

Urth Digest, Vol 163, Issue 10

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Mar 2018

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6784>

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Brian Doherty — 20 Mar 2018, 20:08

And while I believe in the discoverability of intent and the immutability of plot elements implied or explicit (Hamlet dies, urth literally becomes Green), sometimes it is necessary to let people read as they want to - for some, Wolfe really is just a fun read.

Better to let people read as they want than risk the unenlightened fascism (as opposed to my enlightened, transcendent variety) of pushing definitive readings that are deaf to subtext (and I'm not talking about your readings at all here, Robert).

While I cannot be absolutely sure of this anymore, I think that nearly EVERYTHING about what was "really going on" in BOTNS connected to time travel escaped me nearly entirely on first and even second read, and possibly made me kind of not enjoy URTN very much when it was new, and to have never re-read it.

All sorts of actual facts about what was happening in the narrative that I learned from fellow fans and secondary literature escaped me, and still BOTNS was from first read til now in my top 10 favorite reading experiences and one of VERY few books I felt compelled to re-read. These days I think I'd say I valorize SHORT and LONG more, but still. At any rate, I know you can have Wolfe move you deeply without getting a LOT of it.

That said, with the last decade of standalones, my lack of ability to easily perceive basic "what is going on?" points have indeed NOT been overwhelmed by other qualities, and while I still read them I don't expect to love Wolfe's new works any longer. I lack the capacity now to lay out why that did not ruin BOTNS while it largely does ruin more recent standalones, but it's true.

Brian Doherty