

cueing theory

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 26 May 1998

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Matthew Freestone — 26 May 1998, 18:12

Hi,

A few more random thoughts on "Cues":

Adam:

My current take on it is that the "bowling balls" are devils, or something of that ilk. The not-so-young man's deal is very much like selling his soul.

I tend to agree with this, though I don't see the bowling balls as malicious: they just do what you want and assume you've thought about the consequences - a little like the 'getting what you want' theme in "Free Live Free".

But this doesn't explain why the "bowling balls" perceive each other as "a fair young world, mottled by clouds and rich with life."

I think this is because the story is about how all the characters inhabit separate worlds defined by the cues which they pick up: we're seeing the story largely from the POV of the NSY man, who picks up on more and more dismal puns and whatnot as the story moves on (starting with the goblin/gobbling confusion). The bowling balls don't live in that world at all - in fact, the NSY man's characterisation of them as bowling balls may come from his idea of a series of cartoons on sports equipment.

Alga:

So I think that the bowling ball is Gene Wolfe, the second bowling ball is Nancy Kress (or you can choose your other successful and established writer whose mind is a "fair blue world, mottled by clouds and enriched with life"), the setting is a science fiction convention, and the n-s-y man is an importunate and not-so-bright fan who wants to become a writer but hasn't a clue. Er, cue.

I love this interpretation! Also it provides a sensible context for something that's explicitly absent in the text: the environment of the story. The bowling ball is described as being sat on a chair of massy gold, and there's a reference at the end to a queue (pun?) of customers, but that's about your lot.

best,

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