

FRUITS OF KNOWLEDGE: GENDER ROLES, POWER, REBELLION AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF EVE IN PHILIP PULLMAN'S HIS DARK MATERIAL TRILOGY

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## ABSTRACT

Philip Pullman, an outspoken critic of Christianity, has frequently voiced his desire to overturn the core elements of the Fall; to break it down, tear it apart, and allow for a new vision of the old story. In his trilogy consisting of three novels, The Golden Compass, The Subtle Knife, and The Amber Spyglass, (called collectively His Dark Materials), Philip Pullman creates a universe in which consciousness (in the form of Dust) is dying. This Dust can only be saved by a second Eve, a prepubescent girl named Lyra, who will re-create the fall by being tempted into knowledge. The original story of the Fall in Genesis essentially creates unequal divisions between men and women; if Pullman's desire is to overturn what he perceives as Christianity's repressions, this essay investigates if Pullman has created equal gender roles in his version of the Fall. By examining power and rebellion of particularly female characters in His Dark Materials, I conclude that Pullman has not made any significant progression for female equality in his Fall, and that at the conclusion of the trilogy, Lyra has conformed into a traditional Western female gender role.

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## DEDICATION

For the one who helped me realize that love truly matters, and that it is impossible to put a price on it.