

Whorl post re:Heresy and Wolfe's Audience CORRECTION

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Feb 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1208>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Endymion9 — 20 Feb 2001, 15:52

At 11:34 AM -0500 2/19/01, BMeyer7 at aol.com wrote:
Has Wolfe crossed the line from not giving all the answers
to creating texts that must be pored over by talmudic scholars rather
than actual readers of novels? Is Wolfe writing for a smaller, and
smaller audience of expert Wolfe-interpreters? Discuss.

I would argue that Wolfe has not changed his writing style or his audience at all. There are people in this group that might claim to understand all or most the nuances in TBotNS TBotLS TBotSS Castlevision Soldier in the Mist Soldier in Arete And many Wolfe short stories.

They might even have access to the author who might tell them what he meant. I am of the opinion (and I can't remember which famous artist from the past has previously stated this [Dylan Thomas? Bob Dylan? others?], that even an author's opinions about his/her work are not absolute. What the writing means to the author, may be something else entirely than what it means to his readers. And obviously from reading this group, what it means to one group of readers, it might not mean to another group.

Who is right? Both in my opinion. If a book passage means something different to 1,000 readers than it does to 1 (the author) who's opinion has more authority? If it means something different to one group of 10 readers vs. another group of 10 readers, who is right? I guess to sum this thought up, I believe ideas can be bigger than their author.

Secondly, I have been of the opinion and have expressed to others since I first began reading Wolfe, only read this author to enjoy the journey. If a book is all about the destination for you, you probably won't enjoy Wolfe and will become frustrated reading him. Other authors I put in the same category though not as difficult as Wolfe, and that I enjoy greatly the journey/scenery are

Jonathan Carroll
Michael Swanwick
William Browning Spencer

I don't read their books or Wolfe's to find out what happened. I read them to enjoy the company of the book and it's characters for as long as it lasts. Whenever I reread TBotNS I think of it as spending more time with my good friend Severian. I was disappointed when I started reading TBotSS and didn't find my friend Silk there. But I quickly began to enjoy the company of my new friend Horn.

So the question I would have to people analyzing TBotSS is, did you enjoy the journey, the sights Wolfe showed you? I did.

Another analogy I think of is from pastor's I have heard. In a sermon they have instructed the

church members to listen with discerning ears and to take the meat and pick out the bones. Meaning some of this word may be for you, or the same word may mean something different to you than to your neighbor. Some of it may mean nothing to you. Don't choke on the bones but pick out the meaning it has to you and savor that.

Just my two cents. :)

Dennis/Endy

<http://home.mindspring.com/~endymion9/index.htm>

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.