

Wolfe Article & Wolfe encounters

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 23 Feb 1997

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Patri10629 — 23 Feb 1997, 20:03

Hello Michael (Mantis)

Thanks for kind words re: my novel Door Number Three.

DOH! as Homer would say.

The author of the article is George Aichele Jr.:

"Self-Referentiality in Gene Wolfe's 'Seven American Nights'", Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts, Vol. 3, No. 2, Whole No. 10, 1991-- Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts, 1157 Temple Trail, Stow, OH 44224. Editor was: Carl B. Yoke.

Here I was so proud of myself for getting all these academic reference numbers right. And I forget to mention who wrote it!

My silence (lurking really) is based on intimidation. I'm amazed by the breadth of knowledge displayed by the people who've read both the New Sun and The Long Sun books. And I'm enjoying all the contributions.

I've posted here before. But what I really have to say is that I adore the Long Sun books. They seem to me to be a pinnacle of the craft of Science Fiction. I've read them three times and they have yet to stop amazing and flabbergasting me. Wolfe does more in a paragraph than most writers do in a chapter. Why isn't he more appreciated? I say "Gene Wolfe" to "mainstream" readers and they crinkle their foreheads. We are talking a modern master here.

Two Wolfe stories that might give folks pleasure:

I had the privilege of sharing dinner with Neil Gaimen at the WFC in October 95. Mightily intimidated--I adore his Sandman work, and have every issue and book that has been printed. I gushed about The Long Sun books and he launched into an erudite (to me anyway) reference to Chesterton's Father Brown stories (never read 'em) and Kipling's work (ditto, except for a few poems) as influences on the Long Sun novels. No one has brought it up here (I think) so I'd be curious what you English Majors think:) In an online interview--Wolfe mentioned the Chesterton/Father brown reference might be on target.

Also: I met Gene for the second time at the World Fantasy Convention in Chicago. The first time (in Baltimore) I stood next to him happily and stupidly unable to muster a word for 20 minutes:)

A year later he was so sweet. I had him autograph my Long Sun books and mentioned I had reviewed the Long Sun series for the mag SF EYE (forthcoming who knows when, but, like all the other issues, worth the wait). I said, (I'm still a bit amazed I could speak to the Man) "I hope I've done them justice...but if I didn't, I'm sure you let me know:)"

"What have I done to deserve this abuse?" Gene said.

I had met him earlier and had mentioned Hating THERE ARE DOORS. Still do.

It almost prevented me from the exquisite pleasure of The New Sun books.

Well, I wrote about it in the New York Review of Science Fiction. I also praised him mightily. He had pointed a finger at my chest and said: "You're That Guy!"

So as he signed my books I replied. "I gave you Five compliments in that review! And One slam! And all you remember is the slam! Just like a writer."

Wolfe paused for a moment and looked at the ceiling. Then said, "They weren't very Big compliments."

And I burst out laughing.

I just love him.

best,

Patrick O'Leary

<http://members.aol.com/patri10629/index.html>

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com

Jim Jordan — 10 Mar 1997, 18:10 · follows Patri10629

At 08:03 PM 2/23/97 -0500, you wrote:

Chesterton's Father

Brown stories (never read 'em) and Kipling's work (ditto, except for a few poems) as influences on the Long Sun novels. No one has brought it up here (I think) so I'd be curious what you English Majors think:) In an online interview--Wolfe mentioned the Chesterton/Father brown reference might be on target.

Oh, there can be no doubt but that "Nightside" is "Father Brown in Space"! And, Silk as a whole is rather Brownish. Once you've read Father Brown, you'll know.

And see my interview with Gene on Duggan's site. Chesterton is a MAJOR influence. Predictably, of course.

I had met him earlier and had mentioned Hating THERE ARE DOORS.

Briefly, why? I'll admit I did not understand why the Catholic Church (Italian Restaurant) would want to hook up the main character with an idol goddess, but Gene's explanation to me is that the Catholic Church does incorporate pre-Christian religions, though in a purified and transformed way. On the whole, however, I found it a delightful and thought-provoking book. So, what did you not like about it? Instruct us.

I hope this is not "off topic." I think understanding "Long Sun" will involved understanding Wolfe as a whole, especially his religious views.

JBJordan

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