

Sussex Carnifex

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Jun 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2279>

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Nigel Price — 06 Jun 2000, 19:18

On holiday in West Sussex last week, I was surprised, driving around the Chichester ringroad, to come across a large road sign apparently directing me to "Terminus Est".

A further circuit of the roundabout I was attempting to negotiate revealed that the sign actually read "Terminus Ind Est", which still sounded vaguely threatening if marginally less lupine. Chichester, was, of course, an ancient Roman city, but the meaning of this particular Latin phrase eluded me until I got back to our holiday bungalow by the coast and was able to consult a map, whereupon I discovered that the sign was in fact directing drivers to the Terminus Road Industrial Estate...

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My thanks to Mantis for the extremely wonderful and ever-so-useful Lexicon Urthus. I read it from cover to cover when I first got it a few years ago for the sheer pleasure of having so much explained so well. Rereading the Book of the New Sun in preparation for this August's Wolfe symposium in Birmingham, I am now, finally, using it in the conventional manner as a handy reference work and dictionary of Urthisms. Still great fun, and absolutely invaluable.

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And while I'm in an enthusiastic and generally laudatory mood, I ought to express my thanks to Jonathan Laidlow for getting issue 1 of Ultan's Library organised and published. I somehow got credited with being a co-editor for this splendid journal, though apart from some hasty proof reading during my lunch hour (and I never did get round to checking Potto's articles) and cobbling together a hasty review of On Blue's Waters (the finishing touches to which were literally added while my children sat in the car impatiently waiting for me to drive them off on the aforementioned holiday - shows, huh?), my main contribution was standing on the sidelines and cheering Jonathan on while he did all the hard work. (Should I now sign contributions to the Urth list "Cyby"? And incidentally, why can't I find Cyby in the Lexicon Urthus or any of the three volumes of additions and errata?)

Greatly enjoyed reading all the articles and reviews, including those by Urth-list regulars Nick Gevers (Potto), Michael Andre-Driussi (Mantis) and Robert Borski (canis terribilis cum quinque capitibus). Very excited, too, at the news that Peter Wright is publishing a book of his studies on Wolfe next year, to be called "Attending Daedalus: Gene Wolfe, Artifice and the Reader". I admire the clear-sightedness of Peter's analysis of the Urth cycle no end, and enjoyed his review of The Book of the New Sun in Ultan's Library much as I enjoyed his previously published articles, but I'm still not sure that I agree with all the conclusions he draws from his analysis. To me, his reading of the Urth cycle seems overly deterministic, but I need to do an awful lot more work before I can - maybe - come up with a convincing counter-argument. (I'm working on it!) I would love to hear what others think of Peter's interpretation of Severian's narrative.

Nigel Price (aka Cyby)