause of it all” (*AS* 976). The universe, with all its worlds, has recovered balance. It can be broken again by the continuing existence of the subtle knife, including its irresponsible use. Will and Lyra sacrifice their new found feelings to keep that balance. An idealized ending, albeit tragic, would have included that one of them went to live into the other’s world.<sup>71</sup> They decide to go on living, keep learning, rather than waste their lives even for such an ideal as love. The sacrifice is made to allow the dead to disperse in the universe after telling their stories to the harpies.

“Rather than natural, necessary, sanitary progression to adulthood and heroism, it is damage to self and psyche that make Will into a warrior. What happens to Will is loss and diminishment, not growth and gain” (Zettel 44). Will and Lyra are not idealized as heroes; their achievements are treated more as sacrifices than gain, even with the freedom for the dead. Lyra becomes the true saviour from her own actions rather than relying on the supernatural forces. Human strength and consciousness are stronger than any kind of being; these traits define life, rather than spirits.

Lyra represents an ideal heroine. She is a natural leader and has a caring nature. Her final sacrifice fulfils her role as new Eve, a new mother for a new age. So far, the role of mother has never been as praised as that of warrior; the sacrifices required can be perceived as heroic. But the achievements are on a personal level; seldom do a mother’s actions affect a community or get held up to moral questioning. “[A]nd now it simply wasn’t there, and she wasn’t Lyra of Jordan anymore; she was a lost little girl in a strange world, belonging nowhere” (*SK* 386). Jordan does not exist in Will’s world. It seems to destroy her identity; she is Silvertongue; she has rescued the Bolvangar kids; helped Iorek regain his throne. So far, her actions have surpassed expectations.

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things by reason of her pureness. ... therefore can no defiled thing fall into her” (Bayley 168). This is the ideal Lyra represents as future Eve.

<sup>71</sup> Will’s father reveals that no one is able to live more than ten years in another world.

It is a shock to find everything so changed; but it should give her insight, not crumble her identity. “[E]ven if they weren’t going to kill her or part her from Pantalaimon, they had robbed her of her only guide. Without the alethiometer, she was ... just a little girl, lost” (SK 458). This diminution of Lyra as only a girl gives the impression of dependency. She needs her alethiometer to survive, although she had managed quite well without it before she truly mastered it. She is portrayed as powerless.

“[T]he words ‘good’ and ‘evil’ ... describe certain potentials mixed together in every human being, and the relationship between them is worked out within the human heart. (It is perhaps for this reason that Pullman’s final battle seem so anticlimactic: in *His Dark Materials* the real battles are internal, not fought with arms)” (Hatlen 80).

Lyra takes a more passive role following Will. She makes her own decisions but some are in deference to him. Will is less looked upon by the adults. Lyra has fewer wild ideas compared to Will; she follows him and wishes to please him. “In his rejection and rework of cliché, Pullman commits one of the biggest– the male warrior and the female instigator” (Zettel 45). Lyra is more adept at creating the stories, lying, and finding the information than Will. He is the defender and fighter. He saves Lyra from Mrs. Coulter. The same pattern is found within Coulter and Asriel; he has the armies, she is the spy.

Lyra resents being left behind or in the dark. As leader, she is balanced by her caring nature. “She would have listened eagerly now to anyone who could tell her about Dust” (NL 39). Her moral grounds are less defined.<sup>72</sup> She has the right intentions, but her lack of knowledge can set her on the wrong path. “She is a good person; she cares about others; she saves people from

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<sup>72</sup> Every character has dubious morality, where every action can be questioned or pardoned depending on one’s stance. “Oh, this *was* confusing. Mrs. Coulter was so kind and wise, whereas Lyra had actually seen the Master trying to poison Lord Asriel. Which of them did she owe most obedience to?” (NL 69).

death and even when she can't save she saves their ghosts from purgatory" (Hodgson 155).<sup>73</sup> Her actions can be questioned, as she solves her problems through lying, deceiving, causing havoc, eavesdrops.<sup>74</sup> She is reckless; "I didn't have anything in mind, and well you know it," she snapped quietly. "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?" (NL 14). Her moral values are ascertained; she must inform Lord Asriel about the possible poisoning attempt. It is a small heroic metaphor: the heroine interrupts any abuse of power.

#### External Factors

It is the Prophecy that defines Lyra as the new Eve. The prophecy sets several requirements that she has to fulfil to ensure that she is the chosen one. The witches are the only ones who were aware of the prophecy.

"The witches have talked about this child for centuries past," said the Consul. "[...] And they have spoken of a child such as this, who has a great destiny that can only be fulfilled elsewhere –not in this world, but far beyond. Without this child, we shall all die. [...] but she must fulfil her destiny in ignorance of what she is doing, because only in her ignorance can we be saved" (NL 148-149).

Lyra overhears a part of the conversation, but it still remains unaware of what the Consul and Farder Coram discussed. To identify Lyra as the chosen one, she had to correctly choose Seraphina Pekkala's cloud-pine branch. But also her uncanny ability to read the alethiometer without having studied it before reveals that she is the Chosen One.

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<sup>73</sup> Hodgson, Dave. "A New Eve" Yeffeth, Glenn. *Navigating the Golden Compass*. Dallas, TX: BenBella, 2005. pp. 151-161.

<sup>74</sup> She lies to the harpies; she deceives the usurper bear; she almost stole the Gyptians boat; she overhears the conversation of the College Masters', which was how she learned about Dust.

Lyra has noble blood, as supposed by Lord Asriel's title, while Mrs. Coulter is a rich woman. However, this ancestry does not impact Lyra in any way. It does not affect her status as chosen.

#### Heroic Flaws

Lyra is barely aware of the situation surrounding her. She knows she is being hunted but is ignorant of the real reason. She convinces herself that she must deliver the alethiometer. Lyra is knowledgeable in practical things, like how to survive in the North, but remains painfully ignorant of the greater picture.

Lyra has a morally ambiguous weapon in her uncanny ability to lie. Where most heroes lie only in extreme circumstances or to their antagonists, Lyra delights herself in telling lies. She lies about her origins to the Gyptians and to a lady during Mrs. Coulter party. She creates a heroic image of her past.

Lyra has no double. Will is her equal in heroic terms; but within the great scheme of things, he is insignificant. The prophecy foretells Lyra's role, but never mentions him. Yet without Will, Lyra cannot make the final choice.

#### Mentor and Magical Helper

Lyra is among the few heroines in contemporary science fiction and fantasy who have female mentors. Mary Malone, a nun turned scientist, guides Lyra in love, as well as in the true meaning and importance of Dust. Dr. Malone is not presented within the traditional parameters of wisdom, inherent to mentors. Mary has her own path to discover before she can offer anything to Lyra. She is intelligent and with perhaps, it is hinted, superior knowledge for having abandoned religion. What knowledge she brings, is from experience. "They were conscious! They felt her anxiety and responded to it. [...] The shadow particles knew what was happening

and were sorrowful” (AS 892). Malone finally understands the true nature of Dust through her out of body experience. “If Lyra were not to be Eve, then Mary’s achievement as either Sophia or the second Eve would have been all that was needed to save the world from losing consciousness” (Russell 217). As mentor figure, Malone has limits. Her advantage over Lyra was her sexual and emotional experience; this helped her to understand Dust, aided by her physics studies. The prophecy is the first sign that works against Malone. Her final failure as possible heroine is her very short journey. The Mulefa were a revelation to her, but she did not set out to save anyone. Lyra’s questions about Dust and Lord Boreal funding Malone’s project were her only clue that were something bigger.

Farder Coram plays an important role in showing her how to read the alethiometer. He reveals her origins. But her needs surpass his knowledge.

The formation of Lyra as heroine starts with the presence of magical helpers. “There is an admirable lack of sidekicks in the series” (Zettel 41). The characters have independent stories from Lyra; however, I consider that most characters’ actions are in regards to Lyra’s protection or providing her with help. In her case, taking into account the element of talking animals in fairy tales, Lyra has two animal companions. “In modern fantasy, however, we generally see the talking animal singularly. They are not truly animals with separate desires and alien needs” (Zettel 41). Pullman uses this to his advantage with the presence of Pan and Iorek. Both characters fit the traditional role of a helpful animal, but break the rules by being separate entities. Pan is part of Lyra, a visible part of her soul and self. He has a degree of independence from Lyra, as he disagrees at times with her. On the other hand, Iorek has his own culture, ideologically distinct from humans.

Bears are not friendly, they are not cuddly and they are not safe even when they like you. They are polar bears, really big predators...

We are also shown, in a wonderful exchange about feeling cold, that Iorek has no concept of what it is to be *human* and isn't particularly interested in gaining one. (Zettel 41).

Iorek plays the role of magical helper as he serves her in exchange for his armour (*NL* 153). He finds Lyra to be charming enough, and for a strange reason Iorek trusts her with the recovery of his armour, when he had no proof that she may succeed.

#### Reward

Lyra has no reward in *NL*. She misunderstands part of her goals and, betrayed by Asriel, she fails in returning Roger. There is no eucatastrophe for her or the reader. She has to start another journey and to reevaluate her goals in the new setting.

#### Heroic Path

In *NL* Lyra is completely independent. Her first identity is mysterious as with any hero.<sup>75</sup> She gains the alethiometer as weapon; she forges alliances with Iorek, Scoresby, and the witches; she stands against Mrs. Coulter; and finally, she tries to save Roger from Lord Asriel.

[Lyra] was a coarse and greedy little savage, for the most part. But she always had a dim sense that it wasn't her whole world, that part of her also belonged in the grandeur and ritual of Jordan College; and that somewhere in her life there was a connection with the high world of politics represented by Lord Asriel. All she did with that knowledge was to give herself airs and lord it over the urchins. It had never occurred to her to find out more. (*NL* 36).

A young heroine is idealized as knowledgeable, quiet, and humble. Lyra presents herself as the opposite and is perhaps unlikable. Her traits do not seem to fit with the stereotypical good person who can become heroic.

#### Call to Adventure

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<sup>75</sup> "They were a count and countess," she said. "They both died in an aeronautical accident in the North" (*NL* 78).

Lyra's call to adventure comes with the disappearance of the children. "[T]he Gyptians in *His Dark Materials* prove to be a spiritually and emotionally fulfilling force for Lyra, providing her with a liberating space in which to critically assess her situation, and in which to shed the demands of conformity to the feminine ideal and live a baser experience..." (Allen 115). Lyra rejects the idealized image of women represented by Mrs. Coulter; the girl becomes part of the community, even if somehow relegated to certain tasks seldom done by men. Lyra is able to answer her call with the Gyptians. She has to convince them, but she is given the chance. Lyra has to prove her value among the adults, all male and warriors:

"I want to come North," Lyra said so they could all hear it. "I want to come and help rescue the kids. That's what I set to do when I run away from Mrs. Coulter... I can do navigation and I can take anbaromagnetic reading off the Aurora, and I know what parts of a bear you can eat, and all kinds of useful things. You'd be sorry if you got up there and then found you needed me and found you'd left me behind. ..." (*NL* 120-121).

It is interesting to note her need for adults to help her to start her adventure. For all her talk about having the necessary knowledge to embark on an adventure, she does not dare to do it on her own.

Lyra has felt attracted to adventures, mostly those involving traveling to the North. "Yes. Lyra has a part to play in all this, and a major one. The irony is that she must do all of it without realizing what she's doing" (*NL* 32). Pullman takes advantage of the "innocence state" of heroism; Lyra's success depends upon her innocence, upon being unaware of how important she really is. Pullman recreates Eve's innocence to test Lyra. Lyra wants knowledge, which is denied to her, so she has to create her own rules. Her first glimpse of this wonderful world is given by Lord Asriel, overheard as she hides in a wardrobe; he wishes funding for his research and shows mysterious pictures related to Dust. "[S]he was impatient to hear more about scalping and the Northern Lights and that mysterious Dust" (*NL* 29).

## Underground

*NL* has no literal underground experience. Lyra is tested in her moral strength when she meets the daemonless child. She saves the daemonless child, acting against her own prejudice:

... 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. Her first impulse was to turn and run, or to be sick. A human being|| with no daemon was like someone without a face, or with their ribs laid open and their heart torn out: something unnatural and uncanny that belonged to the world of night-ghasts, not the walking world of sense. (*NL* 178-179).

Lyra musters all her kindness and understanding to help the child survive without his daemon.

Her care is insufficient, as the child dies a few hours later.

The encounter opens her eyes to the Gobblers' cruelty. To be daemonless is the worst anyone can imagine to be, yet the Gobblers practice their experiments to kill the human spark. It convinces Lyra of the importance of her self-appointed mission: rescue Roger and bring the alethiometer to Asriel. Knowing that Mrs. Coulter is the leader of the organization responsible for this atrocity, she moves from possible mentor to antagonist. "Lyra's first model is the proto-Eve/Lilith/Marisa" (Russell 217). Lilith has had a connotation for evil; following this idea, Mrs. Coulter is evil and destructive.

Lyra is later captured by the Tartars and taken to the Gobblers. She hides her identity while trying to discover as much as possible about the place and what happens there. Her worst fears are confirmed as she finds the separated daemons caged. "In a series of glass cages on shelves around the walls were all the daemons of the severed children: ghost-like form of cats, or birds, or rats, or other creatures, each bewildered and frightened and as pale as smoke" (*NL* 215). In selfless concern, Lyra releases the daemons, with the help of Serafina's own daemon. This act sets her heroic nature. Saving Roger was in part a selfish act, since finding him would bring the advantage of saving the other children, but she only cared about him. As she rescues the



daemons, she is now risking Roger's life asking him to act as watcher in case any adults come. Her love for the world is greater than fear for herself. The next step is to stage an escape from the Gobblers' compound. She travels through the ventilation system to discover more information; however, she is captured and taken to the intercision. At the last minute she is saved by Mrs. Coulter. The escape plan goes ahead and is only successful with the coming of the Gyptians and Iorek.

Lyra's true potential is never fully explored, as she is always saved by powerful figures. Her escape plan was not carefully designed, but depended on her previous manipulation and setting for the right moment. She is powerless in a physical sense.

Lyra has a more glorious image when in the presence of Iofur. She deceives him quite easily, her only purpose to regain the throne for Iorek, while saving herself. Her power comes from her almost uncanny ability to lie. Even so, she would have achieved nothing without the alethiometer that revealed Iofur's wishes and weaknesses. She takes advantage of his weaknesses. However, the final outcome is entirely dependent on Iorek's strength. He alone can reclaim his throne. Lyra respects Iorek's right to the throne,<sup>76</sup> but she gives up the power. The intellectual victory was hers. It seems that the laws of bear culture only admit shows of physical power to obtain the throne.

#### Final Battle

The final battle of the first book is an unsettling defeat for Lyra. Within the trilogy, Lyra is victorious as saviour, but the hardest test was not saving Roger. "A jet of light, a jet of pure energy released like an arrow from a great bow, shot upward. The sheets of light and colour that were the Aurora tore apart; [...] Roger's body lay dead in her arms, still, quiet, at rest" (*NL* 321-

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<sup>76</sup> Probably the bears would not take kindly to a human ruling over them.

322). The losses of heroes strengthen their resolve to save everything else, to protect those who have not lost yet. Lyra sacrifices Roger to save the world.

### Conclusion

Lyra has set new goals as a heroic figure; she changes the expectations and goals for a heroine. She is the one to find the adventure instead of waiting for something to happen.

However, I think that her heroic character is not fully developed. She has the potential but she is not aware of how much change she can make or how much she influences everything else. She is in constant danger, so it falls into other to keep her safe.

CHAPTER IV.  
THE TEMPTED HEROINE

*Ever since you discovered the Shadow World,  
haven't you secretly wanted to be a hero?  
To be the most special of a special people?  
In our own way we each wish to be the hero of our kind.*  
Cassandra Clare

Introduction

*The Mortal Instruments* by Cassandra Clare, a low fantasy series about Shadowhunters, has had little critical attention. Following the standard plot exploit in fantasy of a normal person being suddenly immersed in the supernatural world, the novel takes on fairies, vampires, demons, and the Shadowhunters who keep balance for the magical world. Clary Fray accidentally follows a stranger, revealing in the long run that she belongs to this supernatural world and is central to its survival.

*The Mortal Instruments* takes an interesting turn with the inclusion of Shadowhunters as powerful humans; an angel gave his blood to a human, creating the first Shadowhunter. “We are sometimes called Nephilim. [...] The legend of the origin of Shadowhunters is that they were created more than a thousand years ago, when humans were being overrun by demon invasions from other worlds. Jonathan Shadowhunter, the first Nephilim, summoned the Angel Raziel, who mixed his blood with the blood of men in a cup...” (CB 78). They are tasked with protecting humans from demons and rogue Downworlders.<sup>77</sup> Shadowhunters are highly trained individuals,

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<sup>77</sup> “Downworlders are those who share the Shadow World with us. [...] / “Like vampires, werewolves, and...” / “The Fair Folk,” Hodge said. “Fairies. And Lilith’s children, being half-demon, are warlocks” (CB 78).

able to perform magic through their runes.

The author plays with the reader's emotional experience and understanding by including the topic of incest, first as a device to complicate the romantic subplot, and later between the antagonist and protagonist.

Clary is introduced as a damsel in distress, rather than as a heroine. Her progress as Shadowhunter is slow, more dependent on her friends than on her own abilities. She is hardly a leader.<sup>78</sup> Jace makes almost every decision, consulting the group only when in need of suggestions. Clary only assumes leadership in Jace's absence.<sup>79</sup> Clary is portrayed as a very powerful Shadowhunter, but she is more a catalyst. She has to take responsibility and embrace her powers before becoming a true saviour.

The introduction to the supernatural world is immediate. Clary goes to a club with her friend Simon. Clary sees a teenager with a knife. Worried about what may happen, Clary follows him only to discover that the would-be victim is a demon. Simon calls security, but by the time they reach Clary, the mysterious boy, his companions and the vanquished demon are gone.

The plot for *The Mortal Instruments* is very linear, it mostly focuses on Clary. Little by little, it is revealed that Clary belongs to the world of Shadowhunters. Her mother disappears, and Clary is attacked by a demon. She kills it, seemingly by chance. The mysterious boy Jace, who followed her, saves her and brings her into his Institute. Jace introduces his adoptive siblings, Alex and Isabelle. The four of them and Simon go visit a warlock to discover Clary's identity. They discover that Clary's mother had erased any memory related to the supernatural

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<sup>78</sup> Tris (*Divergent*), Katniss (*The Hunger Games*), Rose (*Vampire Academy*), Katla (*Stork*) assume leadership by taking action or being acknowledged as strategists, where their ideas are easier and bound to succeed.

<sup>79</sup> When Clary uses the bell offered by the Faerie Queen, she becomes the spokesperson. She tries to make Isabelle speak, as she feels unprepared to speak without offending the Queen.

world, in an attempt to protect her from Valentine, Clary's father. Valentine, believed to be dead, wishes to have the Mortal Cup, which was hidden by Clary's mother.

Clary and friends task themselves with rescuing Jocelyn and stopping Valentine. Jace finds himself in a difficult position as he discovers that his father is Valentine; Jace believes he owes Valentine some loyalty, while his romantic feelings for Clary feel complicated. Simon is transformed into a vampire after being almost killed by vampires. Later he becomes a Daylighter<sup>80</sup> after drinking Jace's blood, allowing him to survive after being almost drained of blood by Valentine.

Valentine gathers the Mortal Instruments,<sup>81</sup> the weapons that represent Shadowhunters and originally gave them the powers. He wishes to raise the Angel to destroy all demons and Downworlders. He finally reveals that Jace is not his biological son, and his real son is Jonathan,<sup>82</sup> who prefers to be called Sebastian after the alias he used to infiltrate Idris. During the war Jace kills Sebastian, rushing to save Clary. During the ritual, Valentine kills Jace. Clary rewrites the runes of the ritual, which allows her to ask a wish from the angel. She revives Jace.

The next stage of the war is against Sebastian,<sup>83</sup> after he is revived by Lilith. Sebastian does not share his father's views, as he wishes to create his own army of dark Shadowhunters and rule the world with Lilith's help. The first stage is marked by Jace's strange behaviour, which is later to be revealed as Lilith. Sebastian is almost resurrected by Lilith, using the imbalance created by reviving Jace. Simon is forced to give some of his blood to Sebastian. Lilith is defeated when she tries to kill Clary, and Simon interferes, taking advantage of his Mark

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<sup>80</sup> Only known vampire able to live under daylight.

<sup>81</sup> The Mortal Cup, where the angel Raziel mixed his blood to be drunk. The Mortal Sword, Maellartach, usually used during trials. The Mortal Mirror, which serves as portal into Idris, the Shadowhunter's country.

<sup>82</sup> He has Lilith's blood making him half demon. He was one of Valentine's experiments.

<sup>83</sup> His real name is Jonathan Christopher Morgenstern. He takes the name after impersonating Sebastian Verlac. Jonathan is Clary's real brother, but chooses to be called Sebastian as he feels betrayed by his parents.

of Cain.<sup>84</sup> Believing themselves to have been victorious, Clary, Simon, Isabelle, and Alex wait for the adult Shadowhunters, leaving Jace to watch over Sebastian's body. However, the ritual almost complete, Sebastian gains control over Jace and both disappear.

The search for Jace starts, without anyone knowing that he is cooperating with Sebastian. Jace is being controlled by Lilith's spell with a rune on Jace's chest. Clary is the first to discover Jace and Sebastian's mental bond, when the first comes to visit her. She decides to join both in an attempt to save Jace. During her stay she tries to discover Sebastian's plans; but all she manages is to doubt her own reasons and moral standing. Suddenly, after a battle the rune that keeps Jace under control is damaged, allowing him to regain control. He decides to deliver himself to the Shadowhunters with the Mortal Cup in an attempt to thwart Sebastian. Clary stops him, calling Sebastian to undo the damage. Afterwards, the cup is transformed to create dark Shadowhunters with Lilith's blood. Clary breaks the bond with a sword<sup>85</sup> given to Simon from Raziel, meant to kill Sebastian. The sword places heavenly fire inside Jace saving him from Sebastian's influence. However, they now have no weapon to use against Sebastian.

Sebastian starts to kill Shadowhunters, without the Clave able to discover his hideout. Clary and friends discover he is in a demon dimension and decide to go after him. Sebastian tempts Clary with the possibility to save her mother, Luke, Magnus,<sup>86</sup> and her friends if she consents to be his sister-wife, and staying in the dimension in exchange of saving the world. She accepts, as she has a backup plan. She has already managed to extract the heavenly fire from Jace, placing the fire in Heosphoros.<sup>87</sup> Clary kills Sebastian with Heosphoros. The heavenly fire

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<sup>84</sup> Placed by Clary to save him from the other vampires who find his Daylight existence an aberration.

<sup>85</sup> Glorious. The sword belongs to Archangel Michael: *"It possesses the power of Heaven's fire. Strike your enemy with this, and it will burn the evil out of him. If he is more evil than good, more Hell's than Heaven's, it will also burn the life from him"* (CLS 428).

<sup>86</sup> He has kidnapped the Downworlder representatives. Luke, Magnus, and to some extent, Raphael are dear to her.

<sup>87</sup> A Morgenstern sword that Clary receives as a gift from an armorer, as it should rightfully be hers.

consumes all the evil in him, finally killing him. The final test comes as the group attempts to escape the demon dimension. Simon gives up his memories, immortality, and vampire powers in exchange for their freedom.

### Why Clary is a Heroine?

Clary has to define her moral standing in regards to Shadowhunters, Downworlders, and Demons. It is not an easy task as the Clave is corrupt and elitist, while Valentine's and Sebastian's plans have a righteous idea at the core, the true commitment of Shadowhunters to keeping the world safe. Clary can be identified as heroine as she is willing to sacrifice her life to stop Sebastian from killing Shadowhunters and Downworlders.<sup>88</sup> She accepts becoming Sebastian's sister/wife; it is her last resource, if she fails or is unable to fulfil her plan.

### General Traits

She has followed Jace and let everyone protect her.<sup>89</sup> Sebastian's obsession with her, constantly questioning her stance and reasons, forces her to take a definite action against him. Sebastian does not see her as an equal, but needs her as she represents his double.<sup>90</sup> Clary understands this, facing him without help: "This was always going to happen; it was always going to be her facing Sebastian with no one else, not even Jace by her side" (*CHF* 568). Sebastian's obsession becomes his weakness. He believes he has finally convinced Clary of his views. He is aware that her acceptance to be his queen is in part the blackmail to save her friends; Sebastian spares them as a gift, to show mercy, or so he believes in his delusion.

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<sup>88</sup> "You told her if she would agree to rule beside you, you would close the borders and leave our world in peace. Rule in Edom, save the world. Right?" (*CHF* 604).

<sup>89</sup> So much trust is placed on Jace, that when he does not attack Sebastian, Isabelle and Alec still believe he has the heavenly fire; they are disappointed and start to feel hopeless. "[Jace's] hand had been at his weapons belt, slowly he lowered it to his side. Isabelle gave a cry of despair, the look on Alec's face was just as bleak, though he stayed silent" (*CHF* 602).

<sup>90</sup> They stand at opposites by the blood of angel and demon.

“Hail, master,” she said, and saw his eyes widen, just as she pulled Heosphoros free and brought it up in a bright arc, the blade slamming through his rib cage, the tip positioned to pierce his heart.

Sebastian gasped, and spasmed in her arms; he staggered back, the hilt of the blade protruding from his chest (*CHF* 606-607).

Clary kills Sebastian, breaking his control over the dark Shadowhunters and demons.

The final sacrifice falls to Simon, who gives his immortality and memories in exchange, so everyone can leave the demon dimension.

Clary’s real progress is in *CFA*, where her Shadowhunter training makes her reckless, as she believes she can investigate the mysterious cult.<sup>91</sup> She manages quite well, for the first time, at the last minute saved by Isabelle.<sup>92</sup>

Clary is described as powerful due to the angel’s blood in her. Within the narrative, her powers are conveniently used as last resort.<sup>93</sup> Jace is the fighter and de facto leader of the group. His extraordinary powers and prowess fit more with the idealized image of the hero, “He gets a little extra for being a hero of the Mortal War” (*CLS* 17). Clary is a central character for her relation to every other character. To ensure her protagonist status, she is given superior powers. Most of the time she remains on the sidelines.

Clary is not a traditional heroine, no matter how much within the text she is portrayed as a vital element; “You act as if you’re not part of all this, of our world; you stand on the sidelines, but you are part of it. You’re central to it. You can’t just pretend to be a bit player forever, Clary, not when you’re Valentine’s daughter” (*CG* 352). Isabelle states Clary’s role, but so far all that

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<sup>91</sup> The Taltos Church is trying to create half demon children. In the building Clary finds a Hydra demon: “She rolled to the side as a head, swaying on a thick stalk of neck, darted over the altar, its thick black tongue flicking out, searching for her. With a scream she jammed the *athame* into the creature’s neck once, then jerked it free, scrambling backward and out of the way” (*CFA* 219).

<sup>92</sup> “Something flashed through the air, a darting flame of silvery gold. ... Clary rolled out of the way as flying blood splattered her, searing her skin. ... [...] and in the entranceway stood Isabelle...” (*CFA* 220).

<sup>93</sup> “You tore that ship to fragments,” Luke said. “Every bolt, every rivet, anything that might have held it together, just snapped apart. ... What you did—no one’s ever seen anything like it” (*CA* 422).



forces Clary to action is her relationships, not the greater good. Clary is shocked by the dark Shadowhunters. She realizes no one else has the ability and moral desire to stop Sebastian without sacrificing something in return. The Lightwoods have lost Max, which is part sacrifice and part motivation to join Clary. Heroes in general terms start to get involved in the conflict as soon as they cross the barrier or discover the problem, regardless of their relations to the antagonist or allies.

#### External Factors

There is no prophecy made about Clary, nor any significant prediction about her. Having the angel's blood and having seen two angels, Ithuriel and Raziel, are the only supernatural aspects that set her apart from most Shadowhunters.

The angel blood, part of Valentine's accidental experiment, is the most crucial aspect of Clary's powers. It allows her to create and have access to unseen or unknown runes far more powerful than those so far used.

She is one of the few heroic characters whose origins are clearly identified. Clary may not be aware of it at the start, but her lineage defines in part the role she plays. Her surname, Morgenstern, hints at her destiny and at her interior darkness. She has to decide which one she will follow.

#### Heroic Flaws

In the Shadowhunter world, Clary is at a terrible disadvantage. She has to learn the history and cultural differences, while developing her fighting skills. Her abilities improve with time, but usually she requires assistance to finish her opponent.

She has a selfish nature, in her case love is her weakness. Jace is the most important person for her. "You love each other—anyone can see that— that kind of love that can burn down

the world or raise it up in glory” (*CFA* 385). They can sacrifice the world to save each other. But being a heroine means sacrificing this love for the world.

Clary is one of the few heroines with a double. Sebastian represents her dark side, what she could become if her dark side was unchecked. “The ordeal is a deepening of the problem of the first threshold and the question is still in balance: Can the ego put itself to death?” (Campbell 89). Clary is not entirely prepared to face her own weaknesses and sacrifice her personal gains for the greater good.

“He believes you love him enough to throw over everything you’ve valued or believed in to come and be with him. No matter what.”  
Her jaw tightened. “And how do you know I wouldn’t?”  
He laughed. “Because you’re *my* sister” (*CLS* 257).

Sebastian does not trust her, yet he understands her actions and her reasons. He is tempting her to follow her dark instincts, insinuated in the fact that joining Sebastian and Jace involve treason to the Shadowhunter world. Thus she must possess a dark instinct that she should obey.

Clary is an unreliable figure. As a heroic figure, she is perhaps the only heroine, in the novels discussed in his paper, who could become an antagonist. Most of her acts are selfish due to her love for Jace: she saves Jace because she loves him, not for the greater good; she stops Jace from turning himself in because they would be separated, not because he is needed for the cause.

It didn’t matter, anyway. There was only one thing she could ask for, in the end, only one real choice.  
|She raised her eyes to the Angel’s.  
“Jace,” she said. (*CG* 496).

She places Jace in importance above the balance of the world.<sup>94</sup> Her actions have grave repercussions that only help the antagonist in turn. One of those repercussions is the creation of the Infernal Cup. This cup allows the creation of Dark Shadowhunters. All that drink from it lose their soul and become enslaved to Sebastian's will.

### Mentor and Magical Helper

Jace is the mentor and romantic interest for Clary. He is the best fighter and demon killer for his age. His close relationship with Clary makes him the ideal teacher. He is the first one to introduce her into the world of Shadowhunters; he becomes interested in her for her apparent lack of powers that nonetheless allowed her to see him in the club. It is also quite significant that it is he who places the first rune on Clary.<sup>95</sup> This moment serves as threshold into the supernatural world. Jace assumes his role as mentor by being the one who makes her cross.

Jace has enough traits and heroic actions to be the true hero of the story. The Shadowhunter society pays more attention to him than to Clary. He has the same angel blood, which increases his fighting skills. If he fails as hero, it is because of his personal history of abuse in the hands of Valentine;<sup>96</sup> it makes him emotionally unstable. Whereas Clary gets tempted to her dark side, Jace believes to be evil in several circumstances. Clary serves as his redemption.

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<sup>94</sup> Liz Sherman saving Hellboy's life even if it means he could destroy the world, when asked by the Angel of Death. (*Hellboy 2: The Golden Army*, 2008).

<sup>95</sup> "There was something in Jace's hand, something sharp and silver. She tried to pull her hand back, but his grip was too hard: She felt a stinging kiss against her skin. When he let go, she saw an inked black symbol like the ones that covered his skin..." (CB 55).

<sup>96</sup> Jace believed that Valentine had murdered his father, Michael Wayland. Later he is deceived into thinking that Valentine was his real father. Finally it is revealed that Valentine took Jace from his mother's womb and raised him as his own, while his real father was Stephen Herondale.

Jace is admired within his society. The adult Shadowhunters focus on his upbringing, after it is revealed, and change their attitude towards him. He is never interested in proving to the Clave his allegiance; he only worries about his adoptive family accepting him as he is.

On the other hand, Clary's mother could have been a mentor figure. Jocelyn was a powerful warrior and she plays an important role in Clary's destiny. As member of the Circle she had a powerful position, and she could influence Valentine's decision. She is redeemed, but diminished in a sense, when she betrays the Circle to lead the Uprising. She saves the lives of many Downworlders, but becomes diminished as she rejects any further role of power.

Jocelyn's disappearance sets the entire adventure in motion, but also sets her behind the front line. After her recovery, her actions are more supportive and passive. Luke has a bigger role being part of the Council.

Clary feels betrayed by her mother; not being aware of the Shadow World for so long sets her at a terrible disadvantage, as she is ignorant of the dangers. "There are two poles of expression of the archetype of the Mother: the Great Mother who embodies limitless nurturance, sustenance, and protection and the Terrible Mother who represents stasis, suffocation, and death" (Murdock 18). From Clary's perspective, Jocelyn goes through these two stages. By denying Clary as Shadowhunter, Jocelyn is the Terrible Mother. She suffocates Clary's power. But after they come to terms with each other, Jocelyn's experience is helpful to Clary.

Simon is Clary's sidekick, but with his transformation into a vampire he assumes the role of magic helper. He is her best friend, always playing a major role throughout the books. He has heroic characteristics. He fights demons and is willing to sacrifice his life to raise Raziel.

Simon has more heroic skills than Clary, when first introduced.

He saw her, crouched on the stairs, and his gaze moved past her and over Abaddon and Jace. He reached back over his shoulder. He was holding Alec's bow [...]

It made a hot buzzing sound, like a huge bumblebee, as it shot over Abaddon's head, plunged toward the roof –  
And shattered the skylight. [...] flooding the foyer with light.  
Abaddon screamed and staggered back ... (CB 356).

Simon comes to the rescue and is more successful than three highly trained Shadowhunters and Clary with her powers. “What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny” (Campbell 59). Simon, who begins as the least magical, becomes safety. His vampire status and his special trait of Daylighter place him perfectly in the middle ground between the supernatural and real world.

#### Reward

Clary gets no reward,<sup>97</sup> in honors or political power. She remains a barely trained Shadowhunter. All she has are her spectacular powers.

All her rewards, in general terms, are personal and emotional: recovering Simon's memories; having her mother and Luke marry; seeing Alec and Marcus together. Her heroic moment is gone, and she will be easily replaced by the next generation.

#### Heroic Path

Clary's actions as a heroine include the traditional elements of the call to adventure: following Jace as he kills the demon on the bar, the underground experience, visiting the Fairy Court, crossing to Edom, and the final battle. The glory attached to heroes is not enjoyed by her, regardless of her involvement, but by Jace. The Shadowhunter Council is quite oblivious to Clary's presence. Jace is watched, when still believed to be Valentine's son; Simon is made

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<sup>97</sup> Unless escaping with everyone from Edom is the gain.

prisoner for his Daylight powers. Clary is only interrogated on several occasions, but rather ignored otherwise. The people around her seem more important.

#### Call to Adventure

Clary deviates from the heroic nature when she considers choosing to have Jace over the greater good. Clary has always set Jace as her priority, more clearly when she spent her wish to revive Jace. Against the wishes and knowledge of the Clave and her family, she decides to save Jace, so she joins Sebastian. Whatever knowledge she may gain to defeat Sebastian is an added bonus of only medium importance to her. She manages to obtain snippets of information on what Sebastian and Jace are doing: getting *adamus* to make a new Mortal Cup, witness Sebastian's dealings with Greater Demons, visiting the exiled Iron sister, etc. Until Jace, in control of himself for a moment, reveals the entire plan, she was not aware of the true extent of Sebastian's power. On the other hand, Simon, Isabelle, Alec, and Magnus have raised Azazel and Raziel for a weapon to stop Sebastian and save Jace.

#### Underground

Jace recovers control over himself for a moment, trusting Clary to help him and planning to escape together. His action is heroic; he is aware the Council may imprison him for his actions so far. He is willing to give himself up, as he believes it is a small price to save the world. "Saving myself is treason. It's putting a weapon into the hands of the enemy" (*CLS* 417). Clary only perceives danger, an unfair trial that would kill him or complicate their relationship.

Clary is aware of the threat Sebastian represents; she could try and foresee the consequences of the war Sebastian will bring. Yet she stops Jace.

    "Jonathan!" she screamed. "Jonathan Christopher Morgenstern!"  
[...]

There was a flash of movement, and Sebastian was there. ... He glanced between Clary and Jace, his black eyes taking in the situation. "Lover's spat?" he inquired. Something glinted in his hand. A knife?

Clary's voice shook. "His rune's damaged. Here." She put her hand over her heart. "He is trying to go back, to give himself up to the Clave—" (*CLS* 418).

It is the first time she calls her brother by his real name. She sees him as an authority figure, someone who can solve the problem. She immediately regrets her action as she starts to understand the consequences, the most important aspect of which is her awareness of the darkness within Jace. "[S]he whispered, not sure who she was defending herself to" (*CLS* 421). Clary has failed as a heroine, her selfish desires standing before her moral values. "In her quest to save him, she had almost forgotten who she was saving" (*CLS* 476). She is saving her ego, the idea of safety. This would be of no importance, could be part of her heroic test, but the other characters rely in her amazing powers. She is set apart for her angel's blood and Sebastian's obsession on her as equal. She has to stand against him or join. His actions have so far repelled her. Standing against him involved taking the role of hero to uphold a set of values. She holds those values, mostly and without questioning herself, in the face of society. But for her those values are worthless in exchange of Jace. "Just like she couldn't hurt me because of you. Always the same dance. Neither of you willing to make the sacrifice" (*CHF* 182).

The outcome of Clary's selfishness is the creation of dark Shadowhunters.<sup>98</sup> Sebastian takes the Cup with Lilith's blood to transform Shadowhunters. He gathers an immense army from the willing and the unwilling. One way or another, Sebastian would have achieved these results, but Clary played a significant part to make the plans work. Had she allowed Jace to go,

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<sup>98</sup> The first one being Amatis, sister of Luke. He was Valentine's best friend, before being transformed into a werewolf. He finally confessed his feelings to Clary's mother. Taking Amatis is a show of power and revenge against Clary.

Sebastian's plans would have been severely set back. He would have to find a new way to create the dark Shadowhunters and have less power to raise Lilith.

### Final Battle

Clary does not shoulder her responsibilities, for the most part of her journey. As I consider redemption<sup>99</sup> the only course for heroes if they ever fail, whether due to pride, temptation, or allowing the antagonist to succeed, then Clary has a final chance. Redemption requires a sacrifice. Clary's price is always Jace, whether to save herself for love or to save the world. Clary purifies Jace with Heosphoros, and, by look of it, kills him.

*You cannot cheat death. In the end it will have its own.*

Glorious sank into [Jace's] chest, and she felt her bloody hand slide on the hilt as the blade ground against the bones of his rib cage, driving through him until her fist thumped against his body and she froze. ...

There was a scream – a sound of rage and pain and terror, the sound of someone being brutally torn apart (*CLS* 490).

This was another chance she had to finish Sebastian, but again she uses it to save Jace. She has several chances to end the conflict, but she lets them pass.

In the end, she fulfils her role. She sacrifices her life, “[t]he adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown, the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades. (Campbell 67-68). Clary is ready to face the danger; for her the heroic journey consists of assuming responsibility and growing out of her personal wishes.

### Conclusion

Clary is tempted by her dark side, but she has the chance to redeem herself and fulfil her role. She is an interesting character, as most heroes have already controlled their darkness before

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<sup>99</sup> “Redemption consists in the return to superconsciousness and therewith the dissolution of the world” (Campbell 222).



facing their antagonist. She has the chance to become an antagonist, but her moral values are stronger, prevailing over her weaknesses. Sacrificing herself and loved ones transforms her into a heroine. She discovers that the world is more valuable than her.

## CHAPTER V.

### A FUTURE HEROINE

*A Hero cannot triumph all the time.*  
Cressida Cowell

Our society builds myths to create an ideal to achieve. Heroes are one of the most powerful ideals in our culture representing safety and a future. Heroines are gathering attention, creating their own mythology. Literature allows the myth to take form and influence society. Stories such as *Northern Lights* and *City of Lost Souls* reflect our beliefs that anyone can be the savior.

The last year has seen an increase in female protagonists as heroic, mostly in science fiction and fantasy. Still, the authors could exploit the genres and characters much more. They could test the moral values of society and how their heroines can stand the pressure of duty and sacrifice. Most strong female characters, so far, are only faced with threats to their loved ones. Saving the world is a question of who is more important: the personal gains or the greater good. Clary saves the world, but almost fails to do so. Lyra's world is saved as a consequence of her actions, but not as a conscious effort according to her original plan.

Heroines still have elements that can be developed, not limited to gender roles. Pullman and Clare show readers two kinds of heroines who both fulfil their roles because they do not allow their gender to be defining. Rather, it is society who limits these heroines and even the respective authors' perspectives. Clary has angel blood, the idea of purity, while the Lyra represents motherhood. The heroine archetype should be based on human experience, not only

female experience. A heroine's moral values and decisions should not be based on the expectations of her gender. Clary lacks the necessary skills to be a Shadowhunter not because of her gender, but due to her non-existent training. Lyra seeks knowledge in a world where female scholars are regarded as less intelligent. Lyra herself held this view because of upbringing in a male College. At the end of her adventures, her opinion is changed and she becomes interested in becoming a scholar.

The heroine novels of the next generation should take advantage of the target audience to include other societal elements, instead of limiting themselves to love stories. It seems that even the contemporary heroine can only accomplish her roles if her love interest supports her or reveals that everything is not in balance. Science fiction and fantasy writers should take the opportunity to delve into why their heroines believe the world must be saved. As Lyra faces the daemon-less child, she discovers that such life is too cruel. She has to save her friend and any other child from such fate.

Almost all the heroines in the stories discussed here abandon positions of power, retiring with a sense that they have spent themselves saving the world. Some feel inadequate to wield the power bestowed upon them; others are emotionally hurt, so it is easier to disappear. The heroic journey, with all its triumph, ends in decline. A heroine should become the new role model for our society. She should be depicted as the kind of person we want to be, embracing ideals and creating values to achieve. If a dystopian world will be our future or the act of survival requires moral sacrifices, the heroic character should serve as an example that the values of our society are superior and model ways to save humanity from itself.

Fantasy tends to idealize the world, depending heavily on the eucatastrophe. Lyra and Clary are happy to pursue their personal goals, learn again how to read the alethiometer and

become a Shadowhunter, respectively, when their actions had such resonance within the world. Fantasy should take advantage of the heroic figure, without so much attention on whether it is male or female; it has the opportunity to exploit the possibilities of warriors and idealists. Antagonists should be worried about the empathy, skills, powers, and heroic mind set instead of seeing a symbol. The most common mentor figure should not be so different for male and female heroes; regardless of gender or relation to heroes, the mentor should be the wise advisor.

The new heroine in contemporary science fiction and fantasy is still evolving. More than ten years between Clary and Lyra have allowed the female to be a warrior. Clary fights, but it takes her a while to perceive herself as warrior; while Lyra never wondered about that aspect of herself. Perhaps future novels will be written bearing in mind the cultural value that the heroic journey creates, presenting new heroines, not in the traditional passive mold or in imitation of male heroics, who discover their own power, strength, and passion to protect against any threat to our society.

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