

Other SF writers? (Was: How list works and questions to mailers)

The Urth list — 45 messages, 20 voices, 12 May 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5020>

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Matthew Keeley — 12 May 2008, 19:35

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 8:09 PM, Andy Robertson <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk> wrote:

Tim Walters writes:

I also recommend Paul Park, Kelly Link, and Robert Aickman, who share many of Wolfe's best qualities, and John Crowley, who isn't much like Wolfe but is equally good.

And the sainted R A Lafferty
hartshorn

All the Lafferty discussion on this list has put the man on my reading list. Where should I start?

Re: Link - Saw her at a really small bookstore signing once. I would have bought one of her books, but the only one they had on sale was Magic for Beginners, which I already owned. I didn't quite work up the courage to talk to her, but she seemed really cool and approachable. After the signing, authors and attendees were all invited to the bar next door for a free drink, but I opted out, not being 21. Curse those US drinking laws. And that's my mostly irrelevant anecdote. In any case, I think Link's quite good, though I don't see her becoming one of my absolute favorite writers.

She's actually released her entire first collection for free online. Probably a good introduction to her work? <http://www.lcrw.net/kellylink/sth/>

Perhaps we Wolfe fans should put together a list of other worthwhile science fiction / fantasy writers? I know a few of the people on the thread have a list already.

-Matt

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 12 May 2008, 20:11 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 12:35 PM, Matthew Keeley <matthew.keeley.1 at gmail.com> wrote:

Perhaps we Wolfe fans should put together a list of other worthwhile science fiction / fantasy writers? I know a few of the people on the thread have a list already.

Equally good, but about as far from Wolfe as you can get artistically or philosophically, is Samuel R. Delany. Some of his work, incidentally, is *not* for

the easily

offended! Good starting places include *_Babel 17_*, *_Empire Star_*, and his short story collection *_Aye and Gomorrah_*

Anyone who likes Wolfe should give Tim Powers a try: his work is nowhere near as *dense* as Wolfe's, and certainly less mysterious, but has a certain similarity in what he uses SF/F to do. A good stand-alone starting point is the pirate novel (h'mmm...) *_On Stranger Tides_*; his finest work to date is in the trilogy consisting of *_Last Call_*, *_Expiration Date_* and *_Earthquake Weather_*.

Any list like this must include Ursula K. Le Guin, who is another far-from-Wolfe but awfully good. Start anywhere but her first three books.

I would recommend, with slight hesitation, James Blish, and especially his four-volume trilogy (and that's not a paradox) "After Such Knowledge." The first book (*_Doctor Mirabilis_*) is a historical novel retelling the life of friar Roger Bacon; the second, in two volumes (*_Black Easter_* and *_The Day After Judgment_*) a contemporary fantasy/horror novel, and the third (*_A Case of Conscience_*) a SF novel. Together they are an inquiry into the question whether the quest for secular knowledge for its own sake is a valid goal, or indeed permissible at all, from a Christian (sc. Catholic) point of view.

As an alternate take on some of the themes in *_Case of Conscience_*, one should also read *_The Sparrow_* by Mary Doria Russell, an astonishing book in its own right and one that may appeal to Wolfe fans specifically for a number of reasons.

Okay, I'll shut up now and let someone else go.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett

Gwern Branwen — 12 May 2008, 20:19 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

On 2008.05.12 20:35:18 +0100, Matthew Keeley <matthew.keeley.1 at gmail.com> scribbled 3.8K characters:

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 8:09 PM, Andy Robertson <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk> wrote:

Tim Walters writes:

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And the sainted R A Lafferty
hartshorn

All the Lafferty discussion on this list has put the man on my reading list. Where should I start?

Start with *_Fourth Mansions_*, if you don't want to pick up one of the short story collections. It's probably one of the 'purest' and best novel distillations of Lafferty. After reading it, you'll know

whether you like him or not.

If you do, you could move on to The Devil is Dead and the others.

gwern

ASPIC SHAPE Video E-Bomb SALDV TOS Sponge argus FLiR IWO

Pedro Pereira — 12 May 2008, 20:27 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

I didn't like James Blish's *A Case of Conscience*. I felt the novel was lacking in all fronts and very overrated. Still, its a matter of personal taste.

Tim Powers I would recomend *The Anubis Gates* over *On Stranger Tides*. I felt the later wasn't especially good, just an average jolly ride.

As for *The Sparrow*, I haven't read that one but I read a lot of reviews and my interest is mixed. For example, it seems that the author got the space-travel relativistic time all wrong. Also, the aliens are at a technological level similar to, say, the stone age or such. The author never explained how that alien race sent a radio message with recorded singing into space... The idea I have is that the author tried to chew more than she could and although the premise of the novel seems very interesting the end result is far from living up to the level of hype it gathered. But my impression is based on reviews, so take this with a grain of salt.

My personal recomendations would go to:

- Solaris*, Stanislaw Lem
- His Master's Voice*, Stanislaw Lem
- Roadside Picnic*, Strugatsky Brothers
- In October will be too Late*, Fred Hoyle
- The Black Cloud*, Fred Hoyle
- Star Maker*, Olaf Stapledon
- Hyperion & Fall of Hyperion*, Dan Symmons (IGNORE THE ENDYMION BOOKS!!!)
- Rendezvous with Rama*, Arthur C. Clarck

And others I don't remember right now.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 12 May 2008, 20:34 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Pedro,

You clearly have more of a "hard science" orientation than I do in SF. Given that, have you tried *Stephen Baxter*?

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 1:27 PM, Pedro Pereira

<domus_artemis at hotmail.com> wrote:

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- Rendezvous with Rama, Arthur C. Clarke

And others I don't remember right now.

Date: Mon, 12 May 2008 13:11:17 -0700
From: danldo at gmail.com
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers? (Was: How list works and questions to mailers)

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

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I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett

Allan Anderson — 12 May 2008, 20:37 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Perhaps he's trendy, but I quite enjoyed the complexity and sense of fun in Neal Stephenson's _The Diamond Age_ and _Snowcrash_.

I'd also love to get into some book-puzzle talk with some fans of both Wolfe and Pynchon.

Pedro Pereira — 12 May 2008, 20:46 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Nope. Yes, I have more of an hard sci-fi bent, but I like every kind of literature, including fantasy. Notice that some of the books I recomend are not even really sci-fi, or hard-sci-fi.

I'm really picky about what I read, and Baxter for some reason doesn't really grab my interest. Most sci-fi and fantasy doesn't grab my interest, to be honest. But when its good, its IS really good.

Date: Mon, 12 May 2008 13:34:02 -0700> From: danl do at gmail.com> To: urth at lists.urth.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers? (Was: How list works and questions to mailers)> > Pedro,> >
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Matthew Keeley — 12 May 2008, 21:13 · in reply to Allan Anderson

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 9:37 PM, Allan Anderson <rubel at goosemoon.org> wrote:
I'd also love to get into some book-puzzle talk with some fans of both Wolfe and Pynchon.

I would certainly be up for some Pynchon discussion at a future date, but so far I've "only" read *Against the Day*, and I gather a proper Pynchon discussion needs to discuss *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*.

I did very much like *Against the Day* (One kind of has to, to read a book that runs almost 1100 pages in hardback), but there was so much going on in there that was over my head. Of course, some of that is just Pynchon's perversity - he's not the sort of writer where every word counts for something, and sometimes he just wants to make obscure or dirty jokes. Still, I found parts of the book extremely moving, and I don't think I've read anything funnier than this one scene involving a dog... I literally laughed for five minutes straight.

It would be interesting to see what kind of overlap there is between Wolfe fans and Pynchon fans. Both can be difficult, but I think Wolfe is more consistently entertaining, though that's hardly the only way to judge literature. Still, *Against the Day* "drags" much more than *The Book of the New Sun*, which is of similar length. And of course the politics of Wolfe and Pynchon would be more or less diametrically opposed...

-Matt

Adam Thornton — 12 May 2008, 21:38 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On May 12, 2008, at 3:11 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:
As an alternate take on some of the themes in *_Case of Conscience_*,
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should also read *_The Sparrow_* by Mary Doria Russell, an astonishing
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for a number of reasons.

Russ Allbery's devastating review of *_CoC_* (*A Case of Conscience*) is right on the mark. The first fifty pages, I think, are actually pretty good, and then Blish takes the novel in exactly the least interesting direction possible.

Adam

Adam Thornton — 12 May 2008, 21:41 · in reply to Allan Anderson

On May 12, 2008, at 3:37 PM, Allan Anderson wrote:
I'd also love to get into some book-puzzle talk with some fans of
both Wolfe and
Pynchon.

Hi there.

Can we add John Crowley too?

Also, re: Mi?ville: I felt that *_Waiting For Jake_* was way too much "Look at me! I've read Borges! Aren't I clever?"

I must admit to a snarky chuckle when I found that *_The Wasp In A Wig_* is one of the best-beloved children's books in Bas-Lag, though.

Adam

Lane Haygood — 12 May 2008, 21:49 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Anyone who likes Wolfe should, if they can, get ahold of Sean Williams' "Books of the Change" and "Books of the Cataclysm." I know the latter are published by Pyr in the States, but I've had to order most of my copies from Australian sellers, although the hunt was well worth it. "The Books of the Cataclysm" are among the finest SF I have ever read.

Tad Williams (I've a thing for the name, it seems) also springs to mind as another top-flight SF novelist, as do the "old faithfuls" of LeGuin, Leiber, Moorcock, Zelazny, Moore, Howard and Vance. If you like more gritty, militaristic fantasy, Glen Cook has recently released some of his "Black Company" novels in anthologies, which are well worth it if you dig the style (think Able with slightly more self-awareness and humor).

The other books I have been reading lately (apart from law books) are Naomi Novik's "Temeraire" novels. They've been compared to what would happen if you replaced Patrick O'Brian's ships with dragons. And they're excellent. It's rare for something involving dragons to hold my interest at all, but Novik really has a gift and has created clever, endearing, and intelligent novels with some real depth to them.

And in the more epic fantasy vein, I've enjoyed George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" novels since I first read them in the late 90s.

Best,
Lane

On May 12, 2008, at 4:41 PM, Adam Thornton wrote:

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Andy Robertson — 12 May 2008, 22:47 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes writes:

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In earlier days here I mooted the concept of "Catholic fantabulation" - a type of fantastic fiction that descended from the Christianised paganism of the Catholic church's worldview, rather than via Wells from the secular protestantism-dying-into-atheism of mainstream Western society.

Other members of this group of writers (apart from Wolfe) would include the Inklings (Lewis, Tolkien, etc), Chesterton, Lafferty, and also their ideological opponents like Pullman and Blish (because opposition is a tribute: it's parodic deconstruction that kills, something that those who puffed THE GOLDEN COMPASS as a counterweight to the Narnia films signally failed to understand).

Crowley would make the cut since his best work is based on modernized takes of the medaeval/Catholic cosmology.

One other possibility is John C Wright, who has just noisily become a Catholic after ages dithering around. His novels like THE GOLDEN AGE are based on classical paganism and therefore fit in the stream of CF.

((His upcoming NULL-A CONTINUUM is not Catholic fantabulation but it is the one thing that is set to break up my current tack of sciffy reading (all Warhammer 40K gaming fiction while I wait for the next Wolfe, he said shamelessly)).

- hartshorn

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

01273-488272 / 0777-214-9545

Matthew Keeley — 12 May 2008, 23:16 · in reply to Andy Robertson

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 11:47 PM, Andy Robertson <andywrobertson@clara.co.uk> wrote:

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"Catholic fantabulation," huh? I was actual thinking of doing something similar (which I'd planned to call the "Catholic fantastic") for a senior thesis. I don't think that's going to be my topic, but it's still something I'm interested in, and I didn't know about Wright before, so I'll have to look him up.

-Matt

brunians at brunians.org — 12 May 2008, 23:28 · in reply to Andy Robertson

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes writes:

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In earlier days here I mooted the concept of "Catholic fantabulation" - a type of fantastic fiction that descended from the Christianised paganism of the Catholic church's worldview, rather than via Wells from the secular protestantism-dying-into-atheism of mainstream Western society.

Splain to me how Catholicism isn't Western, or isn't mainstream Kemo Sabe. Last I checked there were more Catholics than Protestants, in the West as well as in the United States of America. It's this late 20th century quasi-Calvinist, quasi-Marxist atheistic protestantism that is the aberration.

Here's a joke:

Q: How are the Dominicans and the Jesuits the same?

A: They were both founded by Spaniards who were both soldiers before they got religion, they are both organized along military lines, and they were both formed to combat heresy: the Dominicans to fight the Albigensians and the Jesuits to fight the Protestants.

Q: How are they different?

A: When is the last time you met an Albigensian?

.

Oliver Wakefield — 13 May 2008, 00:15 · follows brunians at brunians.org

I did not like Iron Council and it has left me with a prejudice against>Mieville.

What is it you didn't like about Iron Council? Personally I thought it was the weaker of the works and I felt that Mieville's socialist message a bit labourious. I think Mieville has talent but he needs to refine his work. Too much jibber jabber really.

Wow, alot of authors ive never heard of here. Need to get cracking. On the steampunk note I was quite excited to read "the difference engine" but found it flagged seriously at the conclusion. Anyone know of any decent steampunk books.

My top picks of recent novels would be

I am Legend - Matheson

Forever War - Haldeman

Starship Troopers - Heinlein

The Wastelands - got a short story by Wolfe in there

Win Indiana Jones prizes with
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James Crossley — 13 May 2008, 00:33 · in reply to Oliver Wakefield

On 5/12/08 5:15 PM, "Oliver Wakefield" <radontrooper at hotmail.com> wrote:
Anyone know of any decent steampunk books?

There's a new anthology called Steampunk that just came out from Tachyon, featuring stories by Michael Chabon / Neal Stephenson / James P. Blaylock / Joe R. Lansdale / Mary Gentle / Ted Chiang / Michael Moorcock / Jay Lake / Molly Brown / Stepan Chapman / Ian R. MacLeod / Rachel Pollack / Paul Di Filippo / Rick Klaw / Jess Nevins / Bill Baker. Might be a good place to start.

Tim Walters — 13 May 2008, 00:36 · in reply to Oliver Wakefield

Anyone know of any decent
steampunk books.

James Blaylock's THE DIGGING LEVIATHAN is outstanding, but it's steampunk in a very different way from most such.

His more straightforwardly steampunk LORD KELVIN'S MACHINE is pretty weak, I think.

Tim Walters | <http://doubtfulpalace.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 13 May 2008, 00:39 · in reply to Oliver Wakefield

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I think that communism has made his brain rot.

Now, Moorcock and Delany are also socialists. But I think that they are both excellent writers.

.

Lane Haygood — 13 May 2008, 01:13 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I didn't think Moorcock was a socialist/communist. In fact, I've always read his stuff as being much more anarchistic (although it does have a decidedly leftist bent) than socialistic. His heroes (with the notable exception of Hawkmoon) are usually the "just leave me alone I am so tired of everyone expecting me to save the Multiverse just because I'm the Champion" type. Some of them (Erekose) even try to run away from their duty.

If Moorcock were a socialist, Elric would have gone to Elwher, lead the people in a proletarian revolution, and then entered an arms race with Melnibone. "We've got to make more soul-sucking swords before they do. Mutually assured soul-sucking!"

There's a "Dr. Strangelove" joke buried in here somewhere but I can't get to it.

Best,
Lane

On May 12, 2008, at 7:39 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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against>Mieville.

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David Duffy — 13 May 2008, 01:37 · in reply to Oliver Wakefield

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the steampunk note I was quite excited to read "the difference engine"
but found it flagged seriously at the conclusion.

I know why you are saying that, in that it seems sketchy after the density of the earlier
episodes, but on rereading it I found it beautifully understated.

Anyone know of any decent steampunk books.

Not really decent but ambitious and OK Paul De Filippo _Steampunk Trilogy_

Kind of tangentially steampunk with strong writing -- Ian McLeod _The Light Ages_, Keith
Roberts _Pavane_, John Crowley _Great Work of Time_, Michael Moorcock's Oswald Bastable
series.

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen

David Duffy.

Russ Allbery — 13 May 2008, 05:08 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

"Dan'l Danehy-Oakes" <danllo at gmail.com> writes:

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Another interesting direction to approach Delany is from the non-fiction side. His *About Writing* was excellent.

I would recommend, with slight hesitation, James Blish, and especially his four-volume trilogy (and that's not a paradox) "After Such Knowledge." The first book (*Doctor Mirabilis*) is a historical novel retelling the life of friar Roger Bacon; the second, in two volumes (*Black Easter* and *The Day After Judgment*) a contemporary fantasy/horror novel, and the third (*A Case of Conscience*) a SF novel. Together they are an inquiry into the question whether the quest for secular knowledge for its own sake is a valid goal, or indeed permissible at all, from a Christian (sc. Catholic) point of view.

I consider *A Case of Conscience* to be one of the worst, perhaps the worst, SF novel I have ever read both in terms of quality of writing and quality of plot, so opinions definitely differ on the score -- to be fair, I've not read any of the rest of Blish, nor read Blish in the time and place when he was originally writing.

As an alternate take on some of the themes in *Case of Conscience*, one should also read *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell, an astonishing book in its own right and one that may appeal to Wolfe fans specifically for a number of reasons.

This recommendation, on the other hand, I will definitely second.

To offer a recommendation of my own, Geoff Ryman has written some truly spectacular novels, particularly *Air* and his non-SF historical novel *The King's Last Song*.

Russ Allbery (rra at stanford.edu) <<http://www.eyrie.org/~eagle/>>

Russ Allbery — 13 May 2008, 05:11 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> writes:

Nope. Yes, I have more of an hard sci-fi bent, but I like every kind of literature, including fantasy. Notice that some of the books I recommended are not even really sci-fi, or hard-sci-fi.

I'm really picky about what I read, and Baxter for some reason doesn't really grab my interest. Most sci-fi and fantasy doesn't grab my interest, to be honest. But when its good, its IS really good.

I'm not much of a fan of Baxter either, although so far I've only read him at short story length. What I've read has wooden characters and sacrifices story to historical sweep, which bugs me.

The best hard SF writer currently publishing right now is, IMO, Karl Schroeder, who deserves to be better-known than he is. *Lady of Mazes* deserved a Hugo; it was head and shoulders against everything else that year that was actually nominated. His current series, *Virga*, is more adventure and less thoughtful, but is still becoming quite good as it develops.

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David Duffy — 13 May 2008, 06:25 · in reply to Russ Allbery

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As an alternate take on some of the themes in _Case of Conscience_, one should also read _The Sparrow_ by Mary Doria Russell, an astonishing book in its own right and one that may appeal to Wolfe fans specifically for a number of reasons.

This recommendation, on the other hand, I will definitely second.

Well as usual, YMMV. I would reverse these recommendations -- if _CoC_ is less than satisfactory in terms of being a _setup_, _The Sparrow_ made me grit my teeth for the same reason doubled (there is a r.a.sf thread on it just at the moment, where it certainly evokes some venomous responses). And _CoC_ allows Blish to show off another of his interests (Finnegan's Wake) ;). Best intro to Blish: _Jack of Eagles_.

David Duffy.

Oliver Wakefield — 13 May 2008, 10:56 · follows David Duffy

Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> writes:> Nope. Yes, I have more of an hard sci-fi bent, but I like every kind of> literature, including fantasy. Notice that some of the books I> recommended are not even really sci-fi, or hard-sci-fi.

Personally in the past I used to head toward fantasy. But in the end I couldn't stand the whole Orcs and Elves and Dwarves dross. Tolkein was fine he's an original. But a lot of the authors that line store bookshelves are just copying his world to some degree. Fantasy's about imagination and there's no real imagination in a lot out there, but I suppose the whole Tolkein copying thing sells.

That's why I moved to sci-fi really. I can't say I've read that much yet. Dune is what I'm going to read next. Does anyone recommend it?

Be a Hero and Win with Iron Man

<http://clk.atdmt.com/UKM/go/msnnkmg10010000009ukm/direct/01/>

Pedro Pereira — 13 May 2008, 12:17 · in reply to Oliver Wakefield

Yes, I do recommend Dune. Very good indeed. The following 5 books in the series are just so-so, not as good as the first one. But still they are clearly Frank "Herbertish" and you could do much worse than reading them. But Dune itself is really good.

From: radontrooper at hotmail.com To: urth at urth.net Date: Tue, 13 May 2008 11:56:47 +0100 Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers?

Pedro Pereira <domus_artemis at hotmail.com> writes:> Nope. Yes, I have more of an hard sci-fi bent, but I like every kind of> literature, including fantasy. Notice that some of the books I> recommended are not even really sci-fi, or hard-sci-fi. Personally in the past I used to head toward fantasy. But in the end I couldn't stand the whole Orcs and Elves and Dwarves dross.

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Get fish-slapping on Messenger! Play Now

Pedro Pereira — 13 May 2008, 12:19 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

You make it sound like socialism is an horrible disease.

brunians at brunians.org — 13 May 2008, 13:54 · in reply to Pedro Pereira

It has slain in its millions and in its tens of millions.

.

You make it sound like socialism is an horrible disease.

Date: Mon, 12 May 2008 20:39:43 -0400> From: brunians at brunians.org> To: urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers? (Was: How list works and questions> > >> I did not like Iron Council and it has left me with a prejudice> >> against>Mieville.> > > What is it you didn't like about Iron Council? Personally I thought it was> > the weaker of the works and I felt that Mieville's socialist message a bit> labourious.> > Perhaps a bit.> > > I think Mieville has talent but he needs to refine his work.> > Too much jibber jabber really.> > I think that communism has made his brain rot.> > Now, Moorcock and Delany are also socialists. But I think that they are> both excellent writers.> > > .> > > _____> Urth Mailing

Adam Thornton — 13 May 2008, 14:14 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On May 13, 2008, at 8:54 AM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It has slain in its millions and in its tens of millions.

You make it sound like socialism is an horrible disease.

Oooh! Oooh! Are we going to be putting Catholicism on trial here next?

Adam

brunians at brunians.org — 13 May 2008, 14:57 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Compared with socialism?

Being neither a socialist nor a Catholic, I don't mind at all.

I tell you though, the Catholics will get off much easier.

You notice, Nazis are figures of fun these days. Springtime for Hitler and all that. But not communists. Why should that be? Nazism is completely discredited, the countries that still have national socialist governments, are there any left? Maybe Syria, if we are counting Ba'ath Arab Socialism as a branch of national socialism, as it is. But you notice that they don't advertise the connection.

The largest country in the World is still run by communists, even if they have been acting a

It has slain in its millions and in its tens of millions.

Oooh! Oooh! Are we going to be putting Catholicism on trial here next?

Adam

Like the Church, you mean?

Sure, Christian organizations have also committed vast crimes. I have no problem admitting that. I'm a Jew, you silly person.

Quite the contrary, actually.

Better not to turn this into an ideology war, it has no place in this list.> Date: Tue, 13 May 2008 09:54:46 -0400> From: brunians at brunians.org> To: urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers? (Was: How list works andquestions> > It has slain in its millions and in its tens of millions.> > > .> > > You make it sound like socialism is an horrible disease.> >> >> Date: Mon, 12 May 2008 20:39:43 -0400> From: brunians at brunians.org> To:> >> urth at lists.urth.net> Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers? (Was: How> >> list works andquestions> > > >> I did not like Iron Council and it has> >> left me with a prejudice> >> against>Mieville.> > > What is it you> >> didn't like about Iron Council? Personally I thought it was> > the> >> weaker of the works and I felt that Mieville's socialist message a bit>> >> > labourious.> > Perhaps a bit.> > I think Mieville has talent but he> >> needs to refine his work.> > Too much jibber jabber really.> > I think> >> that communism has made his brain rot.> > Now, Moorcock and Delany are> >> also socialists. But I think that they are> both excellent writers.> > >> >> .> > > >> > Urth Mailing> >> List> To

Pedro Pereira — 13 May 2008, 15:16 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

If if you have no problem admitting that, why the vitriolic take on socialism? I like how you are carefull in naming the culprits "Christian organizations" and leaving the christian religion and ideology out to carefully point out the distinction. You should do the same regarding Socialism. One thing is ideology/philosophy, another thing is what "organizations" (like governments) do in their name. You should know that. More crimes have been committed in the name of democracy than the crimes of Socialism, Communism and Church put together. Should we abandon Democracy?

Ranjit Bhatnagar — 13 May 2008, 15:23 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 11:10 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

I don't see any reason why
ideological and political discussion has no place on this list.

Quite the contrary, actually.

This discussion is off topic because I, as owner of the list, say so. That's authoritarianism for you! Please move on to other topics.

JBarach at aol.com — 13 May 2008, 16:22 · follows Ranjit Bhatnagar

In a message dated 5/13/2008 5:18:12 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time, domus_artemis at hotmail.com writes:

Yes, I do recomend Dune. Very good indeed. The folowing
5 books in the series are just so-so, not as good as the
first one. But still they are clearly Frank "Herbertish"
and you could do much worse than reading them. But
Dune itself is really good.

I have to admit that I haven't read Dune myself. But a friend of mine did recently. Here's her take:

[_http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/03/well-ill-be-duned.html_](http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/03/well-ill-be-duned.html)
(<http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/03/well-ill-be-duned.html>)

[_http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/04/done-with-dune.html_](http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/04/done-with-dune.html)
(<http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/04/done-with-dune.html>)

Enjoy!

John

*****Wondering what's for Dinner Tonight? Get new twists on family favorites at AOL Food. (<http://food.aol.com/dinner-tonight?NCID=aolfod00030000000001>)

Pedro Pereira — 13 May 2008, 16:35 · in reply to JBarach at aol.com

Ahah, funny! Maybe I should read them again after all these years?...LOL

From: JBarach at aol.com
Date: Tue, 13 May 2008 12:22:19 -0400
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers?

In a message dated 5/13/2008 5:18:12 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time, domus_artemis at

hotmail.com writes:

Yes, I do recomend Dune. Very good indeed. The folowing 5 books in the series are just so-so, not as good as the first one. But still they are clearly Frank "Herbertish" and you could do much worse than reading them. But Dune itself is really good.

I have to admit that I haven't read Dune myself. But a friend of mine did recently. Here's her take:

<http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/03/well-ill-be-duned.html>

<http://bloggin-dazs.blogspot.com/2008/04/done-with-dune.html>

Enjoy!

John

Wondering what's for Dinner Tonight? Get new twists on family favorites at AOL Food.

brunians at brunians.org — 13 May 2008, 21:57 · in reply to Ranjit Bhatnagar

Now this I have no problem with.

If anyone wants to discuss this matter with me, my email address is widely known.

.

On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 11:10 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

I don't see any reason why ideological and political discussion has no place on this list.

Quite the contrary, actually.

This discussion is off topic because I, as owner of the list, say so. That's authoritarianism for you! Please move on to other topics.

Kerry Benton — 14 May 2008, 22:11 · in reply to Oliver Wakefield

Heartily!

Dune's one of my very favorite books. As noted, the subsequent books fall off in quality. I rank Children and Messiah as "decent", and God Emperor, Heretics and Chapterhouse as varying levels of "readable", all more or less on a geometrically declining quality scale. This is of course is not including the latter day sins of Chris Herbert... those books are dross on a whole other scale (exponential!) ranging from awful to totally unreadable. And I was so excited when I first heard of the first one. Bleh.

Anyway, Dune's got that very complete feeling in the universe Herbert constructs. I love the small glimpses of the extended society. It's depth that's not plumbed as much as alluded to, but I find it rounds everything out, and creates a more perfect experience, in much the same way that the best meals have some not quite graspable character of *completeness*, above the mere agglomeration of materials and application of varying levels of heat.

This is true of all my favorite works, though I guess I have a fondness for epics precisely because inhabiting well constructed, genuine-feeling worlds is so satisfying. This is Tolkein's draw as well.

-k

On Tue, May 13, 2008 at 6:56 AM, Oliver Wakefield
<radontrooper at hotmail.com> wrote:
Thats why I moved to sci-fi really. I can't say ive read that much yet. Dune
is what i'm going to read next. Does anyone reccomend it?

Adam Thornton — 14 May 2008, 22:36 · in reply to Kerry Benton

On May 14, 2008, at 5:11 PM, Kerry Benton wrote:
This is
of course is not including the latter day sins of Chris Herbert...
those books are dross on a whole other scale (exponential!) ranging
from awful to totally unreadable.

Brian, you mean?

Once the Penny Arcade archive is back online....

<http://www.penny-arcade.com/comic/2003/10/15>

Adam

Kerry Benton — 14 May 2008, 22:50 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Oh, dammit, yes, sorry, I meant Brian.

I guess I was only half way towards putting him out of my mind...

Thank you for the correction!

-k

On Wed, May 14, 2008 at 6:36 PM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:

On May 14, 2008, at 5:11 PM, Kerry Benton wrote:
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of course is not including the latter day sins of Chris Herbert...
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from awful to totally unreadable.

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Once the Penny Arcade archive is back online....

<http://www.penny-arcade.com/comic/2003/10/15>

Adam

Michael Straight — 23 May 2008, 17:01 · in reply to Russ Allbery

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 11:11 PM, Russ Allbery <rra at stanford.edu> wrote:
The best hard SF writer currently publishing right now is, IMO, Karl Schroeder, who deserves to be better-known than he is. Lady of Mazes deserved a Hugo; it was head and shoulders against everything else that year that was actually nominated. His current series, Virga, is more adventure and less thoughtful, but is still becoming quite good as it develops.

I'm in the middle of Lady of Mazes right now and am very impressed so far. He reminds me of my choice for best hard SF writer: Ken MacLeod. I think his first two books, Star Fraction and Stone Canal are my favorites, and Newton's Wake (which is probably the closest in feel to Lady of Mazes), but everything he's written is very good.

Rostrum

Adam Thornton — 23 May 2008, 17:26 · in reply to Michael Straight

On May 23, 2008, at 12:01 PM, Michael Straight wrote:
On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 11:11 PM, Russ Allbery <rra at stanford.edu> wrote:

The best hard SF writer currently publishing right now is, IMO, Karl Schroeder, who deserves to be better-known than he is. Lady of Mazes deserved a Hugo; it was head and shoulders against everything else that year that was actually nominated. His current series, Virga, is more adventure and less thoughtful, but is still becoming quite good as it develops.

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The first Virga book didn't do much for me. Lady of Mazes was much better.

Adam

oblate777 at speakeasy.net — 23 May 2008, 17:48 · follows Adam Thornton

On Fri May 23 13:26 , Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> sent:

The best hard SF writer currently publishing right now is, IMO, Karl Schroeder, who deserves to be better-known than he is. Lady of Mazes deserved a Hugo; it was head and shoulders against everything else that year that was actually nominated. His current series, Virga, is more adventure and less thoughtful, but is still becoming quite good as it develops.

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The first Virga book didn't do much for me. Lady of Mazes was much better.

I've been reading the Virga books and I must agree. However, my favorite Schroeder is still Permanence. Not only a great book in toto, but it also includes a chilling re-imagination of intellectual property in the nano era.

rob t. (probably not related to adam but who knows?)

Russ Allbery — 24 May 2008, 18:11 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> writes:

The first Virga book didn't do much for me. Lady of Mazes was much better.

The second Virga book is much better than the first, but it's still not up to Lady of Mazes.

Russ Allbery (rra at stanford.edu) <<http://www.eyrie.org/~eagle/>>

Fred Kiesche — 16 Jun 2008, 18:47 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Delany: In addition to Empire Star and Babel-17, I'd recommend the short work The Star Pit and the novel Nova.

Especially Nova, as it involves the Tarot and stuff and that ties in nicely with...

Tim Powers: I got hooked on him with The Annubis Gates. Also good are The Drawing of the Dark, On Stranger Tides, The Stress of Her Regard, Declare, the "Earthquake Weather trilogy" (with Last Call as my all-time favorite part of that trilogy...

Powers is a ton of fun. Some people have said that Neil Gaiman is "developing an American mythology". Powers was way ahead of him (I like Gaiman, but like Powers a lot more).

(Yes, I am still a couple hundred messages behind...)

F.P. Kiesche III

"When you send a man out with a gun, you create a policymaker. When his ass is on the line, he will do whatever he needs to do...And if the implications of that bothers you, the time to do something about it is before you decide to send him out." (David Drake, Caught in the Crossfire)

Bloggging at TexasBestGrok!

--- On Mon, 5/12/08, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

From: Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>;

Subject: Re: (urth) Other SF writers? (Was: How list works and questions to mailers) To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>; Date: Monday, May 12, 2008, 4:11 PM

On Mon, May 12, 2008 at 12:35 PM, Matthew Keeley

<matthew.keeley.1 at gmail.com> wrote:

> Perhaps we Wolfe fans should put together a list of other worthwhile science & fiction / fantasy writers? I know a few of the people on the thread have a & list already.

Equally good, but about as far from Wolfe as you can get artistically or philosophically,

is Samuel R. Delany. Some of his work, incidentally, is ¬& for the easily offended! Good starting places include Babel 17, Empire Star, and his short story collection

Aye and Gomorrah

Anyone who likes Wolfe should give Tim Powers a try: his work is nowhere near as *dense* as Wolfe's, and certainly less mysterious, but has a certain similarity in what he uses SF/F to do. A good stand-alone starting point is the pirate novel (h'mmm...) _On Stranger Tides_; his finest work to date is in the trilogy consisting of _Last Call_, _Expiration Date_ and _Earthquake Weather_.

Any list like this must include Ursula K. Le Guin, who is another far-from-Wolfe but awfully good. Start anywhere but her first three books.

I would recommend, with slight hesitation, James Blish, and especially his four-volume trilogy (and that's not a paradox) "After Such Knowledge." The first book (_Doctor Mirabilis_) is a historical novel retelling the life of friar Roger Bacon; the second, in two volumes (_Black Easter_ and _The Day After Judgment_) a contemporary fantasy/horror novel, and the third (_A Case of Conscience_) a SF novel. Together they are an inquiry into the question whether the quest for secular knowledge for its own sake is a valid goal, or indeed permissible at all, from a Christian (sc. Catholic) point of view.

As an alternate take on some of the themes in _Case of Conscience_, one should also read _The Sparrow_ by Mary Doria Russell, an astonishing book in its own right and one that may appeal to Wolfe fans specifically for a number of reasons.

Okay, I'll shut up now and let someone else go.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 16 Jun 2008, 20:08 · in reply to Fred Kiesche

Fred,

Delany: In addition to Empire Star and Babel-17, I'd recommend the short work The Star Pit and the novel Nova.

As would I (though "Star Pit" is included in the short story collection).

Powers is a ton of fun. Some people have said that Neil Gaiman is "developing an American mythology". Powers was way ahead of him (I like Gaiman, but like Powers a lot more).

I think what Powers is doing is very different from what Gaiman is doing. Powers is more truly *American* in his concerns -- not surprisingly, given that NG is a Brit. Gaiman is giving a valuable outsider look at America as myth; Powers is dealing with American myths, rather than the myth of America.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I once absend-mindedly ordered Three Mile Island dressing in a restaurant and, with great presence of mind, they brought Thousand Island Dressing and a bottle of chili sauce. -- T. Pratchett