

# Jerry's link

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 17 Apr 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3160>

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maa32 — 17 Apr 2002, 05:58

Hey Jerry, I wish you had never given me that link to that google group "griping about Wolfe". I read most of the threads because I wasn't used to so many people blatantly saying that Wolfe was no good! They weren't just claiming that he didn't appeal to them, but that he was a bad writer! I really kind of got upset at a lot of what those guys were saying, so I feel like getting it off my chest to sympathetic ears. You guys can skip this if you want - there is nothing earth shattering or important here.

I really wanted to slap some of those guys down - I think they really do deserve to be called lazy and incompetent. Holy crap. Wolfe has never been anything but wonderfully kind to me in his letters, and he responds with such frequency that I feel bad about writing him back quickly for fear he will feel obligated to take time out of his schedule to address all the concerns of an ultimately unimportant young man. I imagine all the hard work he puts into constructing a story that will reward re-reading like few other texts out there with his labyrinth of clues and careful research, and then these guys just call him "bad" because they perceive some kind of social message that disturbs them or something. Maybe they should return to the "choose your own adventure" genre, where they have more control over the way the plot unfolds - if you get a bad ending or a misogynistic message, you can start over and pick a new path.

And they keep talking about Severian as if his ideas were odd: I've lived with that rhetoric all my life; my father is exactly like Severian, from the way he talks about women to the way he thinks about punishing people. Don't these people know someone like Severian? He's not that bad of a guy. I thought he should have killed even more people when he had the chance. He is too nice in some scenes, like sparing Agia in Claw. I admit that not everyone can get Wolfe, but just because you don't understand an author doesn't mean you should label them as a bad writer! Severian is even nice to the brute beasts of the world. I certainly wouldn't have cared if Triskele lived or died. The other day I had a dream about the Taco Bell Dog and it kept peeing on my leg. I would give anything to destroy it painfully. Microwave? Perhaps someone elses' microwave, eh? Have they never met anyone with a streak of cruelty? Don't they realize that all human relationships involve pain and suffering? Physically beautiful men and women destroy those who seek their love every day with their "individuality" and insistence on "choosing" the ones they want to love - it's inescapable in a social system that desire will be subverted and someone will be hurt in almost any public interaction. Even saying no to a date is placing your own "selfish" desires above those of someone else. But it is necessary if you want to have any control over your destiny. But it involves, if not cruelty, a willful and confident statement that your desires are MORE IMPORTANT than someone elses'. Anyone who claims they have never been cruel does not understand the world. Forging an identity requires more cruelty and harm to the people around you than most realize. Should people really be nicer to the domestic pets of the world than they are to conscious human beings with real desires? We ignorantly torture people all our lives just by existing, yet we love our domestic animals, and consider the desires of beasts as superior to the needs of humanity, needs which are reflections of the beastly desires we find so endearing in pets. But humans feel real pain, mental anguish that comes from retrospection. People talk about feelings and all that stuff; they are really talking about

chemical reactions like the stimulation of phenylethylamine production through sexual attraction or arousal. What is cruelty but another aspect of that chemistry? I guess I should be posting this over there. Almost everyone here realizes the universal application of the tortured souls that Wolfe depicts. Hey, from this post can you tell why I'm a big fan of Wolfe's work?

Marc Aramini

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Michael Straight — 17 Apr 2002, 14:07 · follows maa32

On Tue, 16 Apr 2002, maa32 wrote:

Hey Jerry, I wish you had never given me that link to that google group "gripping about Wolfe". I read most of the threads because I wasn't used to so many people blatantly saying that Wolfe was no good! They weren't just claiming that he didn't appeal to them, but that he was a bad writer! I really kind of got upset at a lot of what those guys were saying, so I feel like getting it off my chest to sympathetic ears. You guys can skip this if you want - there is nothing earth shattering or important here.

If it makes you feel any better, I read that group regularly, and there are some people who don't like Wolfe, but also many eloquent defenders of his work. Here's a few good posts in appreciation:

<http://groups.google.com/groups?q=g:thl2103972725d&hl=en&selm=7ijvge%24q83%241%40panix3.panix.com>

<http://groups.google.com/groups?q=g:thl2103972725d&hl=en&selm=7ik3ne%24bgl%241%40panix3.panix.com>

<http://groups.google.com/groups?q=g:thl2103972725d&hl=en&selm=7ik75e%24nsn%241%40panix3.panix.com>

<http://groups.google.com/groups?q=gene+wolfe&hl=en&selm=1992Mar27.195807.11656%40ux1.cso.uiuc.edu&rnum=5>

And here, look, I found a nice list of definitions for obscure words in the New Sun books, for those of us without a copy of Lexicon Urthus:

<http://groups.google.com/groups?q=g:thl1791575566d&hl=en&selm=davies-2603991410130001%40davies.ils.nwu.edu>

-Rostrum