

sugar cookie

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 21 Jun 1997

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Joel Priddy — 21 Jun 1997, 17:45

mantis:

Well obviously I'm at a loss if you decline to answer my specific

questions (about men and women) regarding your generalizations (about women). So we'll just drop it.<<

I didn't respond to the specific list of women for two reasons: (1) I wanted to try and make myself clear on the general statement. I think on a case-by-case basis there are going to be lots of cross-overs and exceptions, and I wanted to make the broad strokes before differentiating the little ones; and (2) I'm admittedly shaky on the details. I know that without details I'm making a weak argument, and I further admit to basically just thinking out loud on the two previous points.

My perception in this matter was the one tiny little grain that sometimes colored my otherwise enormous enjoyment of Wolfe, and I wanted to know if it was all in my head or if others had the same impression.

Since some other people do seem to have at least some sympathy with this idea, maybe we should get down to brass tacks, and start discussing individual characters. See if it holds up.

Re: Blackness. I'm not going to say anymore than point out that your assertion "he [Wolfe] never seems to mention ethnicity unless a

character is "Black" conflicts with my tracking of "Celtic" ethnicity within Wolfe's work. Same books, different readers: The End.<<

I readily concede the point.

Peter Cash:

Well, Joel has _me_ convinced of Wolfe's misogyny. <<

I don't really think Wolfe is a misogynist, but, as I said, very masculine in the worldview presented by a lot of his protagonists. See Nutria's statements below...

Nutria:

One of the interesting things about Wolfe's fiction is

that he takes the differences between men and women seriously. His characters are often less than universal (unlike most of literature), but rather are masculine or feminine. I suspect this arises from his religious beliefs. It makes his fiction rather startling in places. Severian becomes a more universal figure only by incorporating a resurrected Thecla into himself.<<

A statement that I wish I'd been articulate enough to say myself.

One of my questions for Wolfe in my interview with him

(and I don't think this went into the final version) was that I could see that women could charge him with being anti-woman. I provided illustrations: There seem to be a lot of bad women in his books. He objected to this, and declared that he did not intend to distribute badness unevenly.

<<

I don't think that Wolfe spreads the badness unevenly,
but he just seems to have a little less variety in the way he spreads it when it comes to women.

Now, to continue my series of controversial pronouncements on Gene Wolfe patterns: Have you noticed the reoccurrence of sugar cookies with "big raisins" in the middle? I can immediately think of

Peace and Free Live Free, and at least one short story (was it "the Man in the Pepper Mill?") where these similarly described cookies appeared. Are the big raisins Really big raisins, or are they dates? Do the big-raisin-sugar-cookies make more appearances than the "big, greasy donuts" that also crop up in Peace after Free Live Free? What could it all mean?

-cephalothorax-