



# Darkness Visible: Inside the World of Philip Pullman

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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It's perhaps inevitable that examination of Philip Pullman's life and work will now be overshadowed by 'His Dark Materials', not only because of its amazing commercial and critical success, but also because Pullman himself seems to accept it as his magnum opus. In this enthusiastic and engaging guide, Tucker leads us through the lower slopes of Pullman's earlier works, pressing ever upward to explore the heights of the trilogy itself, mixing plot summaries with critical insights, glimpses back at Pullman's literary influences, and excursions into some of the more obscure regions of Pullman country, even attempting to penetrate the murky maze of the meaning of 'dust'. Tucker recognises that anyone trying to follow a coherent ideological route through the trilogy, particularly around the question of good and evil, is faced with signposts pointing in a number of different directions, but understandably argues that the sheer excitement and invention of the journey is more than enough. As usual, Tucker wears his knowledge lightly, drawing on his background in psychology and introducing other contemporary children's books into the argument. The result is a book which will be of interest to the young Pullman enthusiast, the general reader and the more earnest student of children's literature, although, from the last point of view, it's a pity that it doesn't have an index. Tucker has no pretensions to a full literary biography, but his opening biographical sketch features a captivating range of photos of the young Pullman, including pullover, tie and Brylcreem studio portrait at age eight, and bare-chested brigand at age twenty-six (all by kind permission of the author himself).

Running Order:

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