# Opposing Roles of Female Archetypes in Anti-Church Propaganda in Hozier's "Take me to Church" and Phillip Pullman's "His Dark Materials"

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Whether something is propaganda or antipropaganda is often debatable. Literature and music are filled with social and literary archetypes which are defined as universal character constructs that we harbour in our collective unconscious, and which can function as both propaganda or anti-propaganda. Examples can be found in the unnamed female lover in Hozier's popular song "Take Me to Church" and the femme fatale in Philip Pullman's character Marisa Coulter from his trilogy *His Dark Materials*, both presenting the archetype of the temptress. Hozier's heroine is an approximate counterpart to the Roman Catholic Church's God while Marisa, on the other hand, is a villain who represents the Church in Pullman's trilogy, attempting to uphold its power and monopoly on knowledge, yet serving as anti-propaganda through her own wickedness and amorality. I will show how these two female characters both embody the archetype of the temptress and display Church anti-propaganda, each in her own distinct way: one representing evil and the other as good standing in opposition to evil.

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## Introduction

Placing power, wielding power, and using someone to promote or denote power are distinct activities, and when women and their allure enter the power arena, it usually involves weaponization of one sort or another. Admiration, adoration, and pursuit of women has preoccupied world literature and the arts in general for ages, but there is a certain instinctive fear that develops when someone awakens deep desires within us, because that gives them power over us. The ancient archetype of the temptress is a personification of this fear, awakened in people's hearts as individuals, or in powerful organisations that wish to utilize or destroy the temptress's power. According to American author and historian Barbara Tuchman, "Woman (in the 14th century) was the Church's rival, the temptress, the distraction, the obstacle to holiness, the Devil's decoy" (Tuchman 2017, 36). Clearly, powerful organisations have a longstanding business built around human desires and the wish to control and monopolize the power they hold over human nature. To gain and hold power over a large number of people, they need to put time and energy into propaganda and at least some power and energy into anti-propaganda to denigrate elements that may threaten this power and influence, or to actually denigrate this power in question to stop its force and influence. Assuming that a temptress can hold power over at least a portion of the population they wish to control, she can become a weapon of either propaganda or anti-propaganda.

Two examples of temptresses, Mrs Marisa Coulter from Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, and a nameless character in Andrew Hozier's song "Take Me to Church," and their role in Church propaganda or anti-propaganda, invite an intertextual reading; the novel and song both build on and shape references from the Roman Catholic faith and the ancient archetypal image of the temptress. Intertextuality is a theoretical concept where one or more texts refer to, reference, quote, or allude to another specific text (Genette 1997). Here, the intertextual reading takes place through examining the two variants of the archetype that are rooted in the temptress concept and their relationship to the Church and used as pro and anti-church propaganda by their respective male authors.

I will focus on how the roles of these two characters differ in their positive or negative representation, especially in relation to promoting or denigrating the Church as an organisation. Both works clearly criticise certain activities of the

Roman Catholic Church, which can also be seen in interviews given by the authors. One character is used as a villain to show the evil of the organisation, while the other stands as the Church's rival for power and attention with her influence and quasi-divine status. Both examples originate in contemporary popular culture, not in ancient scripts, which indicates that the dangers of oppression, manipulation and other forms of abuse from the Catholic Church are still felt and present in modern literature and music.

## Propaganda and Anti-Propaganda

Propaganda is "The systematic dissemination of information, esp. in a biased or misleading way, in order to promote a political cause or point of view" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2022). Although this definition refers to "political causes," its reference to "points of view" applies equally to religious causes. Although church and state are separated by law in most countries of the westernised world, instances like these do still occur in many congregations, as reported by an Evangelical pastor:

> […] I felt pressure from a number of right-wing political and religious sources, as well as from some people in my own congregation, to "shepherd my flock" into voting for "the right candidate" and "the right position." Among other things, I was asked to hand out leaflets, to draw attention to various political events, and to have our church members sign petitions, make pledges, and so on. Increasingly, some in our church grew irate because of my refusal (supported by the church board) to have the church participate in these activities. (Boyd 2005, 11)

It is evident that faith and politics do not always go their separate ways and that they exchange and share power through propaganda, in this case in the form of handing out leaflets and drawing attention to certain political candidates: plainly speaking, to tell his congregation where to cast their vote. The church is thus very much a political entity striving and stirring power within many contemporary communities.

It is often the case that forms of propaganda spark anti-propaganda. Anti- or counterpropaganda is employed in situations to counter propaganda efforts; thus, to understand the former requires a clear understanding of the latter (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2006). The state of anti-anything needs to be understood and interpreted through the "pro" state, and anti-propaganda is no different. The paraphrased explanation above on anti-propaganda by Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell

indicates that understanding the distinction between propaganda and anti-propaganda requires the perception that, in the case of Church propaganda and anti-propaganda, the latter will try to persuade us of something negative about the Church and its activity; this is displayed in the works by Pullman and Hozier and by many other writers in non-fiction genres.

The Roman Catholic Church has raised eyebrows and tempers with its multitude of moral scandals, creating its own unintentional anti-propaganda. A Google search reveals the extent and number of problematic allegations towards the Church, such as *The Guardian*'s recent report on a high-ranking church official in Germany denying awareness of abuse allegations against members of his order: "The case centres on the elevation of a priest to a higher position in the city of Düsseldorf who has been accused of several accounts of sexual abuse against children" (Connolly 2023). Another example reported by the BBC lists abuse statistics of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States: "The state's top prosecutor said 451 clergy in Illinois had sexually abused 1,997 children since 1950. The church had acknowledged only 103 individual abusers before the start of the investigation in 2018. Nearly every survivor interviewed struggled with mental health issues after being abused, the report said" (Wendling 2023). These reports and numbers are extremely worrying and in stark contrast to the fact that the institution promotes itself with a moral position of compassion towards other people.

The scandal problem is not just a contemporary phenomenon or just limited to Europe. Canada has had traumatic experiences with the Church over the centuries as well, described in Michelle Gadpaille's 2010 analysis of *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, or The Hidden Secrets of Nun's Life in a Convent Exposed* (1836) and of Sarah Richardson's *Life in the Grey Nunnery at Montreal* (1858). The literature shows that an entire anti-church genre was born through the accounts of these women who were mistreated by the church: "[…] a special brand of evil was constructed: hypocritical, underground and expressed through the bodies and minds of nuns, such iniquity both arose from and helped to construct anti-Catholic sentiment on both sides of the border. The figure of the mad nun in particular became a trope for both the Catholic system and resistance to its strictures" (Gadpaille 2010, 1). These accounts portray the mistrust and growing negative feelings towards the Church as an institution and the way these negative feelings have grown through time into the present day.

In the 21st century, both Hozier and Pullman criticize the church and its propaganda in the media and in their works. Hozier is expressive in condemning the church's homophobia: "The Pope came here last year and said, 'Who am I to judge with regards to somebody's sexual orientation? I think it is important to differentiate between lip service towards something and actually making change. I think it is hopeful, but saying this in 2015, 'Who am I to judge?' is something that should have been said 100 years ago" (Hendicott 2015). Hozier included the theme of homophobia in the release video of "Take Me to Church." Pullman, on the other hand, expresses his disdain for the Roman Catholic Church by directly mentioning the scandals in which it has been involved and openly critiquing its corruption and power abuse:

> 'It's been caught with its trousers down, in many different ways, hasn't it?' he says of the recent abuse scandals. 'They didn't expect this sort of thing to happen, this sort of thing to come out; they didn't expect to have to account for themselves in the way that they've had to. But this is what happens, always, when you have an organisation whose authority derives from something that may not be questioned.' 'Now,' he continues, 'when you get that sort of authority, in any set-up, the potential for corruption is wide open.' (Barton 2010)

Pullman's clear, pointed critique of the Roman Catholic Church indicates the disdain that we can see displayed in the trilogy *His Dark Materials*. This critique in Pullman's, like Hozier's work, shows clear signs of Church anti-propaganda, intended or not.

The two texts under consideration display an interesting counter use of the temptress archetype in the anti-propaganda of the Church. In Pullman's novel, we encounter a villainous temptress who represents the Church and its activity and is so devoutly focused on her work for the Church and its power-hungry endeavours that her disposition becomes a representation of and anti-propaganda for the Church itself. In Hozier's lyrics, we see a seemingly blasphemous temptress who is mockingly equated with a deity. The speaker ridicules organised religion through his devotion to the temptress, so she too is a type of Church anti-propaganda, but she is portrayed as a positive, grounding counterpart to the Church's self-righteousness and claim of right to judge, or, in other words, the Church's self-propaganda.

## The Artists and the Church

Andrew John Hozier-Byrne, an Irish singer and songwriter, better known as Hozier, rose to world fame on 13 September 2013 when his hit single "Take Me to Church" was released by Rubyworks Records (Zollo 2020). The link was quickly established between his music, the critique of religion, and its consequent anti-propaganda effect:

> Perhaps pagan, apparently agnostic, undeniably unchristian—whatever category you apply, Hozier's music is fundamentally religious. Rather than divorcing faith from art, Andrew Hozier-Byrne, who performs under the stage name Hozier, brings religion to center stage. He wrestles with God in both of his albums, inviting his audience to actively contemplate the afterlife and critically analyze the nature of worship alongside him. (Zollo 2020)

Another comment on his art states:

> His disdain for institutionalized Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church, colors his analysis of religion; […] in his infamous debut single 'Take Me to Church,' he worships the human rather than the divine, begging to 'worship like a dog at the shrine of [his lover's] lies.' (Hayes 2021)

Hozier does not just hint at a critique of the Roman Catholic Church, which has the largest membership of any church in his home country of Ireland, in his songs, he states it directly in his correspondence with the press: "The damage done by the Church to the people of Ireland is completely irreparable, and the reparations are all too few. There's still a lack of will to turn around and say, 'This is not OK'" (Hozier 2014). Quotations from and about his music indicate that Hozier's work contains a predominance of anti-religious propaganda. "Take Me to Church" offers a truly poetic expression of rebellious, tempting female worship and an earnest act of advocacy against the oppression, hate and fearmongering of a powerful institution.

Sir Philip Nicholas Outram Pullman is a well-established English novelist who is perhaps best-known for his outspoken critique of the Church in the fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials*. Pullman has produced other anti-religious works, such as *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* (2010). He has been named as one of the "50 greatest British writers since 1945" by the *Times* (Times Magazine 2008) and, in 2019, was knighted in the New Year's Honours to Literature.

In an interview with *The Guardian* reporter Laura Barton, Pullman speaks about having left religion, the Church and its negative disposition behind, while labelling God as an "evil demiurge":

> And so I came to realise that this world was actually rather a good place, which is full of things that make you laugh and things that make you happy and things that make you feel good physically, and so I gradually abandoned the idea of the evil demiurges who had created this ghastly world, and realised actually that this is our home, it's where we belong, and there ain't no elsewhere […] So that's where I am now, spiritually speaking. Which I never do, because I don't like that word. (Pullman in Barton 2010)

Pullman's words demonstrate his dislike of the Church, its world-view and judgement of people's sins, all the while concealing moral scandal within its ranks. One of those scandals discussed in the same *Guardian* interview triggered the following response from Pullman:

> I ask him [Pullman] if he thinks the scandal will change the Catholic Church. 'I hope so,' he says quickly, and then draws back. 'Well why do I hope so? In one way, I hope the wretched organisation will vanish entirely. So I'm looking on with a degree of dispassionate interest.' He does not, at this moment, seem so dispassionate. (Barton 2010)

These words will reappear in our analysis of Mrs. Coulter and her hypocritical role as a fanatically devout member of the fictional church in *His Dark Materials*. She is completely devoted to her organisation, but a deeply amoral person with a mounting list of horrible sins.

## Archetypes in Literature

The Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung first used the term "archetypes" in 1919. He defined them as "universal, primal symbols and images that derive from the collective unconscious" (Jung 1919, 17). Jung indicates that archetypes influence our behaviour and perception on an unconscious level; his model has been refined in more contemporary definitions like that of Kendra Cherry, who states that: "Archetypes are universal, inborn models of people, behaviours, and personalities that play a role in influencing human behaviour" (Cherry 2023); or in another recent one by Brugue:

> It is described as a kind of innate unspecific knowledge, derived from the sum total of human history, which prefigures and directs conscious behaviour. They are underlying base forms, or the archetypes-as-such, from which emerge images and motifs such as the mother, the child, the trickster, and the flood, among others. (Brugue 2020)

All definitions point to the fact that archetypes, created or perceived, influence our unconscious and conscious perceptions and behaviour, making them useful in propaganda and anti-propaganda. Propaganda and its counterpart are both activities of persuasion and of changing and/or steering our perceptions and opinions. An archetype that already stirs certain subconscious thought patterns and associations can easily be utilised to direct the mind in the direction of an agenda, and that is why they are often used in propaganda or anti-propaganda campaigns, whether political or religious in nature (Pisch 2016, Nicolaides 2018).

In literary studies, archetypes are observed and interpreted mainly within the context of archetypal criticism theory, which is "a theory that interprets a text by focusing on recurring myths and archetypes in the narrative and symbols, images, and character types in a literary work" (Devika 2023). Archetypal criticism dates to 1934 and to Amy Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, and winds its way through the work of scholars like the anthropologist Brandon Fraser and writer and scholar Joseph Campbell. Literary critic Northrop Frye describes archetypes as the building blocks of storytelling, as notes are the building blocks to music, and further elaborates that archetypes also shape our understanding of a literary work based on how we understand the archetypes themselves or based on how the author understands and uses them (Frye 2000). Furthermore, the field origins of archetypal criticism are rooted in academic disciplines like social anthropology and psychoanalysis (Bremm 2010).

In "Take Me to Church" and *His Dark Materials*, a general classification of archetypes and its close understanding play a major role in providing a frame for their identification and analysis. The authors use their own understanding and the socially expected interpretation of a temptress to weaponize this female figure for propaganda and anti-propaganda in ways that overlap but still remain distinct, showing the versatility of archetypal interpretations and their prevalent role and importance in contemporary literature and music. But first let us examine the archetype of the temptress.

## The Temptress

The temptress archetype can be characterized as "embodying a woman of tremendous charm and desirability but who is at core unethical" ("Know Your Archetypes" 2022). This definition conjures up a picture of a beautiful woman with a dark allure but with no stance of innocence, except for when she deploys it to mislead her victims. In most narratives she represents danger for the other characters and leads them into peril.

The figure of the temptress can be traced back to the story of Adam and Eve in the *Old Testament*. Eve persuades Adam to eat the apple from the Tree of Knowledge, despite God's order not to eat from that tree. Although seduced and herself misled by the serpent, Eve is portrayed as the ultimate catalyst of Adam's doom, establishing the tradition of good men being misled via seduction:

> And John Chrysostom uses Gen 3:6 to woman since it was the first woman in the beginning who lured man from Paradise. Aquinas says Eve suggested to the man that he sin (thus doubling her guilt). Bonaventure knows she exercised wicked persuasion and corrupted her husband. A fourteenth century author has it that she prayed and councelled him to eat of it as she did, and deceived her husband by wicked councel. Jacques de Vitry told that she had no rest until she got her husband banished from the Garden of Eden and Christ condemned to the agony of the Cross. (Higgins 1976, 640)

This passage demonstrates how the temptress is seen and portrayed: intelligent, persuasive, wicked, driven, and calculating. In some feminist studies, this archetype is regarded as a representation of the patriarchy's fear of a knowledgeable, powerful, free and promiscuous woman, also referred to as *The Lilith Enigma* (Wilson 2002). The concept of the patriarchy is often mentioned together with the Roman Catholic Church, as its leaders are predominantly men, and powerful men are often perceived as fearing powerful women, as they could undermine their own power (Hays 2023). When interpreting Pullman's and Hozier's work, this fear of powerful women becomes salient.

There are many other powerful, beautiful, intelligent, irresistible, alluring temptress characters in world literature, such as sirens, witches, lovers, and unfaithful wives like Clytemnestra, or King Arthur's wife Guinevere. Although they all have different dimensions of good and evil within them, they all possess the pull a temptress needs

to lure in her victims and establish the cultural ubiquity of our contemporary temptresses.

In "Take Me to Church" and *His Dark Materials*, the temptress appears on both sides of the same Church-defying coin. Hozier's temptress represents a mocking and defying anti-propagandist of the Church for its blind following and shaming of its believers, while Pullman's temptress is fully devoted to God and the Church and is one of its loudest promotors and representatives in the story, yet is in herself an example of anti-Church propaganda through being wicked and immoral and conducting the Church's amoral businesses.

## Church anti-propaganda in Pullman's and Hozier's Temptresses

Marisa Coulter, the villain in *His Dark Materials*, is a dangerous, calculating, power hungry and driven temptress who exudes a dark femininity. She is the former lover of the stories' anti-hero, the protagonist's absent and later recurring mother; she is the head of the General Oblation Board, known as the Gobblers, who represent the Church's Inquisition wing in the trilogy. The Gobblers are notorious for stealing children and mutilating them, torturing people and trying to gain power for the Church overall. One aspect of how the Gobblers try to gain control over people, and in which Ms Coulter partakes, is taking their dæmons.

An important element of Pullman's characterization in the trilogy is the concept of dæmons. Every human in a particular dimension in this fictional world has an animal companion called a dæmon. They are extensions of the human soul and a type of spirit animal that always accompanies their human. They are particularly important for characterization because the dæmons themselves carry hidden characteristics that their humans can camouflage through behaviour, but the dæmon, being an animal, usually displays its characteristics more naturally and less covertly. The type of animal also reveals the nature of the human; servants, for example, usually have dogs as their dæmons because they represent obedience and loyalty; people perceived as cunning or calculating have a serpent dæmon, etc. Mrs. Coulter's dæmon is a vicious golden monkey, a reflection of her two-faced nature. While Marisa is beautiful, sweet and seductive, the monkey usually displays her wickedness, aggression and cunning authority:

> A lady in a long yellow-red fox-fur coat, a beautiful young lady whose dark hair falls, shining delicately, under the shadow of her fur-lined hood, is standing in the doorway of the oratory, half a dozen steps above him […]
>
> The young lady's dæmon is moving out from beside the fox-fur coat. He is in the form of a monkey, but no ordinary monkey: his fur is long and silky and of the most deep and lustrous gold. With sinuous movements he inches down the steps toward the boy, and sits a step above him […] The monkey watches the sparrow; the sparrow watches the monkey. The monkey reaches out slowly. His little hand is black, his nails perfect horny claws, his movements gentle and inviting. The sparrow can't resist […] The lady bends her scented head to whisper. And then Tony turns. He can't help it […] He's lost already […] (Pullman 1995, 95, 96, 97, 98)

In these passages we are presented with Mrs. Coulter's physical allure, her gentle seductive demeanour as well as the beauty and flirtatious nature of her dæmon. There is also a recurring theme of her irresistible nature, a clear sign of a temptress. We also see how helpless her victim is, how utterly he succumbs to her charms and how his dæmon succumbs to the charms of the golden monkey, which can be read as the Church seducing its believers with promises of an eternal safe heaven, only to then abuse them with its various misdoings. This again can be interpreted as an anti-Church propaganda display. This example of Mrs. Coulter's evil temptress nature is not isolated. Another example solidifies her status as a temptress:

> Inside the tent Mrs. Coulter was talking to a man Lena Feldt hadn't seen before […] 'Of course, Carlo', she was saying, 'I'll tell you anything you like. What do you want to know?'
>
> […] 'But, Carlo', she whispered, 'I can please you, too, you know. Would you like me to please you even more?' […] Her dæmon's little black horny hands were stroking the serpent dæmon. Little by little the serpent loosened herself and began to flow along the man's arm toward the monkey. (Pullman 1995, 132, 133)

Mrs. Coulter hones in on the desires of men like a true temptress archetype. She has a clear idea of how to move, how to weaponize her beauty, her voice and her intelligence; her dæmon is also well versed in the art of seduction, as is the Church she represents; again, she is a showcase of cunning and an example of anti-propaganda in her own character of the Church she represents.

Near the end of the third novel, Mrs. Coulter is completely exposed as an evil entity. She is faced with God's messenger, Metatron himself, who looks into her soul and says:

> 'Yes, I see', said Metatron.
> 'What do you see?'
> 'Corruption and envy and lust for power. Cruelty and coldness. A vicious, probing curiosity. Pure, poisonous, toxic malice. You have never from your earliest years shown a shred of compassion or sympathy or kindness without calculating how it would return to your advantage. You have tortured and killed without regret or hesitation; you have betrayed and intrigued and gloried in your treachery. You are a cesspit of moral filth.' (Pullman 1995, 166)

Here Pullman presents Mrs. Coulter directly, as cold, calculating and ruthless, who will drag anybody into the abyss for her schemes. This judgement is all the harsher because it is delivered by an all-seeing, almighty being from whom we cannot hide. Again, the hypocrisy of the Church is displayed; one of its mighty beings condemns the woman who is their representative. Pullman depicts her even more harshly when making her confess the truth:

> 'So you see,' she said, 'I can betray him easily. I can lead you to where he's taking my daughter's dæmon, and you can destroy Asriel, and the child will walk unsuspecting into your hands.' She felt the movement of vapour about her, and her senses became confused. His next words pierced her flesh like darts of scented ice.
>
> 'When I was a man,' he said, 'I had wives in plenty, but none was as lovely as you' […] That was the moment she felt most exposed and in most danger. But she trusted to her flesh, and to the strange truth she'd learned about angels, perhaps especially those angels who had once been human: lacking flesh, they coveted it and longed for contact with it. (Pullman 1995, 166, 167)

This paragraph shows how she meets her maker's right hand, and yet she still tries to seduce even him, although he can see the depths of her soul. In the way he is looking at her we see a negative representation of God's holy creatures themselves. The angel is nothing but a heart of greed and want, considering the temptress's bait. The anti-propaganda of diminishing the holiness of a higher being of God through the temptress shows how Pullman uses her as a negative representation of the Church in the real world, predicting its own downfall. As a representative of the Church, she takes on the form of Church anti-propaganda by defiling the pure and holy image of God in tempting him, showing the hypocrisy of a Church that preaches holiness and purity, yet disregards them with its greed, scandals, and intrigues.

There are more examples of the treacherous temptress archetype in Mrs. Coulter's work for the Church's Oblation Board. The church promises to treat the children well, to enable them to write home to their parents, but later discards their letters, knowing they will be mutilated in the name of the church instead of seeing their parents again:

> 'Hey, lady! What you got us all here for?' He was a tough-looking wretch with dark chocolate on his top lip and a gaunt black rat for a dæmon […] 'We want your help,' she said. 'You don't mind helping us, do you?' No one could say a word. They all gazed, suddenly shy. They had never seen a lady like this; she was so gracious and sweet and kind that they felt they hardly deserved their good luck, and whatever she asked, they'd give it gladly so as to stay in her presence a little longer.
>
> Then the children clustered around to say goodbye. The golden monkey stroked all their dæmons, and they all touched the fox fur for luck, or as if they were drawing some strength or hope or goodness out of the lady […] Then she turned back inside, with the golden monkey nestled in her breast, and threw the little bundle of letters into the furnace before leaving the way she had come. (Pullman 1995, 99)

Here, we witness an inversion of Christian symbolic imagery; the dæmons of the children touch the monkey's fur, as Catholics have extended their hands in hope to touch Jesus or various saints in supplication. Pullman has portrayed a strong anti-church propaganda image, showing the organisation's hypocrisy and cruelty, with its temptress as the wielder of evil.

The next scene indicates not only that Mrs. Coulter is an instrument of torture and evil but also her sense of belonging to the Church, and her pride in knowing how to hurt people:

> 'Oh, there is more suffering to come. We have a thousand years of experience in this Church of ours. We can draw out your suffering endlessly. Tell us about the child,' Mrs. Coulter said, and reached down to break one of the witch's fingers. It snapped easily' […] Mrs. Coulter was saying, 'If you don't answer I'll break another finger, and then another' […] There came another sickening crack, and this time a flood of sobbing broke from the witch. (Pullman 1995, 18)

In another example, Mrs. Coulter is shown as a force in opposition to the Church, further presenting an example of anti-propaganda against it in exposing its poor conduct towards her as a woman. Mrs. Coulter reflects her own position in the Church:

> 'I am wondering what Mrs. Coulter knows,' said the Cardinal. Is there something she should have told us before, I wonder?'
>
> 'You will have to speak more plainly than that', said Mrs. Coulter icily. 'You forget I am a woman, Your Eminence, and thus not so subtle as a prince of the Church. What is this truth that I should have known about the child?' (Pullman 1995, 16)

She is aware of her status as a woman in the organisation: one who is supposedly less subtle; a victim of chauvinistic accusations of being dumb; a deceiver or temptress solely due to her being a woman. Pullman shows through her that Mrs. Coulter is being both used and abused by the entity to which she is most loyal.

There are a number of contrasts between the symbolism of Mrs. Coulter as a temptress and the lyrical persona of Hozier's lover in the song "Take Me to Church." Hozier's music is a flowing meeting point of the strong and heavy waves of blues, the strum of rock, the smoothness of soul, the emotiveness of folk, and the depth of R&B. He is not only impeccable with tone and rhythm, but his lyrics also suggest more than just simple modern indie flair. His description indicates the role of his temptress:

> My lover's got humor
> She's the giggle at a funeral
> Knows everybody's disapproval
> I should've worshiped her sooner (Hozier 2014)

The lover of the lyric persona is evidently charming and witty, inviting the poet in by amusing him, already displaying the tell-tale signs of a temptress; she is also rebellious and uncaring about other people's opinion or the Church's opinion, and has ensnared him, because he worships her. This is a clear display of Church anti-propaganda in the form of "do not mind their opinion or judgement before an altar, rather worship in the bedroom":

> She tells me,
> Worship in the bedroom
> The only Heaven I'll be sent to
> Is when I'm alone with you (Hozier 2014)

She tempts him sexually and invites him to the bedroom; his devotion and the fact that he has already been seduced are shown in the words "the only heaven I'll be sent to is when I'm alone with you." This is yet another indication of anti-propaganda against the Church because we can turn away from the institution and worship something or someone else.

One more instance where temptress status is used as anti-Church propaganda is indicated in the lines:

> If I'm a pagan of the good times
> My lover's the sunlight
> To keep the Goddess on my side
> She demands a sacrifice
> Drain the whole sea
> Get something shiny (Hozier 2014)

She is again tempting him to do things for her, bending him to her will and commanding him to treat her as a deity, indicating that God is not the only player in the arena. This is not only a display of the temptress, but also of the elements of church anti-propaganda personified in a woman who demands divine status– blaspheming, belittling and mocking the Christian belief system. The direct age-old rival paganism is pointed out as further mockery. She is anti-propaganda, but in opposition to the Church and not a representative of it, like Mrs. Coulter.

Hozier not only equates his temptress to God, he also critiques and displays Church anti-propaganda in pointing out that institution's role as a suppressor of freedom of speech in making the temptress the last true mouthpiece: "If the Heavens ever did speak/She's the last true mouthpiece" (Hozier 2014). This again is a critical mockery of the Church and preferred worship of the temptress can be observed. He is saying that God is not willing to talk to us, but the woman he worships will, thus portraying the absurdity of worshiping an absent (imaginary) father figure. The definition of mouthpiece is also worth mentioning: "(disapproving) A person or a newspaper that only expresses the opinions of one particular organization" (*Cambridge Online*

*Dictionary* 2023). We can interpret these lines to mean that the temptress he worships is the only one who can speak on behalf of Heaven and us as humans instead of the Church.

The last lines of the song indicate antipropaganda through the temptress figure in colloquial terms:

> Something meaty for the main course
> That's a fine looking high horse
> What you got in the stable?
> We've a lot of starving faithful
> That looks tasty
> That looks plenty
> This is hungry work (Hozier 2014)

Here we can see how the temptress's demands are slowly merging into the Church's standard demands for worship, feeding, giving, the hunger for meat and power, while simultaneously shining a light on its gluttony and greed, consuming even Christ's body as part of a ritual. The "high horse" is a colloquial allusion to judgement and how the Church controls people by looking down on "sinners." The expression "the starving faithful" points to Ireland's troubled past with the great Potato Famine between 1845 and 1852. The colloquial, macho, blue-collar expression "this is hungry work" could be interpreted to mean that wanting to have an outreach so strong and wanting to wield so much power demands sacrifice from believers to keep the church alive, which is again a strong critique and anti-propaganda concerning the Church's taking advantage of its believers.

Both authors present the archetype of the temptress in their work in their own unique way, yet, at the same time, both figures stand as anti-Church propaganda. The difference lies in the fact that Pullman's villainess is a representative of ecclesiastical evil, whereas Hozier's lover is its militant counterpart.

## Conclusion

The powerful archetype of the temptress that evokes primal emotions and fears within readers has clearly been wielded to a similar purpose in our two examples. Archetypes, in general, are powerful images that evoke strong, universal reactions

and themes and are therefore often weapons of both propaganda and anti-propaganda. They also cannot escape an intertextual reading, as they are ancient in origin and are reoccurring images throughout literature and music history, as well as reoccurring intertextual interplays between the novels and song discussed here.

These two temptresses from popular 21st-century culture display classic characteristics of the archetype and exhibit many similarities; they seem to have opposing roles yet similar goals in the anti-propaganda of the Church. While Pullman's Mrs Coulter is a duplicitous villainess who represents the Church, Hozier's lover mocks the Church as a type of female antichrist and seductress. Hozier's temptress is compared to a female messiah who presents anti-propaganda by questioning the absoluteness of God's being God. Mrs. Coulter is the polar opposite; she has blind faith in and obedience to the Church and its cause and is representative of its evil in thought and action alike, and is, through her own character flaws, the anti-propaganda to the Church she represents. Both female figures are irresistible and have a grip on their observers, yet the reader is still positioned to reject Pullman's temptress or feel shame for the pull she exerts. In Hozier's lyrics, the female figure is celebrated as a counter force to the Church, yet is succumbed to as an act of defiance against the Church.

The popular contemporary culture to which the two writers belong still feels the threat of the Roman Catholic Church as an institution. A contemporary English writer of young adult fiction and an Irish indie-blues musician both still convey the same attitudes as writers from the 1850s to the insidious influence of the Roman Catholic Church. The two contemporary artists who have created these temptresses display a classic reading and deployment of the archetype, but in comparison, also demonstrate how one ancient idea can take distinct forms, while having similar goals.

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