

The golden compass and paradise lost

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The Golden Compass is the first book in a trilogy series called His Dark Materials, written by Philip Pullman. The author was influenced by the title, His Dark Materials from another famous piece of work. That title is written in John Milton's 17th century poem, Paradise Lost.

In Pullman's book, he tries to raise many of the same issues in Milton's poem, such as free will versus destiny and the nature of good and evil in a different perspective. The characters in The Golden Compass reflect certain characters and concepts in Paradise Lost. The character Lyra is a reflection Eve, Ms. Coulter is the female version of Satan, Lord Asriel resembles Adam, and the particle dust reflects the forbidden fruit. In both stories, the characters display betrayal, love, or hate in their relationships. There are also the concepts of the loss of innocence, gaining the knowledge of evil, temptation, and fate. I will analyze both books separately and then together.

Paradise Lost is a fiction poem about the first fallout in heaven, the creation of mankind, using free will wisely, and original sin. In this novel we are introduced to the main characters, The Father (God), The Son, Adam, Eve, and Satan. The events take place in the Garden of Eden, also called Paradise. The Father does not live in Paradise but he watches what occurs there from heaven. Satan is the first person to be condemned by God, he is banished from heaven into hell where he proclaims an eternal war against God and begins corrupting the world. Adam was the first human created by God. Eve is Adam's wife, who was literally created from one of the ribs in Adams body. One day Adam and Eve get into a dispute which cause them to separate. Adam disagrees with that idea because Satan could attack them separately but not together. Eve believes Adam is distrusting God by thinking that she

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cannot defeat Satan alone. When Eve wanders off she meets Satan, who was disguised as a talking serpent. The serpent told her about the food of God which turned out to be the forbidden fruit. He easily used a few compliments and a convincing speech to trick her into indulging. Eve was tempted, compelled, and it was also lunch time. Eve decided to eat the apple and after sharing this news with Adam, he decides to eat the apple too.

One of the main underlying conflicts in Paradise Lost is the concept of free will. Free will is what inevitably leads to the fall of man. Adam and Eve are left alone in the Garden of Eden with only one rule, which is not to eat from the forbidden tree of knowledge. The twist to this tree is that knowledge is the awareness of everything, including good and evil. They only knew the good of mankind before they indulged. Before they ate the apple the Son of God spoke, They trespass, authors to themselves in all. Both what they judge and what they choose, for so I formed them free and they must remain. Till they enthrall themselves. (3. 122) This proves that although Eve was tempted by Satan and Adam was tempted by Eve, they both had the ability to be stand against sin but they failed. Adam and Eve were unique as the first humans because they weren't destined to do anything. They created their own endings when they used their free will to commit sin. As a result of their sin, they were forced to leave Paradise and enter the real world full of danger and atrocities. In Pullman's book, similar issues arise in the matter of free will and good versus evil.

The Golden Compass is about a young girl named Lyra who takes it upon herself to save the world from evil. She is accompanied by Pantalaimon

nicknamed Pan, who is her external soul in the form of an animal. These animals are called daemons and every human in this world has one. Lyra's daemon, Pan, can shapeshift according to Lyra's mood or attitude. When Lyra hits puberty her daemon will settle into one animal form for the rest of her life. Lyra is looked after by her Uncle, Lord Asriel, and his scholar friends at Oxford University. Lord Asriel is a researcher and he was interested in a mysterious particle that builds the attachment between humans and their daemons called dust. When Lord Asriel goes to the North on an exploration to eliminate dust we meet Ms. Colbert, who is about to become the new guardian of Lyra. Ms. Colbert is a stunning woman of high authority with a stern personality and a bit of a dark side. During this time, the world is in a state of crime as children are being abducted by a group called the globbers. Lyra's two friends Billy and Roger get kidnapped which leads her into a wild adventure to save them. This trip turns out to be more of a learning experience for Lyra.

Pullman created Lyra with the same intentions as Adam and Eve, to not be destined for anything but to control the course of her life with free will.

Lyra definitely had good intentions but in the end she changes her own life and affects the lives of those around her.

In Pullman's and Milton's book the main characters are two strong females that are needed to execute both storylines. Lyra and Eve share innocence, confidence, and a life changing experience when they leave their home. Lyra is innocent because she is not aware of her own truth and the truth of the world around her. Lyra gets a rude awakening when she finds out that Lord

Asriel and Ms. Coulter are actually her mother and father. Increasingly, after her own research she learns that her mother is in charge of kidnapping children and discovers her true intention for them.

Lyra is confident that she can save the children which includes her best friend Roger which she does but she gets some help along the way. After Lyra saves Roger, she unknowingly ends up getting him killed when he is used for her father's experiment to sever him from his daemon. Lyra comes to understand evil, she is disappointed in the truth about her parents and realize she has to save dust since the evil people want to get rid of it. In the same way, Eve is innocent because she literally lives in Paradise, no other reality exist to her. Before she falls, she is confidence that she would be strong enough to stand against Satan on her own. She is put to the test when she is tempted by Satan to eat the forbidden fruit and unfortunately she fails. As a result of sin, Eve becomes aware of evil in the world and her character get corrupted. First, she believes she is more superior than she was because she has new knowledge from the fruit, then she convinced Adam to eat the first knowing that he might die, and later on she is in a dark mental space when she suggested committing suicide. Both characters are robbed of their innocence, get into trouble because of their confidence, and become changed after their experience with the world.

Two of the most important men in each novel were blinded perfection. Lord Asriel is the reflection of Adam, with the exception that he is the evil one. Adam knowingly agreed to eat the apple with Eve knowing that it would lead to his own destruction because he loved Eve so much. After Adam realized

what he had done, he admitted to himself What seem'd in thee so perfect that I thought, No evil durst attempt thee. But I rue (pg. 229). At this point, Adam realized he let his love for Eve get so carried away, he could not see her flaws. Similarly, Lord Asriel is primarily focused on his experiment to remove dust and rid the world of evil. Children could grow into pure adults and remain innocent if dust is not inflicted on them. However, he ends up killing a child during a procedure to remove the dust by severing the child from his daemon. He gets so caught up in trying to save the world that he doesn't realize it is the very thing making him immoral. Although Lord Asriel has some attributes of Satan as he is clearly evil, both characters have two different objectives. Satan is trying to corrupt the world while Lord Asriel is trying to make the world perfect. Adam and Lord Asriel are more alike because they both went wrong by believing that someone or something could be perfect.

I believe Ms. Coulter is the female version of Satan. Pullman created this character to address the appearance of evil. While Satan was trying to convince Eve to eat the apple, he used very seductive language by flattering her and making her blush. Mrs. Coulter is introduced to readers as a very attractive woman with a sense of style, which is why Lyra is immediately impressed by her. Ms. Coulter is also in charge of the organization that runs the General Oblation Board (short acronym for gobblers). The purpose of the gobblers were to abduct children so they could be severed from their daemons in order to stop dust from entering their body. Ms. Coulter has a child of her own, as we later find out that she is Lyra's mother. Ms. Coulter knows that this is wrong because she stops Lyra from having the procedure

done. We can assume that she has no morals to oversee the victimization of these innocent children. Satan is similar because he was an angel in heaven with traits of jealousy and greed. After being kicked out of heaven, he chooses Adam and Eve to be his victims because it is apart of his greater plan to corrupt the world and spite God.

The most important concept of both books is the external force that lies beyond the characters control. Both authors delved into the realm of evil, however Milton made it a matter of choice while Pullman displayed it as a matter of nature. The particle dust is the reflection of the apple from the forbidden tree. In Paradise Lost, the apple represented sin but it also gave Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil.

They only knew the good of the world before eating the fruit. The concept of dust in The Golden Compass represents the same thing, an awareness of evil. Dust is a mysterious particle that is being studied by Lord Asriel. He figures out that Dust is what allows children's daemon's to settle into the animal that'll represent their general character for the rest of their life. This final change occurs at the time of puberty, which is when children start to become mature and knowledgeable about the world. Lord Asriel explains dust to Lyra by saying, Somewhere out there is the origin of all the Dust, all the death, the sin, the misery, the destructiveness in the world. Human beings can't see anything without wanting to destroy it, Lyra. That's original sin. And I'm going to destroy it. Death is going to die. (page 377) The only difference between the two symbols was the shift of responsibility. It was a choice to eat the apple, whereas the dust was automatically inflicted on the coming-of-age child.

Philip Pullman uniquely converted Paradise Lost into a new book. He was able to express each of Milton's ideologies ____ . ADD CONCLUSION.