

Massachusetts Letters About Literature 2016  
Massachusetts Center for the Book  
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Level I Honors Award

Dear Philip Pullman,

When I started reading your book, The Golden Compass, I viewed it as a piece of fantasy that one would read for fun, nothing more. What could a classic fantasy story; a tale of good and evil, possibly say about the real world? I found that your book started out without heaviness. It seemed to be striking the same note as a lighthearted book, like the first Harry Potter. However, as I delved deeper and deeper into the book, a realization dawned on me. The problems in Lyra's world were just accentuated versions of the problems in our world. Reading The Golden Compass really changed my opinion of science, in regards to its regulations, and politics. I have realized the need for laws regulating science, and I now realize that politics are not what the campaigns and media portray them to be. In politics, many untruths are told, and many illicit things are done. The world tries to hide the raw information through glamour and sugar-coating. But I know the truth.

Before I read your book, I found any document binding scientific experiments tyrannical. Whenever I talked to my friends or family about outlandish topics, like cloning, or androids, the answer was always that the experiments were illegal. As this continued I got more and more outraged. When science could do so much good, why would certain people insist on limiting it? In my mind, science could do no harm. I also believed in black-and-white politics. There was one candidate that was bad, and one that was good. One good party, and one bad party. These views were radically changed when I read your book. The experiments and purpose of the General Oblation Board were contrary to the image of scientists that I believed to be true. I began to consider ethics, and the emotional effect science had on the rest of my life. I will do my own research about science and politicians. I will no longer be deceived by the web of lies that surrounds us all. The Alethiometer, or Lyra's golden compass, showed her the truth. Your book showed me the truth, so for me, your book was truly a golden compass.

With all respect,

*Tejas Vir*

Tejas Vir  
Arlington  
Grade 6