

Realism, SF and F.

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 30 Apr 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1602>

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David Duffy — 30 Apr 1999, 03:37

All this discussion reminds me of the not-to-be-got-into-here arguments about science fiction v fantasy v magical realism v fabulation v whatever whatever. Wolfe is a science fiction writer, even when he writes about the fantastic or supernatural, in creating the illusion that the events described in the narrative **could** happen. That is, he tries to make us believe the underpinnings of the world of the story are the same as our own (back to suspension of disbelief). I guess a certain type of ghost story might be one model (James, how about Hodgson). Wolfe has written a few of **those**.

Another example might be the *_Soldier_* series. His Classical world feels pretty real to my imagination (not much different to Urth really), and he claims to believe the gods were literally active in it. All his **speculations** are based on particular premises, for which he provides evidence in a playful way eg reality of Amazons.

Part of the rules of the game is that both the allegory and the surface story must be completely self-consistent, especially if one is creating puzzles. Wolfe does bother to make up plausible reasons for what happens. So we are allowed to argue about androids -- I think Jonas is made of highly advanced light materials, but is not hollow. The Ship of UotNS is not the only vehicle that has ever undertaken star travel (we have the Whorl as one counterexample), and Jonas's knowledge seems to date him to a much earlier period (perhaps conventional relativistic processes have brought him so far forward in time). If he is the Tin Man, who's the Cowardly Lion? (And has anyone mentioned *_Of Mice and Men_* re Baldanders and the Dr?)

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William H. Ansley — 02 May 1999, 00:20 · follows David Duffy

On Fri, 30 Apr 1999 David Duffy <davidD at qimr.edu.au> wrote:
Jonas's knowledge seems to date him to a
much earlier period (perhaps conventional relativistic processes have
brought him so far forward in time). If he is the Tin Man, who's the
Cowardly Lion?

Because I have more or less posed as an Oz expert on this list, I'll take a crack at this (especially since it seems likely to have been intended as a rhetorical question--I really like answering those <g>).

If Jonas is the Tin Man, I have no idea who the Cowardly Lion might be. But if Sidero is the Tin Man (and I think he is a much better candidate, being literally hollow and heartless as well lacking the kindly emotions that a loving, sawdust-stuffed* heart in his chest cavity would no doubt supply) then Zak is the Cowardly Lion.

The Cowardly Lion is a seemingly craven creature when we first see him (in the movie and the book) who becomes the King of Beasts (by the end of the book although not the movie).

Zak is a craven (well, at least he is running away) featureless blob when we first see him who becomes the captain of the ship, among other things.

William Ansley

*This is what the Wizard of Oz gives to the Tin Man in the book, rather than a heart-shaped watch.