

Infrequently Questioned Answers Questioned

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Jan 2000

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Peter Stephenson — 20 Jan 2000, 20:11

From: "David Lebling" <dlebling at shore.net>

Subject: Infrequently Asked Question Answered

Have you ever noticed that none of Wolfe's space colonies seem to be very happy places?

(Then again, I suppose none of Wolfe's _places_ seem to be very happy.)

Yes, I agree with both of these. Anyone think there might be a dash of the `tortured Catholic soul', as in Graham Greene or (sometimes) Evelyn Waugh, or [puts on BBC arts correspondent voice] can one make too much of that aspect? Silk is probably the clearest evidence, but does this extend to all Wolfe's worlds? You can argue Silk is closer to Wolfe's universe's view of itself than Severian, since the latter misses so much, while Silk is much more contemplative. But maybe contemplative means more gloomy in any case. I always stop when I start arguing in circles.

corncrake

PS: I'm now on McAuley's `Ancient of Days'. He even uses the word `hierodule' at one point. If this isn't a conscious homage to Wolfe (as quoted last week), he must have a very baggy unconscious. But I can believe that anyway.