

ST review

The Urth list — 5 messages, 5 voices, 15 Jan 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2071>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Alice Turner — 15 Jan 2000, 10:51

From the NY Times, 1/16/00, Gerald Jonas column:

Gene Wolfe's reputation as one of modern science fictions most important writers rests largely on his series of novels about redemption, known by their collective title, "The Book of the New Sun." While rich in characters and incident, they are best remembered for their almost palpable atmosphere of inertia: in a far-future civilization exhausted by the weight of its past, only the slow decay of tradition can lay the groundwork for a new beginning.

The short stories collected in STRANGE TRAVELERS--all written and first published in the 1990s--share a fascination with inertia. The book opens and closes with complimentary views of a society coming into existence around a massive traffic jam. Unable or unwilling to abandon their immobile vehicles, drivers and passengers create new roles for themselves, their agony redeemed by fitful acts of kindness and creativity.

It is never easy to tell in Wolfe's short fictions where reality ends and dream begins. People who may be dead dream of dying, and even their waking may signal a kind of death. Wolfe can write about ghosts and demons in a style entirely free of whimsy or conventional horror, and he can make straightforward science fiction sound like folk legends and wisdom tales. If there is a single point to stories so varied and skilful, it is that what happens is always less important than the people it happens to.

Damien Broderick — 16 Jan 2000, 04:14 · follows Alice Turner

At 10:51 AM 15/01/00 -0500, alga wrote:

From the NY Times, 1/16/00, Gerald Jonas column:

Gene Wolfe's reputation as one of modern science fictions most important writers rests largely on his series of novels about redemption, known by their collective title, "The Book of the New Sun."

No, that's his collection of ghost stories,

Damien

Jack Lyons — 16 Jan 2000, 10:27 · follows Damien Broderick

On Sun, 16 Jan 2000, Damien Broderick wrote:

:At 10:51 AM 15/01/00 -0500, alga wrote:

:>>From the NY Times, 1/16/00, Gerald Jonas column:

:>

:> Gene Wolfe's reputation as one of modern science fictions most important :>writers rests largely on his series of novels about redemption, known by :>their collective title, "The Book of the New Sun." : :No, that's his collection of ghost stories, : :Damien

You beat me to it.

Damn you,

RJ

Alex David Groce — 16 Jan 2000, 10:48 · follows Jack Lyons

Damien wrote:

At 10:51 AM 15/01/00 -0500, alga wrote:

From the NY Times, 1/16/00, Gerald Jonas column:

Gene Wolfe's reputation as one of modern science fictions most important writers rests largely on his series of novels about redemption, known by their collective title, "The Book of the New Sun."

No, that's his collection of ghost stories,

And only with Wolfe would there be considerable argument about WHICH of his stories are, in fact, ghost stories, and who's haunting who.

Question re: "The Ziggurat"

When Emery is telling "Tamar" about the death of her crewmates, she (I'm paraphrasing, the book is at home) "makes a quick gesture, then folds her hands and shuts her eyes." Does anyone else think she's crossing herself before praying?

On a side note, "The Ziggurat" is the third Wolfe story I can think of that concerns a civilization that has gotten rid of men: "Many Mansions" and "In Looking Glass Castle" are the other two. There's an interesting thematic similarity to Walker Percy's "The Last Gentleman" and "The Second Coming" here, in the idea that a suicidal man can "snap out of it" most easily if confronted with chaos, disaster and death (and "a good woman," perhaps, even if she is insane or alien or tries to kill him?).

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

Alex David Groce (agroce+ at cs.cmu.edu)

Ph.D. Student, Carnegie Mellon University - Computer Science Department

8112 Wean Hall (412)-268-3066

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~agroce>

Jim Henley — 16 Jan 2000, 12:36 · follows Alex David Groce

-----Original Message-----

From: urth-errors at lists.best.com [mailto:urth-errors at lists.best.com] On
Behalf Of Alex David Groce

Damien wrote:

At 10:51 AM 15/01/00 -0500, alga wrote:

From the NY Times, 1/16/00, Gerald Jonas column:

Gene Wolfe's reputation as one of modern science fictions most important writers rests largely on his series of novels about redemption, known by their collective title, "The Book of the New Sun."

No, that's his collection of ghost stories,

And only with Wolfe would there be considerable argument about WHICH of his stories are, in fact, ghost stories, and who's haunting who.

Also, only Wolfe might actually go out and _write_ "The Boo of the New Sun" if he got wind of this typo.

Best,

Jim

"All God's children got a little bit of soul
but not that much . . . "

-- Graham Parker, "Obsessed with Aretha"