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Posted on 14 September 2019 By Philip Pullman

This novel is an absolute work of pure genius, and is in my top ten reads of all time Before I go into the depths of character and plot, let me start by saying this book is up there with other fantasy hard hitters by this I mean books like The Lord of the Rings and The Chronicles of Narnia the books that define the genre This is high praise indeed, and this novel is worthy of it The protagonist of the book is Lyra, a young girl, who is parentless and seemingly friendless She has grown up in an Oxford College and has developed a detachment to her guardians She spends her days enjoying her youth and harassing those that turn out to be some of her greatest allies For her, this book is a journey of self discovery a way of exploring the limits of her character and potential Her adventure sees her befriend an armoured polar bear and become the wielder of the golden compass This is initially described as a lie detector but it is apparent that the depths of its power have not been fully explored It lay heavily in her hands, the crystal face gleaming, the brass body exquisitely machined It was very much like a clock, or a compass, for there were hands pointing around the dial, but instead of the hours or the points of a compass there were several little pictures with extraordinary precision, as if on ivory with the slenderest sable brush She turned the dial around to look at them all There was an anchor an hourglass surmounted by a skull a bull, a beehive..Thirty six altogether and she couldn't even guess what they meant This book retains all the classic elements of fantasy magic, mythical creatures and supernatural phenomena The world Pullman has created is

physically intertwined with our own there are references to cities and countries in which his idea has been planted. Each human has a daemon that is essentially their soul. These take on the form of an animal that is representative of the person, for example someone who is enthusiastic and friendly has a colourful cat whereas a soldier has a wolf or a hound. The author does very little to explain this. It is just a thing that we are told about at the start but through the book we begin to see the significance of it. The fact that children's daemons change is a subtle hint how children can be influenced and have not found their identity whereas adults are secure and confident. In this the author has created an air of mystery as we explore the true meaning of the bond as we read further. The plot is fantastic. The author manages to surprise the reader on several occasions as he drops several, massive plot turns. This sees the story go into unexpected directions. From the beginning of reading a book, you begin to predict what will happen. Some books are completely predictable and obvious in their direction. This one was not. I physically gasped at some moments as I found myself awed by the author's storytelling. This is when several characters' origins, in relation to Lyra, are defined. The book begins as a simple rescue mission but ends as a story that is questioning the morals of all characters involved. The fate of the characters is destined in the mysteriousness of the northern lights, the gateway to beyond. This is one of those books that is applicable to all ages. It originally appears to be a children's book, but it can be enjoyed by anyone. Much of the content in here touches on themes that most children would not comprehend fully, never mind be able to philosophise about. The author considers spirituality, religion, morals and the existence of the soul, amongst other things. Most children would not pick up on these references and understand the significance of them. However, they would still adore the book. The book can be seen as two separate entities existing at the same time. The first, and most obvious, is the one that appeals to children: the saving of innocents from despotic adults with lots of exciting characters. The second is on a deeper scale: the author explores the conflicting powers of science and religion, manipulation and morality in terms of actions being for a greater good. In this the author is a genius, he has written a book that can be both a children's bedtime

read and an adult's point of pondering. The Golden Compass trilogy seems like a natural progression in Christian literature. Yes, it is Christian literature, the same way the Chronicles of Narnia are. Aslan is only a lion when the reader is about 10 or so in the United States. After a point, he unrepentantly becomes Jesus and the four children are like the Gospels or something, and the story is somewhat ruined then, because as an adult, you can't just shoehorn Jesus into a lion outfit without snickering a little. Pullman, however, has solved this problem. I can't continue without utterly spoiling the story for everyone who hasn't read it, so consider yourselves warned. He made Jesus into a little girl. Even better, he made Jesus into a little girl who doesn't even know she's Jesus now. How's that for a new twist on the New Testament? The part that's particularly brilliant about it, is that it actually worked. Lyra is never really anything like Christ. She just follows the path of his narrative. First, she has the absent father. Lord Asriel is desperately involved in his own ideas, so though he's not actually in heaven, he may as well be. Wait a sec, isn't this just dogma again, sort of, except dogma is really relevant to Catholicism in particular, rather than scriptures, and instead of Linda Fiorentino who is kind of a mopey Christ, we get a 10-year-old girl. 10-year-old girls are the best focal point for any story. I've been one for years. And this is a perfect choice, because she really never takes time to mope. She doesn't miss her faith or wrestle with it. She doesn't believe at all, and therein lies the genius of Pullman's work, that has all the Christians in a snit. She's also the Antichrist. Why would he do that? Because the Bible does. If you really take a look at the word Antichrist, it does not mean evil. Christos, from which Christ is derived, means anointed. So what does Antichrist really mean? Unanointed, or that which is against the anointed. There's a bunch of baggage on top of that meaning, which is how we got those Omen movies, but at the heart of it, it just means smeared with fat. Actually, it means recognized by the divine. But in ancient times, we did that by smearing the recognized thing with the fat of a sacrificed animal or person. And that, is why we celebrate the crucifixion. It was the point of Christ's birth. As if it wasn't obvious enough, it's why he's referred to as the Lamb. Wow. So this is heavy. Pullman has gone all the way back to the origins of the Judeo-Christian faith and said, this important guy, was just the carrier of this magical stuff that we re

obsessed with, that we don't even use any of it like we're infected or poisoned by this idea we need an antidote we need an antichrist, to show us how far we've wandered from the truth, which had nothing to do with trooping along after some guy. and this explains why Christians are so antagonized by the books they've been following the beast for years without recognizing it the golden compass referred to in the book, is the bible we've all forgotten how to read and in its stead, we've rallied around the church which claims to help us understand the symbols but in reality, it is the beast referred to the one which rose from Rome, with many heads that change over time so what really, is the golden compass about it's about how to be human again how to regain an understanding of the world, that doesn't rely on our fragile expectations for good and evil all it requires, is that you give up everything, in order to discover what is important again and I don't know how Christians could have missed that primary message. I don't love the Beatles Ducks as he is castigated by the seething masses I also don't love green vegetables, punches to the face, or going to the dentist, though I don't think those revelatory disclosures will elicit much in the way of rage fueled attempts to slit my throat with the jagged edge of a broken CD compact disc, kiddos look it up So, why risk a severed jugular on the day before I'm going to stuff myself so full of turkey that I'll have a snood coming out of my ear Well, because it's the best way I can think of to articulate my feelings about The Golden Compass. I don't LOVE the Beatles, but I recognize their skill and talent and appreciate them for the impact they had on popular music There are Beatles songs that I enjoy I think I might have a Beatles album on my iPod though I've never actually played it on my iPod But, I'm never going to suddenly say to myself, Geez, I really need to hear a Beatles song RIGHT NOW and rush off to listen to one Side note I do occasionally get an urge to listen to Yesterday, but just the Boyz II Men version so perhaps I'm not the most qualified judge of musical quality on the planet Is Philip Pullman a Beatles level authorial entity Well, no But, he is a skilled writer with a gift for storytelling and world building He's a talented technician and stylist But, I don't love The Golden Compass I appreciate that it's a well written and well conceived story, but, as agents revel in saying to me when I pitch them, I just didn't

connect with the material I can see why people ahem, Kristin love this series, and I certainly would not dissuade anyone who is interested in reading it from giving it a go. It's well done. Someone asked me, as I was finishing this, if I was going to check out the second book in the series, but I think I'll Let It Be. 2.5 I never read this as a kid and maybe I would have enjoyed it if I had, but it was just okay for me. You cannot change what you are, only what you do. I first read this when I was like 10 or 11 and I remember really liking it. I recently came across an online thread about this book series and the message is the author was intending to convey, and I was taken aback. I honestly really didn't remember anything except for talking bears that wear armour lol. After the reread, I am surprised that I read this as a child. This is definitely a children's book that is not meant for children, in my opinion. The deeper meanings are pretty subtle but, regardless, I have no idea how I was able to read and enjoy this because I highly doubt I really understood what was going on half the time so it was an interesting experience to read this with an adult perspective. I still enjoyed it, but it was a completely different reading experience than when I was a kid, understandably 4 stars. I enjoyed the premise and theme of the book. Pullman created well thought out and memorable characters. It was a little too technical for me in regard to the depths of fantasy, i.e. I had to go back and look up the meaning of some of the made up words in the book to stay focused on what was actually happening. But great imagery. I'm not sure if I will read book 2 or 3 of the series yet. Thoughts 9/8/17. I cleared my rating. If that doesn't sufficiently refute the claim that I just wanted to give THE GOLDEN COMPASS 1.0 star, then you're irrational, and further discussion is pointless. 2. I am a BOOK REVIEW BLOGGER. That's what I do. If you want to make cracks about being a trophy wife, go right ahead, but to insinuate that I would skim a book to have the minimum knowledge required to give the appearance of having read it so that I can give it a bad review for certain reasons, is an attack on my character and work ethic. I'm not some conservative religious zealot who thinks books with magic are sending our children straight to hell. I don't have children. I'm not a Christian. I do, however, have four nephews, all under eight years old that I have already given HARRY POTTER and many, many other similar books, THE

GOLDEN COMPASS not among them.<sup>3</sup> In regards to my perceived lack of faith in a child's intelligence, I'm baffled that you think that's the only issue. Children aren't stupid. They have good instincts. Shame on you. Are you going to tell me that children also have excellent impulse control. That they're always rational. That they aren't capable of making bad decisions when overwrought. And am I also to assume that you all strictly adhered to the suggested age requirements on books. None of you were specifically informed that you read several grade levels ahead of your peers. This isn't the simple issue some of you are trying to make it. You MUST know I'm an advocate for free thought, for going against the grain, for individuality vs hive mentality. I believe it's important to teach children to question, to think for themselves. BUT. I feel this book crosses a line for its intended audience. The two adults Lyra should be most dependent on are villains, and whether or not there are good role models among the secondary cast of characters, they are SECONDARY, ultimately insignificant roles as evidenced when dollface takes off on her own b/c her parents cannot be trusted, and she knows better than they do. The fact that it's true in her scenario is exactly what concerns me. You can draw a straight line through all the steps on the path to a child's inevitable conclusion that Adults are the Enemy, and to do good, to do right, you cannot trust or obey them. I think that's a very dangerous, potentially harmful thing to teach a child. You don't have to agree with me. In fact, the whole reason I'm writing this, years after I read the book, is b/c I didn't want to be that person who essentially outlines their own possibly contradictory review on someone else's post. B/c those people suck. FYI read between the lines. I don't recommend this book for readers not in their teens. Yes, some children mature faster than others, and, especially, if the child in question is your own, you're the best judge of what is appropriate. I would never tell anyone what to do with their children. I am merely voicing a concern and suggesting that one might consider personally screening THE GOLDEN COMPASS before passing along to young, impressionable minds. This is my opinion. If you are violently opposed to it, I invite you to WRITE AND POST YOUR OWN REVIEW. Lyra Is Rushing To The Cold, Far North, Where Witch Clans And Ard Bears Rule North, Where The Gobblers Take The Children They Steal

Including Her Friend Roger North, Where Her Fearsome Uncle Asriel Is Trying To Build A Bridge To A Parallel World Can One Small Girl Make A Difference In Such Great And Terrible Endeavors This Is Lyra A Savage, A Schemer, A Liar, And As Fierce And True A Champion As Roger Or Asriel Could Want But What Lyra Doesn T Know Is That To Help One Of Them Will Be To Betray The Other Rating 3.5 stars Listened to this on audio, which was a lot of fun

