

Hamilton Academicals

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 24 Aug 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2808>

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.

Nigel Price — 24 Aug 2001, 23:32

In "To Nigel", P Morris wrote:

I realise this group is composed of "Wolfe fans" and also "Wolfe professionals", (I count myself among the former, but not the latter)

Two distinct groups of contributors? What a chilling thought...

No, no, it may appear that way sometimes, but I'm sure it's an allusion. We're all fans really. If I've been more than usually pompous recently, I apologise.

But why are you wasting your time...

Because my real jobs currently (Beta testing software, compiling a concordance to a new translation of the Bible, researching employment issues among Swiss bankers, writing a video script to train shop managers for a national chain of hardware stores) are nowhere near as much fun as discussing Wolfe, whose works I admire and adore in equal measure.

...slamming Hamilton for, I guess, lack of seriousness, lack of artistry, philosophic shallowness etc????

And there was I thinking that I was praising him to high heaven and trying to persuade everyone to read him! I didn't spend the summer reading the 3,600 pages of "Night's Dawn" and then rush straight onto "A Second Chance at Eden" because I thought Hamilton was bad. He's not, he's brilliant, absolutely brilliant. His books are exciting, horrifying and funny by turns, and tremendously gripping. I think I may be slightly in love with the heroine of the series, Louise Kavanagh, and finally leaving the crew of the starship Lady Macbeth behind was almost like a minor bereavement!

Anyone who has enjoyed both Hamilton and Wolfe can immediately see they are trying for two entirely different outcomes. Hamilton is an "adventure" writer. You can see that in his lively if somewhat silly "Mindstar"

books.

He is interested in exploring future tech, arranging a sweeping narrative, and resolving a somewhat interesting problem (the possession)

Wolfe, as we all know, is interested in religious-philosophical issues, and working out long, subtle jokes...

I agree completely with what you say. The amazing thing as a Wolfe fan, though, is the way that Hamilton uses many of the same themes and raw ingredients which Wolfe uses, but succeeds - wonderfully - in making a completely different type of book out of them. That's why I originally thought that it might be worth mentioning Hamilton on the list. Then I got back from holiday, and found that the subject had already been raised.

..that attract the interest of the professional unravelers such as yourself.

You flatter me. I'm a failed academic who earns his living as a hack writer and consoles himself by pontificating about his favourite SF author. It's mostly harmless, if occasionally tedious for the other list subscribers.

You seem to be blaming Hamilton for not being like Wolfe.

Well, that was certainly not my intention. What I was trying to explore is how he can use similar tropes while being so very different.

Face it, there's only one Wolfe.

Indeed. My very favourite author.

I count myself among one of his greatest admirers.

As do we all, I suspect. Sometimes, Wolfe writes so well that he simply takes my breath away.

Nigel

in deepest, darkest Minety