

The Clarity of Clute

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

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Nicholas Gevers — 07 Nov 1999, 21:15

It's unlikely that alga and Kevin will ever agree with me about the inherent merits of Clute's prose style; we keep accusing each other of missing the point, which suggests we're doing far too much pointing. Let me (with any luck) close this correspondence by saying that, yes, Clute can muddy the waters terribly with his Latinisms and Hellenisms, but that it's his use of such stylistic mannerisms that makes his criticism distinctive and (within limits) popular. If one is familiar with these mannerisms (as many by now are), one will recognize Clute's review of OBW as an attempt to match Wolfe's content with an equivalent exuberance of language, conveying the critic's aesthetic excitement to the reader. So many other critics write dull stodge, losing any excitement utterly in the process; they're like hardware commentators expatiating on the technical virtues of different kinds of monkey wrench.

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Kevin J. Maroney — 08 Nov 1999, 10:45 · follows Nicholas Gevers

At 09:15 PM 11/7/99 -0800, Nick wrote:

It's unlikely that alga and Kevin will ever agree with me about the inherent merits of Clute's prose style;

Possibly. I like Clute's writing, and I like his thoughts a great deal. But he sometimes writes really bad sentences.

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