

A Good Society

The Urth list — 7 messages, 4 voices, 11 Jul 2008

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5101>

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John Smith — 11 Jul 2008, 15:17

Can any one think of a Wolfe novel or story in which he portrays a good society?

When I re-read The Fifth Head of Cerberus, I realized that on the first reading I had missed how brutal and nasty the planet of Sainte. Croix is. Urth and the Whorl are also terrible places. Stories like The Death of Dr. Island have a cruel or indifferent society in the background.

Wolfe doesn't seem to write about utopias. But does he ever show even a decent world?

Jack

Best wishes,

Jack

Paul B — 11 Jul 2008, 16:15 · in reply to John Smith

Yeah, and the bad society often goes hand in hand with secularism (or wrongheaded spirituality). Long Sun is of course the most obvious example of this, but I haven't read him describe a spiritual society either, to date. Presumably because life there would be so good it'd be dull writing.

Paul

On Fri, Jul 11, 2008 at 11:17 AM, John Smith <jsmith2627@att.net> wrote:
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Jeff Wilson — 11 Jul 2008, 17:23 · in reply to John Smith

John Smith wrote:

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The Goddess' world in *_There Are Doors_* is a pretty tranquil liberal democracy similar to 1950's Britain - She reigns with the lightest of hands and suffers Her people to govern themselves as long as Her worship and personal property are respected.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Lane Haygood — 11 Jul 2008, 17:32 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Given the strong Gnostic vibe I get from a lot of Wolfe's work (not that I think he's a gnostic, mind you, but I think he mines the theology for plot points), the idea that the material world is flawed and evil isn't so strange.

Lane

On Jul 11, 2008, at 12:23 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

John Smith wrote:

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Jeff Wilson — 11 Jul 2008, 18:39 · in reply to Lane Haygood

Lane Haygood wrote:

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His interviews affirm this; he says we are lucky to live in a Christian society cos the rest of the world (like Turkey) is a depraved hellhole where people kill kittens for fun.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Paul B — 11 Jul 2008, 19:21 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Hooo boy, really? What interview was this?

Well, Wolfe is getting old, I suppose I can grant him moral exception (har) for cantankerous outbursts.

Paul

On Fri, Jul 11, 2008 at 2:39 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
Lane Haygood wrote:

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Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> <<http://www.io.com/%7Ejwilson>> >

Jeff Wilson — 11 Jul 2008, 19:37 · in reply to Paul B

Paul B wrote:

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<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~vze2tmhh/gwjbj3.html>

I beg your pardon, it is James B. Jordan who actually mentions the part about the kittens, but about 8-10 answers down the page is where Wolfe talks about other cruelties.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >