

Wolfe as Authority (Is that a minotaur I hear?)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Nov 2000

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Robert Borski — 06 Nov 2000, 13:45

mantis having written:

<Oh good: now we can see that interviews, while providing some data points, are not necessarily the be-all and end-all. I mean, not to complain or anything, but I was starting to feel that people around here were beginning to give great weight (perhaps even supreme weight) to data points from one interview or another. Which is fine, I mean, whatever: the answer that fits a given reader is where ever he/she finds it (I really don't mean to knock that); toss out all the lit crit and find all answers in interviews; but the impish side of me always wants to point out, "Just read _another_ interview.">

Alex David Groce then having written:

<The other difficulty with using Wolfe's interviews is that, while they are useful in a general way, Wolfe is, I think, intentionally gnomic and tricky. Recall the answers to the question list for LONG SUN, and the fact that THE CASTLE OF THE OTTER did suprisingly little to clear up some things about NEW SUN (it gave two different explanations of where the idea came from, for Pete's sake).>

I happen to think both of these statements are right on the money. I also suspect that Wolfe is this way when people come up to him at conventions and ask him questions, and know from personal correspondence that he can be both outright straightforward and maddeningly elusive at the same time. Kinda makes hash of Peter Wright's contention that Wolfe _wants_ us to understand him, doesn't it? (Although I do think the co-opting of Severian into RETURN TO THE WHORL will turn out to be yet another attempt by the author at clarifying some of the central plotpoints in the New Sun mythos.)

Then again, if Wolfe was anyway else, he'd be somebody other than the Daedalean writer we all love and respect, and the pilpulist nature of this group would be so much the poorer.

Now if you'll excuse me, the labyrinth beckons again.

Robert Borski (who, despite Wolfe's somewhat snide answer about Hyacinth's mother in the LS question list, still believes it's Lime)