

Gene Wolfe, Severian, and Latro

The SF-Lovers list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 25 Nov 1988

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/sflovers/74>

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Brian Hilchie — 25 Nov 1988, 01:54

I have just returned to the net after a lengthy absence so I apologize if this has come up recently.

Has there been in the last few months or will there be in the near future anything published by Gene Wolfe, particularly followups to Soldier of the Mist and The Urth of the New Sun?

Also, does anyone share my suspicion that Latro (from SofM) and Severian (The Book of the New Sun and TUofNS) are the same person? I don't have any hard evidence for this, but the ending of TUofNS leaves this possibility open, and I find the similarities and contrasts between the two characters very intriguing. Any comments supporting or refuting this theory are welcome.

Brian Hilchie

Chuq Von Rospach — 28 Nov 1988, 23:39 · follows Brian Hilchie

Has there been in the last few months or will there be in the near future anything published by Gene Wolfe, particularly followups to Soldier of the Mist and The Urth of the New Sun?

No. His latest is "There are Doors" (Tor hardcover), which is unrelated to anything else (except, from what I can tell having just started it, Free Live Free in spirit...). Based on what he told me a while back, his next book will be the follow-up to Soldier of the Mist (title unfortunately forgotten....) probably about mid-year. There are going to be more followups of both series, but I don't know the details.

Also, does anyone share my suspicion that Latro (from SofM) and Severian (The Book of the New Sun and TUofNS) are the same person? I don't have any hard evidence for this, but the ending of TUofNS leaves this possibility open

While we didn't discuss this point directly, from my discussions with Wolfe I don't see this as being true. He views them as separate series, not Asimov-esque independent series wedged together into an artificial similarity.

Chuq Von Rospach

Jim Gardner — 29 Nov 1988, 21:30 · follows Chuq Von Rospach

brian at alzabo.UUCP (Brian Hilchie) writes:

Does anyone share my suspicion that Latro (from SofM) and Severian (The Book of the New Sun and TUofNS) are the same person?

To me, it's pretty clear that Soldier of the Mist is a "book-end" to the Book of the New Sun. In other words, Wolfe got SotM by reversing most of BotNS. For example, Severian remembers

everything while Latro remembers nothing. While everything in New Sun was strange and aged and decadent (to a greater or lesser extent), everything in SotM is very simple and "pure": for example, cities have names like "Truth".

There is a strong parallelism between Severian's companions and Latro's: the young innocent woman; the old sorcerer/sorceress who is not what (s)he seems; the giant; and so on. I'm afraid it's been a long time since I read SotM, and it hasn't stuck in my memory as well as BotNS; but I remember saying "Aha!" over and over again as familiar incidents from BotNS popped up in SotM, rearranged or reversed.

Jim Gardner
University of Waterloo