

# dog-headed ape, 1st vs. 3rd vp

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 01 Aug 2003

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maa32 — 01 Aug 2003, 07:26

I don't know if anyone mentioned this, but I thought it was a weird repetitive image. In the Chapter entitled Carnifex after the duel of flowers in Shadow of the torturer, a dog-headed ape shows up and walks up the wall. I never made up my mind about that guy. A masked hierodule/cacogen?

Then, I was reading Long Sun again, because I have neglected it. And lo, in the second chapter of Nightside while Silk looks for sacrifices, we run into ... "This dog-headed ape, trained to light its master's way with cresset or langern, and (according to a badly lettered placard) to defend him from footpads and assassins"

What do you think? The same creature? Any other places where the dog-headed ape shows up? Do these two descriptions reveal anything about the creature?

Is Silk doomed to run into many of the same creatures as Severian? Typhon and the sea monster Scylla ... Is the catachrest like the dead bottle creature?

I'd like to shift over to some small viewpoint considerations.

By the way, thanks to Don and Civet for commenting on Wolfe's comments about my story. I appreciate your input! Part of my problem could be that the complexity of the story in question seemed to demand a third-person viewpoint, one which I have a hard time finding the right voice for.

I find Wolfe's first person work pretty much flawless ... with male narrators. Latro, New Sun, Short Sun, Peace, Fifth Head of Cerberus ... I can't think of finer fiction anywhere. Castlevue, There Are Doors, Free Live Free, Devil in a Forest ... definitely, to me, not quite as fun to re-read over and over.

For me, I think I prefer 1st person from almost every author, but I am interested in hearing whether this is so for others. Anybody else find 1st person fiction more compelling than 3rd in general, or is this limited to Wolfe? I think almost every book that Wolfe has written in the 1st person has worked extraordinarily well ... because he knows how to present a narrator that has all the facts but can't put them together ... whereas it is difficult for me to extrapolate too much from a 3rd person manuscript - shouldn't the omniscient "story teller" already have put together all the cogent facts? There are motives in 1st person, but it is very difficult to find "motives" in a work like "The ziggurat" - why should we think that the whole thing is a hallucination, when the 3rd person voice of history presents it as fact? Where is the motivation for the 3rd person voice to pander to the mental incapacity of the main character? Long Sun is an interesting case, because we have raw history, but we also have clear motivation, so it operates more like a 1st person manuscript. Anybody else have problems with, say, "Ziggurat" or "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories" due to an unwillingness to challenge the voice of the uncharacterized narrator?

Just a few banal thoughts.

Marc Aramini

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Andrew Bollen — 01 Aug 2003, 08:48 · follows maa32

Marc says:

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Maybe they're just baboons? - "papio cynocephalus ursinus". (Cynocephalus = dog-headed, of course.)

On the other hand, I did wonder whether the one in Shadow might have been Father Inire, checking out the new guy. Probably a dumb idea.

But the cynocephalic ape was associated with Hermes/Mercury/Thoth, I believe - some kind of association with hermetic wisdom; some kind of psychopomp figure also. The first could be quite appropriate for Inire; the second sort of appropriate for Sev's first self- resurrection.