

(no subject)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Jul 2003

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Andrew Bollen — 14 Jul 2003, 02:51

Crush responds:

As a believer that the discrepancies are intentional, I see their triviality
as exemplary of Wolfe's subtlety in dealing with an unreliable narrator.

If

the discrepancies had been of weight, then they would have looked to be most
likely intentional on Severian's part -- i.e. *lies". Since they are trivial, they can only be errors in memory (assuming they aren't typos).

Fair point. But the Marble/Mint error you mention IMO supports my position. That was the same kind of thing as Roy raised - Drotte-Roche etc - and arguably bigger, since Drotte & Roche were less significant characters than the Mayteras. As you say, the best way to resolve it would be if GW were to comment, but going by history, some people might just assume he's being enigmatic or prevaricating, no matter what he says :).

Also - what would be the narrative point of Sev having a false belief in his own perfect memory? If the intention were to cast ambiguity over everything he says, then it seems too weak to have only examples of fairly trivial recollection errors - does it matter to the story if he actually doesn't have perfect memory for detail; would it really cast doubt on his account of larger things? I'd expect there to be at least one substantial example, even if it were Wolfishly hidden & scattered in 5 holographic parts over 3 volumes.

Maybe there is!