

Possible Delany comparisons

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 28 Jul 2001

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PMorris33 — 28 Jul 2001, 04:00

In terms of "worked prose" and a highly nonchalant attitude to the future, perhaps Delany's "Stars In My Pockets like Grains Of Sand" can compare to the Wolfean Long Sun and Short Sun series. Does anyone know if Delany ever published his sequel to "Stars In My Pockets"?

Pippen

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 30 Jul 2001, 08:18 · follows PMorris33

Pippen wrote:

In terms of "worked prose" and a highly nonchalant attitude to the future, perhaps Delany's "Stars In My Pockets like Grains Of Sand" can compare to the Wolfean Long Sun and Short Sun series. Does anyone know if Delany ever published his sequel to "Stars In My Pockets"?

No, he has not. He has made several different comments about this, which add up to a kind of ambiguity. The two major points have been that (1) he did indeed intend to finish it and worked on it from time to time but that (2) since the advent of AIDS, and the devastation it wreaked among his friends and acquaintances, he has found it difficult to get back into the kind of mental space in which he wrote the first volume.

I agree that it is comparable to Wolfe in the ways you suggest; and quite different from Wolfe in almost every other way. Among the ways in which it is similar is what you might call a time-bomb effect -- the way in which, after you've been reading along for some time, you suddenly realize that a common English word means something quite different in the mouth of the narrator from what it means in modern (or post-modern) English, and this forces a revision of everything you have read so far. (I remember the first time I read it, back in '84, how difficult it was for me to adjust to the way Marq Dyeth uses the commonest of pronouns!)

The one thing in your post I would question is the term "highly nonchalant attitude to the future." To my mind, this is an intensely thought-out future, one which considers, questions, and often rejects many (most?) of the most commonly-made assumptions about "the future" we find in science fiction: not least of which is the tendency for SF writers to conceive of planets as ecologically and culturally monolithic. "The desert planet," "the

jungle planet," "the planet of sharp-trading gypsies," "the planet of pastoral Quakers," and so on, simply are not likely to exist because (as Marq repeatedly observes) worlds are big places.

--Dan'l

matthew.malthouse — 31 Jul 2001, 11:37 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 28/07/2001 05:00:25 urth wrote:

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perhaps

Delany's "Stars In My Pockets like Grains Of Sand" can compare to the Wolfean Long Sun and Short Sun series. Does anyone know if Delany ever published his sequel to "Stars In My Pockets"?

Alas no.

Between the time when Delany planned the diptych and wrote Stars... and it was published then getting on with the second the AIDS issue hit and Delany said that his world was so changed by it that he could no longer write the second - poor memory might not serve but I think it was to be entitled "The Splendour of Cities and their Dying" or something very similar.

Since there has been rumour that he started working on it again, but only rumour: I've heard nothing that could be taken as reputable news.

It's a great shame as Stars is one of my favorite novels and every time I read it I regret the lack of a completion.

Matthew