

Posthumous

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 10 Feb 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2129>

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Christy — 10 Feb 2000, 15:26

I haven't read **Strange Travelers** yet (it is en route from Amazon), but I can say that the jag on living on after death is Swedenborgian. No doubt at the behest of Jorge Luis Borges, we can assume that Wolfe has read some of his material (**Heaven and Hell** is the most famous and interesting) and is devoting some airplay to it. Swedenborg explains a system of thanatosis that has appealed to many (most apparent is William Blake), and most recently to M. Night Shyamalan, the writer/director of **The Sixth Sense**. Watch that movie, or read Swedenborg's book, to ask the same horrible question that Wolfe must have already asked himself: am I already dead?

-C-

William H. Ansley — 10 Feb 2000, 23:50 · follows Christy

Christy <cglst7+ at pitt.edu> wrote:

ask the same horrible

question that Wolfe must have already asked himself: am I already dead?

Now that I think about it, that is rather horrible. If I'm already dead then I don't have anything to look forward to!

William Ansley

Alex David Groce — 11 Feb 2000, 13:18 · follows William H. Ansley

I'm sure Wolfe's come across Borges references to Swedenborg, and perhaps read some--but really the idea of dead protagonists (from "The Other Dead Man", PEACE, etc.) is not necessarily thus derived. It's not an unheard of theme. Wolfe's general take on it seems to be in the mode of "Purgatorial Fantasy"--an alternative to Dante's view of purgatory as a place, bringing in the tropes of the ghost story instead. It does match Swedenborg well, but that's probably not the only possible source.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

Alex David Groce (agroce+ at cs.cmu.edu)

Ph.D. Student, Carnegie Mellon University - Computer Science Department

8112 Wean Hall (412)-268-3066

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~agroce>