

Rape and Misogyny in Wolfe

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 21 Apr 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3961>

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James Wynn — 21 Apr 2003, 18:01

I feeling pretty dense right now since I can think of only one rape in my reading of Wolfe right now: the infamous act by Severian on the semi-conscious Jolenta. I'm tracing my memory for any others and I just can't come up with any others -- I recently re-read tFHoC and I don't recall a rape of a female slave.

I for one would appreciate a listing of the rapes -- particularly any "Rape as Salvation" events (the Jolenta one does not apply IMO).

Also, it has been frequently reference that Wolfe exhibits misogyny. I've yet to encounter it (and notice it -- which may be revealing about me). I'm curious what other readers have read in Wolfe that they consider to be misogynistic. Possibly it is in works I've yet to read.

As a premtive shot, I don't consider the Trivigaunti to an example of misogyny. Trivigaunte does not seem to be anymore distopian than Viron which is quite machismotic -- and we are constantly reminded that men aren't treated any worse there than women are in Viron.

--- Crush

Chris — 21 Apr 2003, 18:39 · follows James Wynn

Having time only for a "short" reply...

To Nutria: No offense taken, at least by me. I just couldn't be sure, and wanted to clarify what was being talked about.

re: the question at hand

There is one, I believe, in the Latro books. The way those are written makes the incident hazy in my memory and I unfortunately can't dredge up the details (might as well ask Latro, for all the good I am there).

Best example, I believe, is Horn and Seawrack in OBW.

Severian, of course, you've mentioned.

Silk doesn't seem to get dragged into this (at least not in the Long Sun series), but Auk does.

Usually there are extenuating circumstances, as alga pointed out. These extenuating circumstances aren't enough to excuse any of them, however (as Horn himself points out to Seawrack, and Auk may have said something similar come to think of it).

re: misogyny, I tend to think the word has been extended to refer to a lot of things beyond its real scope - such that it gets to be very difficult to have a sensible discussion about it. I would vigorously deny that Wolfe is a misogynist if the accusation were made. A claim might be made

that his metaphors and female characters reflect a general attitude that is objectionable - to actually debate that would require such care that I'm not sure I'm quite smart enough to take part in that. But even if you grant that much, this is still not misogyny IMHO.

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James Jordan — 21 Apr 2003, 19:56 · follows Chris

Chris wrote:

re: the question at hand

There is one, I believe, in the Latro books. The way those are written makes the incident hazy in my memory and I unfortunately can't dredge up the details (might as well ask Latro, for all the good I am there).

Io is raped between the chapters. She's really just a child, to boot.

Best example, I believe, is Horn and Seawrack in OBW.

Of course, she's a siren and Odysseus could not help himself -- or could he?

Severian, of course, you've mentioned.

Memory does not oppress me, but fails me. Lots of sex, but I don't recall Sev forcing any women. Someone remind me.

Silk doesn't seem to get dragged into this (at least not in the Long Sun series), but Auk does.

Well, also there's the Christmas story about the little boy alone in an automatized house, "rescued" by a soldier who clearly has ... plans ... for him.

And in 5th Head, I'm referring to the third novella, where a female slave is brought in to service the soldier, Clinton-style, while he is working. IMO, making servants do things like this is rape. Maybe "sexual exploitation" is better, but that may be a distinction w/o much of a difference. There's another novelette wherein a female space captain makes sexual use of an underling male. Exploitation, anyway.

Of course, maybe given how much Wolfe has written, there aren't THAT many rape scenes after

all! I can't recall any in Devil, Pandora, There Are Doors, Castlevision, Free Live Free.

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I agree. Wolfe is an equal opportunity critic of human sin and failings!

Nutria

David DiGiacomo — 22 Apr 2003, 06:23 · follows James Jordan

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at hotpop.com>

I for one would appreciate a listing of the rapes -- particularly any "Rape as Salvation" events (the Jolenta one does not apply IMO).

I found the rape of Mora to be most objectionable.

Also, it has been frequently reference that Wolfe exhibits misogyny. I've yet to encounter it (and notice it -- which may be revealing about me). I'm curious what other readers have read in Wolfe that they consider to be misogynistic. Possibly it is in works I've yet to read.

"The Death of Dr. Island" is in a class by itself, but certainly "Seven American Nights" and "The Ziggurat".