

shapeshifter hearsay

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 31 Jul 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4680>

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b sharp — 31 Jul 2006, 17:53

Tony Ellis writes:

And hearsay in a novel is a million times more significant than hearsay you or I hear down the pub - >because the author has deliberately chosen to put it in. As with Chekhov's Gun, if a good author >includes a reference to an old legend or rumour in their story, we can be damn sure it has a bearing. If the author piles on such references, the way Wolfe does with shape-changing >and mimicry in all three Fifth Head novellas, then we know that something is definitely going on.

Does the same principle apply to the circumstantial evidence for shapeshifters in BotNS? Do they exist on Urth? (no I will NOT mention the Piteous Gate ;-)

-bsharp

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 31 Jul 2006, 18:09 · in reply to b sharp

Tony Ellis writes:

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and b responds:

Does the same principle apply to the circumstantial evidence for shapeshifters in BotNS? Do they exist on Urth?
(no I will NOT mention the Piteous Gate ;-)

Yes, the same principle applies. However, I think Tony may be overstating the power of the principle; or perhaps I'm misreading him. As he says, "...something is definitely going on." However, it is too much to say, simply from this principle, that "shape-changing and mimicry" "is definitely going on." (Though I do believe that there's enough evidence in 5HC that, indeed, there are shapechangers.) Rather, something is going on that makes shape-changing and mimicry deeply important in that book.

Do shapechangers exist on Urth, then?

Howinole should I know?

But mimicry -- especially memory-based mimicry -- is going on all over the place, and disguises of various sorts are rampant throughout the Book of the New Sun and its various sequelae.

In my never sufficiently humble opinion, it's clear to me that identity is one of Wolfe's major themes, not only here but in all his major work since 5HC, and that memory, mimicry, shape-changing, disguises, cloning, and many other things that go on in those major works are all aspects, or subthemes if you will, of this supertheme.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

"Shovels are essential to the fantasy genre.

However, they are primarily used by the authors rather than the characters." -- Stephen R. Donaldson

Tony Ellis — 01 Aug 2006, 18:04 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I wrote:

Yes, the same principle applies. However, I think Tony may be overstating the power of the principle; or perhaps I'm misreading him. As he says, "...something is definitely going on." However, it is too much to say, simply from this principle, that "shape-changing and mimicry" "is definitely going on."

You are slightly misreading me, I think, or more likely I wasn't being as clear as I thought I was, as I thought I was being very careful **not** to say "because there's so much hearsay, we know that shape-changing and mimicry are definitely going on." There are far more concrete reasons to believe the Annese are mimics.

My only points were that (a) Annese shape-shifting/mimicry can't be **dismissed** just because it's hearsay, and that (b) the sheer volume of this hearsay should warn us that something important is being communicated.

Exactly what that 'something' is we can argue about indefinitely, and knowing this list we no doubt shall. My own take on it is that we are simply being told "the myth that the Annese could change their shape is too widespread not to have some basis in reality."