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## The Chronicles of Narnia and His Dark Materials: The Bible and Paradise Lost of Children's Literature

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# *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *His Dark Materials*: The Bible and *Paradise Lost* of Children's Literature

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## ABSTRACT

Ostensibly light and entertaining children's literature, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *His Dark Materials* both engage in profound and mature moral and theological discussions. In creating their respective series', C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman use themes and metaphors from traditional Christianity to construct reactions to the Christian faith and make arguments with respect to its validity. While C.S. Lewis depicts Christianity as the ultimate benevolent force of humanity, Philip Pullman portrays the church as an enslaving and stifling force that promotes conformity rather than free thought. Concentrating on the role of sin in post-lapsarian humanity, both C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman use various facets of their series, such as the image of God, the role of the narrator, and the depiction of the serpent from the Garden of Eden, to construct reactions to the Christian faith. While Lewis follows traditional Biblical imagery, depicting his God as the almighty savior, the serpent as the bringer of all evil, and the Fall of Adam and Eve as the great downfall of mankind, Pullman reverses these notions: God as the definitive source of evil, the serpent as the only conscious and therefore intellectually acute being, and the Fall of Adam and Eve as the only means to an enlightened society. Using these themes and images among others, Lewis and Pullman create two contrary views of Christianity as it functions in relation to humanity: one as the benevolent society dedicated to providing eternal happiness, and one as the lying, manipulative institution concerned with enslaving its followers.

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Misia Yuhasz is a third year student at Case Western Reserve University pursuing a degree in English and a concentration in pre-medicine. Aside from academics, Misia is serving as president of the Ballroom Dance Society and is currently Assistant News Editor for *The Observer*. This spring, Misia is also working with other English majors and graduate students to organize an English honors society chapter of Sigma Tau Delta on campus. In addition, Misia is an active member of the Mortar Board Honor Society and the Golden Key International Honour Society and has served on the Jackson and Wittke Selection Committees. In her spare time, she volunteers at Rainbow Babies Children's Hospital.

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