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The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 07 Nov 1999

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Alice Turner — 07 Nov 1999, 09:55

Nick Gevers said:

Various points raised by Kevin Maroney and alga:

1) On Clute: it's true that Clute's contortions of style can hinder accessibility of his mass-audience reviews for that audience; but I think this misses the point of why SF WEEKLY, Dorling Kindersley, and others similarly commercial have employed Clute to produce material for them. It's because of his style, which, for whatever reasons, has won him a wider popularity. Maybe his critical poetry strikes chords in unexpected places; but he is very widely read, and not because he dumbs down his prose.

Yes, Nick, but you missed my point, and that of others. It is when Clute dumbs down his prose that he is readable and useful. What we are all objecting to is the absurd high-falutin'ness of his prose in this review, the clog of academe.

3) David Hartwell's role in persuading GW to produce UOTNS: as he is Wolfe's long-time editor, couldn't we see Hartwell as a sort of Hierogrammate, patiently recording the rescripts of the Increate? And sometimes prompting them?

Well, I like that!

-alga

Kevin J. Maroney — 07 Nov 1999, 14:48 · follows Alice Turner

At 09:55 AM 11/7/99 -0500, alga wrote:

Yes, Nick, but you missed my point, and that of others. It is when Clute dumbs down his prose that he is readable and useful. What we are all objecting to is the absurd high-falutin'ness of his prose in this review, the clog of academe.

I would say that Clute sometimes lets his joy of language get in the way of his communication. Fortunately, this is only an occasional lapse.

It is almost always possible to explain even a very complex idea very simply; sometimes it takes a great deal of effort to do so. (There's a joke wandering around to the effect of:

And Jesus asked them, "And who is it that you say that I am?"

And the Apostles answered, "You are the kergyma of our metaphysical grounding." And Jesus said, "Say what?"

that I think could apply to Clute's writing sometimes.)

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at crossover.com Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York
Review of Science Fiction <http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/olp/nyrsf/nyrsf.html>