

Mr. Wolfe and Mrs. Byrne

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 19 May 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2266>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Dan Parmenter — 19 May 2000, 17:03

For me, one of the continuing joys of the New Sun books is the much-commented-upon use of archaic words. Wolfe himself has written about this (CASTLE OF THE OTTER) and indeed, our own Michael A-D has provided us with his remarkable Lexicon, an ingenious and fascinating series of writings about the Book of the New Sun in the form of a dictionary.

My own personal and professional interest in words, dictionaries and lexicography has often led me to seek out unusual collections of words and one of the best I've come across is Mrs. Byrne's Dictionary by Josefa Heifetz Byrne, the daughter of violinist Jascha Heifetz.

The number of "Lupine" words in the book is quite astonishing. I've been compiling a list of them, which I'll post at some point, but it includes some of my favorites, such as "paracoita" and "hierodule". There are enough Lupine terms that given the book's popularity, with numerous printings (it's still in print now in fact), I would have to assume that Wolfe knows the book quite well. A search through the URTH archives indicates that one or two other folks (including the esteemed Mr. Andre-Driussi) have mentioned it, but no one else seems to have mentioned the extent of the debt that Wolfe owes Mrs. Byrne.

Lex Shellac