

name of a name

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 01 Apr 1998

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Damien Broderick — 01 Apr 1998, 11:51

manthis sez:

< Broderick should write more!

Hey, I'm dancing as fast as I can! (Four books out last year; one of them, THE WHITE ABACUS, just won the Aurealis Award for best sf novel of the year.)

What I'd *lerv* to see - but surely never will - is some cross-referencing discussion of my 1986 novel THE BLACK GRAIL (Locus: `the first serious work of science fiction I've encountered which clearly shows the influence of Gene Wolfe's spectacular tetralogy... he isn't trying to re-write or imitate Gene Wolfe, he's just drawing on Wolfe's work as part of his literary heritage.' Debbie Notkin, July 1986)

< (I forget--was "The Changeling" covered in the essay? If not there is room for more expansion.)

No. Haven't read it.

tony.ellis at futurenet.co.uk (Tony Ellis) sez:

< Damien, in your fascinating Peace essay a few posts back you say that

The name of the narrator of Wolfe's *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, never given in that text, can be determined to be Gene Wolfe.

I'm not quite sure how you arrive at this. Could you elaborate, please? >

On p. 6 of my pb edition, he finds in the library books that are plainly by Kate Wilhelm, Virginia Woolf, Bernard Wolfe and Vernor Vinge (by mistake as VVinge). `I never found any books of my father's'. U.s.w..

Damien

Tony Ellis — 01 Apr 1998, 13:13 · follows Damien Broderick

01/04/98

13:00

RE>name of a name

Damien wrote:

Hey, I'm dancing as fast as I can! (Four books out last year; one of them, THE WHITE ABACUS, just won the Aurealis Award for best sf novel of the year.)

The heartiest of hearty congratulations, Damien! I'll start looking out for your name in this hemisphere.

Gene Wolfe" as the narrator of Cerberus:

On p. 6 of my pb edition, he finds in the library books that are plainly by Kate Wilhelm, Virginia Woolf, Bernard Wolfe and Vernor Vinge (by mistake as VVinge). `I never found any books of my father's'. U.s.w..

Very astute of you to have spotted this. (Either that, or very stupid of me to have missed it.) I suppose if Wolfe is a typical American-Irish name then it's reinforced slightly by the photograph of his mother Number Five sees, where he declares her to be of Celtic origin.

All the same, I think I would say "can be theorised to be" rather than "can be determined to be"... We can't be sure his name isn't Witherspoon. :-) And where are you getting Gene from? The Gene-geneticist pun is the sort of thing Wolfe loves, of course...

While I'm writing... what are we supposed to make of the strange building Number Five (or Gene) sees in the photograph? "...a very long wooden house only a story in height, with a porch or veranda that changed its architectural style every twenty or thirty feet so as to give almost the impression of a number of exceedingly narrow houses constructed with their side walls in contact."

I did think of a motel, but the fact that this is a sepia photo suggests something a little older. Is wooden, one-storey terraced housing characteristic of a particular time or place?