

Severian the Alzabo?

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 16 May 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5029>

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dcooperv — 16 May 2008, 05:21

Howdy, I'm a fairly new subscriber, though I've read a bit of the archives. Anyway, I don't have any deep insights to share, but here's an interesting bit I found. In his interview with Larry McCaffery (<http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/interviews/wolfe46interview.htm>), Wolfe says: "The Alzabo is a monster, sure; but it's something many people fear a great deal when they work for a major corporation: we fear we'll be swallowed by Procter and Gamble, become just a cog in its innards or so much a company man that we'll be just a voice coming out of its mouth." This I think sums up the psychological appeal (for lack of a better term) of the Alzabo and similar monsters (body-snatchers, Star Trek's Borg, et cetera). Compare this with the idea in Helioscope (IIRC), that the fear engendered by the figure of the torturer isn't just the fear of being tortured, but also "the fear of being made to be a torturer." Likewise, we have Dorcas's warning in Claw (don't have my copy at hand, but it's while they're camped out at the House Absolute), "People don't want to let other people be people," or words to that effect. This was just a neat little motif I found running through the work. Can any of you add to this? Hopefully I can spark some discussion.

All the best,
Dan Vince

aaron — 16 May 2008, 22:55 · in reply to dcooperv

Very interesting. I had not read that Wolfe quote until now. I learn something new about The Book every day it seems.

On Fri, May 16, 2008 at 1:21 AM, dcooperv <dcooperv at mail.rochester.edu> wrote:

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