

Tales

The Urth list — 4 messages, 3 voices, 26 Oct 1999

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Nicholas Gevers — 26 Oct 1999, 03:12

Reading the fascinating discussion of narrative forms and strategies on the list, two points occur to me:

1) Someone (I think alga) states that "The Tale of the Student and His Son" would not work as a short story in a magazine, but is very effective in its NEW SUN context. This may well be true, but the "Tale" did in fact appear as an independent story, in THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, October 1981.

2) I've speculated previously that THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN IS "The Brown Book" (in addition to all the other things that Sev's narrative can be taken to be). In other words, NEW SUN is an anthology of folk tales, myths, and legends, woven into a narrative which for all its modernist first-person presentation is sufficiently episodic that each set-piece adventure of Sev's still functions as a tale in itself, conforming to some recognizable pattern (rituals of initiation, confronting the ogre, overcoming captivity, whatever). It's been frequently remarked that the five Brown Book tales Wolfe has given us in full each tell Sev's story in some compressed, generally allegorical, form; but I think this logic runs deeper: just as Wolfe's essay "Books in THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN" implies that Sev brings Thecla a copy of THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN in SHADOW, so Sev is in a sense carrying a copy of his own narrative with him throughout his wanderings on Urth.

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Ol' Pappy — 28 Oct 1999, 10:21 · follows Nicholas Gevers

Nicholas Gevers sez:

2) I've speculated previously that THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN IS "The Brown Book" (in addition to all the other

No, that can't be right. I like the sentiment, though. A friend of mine who read the BOTNS suggested that the Brown Book and the Book of Gold are the same: besides the obvious conflict of editions, I can't see that either. Symbolically, sure.

My candidate for the most recent Brown Book is Borges and Bioy Casares'

Extraordinary Tales. It's out of print now, having been translated and finished up by Herder and Herder in 1971 and suffering obscurity even among Borges' own works. It fits Severian's exposition and the Brown Book's own subtitle-- my first edition has featureless brown cloth binding.

(My first edition, which is the only book I scrupled to steal from my old college's library upon my departure. An act I made well with myself because it hadn't been checked out since the Carter administration, and which bears a romanticism that didn't register with me until recently, even though I had read the series only two years previous to the theft)

O.P.P.

Jim Jordan — 28 Oct 1999, 10:20 · follows Ol' Pappy

At 10:21 AM 10/28/99 -0400, you wrote:

My candidate for the most recent Brown Book is Borges and Bioy Casares' *Extraordinary Tales*. It's out of print now, having been translated and finished up by Herder and Herder in 1971 and suffering obscurity even among Borges' own works. It fits Severian's exposition and the Brown Book's own subtitle-- my first edition has featureless brown cloth binding.

Could this be *The Book of Fantasy* by B & BC, published by Viking in 1988? It's a collection of stories by other authors first pub'd in 1940 in the Argentine. The first is by Akutagawa, but this edition is arranged alphabetically (aleph-abetically?) by authors. There's a Bradbury, a couple of Chestertons, etc.

Let us know if it's the same book.

Nutricious

Ol' Pappy — 28 Oct 1999, 15:41 · follows Jim Jordan

Nutricious sez:

Could this be *The Book of Fantasy* by B & BC, published by Viking in 1988? It's a collection of stories by other authors first pub'd in 1940 in the Argentine. The first is by Akutagawa, but this edition is arranged alphabetically (aleph-abetically?) by authors. There's a Bradbury, a couple of Chestertons, etc. Let us know if it's the same book.

No. They are similar but not the same. The longest story in *Extraordinary Tales* is four 5x7 pages. Both books have the same mission statement, and are peppered with the same Borges sine qua nons: "On Cartography" and "The Magician," I think, are two.

Extraordinary Tales is better, for reasons previously stated.

O.P.P.