

Lons Sun Worth It?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 08 Nov 1999

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Alice Turner — 08 Nov 1999, 19:54

Aha--here it is; at the back of my mind I knew I had a second point of contention with Timothy Reilly (what a lot of Irishmen we have here....):

Actually, I had the same experience, (though I stopped rather earlier),
and
for the same reason: the more straightforward narrative style of the Long Sun books, (and many others - including short stories - that Wolfe has written), is I find much less aesthetic than the clear-eyed, calm and philosophical (and perhaps mildly Proustian) first person voice of the BOTNS and 5HC.

Are the Long Sun books worth persevering with given this stylistic preference?

I felt the same way you did at first, dismayed, really. At that point, mantis and I had not yet joined the group and I posited them to him them as (almost) YA novels (Young Adult). But we read them closely together, arguing over many things that the group has now covered so often that I can't possibly bring them up again, or I would have virtual vegetables thrown at me from every direction. And I grew to admire the series a great deal.

The triumph, my friend, in this series is in the plotting, which is absolutely masterful, much more intricate than in the New Sun series. This truly is a clockwork universe where every part meshes with every other part, where not a phrase is dropped by accident, where everything is hidden, but fair clues are only half-hidden. It's a giant jigsaw puzzle, and to solve it you'll either need to keep notes, have Sev's memory, or read the Whorl archives carefully (don't do that yet!). I have gone over this series with a toothbrush, and I believe there is only one example of an instance where a character is hustled off stage for a while just because the author (Wolfe, not Horn) couldn't be bothered with her for the moment. And that doesn't happen till the fourth book. Horn says that the lacunae in his book stem from his lack of experience, but the Maker behind Horn is a very very crafty fellow who likes to make the reader work up a sweat. None of us agrees, to this day, on everything in this "simple" series, not only the theological stuff, but such matters as the relative importance of Dr. Crane (whew, that eggplant missed me by only an inch!).

Besides, you ought to read it to understand the new series. Don't despair! Doubt everything! (Don't read the archives!)

-alga