

Critics Respond to Harold Bloom

Charlie Rose (Interviewer): “What do you say to my friend Mr. Bloom? Professor Broom.”

Janet Maslin (New York Times): “He doesn't know what he's talking about. I'm glad he calls you Charles...”

Charles: [laughing] “I am too.”

Janet: “But that's the most interesting thing he had to say there. I'm sorry. He's just dead wrong.”

Charlie: “He's dead wrong?”

Janet: “He's dead wrong.”

Charlie: “He's dead wrong in the comparisons that he makes?”

Janet: “This is not the *Wind in the Willows* but it is not chopped liver either.”

Charlie: “So you're saying this is not great literature you're saying this is what? Popular literature?”

Janet: “Nobody said it's great literature.”

Charlie: “Okay what are you saying then? Are you saying it's a nice little story that everybody should read?”

Janet: “It's a great mass phenomenon. It's Star Wars. It's Star Wars as a book. That's what it is.”

Charlie: “But you don't review mass phenomena. You review books.”

Janet: “Why can't a book be a mass phenomenon? Why can't it capture everyone's imagination because it's interesting? Because it's lively and interesting.”

Malcolm Jones (Newsweek): “And why can't a mass phenomenon be good? I mean who's to say Stephen King...”

Charlie: “Thirty five million people can't be wrong.”

Malcolm: “No that's... thirty five million people *can* be wrong.”

Janet: “That's outrageous what he said to say.”

Malcolm: “It is. I agree.”

Janet: “That's just reflexive snobbery. It's from somebody who doesn't sound like...”

Charlie: “Elitism? Snobbery? Intellectualism?”

Janet: “Yes. You know there's always. There's one in every crowd. I'm sorry.”

Charlie: [laughing] “Oh ho ho hooo.”

Janet: “Well, that just makes me angry.”

Charlie: “Why does it make you angry? He's got an opinion like you do. You write your opinion in the New York Times and you love the book. He gets on a television show...”

Janet: “Well...”

Charlie: “And he says I didn't like the book because I thought...”

Janet: “No no no. He doesn't say. He says that people are fools to like this slop he doesn't just say I didn't like it!”

Mark Gleason (Book Publisher): “He's saying a thinking person shouldn't read this book. That it's not doing anybody any good.”

The above is a snippet from a reaction to Harold Bloom's thoughts on Harry Potter. Transcribed by Abner Coimbre. [Source](#).