

Pullman nearly lost me...

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 07 Aug 2001, 09:55

Perhaps you recall my saying that the ending of Chapter Two of TGC captured me totally?

Chapter Two of TSK very nearly lost me. I refer to a speech by Ruta Wossername, the guest witch queen, to the effect that all churches are evile because "that is what Churches do: control, destroy, obliterate every good feeling."

Assuming (which I grant is something of an assumption) that this is the point of view Pullman subscribes to -- it lacks a certain basic integrity.

There are plenty of valid arguments for an anti-clerical viewpoint; but to say, in the face of the thousands, probably millions, of people who experience good feelings in, and as result of, their churches [and I'm taking this word, in the context of an anti-clerical rant, to mean pretty much any organized or hierarchical religion, from Catholicism to the O.T.O., to Scientology, to the various Eastern cults that center on obedience to a guru or master), so please don't think I'm offering any apologia for Christianity or any particular flavor thereof at this time], that destroying and obliterating every good feeling is what Churches do -- well, it's intellectual dishonesty.

Can Pullman get away with it? _Almost_; it's being said by a character in a world where "the Church" is a monolithic, evil thing. If she'd said "that's what the Church does," it would have been fine. But by speaking of "Churches," she's prophesying, speaking of all-churches-everywhere-and-at-all-times, and it's bushwah.

No, it hasn't ruined the book (so far). The book nearly hit the wall at that point, but the goodwill Pullman had gathered in the first volume kept me going.

One other observation: I feel some discontinuity between Lyra's character in TGC and what I've seen so far (about 80 pg) in TSK. I'm not sure why but I feel it.

--Dan'l