

chesterton

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 11 Jan 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4299>

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aramini1 at cox.net — 11 Jan 2005, 11:57

Chesterton is worthy of discussion on the list primarily because his writing clearly influenced Wolfe.

Some authors are trickier than others. I once wrote a sample argumentative paper for my students with sources and all in the hopes that they would realize my argument was full of holes and pick it apart. Instead, they all agreed with me. In the hands of a fervent athiest, having a most low god who claimed to be have the highest god on his back as festering sores would be seen as a reflection of the author's idea of the most high god (a god of sores and debasement)- in Wolfe, we read it in the opposite fashion. Odd how that works, isn't it?

Marc

Maru Dubshinki — 11 Jan 2005, 14:02 · in reply to aramini1 at cox.net

Makes you wonder just how much of 'Wolfe' is actually there, and how much is random transformation of trivia or what readers read into it...

~Maru, who can't stop thinking of 'Foucault's Pendulum', by Eco

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Chris — 11 Jan 2005, 15:45 · in reply to Maru Dubshinki

Certainly there is a bit that goes on in this list that borders on conspiracy theory. On the other hand it is often quite obvious that his texts are carefully crafted to produce a wealth of interpretations - some of which he definitely seems to have had in mind, and others he could not have foreseen.

If you like Eco's work then there is a very small book called "Interpretation and Overinterpretation" that really makes some good points that apply to Wolfe, and this list. Sometime in aeons past I blathered on for a paragraph or two about that book on the list, but I'm not sure it ever got captured in the archives.

In any event the problem with accusing anyone on this list of "overinterpretation" is that Wolfe obviously intends the reader to look deeper and even, on occasion, to reject straightforward statements from his narrator, etc. Because we as interpreters are aware of this intention, and know we can't "understand" the text without taking it into account, we are in effect deliberately encouraged to engage in a strategy of interpretation that's likely to produce exactly this kind of "overinterpretation".

-- Civet

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