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The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 May 1999

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Dan Parmenter — 20 May 1999, 14:55

From: Geoff Alex Cohen <gac at cs.duke.edu>

Ultan has an assistant, Cyby, who is described as: "...a stocky, very erect man of forty or so with a flat, pale face." and "Cyby had a high square forehead, from which his graying hair was in retreat. It made his face seem small and a trifle babyish..."

Now, this is a fairly decent description of Wolfe, especially in 1980. Also, the symbolism of Cyby as apprentice to Ultan implying Wolfe seeing himself as the apprentice to Borges is too good to be an accident.

I've often wondered if Cyby was based on anyone. For a while I was convinced that he was based on Norman Thomas DiGiovanni, the controversial Borges translator. The one photo of him I'd seen seemed to fit Wolfe's description of Cyby, but it's not exactly a detailed description. Wolfe is quite bald and was by then, but that hardly disproves your hypothesis.

Lex Shellac