

Lanark and the Sand Garden

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Apr 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3940>

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.

ArchD'Ikon Zibethicus — 16 Apr 2003, 11:14

Malco/Nastler:

He does say that, but he also admits that although Thaw/Lanark is based on himself they have been altered in various ways in order that the reader will become more attached to them. In any case, I trust Nastler as far as I can comfortably spit out a rat.

Which is as little as Lanark ended up trusting him...understandably...

(sigh)...where's one of my copies?

""Bloody rotten," said Lanark. "I haven't read as much as you have, I never had the time, but when I visited public libraries in my twenties _half_ the science fiction stories had scenes like that in them, usually at the end. These banal world destructions prove nothing but the impoverished minds of those who can think of nothing better."

The conjuror's mouth and eyes opened wide and his face grew red. He began speaking in a shrill whisper which swelled to a bellow: "_I am not writing_ science fiction! Science-fiction stories have no real people in them, and all my characters are real, real, real people! I may astound my public by a dazzling deployment of dramatic metaphors designed to compress and accelerate the action, but that is not science, it is magic! Magic! As for my ending's being banal, wait till you're inside it..."

(p. 498, Canongate 1981 hbk.)

Needless to say, as a member of this list, _I_ don't wholly agree with Nastler, either...

Personally I dislike the idea of the books being bound separately, it might give someone the nasty idea of reading them in the "right" order. Which would be the wrong thing to do.

Well, yes...but if somebody's gonna be minded to do that, they'll do it regardless of the binding, I suspect. I myself have never done it, despite having lost count of my readings. Nastler wants the books "thought of" in the 'right' order; not necessarily _read_ in that order.

The thing which would suck me in if I had the money is that with four volumes, you get four times the cover illustrations...as well as a new essay by Mr. Gray on the writing of the book...

I'll also say that Lanark deals with the judgement of a society following an assessment of the main character by a council of representatives.

Nastler says: "The Thaw narrative shows a man dying because he is bad at loving. It is enclosed by [Lanark's] narrative which shows civilization collapsing for the same reason." (p.484.)

Dunno if this necessarily equates with a _judgement_ per se...and Lanark's abject failure at the 'general assembly of council states' in Provan was _planned_ and _intended_ by Sludden, who sent him there knowing he was going to get rolled...

The council is disgusted by his abjectness and jeers at him after his arrest and release from the drunk-tank, yes, but the destruction of Unthank is not caused by this event...

And I was particularly taken by the passage where Thaw accuses God of using "a torturers trick" (!!!) to gain his worship. Thaw prays for mercy during an awful asthma attack.

Well, you've given me something to contemplate...the relations between Mr. Gray and Mr. Wolfe as authors...I suppose there must be some, beyond the fact that they are two of my most favoured...but I don't know precisely what they are...

And please also consider "Unlikely stories, mostly"
EVERYONE should own a copy of "The book of prefaces"

Let's face it...just go get the lot...

...but how could you omit 'Janine'? Canongate is reprinting it this year...at last...

*

Moving over to the Sand Garden (and back on-list-topic)...Blattid thus:

So I'm thinking that they don't come from the "real" South Africa at all, but from the South Africa of jungle movies.

That was what I always suspected, myself...or what if they don't come from _our_ Urth, or not exactly ours? The one next door, perchance...

...who knows what those doors in the Garden open on to...

->Zx<-

Oh, BTW - am I the only 'Lanark' reader who is irresistibly reminded of Sludden every time I hear/see Tony Blair?

When God failed to respond reliably to on-line access, Mankind had to turn elsewhere to unload the burden of its own responsibility. It invented the computer - which is far more accessible than God and just as satisfying - providing you never give yourself time to think about it.

- Colin Kapp
