



Notes From The Tilt-A-Whirl: Wide-Eyed Wonder in God's Spoken World

N.D. Wilson

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A visual, poetic exploration of the narrative nature of the world and the personality of the Poet behind it all.

When Nate Wilson looks at the world around him, he asks "What is this place? Why is this place? Who approved it? Am I supposed to take it seriously?" What could such an outlandish, fantastical world say about its Creator?

In these sparkling chapters, Wilson gives an aesthetic examination of the ways in which humanity has tried to make sense of this overwhelming carnival ride of a world. He takes a whimsical, thought-provoking look at everything from the "magic" of quantum physics, to nature's absurdities, to the problem of evil, evolution and hell. These frequently humorous, and uniquely beautiful portraits express reality unknown to many Christians-the reality of God's story unfolding around and among us. As the author says, "Welcome to His poem. His play. His novel. His comedy. Let the pages flick your thumbs."

Notes From The Tilt-A-Whirl: Wide-Eyed Wonder in God's Spoken World Details

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Suzannah says

Read October 16, 2011 and October 12, 2014.

Maybe it's something about Octobers. Even richer and more perceptive than I remember it being the first time. This is a volume of literary criticism on the biggest Art of all. I particularly recommend it to writers.

Jacob Rush says

The Wilson family probably share Chestertonian blood. In an insightful and poignant way, N.D. Wilson dismantles the academic skepticism of the secular, evolutionist by his sharp, sometimes crass, wit. Without God, without the Divine Storyteller, life is meaningless, we are a drift and alone in this vast cosmos. Wilson paints for us what it would look like to be amazed at the story that God is writing with our universe. This world and everything in it is being spoken by God like a master novelist, and we find ourselves as actors inside this grand play. Who will our character be? Will he be the grumpy, frustrated kind who never catches a break so he takes it out on his family? What will we do with the story God has given us? N.D. Wilson masterfully writes to open dull eyes (like my own) to the wonder and amazement of the world we live in, and invites us to enjoy the ride.

Sydney Kirsch says

I didn't love it quite as much as *Death by Living*, but that doesn't really mean anything because it was still incredible and beautiful and sparkly.

Roberto Vargas Jr. says

O estilo de Wilson é extremamente fluido e agradável. Diria até que é “viciante”!

E é difícil dizer mais algo sobre o livro sem encher este texto de spoilers. Farei, então, apenas dois breves comentários.

O primeiro: Como é bom encontrar eco do que pensamos em palavras muito mais apropriadas e que jamais poderíamos usar, por nossa própria incompetência! (Aliás, Wilson usou magistralmente o mesmo argumento que usei em *Sobre a autoria do mal por Deus*; adorei isso!)

O segundo: O que dizer sobre de que o livro trata? Quando um familiar postou num grupo da família um vídeo de fractais numa bolha de sabão, dizendo “Isso é arte!”, encontrei o que talvez sejam os melhores termos que posso articular sobre o tema do livro e com os quais o recomendei:

"Deus é pródigo em nos presentear com a beleza. Ele faz os fractais de neve únicos em cada floco numa abundância inimaginável. Nós perdemos toda esta beleza pelo costume ou por colocarmos nossa atenção em coisas menos relevantes. O livro é um convite, um apelo a apreciar deliberadamente a criação e o Deus que a criou. Ou, como responde o Catecismo de Westminster ao que seria o fim do homem: conhecer Deus e gozá-LO eternamente! Louvado seja Ele!"

Recomendo-o, pois, muito fortemente.

G.M. Burrow says

Breathtaking. Hilarious. Scathing. Fiercely jolly. If you ever want to read about poetry, ants, creation, thunderstorms, evil, Hamlet, eternity, snow, hell, pain and death all rolled into one ecstatic ball, then read this book. It will sprawl you, wind you, pick you up, and push you on your way even as you hold out both arms to stop the world from rocking. It will blind you with beauty and insist that you see.

I read this in one dizzy three-hour sitting in June 2009, then again (much slower) in March 2011.

Douglas Wilson says

Stupendous. More to follow.

I had read Notes from the Tilt a Whirl before in its various manifestations. But when it arrived in its final printed form, I was happy to sit down and go through it again, left to right. What a good book this is.

The conceit for the book is that the solar system is a ride at a carnival, with circular motions inside circular motion. Not only do we have the carnival-like motions, we have a carnival-like environment, gaudy colors and situations included. The book works through the four quadrants of one trip around the circumference, through the seasons of winter, spring, summer, autumn. Those who don't get either thrilled or sick (or both) in the ride are those who, in the name of realism, resolutely ignore everything that is going on all around them, and they ignore it all day long.

As they are on display in this book, Nate's gifts revolve around a very basic truth. He has the same ability that Chesterton had, that of making ordinary things seem extraordinary, and then with a start you realize that it is not a verbal trick -- ordinary things are extraordinary. Why don't we see that more often? I mean look at a walnut, for Pete's sake.

A metaphor is a twisted and circuitous route that goes straight to the truth. Some metaphors are so convoluted that they get there right away. This book is just crammed with them. My father is working through the book too, and his one substantive criticism was one he cited from a C.S. Lewis criticism of Rudyard Kipling -- too much brilliance, too fast, need to breathe . . . lie down for a bit. Woof. It is a reasonable criticism, but you can always pace yourself. Read it in smaller chunks. But read it.

And I just enjoyed reading it again, this time in February of 2011. It is just as good on a Kindle.

Banner says

This was a refreshing, honest and very personal book about faith...from one man's perceptive. He doesn't seem to be trying to convince anyone about anything (well maybe in a couple of places...not totally sure). He just expressed how he saw the world through faith.

His style was kind of like reading Robin Williams teaching Sunday School or maybe talking with his fellow theologians down at the pub. It took a page or two to get into, but I enjoyed the style.

This is not one of those get pumped up, I can do all things kind of book. It is a honest look at the world as it really is and seeing God in the ugly and the beautiful.

Try the kindle sample and see if your not hooked.

Thiago Lima says

Fantástico! Genial!

Esse livro é sobre cosmovisão. Isso, "cosmovisão" no singular. Não é um livro discutindo sobre as diversas cosmovisões existentes, embora ele fale superficialmente de algumas. Nesse livro Nathan, de forma magistral, nos apresenta uma cosmovisão singular, uma que enxerga esse mundo além de simples taxonomia e estações climáticas, que te deslumbra com a beleza desse mundo que, na verdade, é obra de um grande Artista.

Nathan fala sobre moralidade, céu, inferno, morte, vida, ressurreição, sobre o famigerado problema do mal, misturando tudo com detalhes sobre a primavera, borboletas e formigas. Tudo isso enquanto cita C.S. Lewis, Agostinho e expõe a tolice de Nietzsche, Platão, Hume e Kant (como esse livro poderia ser ruim?).

Para mim, foi como entrar numa xícara maluca.

No primeiro capítulo achei sensacional. A primeira volta é sempre "só alegria".

Mas quando a xícara girou demais e o autor começou a falar de quarks, o enjoo bateu e quase abandonei o brinquedo. Mas com tanta gente boa falando bem desse livro, eu deveria persistir. E foi esplendido. Depois que acaba fica aquele gostinho de que foi um dos melhores brinquedos que você já viu. Quem já foi na sensacional montanha russa com simulador do Harry Potter, que os parques Island of Adventure e Universal proporcionam em Orlando, sabem do que estou falando.

Enfim, leia esse livro. Se espante e se maravilhe com o Criador e sua arte.

Observe esse mundo que é só para os crecidinhos mas que ninguém checa altura nem identidade na entrada. Se espante com as sombras e com o inverno. Se maravilhe com a primavera. Se maravilhe porque no final "haverá borboletas", afinal.... "histórias não terminam com a morte".

Obrigado Nathan, por esse divertidíssimo passeio.

Jen H. says

So, on Saturday I was the lone woman sitting amongst a group of men when the subject of this book came up. I'd started to read it once before and hated it. Why? I didn't like the author. I've thought for years he was trying too hard to be like his father and never quite measuring up. Ugly, I know. But true. And I happen to

think his father a right jolly old elf, with a bit of Lewis, Chesterton and Luther thrown in for good measure. Who wouldn't like THAT sort of guy, right?

So when talk about this book appeared, I listened to the chatter and gave my two cents worth when the lauding increased. I said, "It's a good book for males, maybe. But not for women." Amid the loud guffaws, hearty laughter and shame-faced embarrassment (as if they shouldn't have enjoyed it as much as they did), I thought it might be expedient on my part to again "take up and read" this book I had so hastily condemned during my earlier sojourn. Who knew? I might have missed something important, like...um....the "story" itself. I don't like being the only one in the room to NOT get the joke.

I'm glad I gave it a second chance. And I'm also happy to say that the son has not only succeeded in becoming like his father; in this book, I do believe he has exceeded him if this readers tears are any measure. Doug Wilson has only made me cry once. It happened when we were at a History Conference where he was one of the principal speakers. When he spoke of King Jesus, his voice cracked. And my tear ducts quickly followed suit. In Nate's book, I cried and cried and cried again. In "Notes from the Tilt-a-Whirl", Nate Wilson makes us to see God's glory by training our eyes on the shadow. You know the one. It's the one that was eliminated forever when Christ rose from the grave.

And about me resenting the son for wanting to be like his dad? That was my problem, not his. This son is a grand and glorious reflection of his father, and one in whom his father, I would imagine, takes great pride.

Although I still believe this is a book written by a man to men and for men, I also believe that every woman can and will be blessed/challenged/made to truly *see* in the beauty for ashes picture Nate paints of the world created in extravagant, living color AND in the harsh and harrowing, dark places by the Master Artist. Read it, girls, if you wish to see glory. Read it if you wish to weep. Just read it.

I'd left a bookmark in this particular book when I'd tried to read it the first time. Upon it was a quote from the great man himself, G. K. Chesterton. And what did it say? "The most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and an ordinary woman and their ordinary children."

Thank you, Doug and Nancy, for being brave enough to live the ordinary. And thank you, Nate, for writing about it in a way that makes me *see* the majesty and the glory of our God.

Mark Jr. says

I succumbed to the buzz the year this came out; I read it, and I'm glad. It's not quite like any other book I've encountered. If it's a little too self-conscious at times of its witty uniqueness, it's equally full of insights and great little stories—like the toddler and the butterfly. The great John Frame says that theology should be written in many genres; Wilson seems almost to have created a new one. A good book to savor a bit at a time.

Barnabas Piper says

The peaks of this book were higher than almost any book I have read in recent years. Wilson has a genuinely unique voice and a gift for seeing the world and the greatness of its minutiae. If you want an exploration of

God's kingdom and reality in a fresh way, this is the book.

Heather says

I like Nate.

Joel says

N.D. Wilson's book is peculiar. I set out reading this not having a clue what to expect; and to the author's credit, I got a good handle on what I was in for after reading the introduction. Wilson's style is distinct. He is very self reflective and looooooves metaphors. This I do not mind. But it is also no guarantee of a good read.

This book has problems. It is a compilation of random personal reflections capped off by one powerhouse chapter concerning hell towards the end of the book. The writing is flowery, but not flowery like Dickens' prose, flowery like write whatever comes to mind and let it go without proofing because it is more raw and beautiful if it isn't messed with. Wilson sounds poetic enough, but halfway through the book I didn't have a clue what he was actually trying to say. This book is about God's creation, but there is absolutely no structure. Wilson would have been better off splitting up all of his paragraphs into poems and releasing a poetry journal.

This was the kind of read where you're getting through it and the writing is pretty enough but you realize that after one hundred and fifty pages the author hasn't actually said anything. As noted before, there is a chapter on hell later in the book that has some structure and hits the reader with what Wilson may actually believe concerning the Creator who he has spent the last 6 chapters talking about but not actually given any insight on. He presents man's attitude towards eternity in a different light and it made me think. I don't think I agree with him at all, but he gets credit for doing in this chapter what he should have been doing from the start. I recommend that people read the hell chapter; you'll get out of that twice what you would get out of everything else. It saved Wilson from a more brutal rating in my book.

Marcel says

Senhoras e senhores, que livração!

Foi divertidíssimo entrar na Xícara Maluca e ver a forma biruta de ND Wilson enxergar o mundo!

Tem lugar pra mais um! Vamos?

Hannah Jayne says

I love these words. I love this world. I love this life. And the Artist—the Artist is best of all.

