

Bojana Vuĳin*
Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu

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INNOCENCE, EXPERIENCE AND NEGATIVE CAPABILITY: THE ROMANTIC CHILD IN PHILIP PULLMAN’S *HIS DARK MATERIALS*

Children’s literature is still heavily influenced by Romanticism and its ideology of the holiness and innocence of The Child, particularly the Wordsworthian “father of the man”, who is a figure of both great spirituality and naivety, able to intuitively grasp the inner workings of the universe. In light of this idea, and using current research into children’s literature, this paper examines Philip Pullman’s trilogy *His Dark Materials* (*Northern Lights*, 1995; *The Subtle Knife*, 1997; *The Amber Spyglass*, 2000), arguing that it offers a typically Postmodern interpretation of the Romantic Child, simultaneously affirming and subverting this ideological construct, through intertextual re-imaginings of William Wordsworth’s Platonism, William Blake’s concepts of Innocence and Experience, and John Keats’ theory of negative capability.

Key words: children’s literature, Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials*, The Romantic Child

The connection between children’s literature and the period of Romanticism is well-known: even though current researchers agree that this is yet another example of literary history serving a generous helping of *his story* (cf. Cogan-Thacker–Webb, 2002), the usual consensus among the general public and casual readers is that the English male Romantics created literature for children as we know it today. Neither of these “facts” is actually true, and it does not take much effort to understand why. First, Romantic poets did not so much write *for* children as they wrote *about* children, using the constructed image of the child as Innocence personified, and not having much to do with *actual* children.¹ Second, today’s

* bojana.vujin@ff.uns.ac.rs

¹ Of course, this refers to male, canonical figures – there *was* a tradition of Romantic poets writing almost exclusively for children, but these were women, like Adelaide O’Keeffe or sisters Ann and Jane Taylor, whose efforts, while extremely popular with children, were disregarded by the privileged creators of literary canon. Others, like Sara Coleridge (Samuel Taylor’s daughter), did not publish actual books, but instead created homemade verse cards and poetry journals for their own children. This has been largely

children's literature as a business – and it has to be seen as a business, and not just as a matter of private delight, where it is relegated when observed through rose-coloured glasses of schmaltzy sentimentality – owes more to the periods that followed Romanticism (mostly the Victorian era and the Turn of the Century), when the Powers-That-Be of the newly established book industry acquired enough marketing savvy to realise that children's literature is a virtual goldmine and acted accordingly, establishing a lively, rich, and above all, profitable, publishing venue. Still, Romantic ideas permeate children's literature to this day, particularly the insistence on the innocence and holiness of children, which has little basis in reality, and everything to do with the poetry of the Romantics, whose glorification of The Child was indebted largely to philosophical ideas of authors such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and their infantilising colonial concepts of “innocence”, “nature” and “purity”, which reached their apotheosis in the notion of the Noble Savage. This is not to say that male Romantics had no impact on writing for children: on the contrary, despite their lack of children's content, they – especially William Wordsworth – managed to become hugely influential in how later generations of writers and readers saw the “father of the man”.

Wordsworth is thus centrally important to this particular literary construct: the child figure who is wiser than the corrupt adult world around it, and whose outlook is not only insightful, but prophetic, as some of the most famous lines in “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood” (1807) directed at this Child so obviously state (“Thou best Philosopher [...], thou Eye among the blind [...], Mighty Prophet! Seer blessed!” (lines 111–115)²). Egregious though this accolade might have been in comparison with the miserable lives led by the actual urban children³, it showed the power of ideology which is still par for the course in children's literature and childhood studies (cf. Coats, 2018; Hunt, 2006). Even though later periods tried to explore the ambiguities of human nature in the figure of the child, mainstream children's literature usually reverts to the ideal of

disregarded in the canonical narratives of Romanticism, which is an obvious indication of the status of both women's writing and writing for children in the androcentric history of literature (cf. Ruwe, 2014).

² As is customary, and for reasons of space and clarity, all quotations from poems are referred to by their line numbers. For details on editions used, see References.

³ These social realities and disparities were, of course, explored a little earlier by William Blake. His poetry too uses the child as a convenient symbol, but at least it is knowingly ironic and more self-aware of that symbolic nature, as exemplified by the central poem in the *Innocence* section in *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794), “The Lamb”.

childhood innocence and otherworldly insightfulness, while at the same time insisting that children should be kept away from anything that might threaten that ideal, which is today defined in increasingly puritanical terms. Since it always hovers between its dual roles of education and entertainment, it is easy for children's fiction to become moored in its own moral lessons and ideologies, and use the constructed child⁴ as an empty vessel for them. There, this Wordsworthian figure can perfectly represent the irresistible, nostalgic paradox of the embryonic Human who is simultaneously possessed of higher wisdom and ingenuously unaware of their own lofty abilities.

How, then, can a work for children navigate these difficult waters of tradition and innovation? One possibility is for it to acknowledge its debt to the Romantic idea(l)s, but then re-examine and subvert them; something that is particularly fitting for Postmodern works of art aiming to dismantle grand narratives. This is precisely how Philip Pullman approaches the Romantic Child in his famous trilogy entitled *His Dark Materials*. Written at the Turn of the Millennium, just as J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007) was ushering in a second Golden Age of children's literature⁵, *His Dark Materials*, comprising of *Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997) and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), leans heavily on tradition, from its intertextual dialogue with John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), to the epigraphs that precede each chapter of *The Amber Spyglass*, styled as little etchings and taken from the Bible, Milton, Blake, Keats

⁴ The constructed child refers to the heavily fictional(ised) and ideologically painted figure of the child in literature, which does not reflect reality, but instead whatever social and literary context the author is writing from/about. As Adrienne E. Gavin (2012: 2) succinctly puts it, “[c]reated from authors’ autobiographical or biographical imperatives, social intent, historical inspiration, or literary imaginations, the fictional child is an artefact that expresses memories or intuitive understanding of childhood or symbolically pictures the child as innocent, victim, blank slate, born sinner, infant tyrant, visionary, or signifier of nostalgia, hope, despair, or loss. Literary children often carry substantial weight in texts, and, in envisioning the child, writers have constructed images and characters that serve various functions: instruction, allegory, pathos, escapism, satire, identification, demonization, or idealization.”

⁵ The (first) Golden Age of children's literature was, roughly, the second half of the nineteenth century, after Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) revolutionised the newly established literary branch (I deliberately do not use the term 'genre', as children's literature is broader than that and it itself includes numerous genres) in that it tipped the scales of entertainment vs. education firmly in the direction of the former, in the face of earlier heavily moralistic stories for children.

and Coleridge, among others⁶. The overall theme of the trilogy can be interpreted as the struggle between Innocence and Experience, while the discussion on the nature of religion and belief counts on child readers' natural insightfulness and ability to comprehend things usually considered too difficult for them – a remnant of the Wordsworthian “best Philosopher” if there ever was one. After firmly establishing these connections with the Romantic tradition, Pullman then sets about subverting that tradition, by having his characters realise that Experience is actually a desirable outcome of life, and that insistence on idealised childhood Innocence is not only an unattainable goal, but an insidious, theocratic attempt at control.

Moreover, not only does Pullman use the Innocence–Experience binary to explore these ideas, but he also reaches for some of the most pervasive Romanticist notions, such as John Keats' theory of negative capability (1817), to delve into the workings of imagination and creation, without simplifying the concepts for his child audience. Throughout the trilogy, this push-and-pull of Romanticist tradition and Postmodern subversion of that tradition allows for a re-examination of the ideology of the child and the notion of what is “appropriate” for children's literature to handle, as I will demonstrate in the remainder of the paper, focusing in turn on the influence of William Wordsworth, John Keats and William Blake on Pullman's *His Dark Materials*.

Set in a multiverse that includes our own world, but also other, more fantastical ones, which can be reached through special “windows” carved between worlds by the wielder of a special instrument called the Subtle Knife, *His Dark Materials* trilogy follows two children on their intersecting quests to escape persecution and bring freedom to their loved ones and, by extension, the world(s). While the boy, Will, belongs to our own reality, the girl, Lyra, hails from a steampunk fantasy world ordered as a Calvinist hierocracy where people have external souls, called *daemons*⁷, which change shape while one is a child, but take

⁶ For a more in-depth exploration of intertextuality in *His Dark Materials*, see Hunt–Lenz, 2003: 123–126. More generally, Christine Wilkie-Stibbs' chapter entitled “Intertextuality and the Child Reader” (in Hunt, 2006: 168–179) provides a good overview of the challenges faced by both authors and readers of children's fiction when it comes to intertextual elements.

⁷ This may very well be another nod at Romanticism, this time Wordsworthian Platonism, since the inspiration for the daemons probably lies in Socrates' *daimonion*, the “divine something” (as Cicero called it) that acts as a voice of conscience, mentioned in several of Plato's works, most notably *Apology* (usually estimated to have been composed between 399 and 387 BCE).

permanent form in adulthood. The two protagonists meet in the second book, *The Subtle Knife*, and proceed to take part in a cosmic war, going through numerous adventures with various fantastical creatures like armoured bears and witches, and finally (almost accidentally) establishing the Republic of Heaven in the end. Even if one did not know where the title of the trilogy comes from⁸, the *Paradise Lost* element is easily spotted even in this brief summary, and Pullman's own atheist philosophy replaces moralistic instruction rooted in Christian thought which has dominated European children's literature since its inception, and whose secular iteration is still part of it today. Thus, even though he seemingly rejects the didactic tone of traditional children's stories, Pullman still instructs his reader in moral lessons; only instead of dogmatic puritanism, he chooses to focus on ethical spiritualism steeped in atheism. Nicholas Tucker (2017: 137) calls Pullman "an intensely moral writer", though he is more reserved about Pullman's atheism, stating that "the trilogy is not so much an atheist text as a reworking of a Christian one towards radically different conclusions". Even this can be interpreted as Romantic, because Pullman's belief in science over dogma (best illustrated through the character of Mary Malone, a physicist who used to be a nun, but left the Church in pursuit of science and personal liberation) has some things in common with P. B. Shelley's views⁹. Add to that the fact that the trilogy also heavily relies on quantum mechanics and particle physics (in the books, sentient elemental particles of consciousness, known as Dust, play a central role in Innocence becoming Experience), and the result is basically modern philosophy of nature: in other words, Pullman's Romanticism wears new clothes, but the cut of those clothes is still classic and quite recognisable to the trained eye.

The easiest way to illustrate the connection between the Romantic Child¹⁰ and Pullman's interpretation of it is through the concept of the alethiometer. This

⁸ The epigraph at the beginning of the trilogy helpfully points the reader to Book II of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

⁹ Shelley's Romanticism, while still indebted to the Classical German Idealism that inspired his fellow poets (most obviously Wordsworth), moves away from the transcendental and into the empirical. His early musings, like the famous pamphlet "The Necessity of Atheism" (1811), give insight into his view that proof of a creative Deity is necessary for belief. For more on this, see King-Hele (1992).

¹⁰ The most important features of the Romantic Child have already been mentioned (spirituality, naivety, insightfulness, otherworldliness, innate ability to comprehend higher truths). For a more in-depth discussion of the concept, see Roderick McGillis' chapter entitled "Irony and Performance: The Romantic Child" (in Gavin, 2012: 101–115).

device, introduced early on in *Northern Lights*, is a heavy golden tool that looks like a cross between a compass and a pocket watch (indeed, when the American publisher changed the title of *Northern Lights* for the North American market, they chose *The Golden Compass*) and, like its name suggests, it serves as a measuring instrument that allows the person operating it to learn the truth, by asking pertinent questions. The reading of the alethiometer is exceptionally difficult and takes many years of dedicated study, and even then, the results are often too vague to interpret. Unless, as it turns out, the reader is a child with extraordinary innate ability to see connections between symbols and comprehend their meaning without fail. The complicated mechanism is operated by moving three of its four hands along the rim, where numerous symbols are painted or etched. Once the question is asked, the fourth hand starts whirling between the symbols, and the combination of all these elements is then read in conjunction with all the levels of thinking the questioner can simultaneously hold in their mind, in “maybe a never-ending series of meanings” (Pullman, 2012: 109). Lyra, who is in possession of one of only six alethiometers ever made, has an unprecedented ability to intuitively grasp even the slightest meaning. Throughout the trilogy, she easily interprets the alethiometer’s readings, by entering an almost trance-like state and holding an infinite number of symbols in her mind. When Will asks her how she does it, she replies: “I know when to stop asking”, and then proceeds to explain that “the alethiometer’s like a person, almost. I sort of know when it’s going to be cross or when there’s things it doesn’t want me to know. I kind of feel it.” (Pullman, 2012: 413) This reliance on feeling instead of analytical thought is almost a textbook example of the ideological construct on the Romantic Child. The process Lyra describes, meanwhile, is eerily similar to Wordsworth’s famous depiction of “the blessed mood” necessary to “see into the life of things”, in “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798” (1798):

that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things. (lines 38–49)

Even though these verses do not refer to a child, but to a figure we would today call a young adult, the symbolism is similar to what Wordsworth uses in “Immortality Ode” when describing “a six years’ Darling of a pigmy size” (line 87); in other words, a figure made of innocence, imagination, and enlightenment. As Roderick McGillis remarks, the Romantic child is “both natural and supernatural” (Gavin, 2012: 102), and here, it uses its ability to become one with nature and the Hegelian Spirit, in order to unlock the secrets of the universe.

Not only is the power of Imagination, so central to Romanticism and so entwined in the ideology of the Romantic Child, the very thing that allows Lyra to intuitively read the alethiometer, but it is also what enables Will to use the subtle knife. As the angel Xaphania explains to them, the faculty of imagination “does not mean *making things up*. It is a form of seeing.” (Pullman, 2012: 997). Moreover, the “blessed mood” Lyra employs to *see* and Will to *feel* is the same process Dr Mary Malone uses to communicate with Dust on her computer. The mysteries of the universe can thus only be reached once a person lets go of strict adherence to certainties. In other words, this intuitive, imaginative state is explicitly connected to Keats’ theory of negative capability, which Mary explains to Lyra:

“[The shadow-particles] know we’re here. They answer back. And here goes the crazy part: you can’t see them unless you expect to. Unless you put your mind in a certain state. You have to be confident and relaxed at the same time. You have to be capable – where’s that quotation...”

She reached into the muddle of papers on her desk, and found a scrap on which someone had written with a green pen. She read:

“... capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason –’ You have to get into that state of mind. That’s from the poet Keats, by the way. I found it the other day. So you get yourself in the right state of mind, and then you look at the Cave –”

“The cave?” said Lyra.

“Oh, sorry. The computer. We call it the Cave. Shadows on the walls of the Cave, you see, from Plato.” (Pullman, 2012: 400–401)

Here, we can see that Pullman does not simply use the concept of the Romantic Child as a stand-in for nostalgic adult fantasies of spirituality and enlightenment, but that he actively enters into a dialogue with the most important Romanticist concepts, so as to explore how his version of the Romantic Child might

break free of the ideology it is bound in. Lyra's journey is, in essence, a journey from Innocence to Experience, and she has to learn that leaving Innocence behind is not simply inevitable, but desirable. Plato's philosophy, so crucial to Wordsworth's view of the child, clearly demonstrates this: by naming the computer the Cave, Dr Malone's team of researchers acknowledge that the position of the one communicating with Dust particles is a precarious one, because, even though negative capability allows them to accept that there might not be a simple, easy, unique truth to learn (a presciently Postmodern notion on Keats' part), reliance on pure intuition comes at a price, since shadows on the cave walls may be the only reality reachable in that way. Therein lies the paradox: The Romantic Imagination, in all its iterations, is absolutely crucial, but it works even better when supported by actual understanding, as opposed to pure intuition.

Not surprisingly, then, Lyra loses the ability to read the alethiometer once she leaves childhood behind and embraces the world of experience. Just like Wordsworth's child, who arrives from Heaven "trailing clouds of Glory" ("Immortality Ode", line 65), only to have "shades of the prison-house" (line 68) close in upon them, Lyra will not give into desperation over her loss, but will instead "find strength / in what remains behind" (lines 184–185), "in years that bring the philosophic mind" (line 191). When she asks Xaphania why she can no longer read the alethiometer, the answer she receives echoes both the realizations reached in "Immortality Ode" and the idea of "abundant recompense" (line 89) that allows one to hear "the sad still music of humanity" (line 92) when they grow up and leave intuition behind, expressed in "Tintern Abbey":

"You read it by grace," said Xaphania, looking at her, "and you can regain it by work."

"How long will that take?"

"A lifetime."

"That long..."

"But your reading will be even better then, after a lifetime of thought and effort, because it will come from conscious understanding. Grace attained like that is deeper and fuller than grace that comes freely, and furthermore, once you've gained it, it will never leave you." (Pullman, 2012: 994)

Thus, even though Lyra seemingly starts her journey as a Romantic cliché, she morphs into a less constructed figure and becomes a character who, while still clearly influenced by the many ideologies of Romanticism, reaches its full dynamic potential – she is hailed as "the first believable little girl since Alice" (Hunt–Lenz,

2003: 152) – instead of remaining an otherworldly, unknowable Other, which is usually the fate reserved for the true Romantic Child.

The fact that, in *His Dark Materials*, innocence becomes experience in a joyous, rather than melancholy way, owes as much to certain tropes of classic children’s literature as it does to Romanticism. In an interview he gave to Nicholas Tucker in December 2016, Philip Pullman elaborates on this:

What I’m against in a quite visceral, loathing way, is the sentimental vision of childhood you get in books written in the so-called Golden Age of children’s literature. Peter Pan, who thinks it’s better always to stay a child, some of A. A. Milne’s verses, I can’t bear them, they make me sick! Children don’t want to be children – they want to be grown up. The games they play are about being adult. Recalling my own adolescence, and encountering sexuality and intellectual excitement was all part of an extraordinary wonderful, glorious awakening. The whole universe began to sing. So when you get people like C. S. Lewis in the Narnia books lamenting the fact that children have to grow up it makes me very angry. (Tucker, 2017: 188)

Hence, Lyra’s story ends up being a celebration of experience. Innocence, however, is not entirely lost, but reflected in Experience, and manifests itself as redeemed imagination, as befitting a work inspired by William Blake. Lyra, whose name echoes both the Romantic Aeolian harp / Lyre and the word “liar” constantly tells far-fetched stories and outright lies, until she is attacked for it by the harpies who guard the Underworld. However, when she tells them the true story of her life, both them and all the ghosts around them are spellbound, so much so that a new bargain is struck: the harpies will act as guides for the dead souls, and will allow them to exit the underworld and turn into Dust, as long as they tell them the truth of their lives. This storytelling based on truth can be interpreted as Blake’s redeemed imagination, which allows souls to enter, not Heaven, but eternal existence as part of nature. As Blake states in Book II of *Milton* (1804–1810), imagination is “the Human existence itself” (line 32); therefore, Lyra’s truth, her story of human existence, *is* imagination. Like Blake, Pullman also rejects the authority and oppression of organized religion, and in the end, Will and Lyra realise that the republic of heaven, which has to replace the kingdom of heaven, must be created on Earth, in each of the many worlds that constitute their multiverse. Nicholas Tucker (2017: 119) quotes lines from “The Chimney Sweeper” (from *Songs of Experience*), where the child’s parents go “to praise God and His Priest and King, / Who make up a Heaven of our misery” (lines 11–12), explaining that Blake’s “spectres that haunt us and which we must always learn to cast away” are “the creation of

oppressive religion backed up by the state”. Just like Blake’s little Chimney Sweeper, Lyra soon realizes that the hierocracy she lives in needs to be overthrown so that imagination and innocence can be free and able to transform into experience. This realization, however, does not translate into radicalisation, and even though Lyra is aware of the root of the problem, she does not set about changing the world through revolutionary action – the change, so gradual that it is almost unnoticeable, is rather to be achieved through the joyous acceptance of experience.

Rather than bemoan the loss of innocence, then, Will and Lyra, Pullman’s Adam and Eve, embrace their budding sexuality and cause the second Fall of Man; only this fall is seen as something natural, positive and, above all, *necessary* for humanity. Here, the Romantic Child has been truly obliterated: childhood is no longer perceived as a state of uncorrupted heavenly grace, but simply as one of the many stages of life, neither better nor worse than any other. The metaphor of the daemon plays a crucial role in this realization. As mentioned above, the daemon is a manifestation of one’s soul, able to change shape in childhood and settling in adulthood. Out of fear of sexuality, and in order to keep children in a perpetual, artificial state of innocence, scientists from Lyra’s world come up with an instrument that severs the link between the child and their daemon; however, instead of working, this act, explicitly described as a horrifying mutilation, results in torture and death. The message is clear: children *must* grow up, and furthermore, this should not be seen as a tragedy or loss. After her kiss with Will in a symbolic Garden of Eden leads her into the world of Experience, Lyra realises that her daemon Pantalaimon has taken permanent shape (that of a pine marten):

“Pan,” Lyra said as he flowed up on to her lap, “you’re not going to change a lot any more, are you?”

“No,” he said.

“It’s funny,” she said, “you remember when we were younger and I didn’t want you to stop changing at all... Well, I wouldn’t mind so much now. Not if you stay like this.” (Pullman, 2012: 1000)

This scene serves as the ultimate deconstruction of The Romantic Child: in embracing Experience, Lyra has gained true wisdom, just like Xaphania told her, and is now ready to embark upon the rest of her journey.¹¹

¹¹ This has (so far) been explored in the novella *Lyra’s Oxford* (2003), and in *The Secret Commonwealth* (2019), the second book of the (as of September 2023) still unfinished sequel trilogy, *The Book of Dust*.

As mentioned at the beginning, Romanticism is still pervasive in children's literature, perhaps because humanity needs to believe in the redemptive powers of pure innocence in order to understand itself, and perhaps because it is easier to pigeonhole children as uninterested in and afraid of adult world, in order to keep the illusion of pure childhood innocence alive (maybe that is why adulthood keeps getting delayed, and now we have not only teenagers, but also young adults and, lately, "new adults" as well (cf. Deahl, 2012)). Whatever the reason, children's literature often reverts to the constructed figure of otherworldly insight and purity, the Romantic Child. Philip Pullman's Lyra, the protagonist of *His Dark Materials*, has all the elements of the Romantic Child: she is, as Roderick McGillis puts it, "beautiful, natural, and pure as well as stubborn and irrational", just like Wordsworth's little girl from the poem "We Are Seven" (1798) (Gavin, 2012: 105). However, after having established Lyra's character as that of the Romantic Child, Pullman sets out to subvert that ideology. Lyra is thus not simply a construct, floating aimlessly adrift from the Romanticist ideologies that have begotten her. On the contrary, she interacts with the most important notions pertaining to the Romantic era: Wordsworth's Platonic idea that "Heaven lies about us in our infancy" ("Immortality Ode", line 67), Keats's theory of negative capability, which states that we need to be "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Keats, 1899: 277), and Blake's concepts of Innocence and Experience, as well as his views of religion and imagination. By making Romanticism central, and not incidental, to his exploration of Lyra's interaction with the world, Pullman allows Lyra to question those ideologies, break free from the mould of the Romantic Child and become "a highly individualized variation on the female hero" (Hunt-Lenz, 2003: 155).

There are, of course, many other Romantic elements in the novels, like an allusion to Blake's Los, the divine aspect of human imagination represented as a smith, in the character of the armoured bear, Iorek Byrnison (in a memorable chapter, entitled "The Forge", Iorek mends the subtle knife, asking Will to "hold it still in [his] mind" (Pullman, 2012: 750), because the forging is not only a physical, but a spiritual process as well); or the name of Mrs Coulter's daemon, never given in the novels, but revealed to be Ozymandias in the radio play adaptation. These intertextual nods only reaffirm Pullman's position as a quintessentially Postmodern writer who questions tradition, takes from it what he deems important, and then uses it to dismantle the grand narratives of canon. By weaving all these elements into an inspiring, original, and above all, universal story, he secures a place for both Lyra and himself among the classics of children's literature.

Бојана Вујин

НЕВИНОСТ, ИСКУСТВО И НЕГАТИВНА СПОСОБНОСТ: РОМАНТИЧАРСКО
ДЕТЕ У ЊЕГОВИМ МРАЧНИМ ТКАЊИМА ФИЛИПА ПУЛМАНА

Резиме

Дечија књижевност је и даље под великим утицајем романтизма и идеолошке конструкције Детета као свете, наднаравне, невине фигуре, нарочито Вордсвортове слике детета као „оца човека“, творевине коју одликују невероватна духовност и наивност и која има интуитивну способност да разуме тајне универзума. Узевши у обзир ову идеју, као и актуелне теорије дечије књижевности, овај чланак анализира трилогију Филипа Пулмана *Његова мрачна ткања (Северна светлост, 1995; Чудотворни нож, 1997; Ђилибарски дурбин, 2000)* и показује да у њој аутор на типично постмодернистички начин тумачи идеолошки конструкт Романтичарског детета, тако што ту фигуру истовремено потврђује и подрива, кроз интертекстуални дијалог са платонизмом Вилијама Вордсворта, идејама невиности и искуства Вилијама Блејка, те теоријом негативне способности Џона Китса.

Кључне речи: дечија књижевност, Филип Пулман, *Његова мрачна ткања*, Романтичарско дете

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