

Wash Post article on Wolfe: correct URL

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 08 Apr 2002

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Nicholas Gevers — 08 Apr 2002, 03:09

Apologies--it appears the URL I gave for my Washington Post article on Wolfe is defective. All the Sunday articles on SF, including ine, can be found here:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/print/sunday/bookworld/>

I hope that works better!

--Nick Gevers.

Alice K. Turner — 08 Apr 2002, 11:09 · follows Nicholas Gevers

Try this for a direct link:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62473-2002Apr4.html>

-alga

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Michael Straight — 10 Apr 2002, 14:24 · follows Alice K. Turner

Thats a great article Nick. I like the way you linked 5th Head with the Sun books. Even though I've read half-a-dozen similar retrospectives of Wolfe's work, this one seemed quite fresh with many original and interesting points and emphases. I think the only thing lacking might have been a little more about good Wolfe's prose is. I always enjoy reading him even when I haven't figured out what's going on in the plot.

But overall, a great article. Ought to spur at least a few people to give Wolfe a try. Thanks!

-Rostrum

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 10 Apr 2002, 15:53 · follows Michael Straight

I agree with Rostrum, that was a really nicely-done "intro to Wolfe," especially for the (presumed) target audience of folks with no more than a casual knowledge of or interest in SF.

It's worth noting, that I have generally suspected Wolfe (and especially these books) of being particularly opaque to non-SF readers. He uses the rhetorical battery of SF so freely and so extremely that I wonder if someone with no real experience in the reading of SF might find him very hard slogging indeed, might indeed find it nigh impossible to decode.

But anyway ... I want to question the explicit linking of 5HC to the "Sun" books. (BTW, I like the term "Briah Cycle" and even agree that this is the term that should achieve general currency, but will still probably use "Lupiverse," for personal and selfish reasons). They are thematically linked, certainly, and you made that case mighty well; but I question how well it serves as an entry point to the Lupiverse
-- for two reasons:

First, and less important, because I'm pretty sure that it does not take place in the same universe as the "Sun" books. I would be hard put to explain why, but there it is. Certainly it lacks any explicit intertextual links with the universe in which they take place.

Second, and far more important, because in many ways 5HC is the most difficult of Lupine texts. I mean this both in terms of "style" and "matter."

It's an incredible puzzle-box, but one that does not even tell you up front what the puzzles are; you have these three novellas, and they seem to be linked somehow, but when you first go through the texts, it's hard to even see what questions to ask to find the links. And the language of 5HC is the most explicitly and exclusively stfnal of all Wolfe's novels; the reader is forced to do a huge amount of rhetorical unpacking simply to make plot-sense out of the individual texts (and this is particularly so in "A Story," which is precisely the part that looks simplest on its surface). Then, too, 5HC is unremittingly depressing, possibly the hardest book to tolerate, emotionally, that I have ever read. 5HC emphatically should not be given to people who are considering suicide (when the rainbow is not enuf); the only bit of hope I see anywhere in it is actually external to it, the fact that a human can and does ask these questions means that maybe, just maybe, we can find better answers to them...

"And if a bird can speak, that once was a dinosaur,
and a dog can dream, should it be impossible
that a man might supervise the construction of light?"