

PEACE: oh wabe!

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 24 Oct 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3510>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 24 Oct 2002, 18:09

William Ansley's memory of PEACE is very sharp!

He wrote:

In the passage from Peace you mention above, Weer is thinking about nonexistant races of men. I don't have my book with me and so can't remember the details, but from what you say above, it was the orange-skinned people who worshiped sundials. The passage continues to the effect that, after the threat of legal action allows the "orange tribe" into the country club, "they out with strange oaths. What's a wabe?" (I am reconstructing the quote from memory.)

This is right. The only additions I would make are: "wabe" is part of the strange oath that slips out of an orange guy in an unguarded moment (an utterance that makes the familiar seeming become utterly alien); and that the orange tribe seems to worship sundials as "ours" seems to worship telephone poles (a play on how telephone poles have cruciform shapes due to utility unrelated to religion . . . another engineering joke).

The grass plot round a sundial ... because it goes a long way before it,
and a long way behind it ... and a long way beyond it on each side.

This is word play. The sound of the word "way" is combined with the sound of the common first letter of "before," "behind" and "beyond" to produce the word "wabe." (My apologies to everyone who already understood this perfectly.)

Hey, does this mean it is pronounced "WAY-bee," to rhyme with "baby"? I thought it was "WAYB" to rhyme with "babe"!

Wolfe-content aside, everybody should go out and see Miyazaki's new movie "Spirited Away"! Right now! Miyazaki has several fine movies and this is one of them. Many of the people around here have seen it already (I've seen it twice and might see it again before it gets to video).

=mantis=

Sirius Fiction

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29 copies of "Snake's-hands" until OP!

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Josh Geller — 24 Oct 2002, 18:55 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

On Thu, 24 Oct 2002, Michael Andre-Driussi wrote:

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According to Humpty-Dumpty.

But according to Carroll's original definition:

Wabe (derived from the verb to swab or soak). The side of a hill (from its being soaked by the rain).

So it looks like it is pronounced 'wob'. See <http://www.math.luc.edu/~vande/jabglossary.html>.

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William Ansley — 30 Oct 2002, 04:46 · follows Josh Geller

William Ansley's memory of PEACE is very sharp!

It should be. _Peace_ is still my favorite of Wolfe's books and I have read it many times.

He wrote:

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Interesting. I'm going to quote the whole passage.

[T]he orange people with their weird religion demanding the worship of sundials (as our own seems to others that of telephone poles), so that in friendly locker-room conversations, when we have at last and at the threat of certain legal pressures admitted them in Pinelawn and are discussing the round now past, they out with strange oaths. What is a wabe?

I have always thought Wolfe meant that to others (although just who these others might be, I'm sure I don't know) we seem to worship telephone poles because we have them all over the place, so they must be some kind of totem object.

<Foghorn Leghorn>

Totem! Poles! Totem poles! I made a joke, son.

</Foghorn Leghorn>

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"WAYB" is, of course, the canonical pronunciation. Considering that I made a special effort to phrase my explanation above in such a way as to prevent anyone reading it from arriving at "WAY-bee," the depth of my failure is all the more humiliating. <g>

Wolfe-content aside, everybody should go out and see Miyazaki's new movie "Spirited Away"! Right now! Miyazaki has several fine movies and this is one of them. Many of the people around here have seen it already (I've seen it twice and might see it again before it gets to video).

I agree whole-heartedly with mantis here. This film is not playing in a lot of theaters, but it is well worth going out of your way to see it.

William Ansley

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 30 Oct 2002, 17:14 · follows William Ansley

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Two points in support of the estimable Ansley's prescribed pronunciation:

a) "Wabe" needs to rhyme with "outgrabe," whose origin (if it can be called that - past tense of "to outgribe") does not in any way suggest it should be pronounced "out-GRAY-bee."

b) Rhythmically, "Jabberwocky" is structured:

baDA baDA baDA baDA
baDA baDA baDA baDA
baDA baDA baDA baDA
baDA baDA baDA

The rhythm is extremely regular. Ignoring "wabe," the only possible exception occurs the final line of stanza 2, "the frumious Bandersnatch;" however, as the adjective can be pronounced "FROOM-yuss," there is no real irregularity. For "wabe" to be pronounced bisyllabically, then, and especially with an unstressed second syllable, would create a lone irregularity in a poem whose rhythm is otherwise extremely, almost obsessively, regular.

--The Pedantic Blattid