

The Play

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 31 Jan 1998

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Alice Turner — 31 Jan 1998, 13:05

I think Nutria's analysis of the Play (which I'm not quoting, because it's fairly long) is excellent, but suffers from too strict adherence to the Bible. Using the Zoroastrian/Persian model has some advantages. First, at least in the Zurvanite version, the great creator is Time itself, which has no limit, no beginning nor end (this seems very New Sun to me). Second, as in much heroic fantasy, which Wolfe is certainly taking off from (though he goes a long distance), there are both Good (Ohrmazd, Ahura Mazda) and Evil (Ahriman, Angra Mainyu) who do battle through creation. Third, Nod (Gayomart, in the Persian, but just as Nutria says, Wolfe wants the Hebrew link too) is an interesting figure who really does mirror Baldanders, the primal giant from whose body and bones much was created. Fourth, the myth includes not only Meschia and Meschiane (and there is no rib or apple or serpent or sin or exile nonsense in this version), the parents of humankind, but also Jahi, the outsider, who may fairly be said to stand for the undines and all the creatures that are neither animal nor human but, as Borges put it, "imaginary beings." And they are important to Urth.

-alga-

Jim Jordan — 31 Jan 1998, 22:10 · follows Alice Turner

At 01:05 PM 1/31/98 -0500, you wrote:

[Posted from URTH, a mailing list about Gene Wolfe's New Sun and other works]

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Readily granted. Good stuff, Alga.,

Nutria