

race in Wolfe

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 09 Feb 2002

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Andy Robertson — 09 Feb 2002, 12:29

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michael Andre-Driussi" <mantis at siriusfiction.com>
url: <http://www.ultan.co.uk>

FWIW I read the essay and enjoyed it. It is mainly about things and issues surrounding Colonizer/Colonized, a reading of 5HC that addresses Colonialism. It starts off with a survey of what has been written over the years on this aspect of 5HC. Using this to set the context, Wright then goes further than any have dared before.

Interesting.

I note one thing. Wright casually uses the term "white" for coloniser, but what is notable about TFHOC is that the colonised "abos" such as Sandwalker are very white physically. ((If these are abos and not humans imitating abos.))

Wolfe is in fact quite notable for making the poor and oppressed in his books be specifically poor whites.

I do not mean that there are not occasional cameos by those of other ethnicity, but that his books are relatively free from PC pantomimes of ethnic white guilt. It is usually whites who are the oppressed and persecuted.

Has anyone given any serious thought to the treatment of race in Wolfe?

hartshorn

Michael Andre-Driussi — 09 Feb 2002, 19:34 · follows Andy Robertson

Hartshorn wrote:

I note one thing. Wright casually uses the term "white" for coloniser, but what is notable about TFHOC is that the colonised "abos" such as Sandwalker are very white physically. ((If these are abos and not humans imitating abos.))

In a similar vein, I thought at first Wright was perhaps over-simplifying by presenting two monolithic groups, colonizer and colonized. After all, we are certain that the colonizers include the Anglophones as well as the Francophones; we have reason to believe that the colonized include Hill People and Marshmen, if not even more diverse groups (the "trees"; the Shadow Children).

Aside from the mimicry of colonizers by colonized (which is the bullseye of 5HC), on Earth we also have the reverse--the mimicry of colonized by colonizers (tobacco, jazz music, etc.). Is there evidence of this in 5HC?

Then again, I also realize that simplification is often required to get larger points across, and in the end I thought the simplification was justified for the purpose and length of the essay.

Another thing I wondered about was this: often it is the case that a reader cannot determine what an essayist's favored reading is until the end of the essay. We cannot tell "where the litcritter is coming from," in other words, until we piece together the clues after the essay is done.

In 5HC, for example, there are branches of the tree, for one example: Veil's Hypothesis (+ [reading says "true"], 0 [reading says "maybe"], - [reading says "false"]).

Depending on how a reading scores Veil's Hypothesis, certain later branches open or close. If abos exist, can they change shape; etc. And is the twin-planet system Eden, the original birthplace of homo sapiens sapiens? (Although this comes earlier, in a sense.)

So in the end one would have a string of alpha-numerics, like those "geek codes" you might see used by aficionados to signal their personal likes and dislikes within the canon or category.

These Wolfe-codes could be used at the beginning of an essay or message to provide introduction/deep context.

There would be a string like "AbaiaWin=+; AutarchySham=+; SeverianAntichrist=+" which would mean a non-consensus reading where since Abaia wins (with the flooding of Urth), and the Autarchy is a sham puppetshow put on by agents of Yesod, then Severian is the antichrist.

The Wolfe-code system is just a wild and silly notion.

=mantis=

Sirius Fiction
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