

Clute's review

The Whorl list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 03 Nov 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/707>

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Alice Turner — 03 Nov 1999, 23:59

He does make a number of petty mistakes, but I tend to be tolerant of those (knowing how many of these are routinely caught by fact-checkers and copy-editors in any professional venue, which this is not). What seems worse to me is that the summaries of the other series seem so very, well, summary. And confusing--not to us, but to a neophyte. If I hadn't read the series, I wouldn't see here the slightest reason for doing so. This does not seem to me a useful way of doing a review (and I have done many reviews, over many years). It simply is not serving a reader to toss in a garbled, portentous (and pretentious) sentence like "In the end, though, so overwhelming is Wolfe's capacity to transform the tacky quiddities of genre into meditated vision, it is perfectly clear that Severian is far more than the secret son of a hidden Dad: for he is Apollo, and he is Christ." That may be true, every phrase of it, but for a neophyte the sentence is so awful and the attitude so lofty--he is not *explaining* the series in a kindly way, and a good review is kind, not to the author necessarily but to the reader--that the mind retreats. Wha???

I really like Clute's SF Encyc (haven't read the fantasy one). I think it insightful, impressively inclusive, well thought out, and, yes, kindly overall. I assume his mind-set was different, that he was writing for the masses, that he felt that he needed to approach his material on the most basic level. And I know that he admires Wolfe. But I don't think he has done him a service here.

URL: <http://www.scifi.com/sfw/current/excess.html>

-alga

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

Jim Jordan — 11 Nov 1999, 10:19 · follows Alice Turner

At 11:59 PM 11/3/99 -0500, La Slima wrote:

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Clute does like Wolfe and has done some good work. But he's really hostile to Wolfe's religious beliefs, as you are, O Slima, but unlike you, he seems not to want to deal with them as they are actually found in the books. Thus, his interpretations are often a bit askew. Clute tends to read Wolfe in the way he wishes Wolfe would write, were he Clute!

Drooling Rat

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Kieran Cleary — 11 Nov 1999, 16:25 · follows Jim Jordan

Nutria,

Could you point me to that interview with Wolfe where he talks about his religious beliefs? I seem to remember a gnomonic comment about Greek gods?

Thanks,

Kieran Cleary

North West Labs
Stephen St. Court
Sligo
Republic of Ireland

Tel. +353 71 69441
Fax. +353 71 69451
email: kieranwnn at tinet.ie

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Jim Jordan — 16 Nov 1999, 10:00 · follows Kieran Cleary

t 04:25 PM 11/11/99 -0000, you wrote:
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<http://world.std.com/~pduggan/gwjbj.html>

The Bible teaches that before the coming of the Son of Man, humanity was under-age, and was under the governance of angels -- which would include fallen angels. Rather like being an officer-cadet in boot camp and under sergeants for a few months. Whether Gene has this particular aspect of Biblical teaching in mind or not, he seems to believe something similar, to wit: that in the ancient world there really were "gods" and "spirits" actively engaged with human beings.

Nutricious

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